

2017 CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

The Ethnographic and Folk Culture Society organized the biennial International Conference on Politics, Society and Culture in South Asia from 03rd – 05th March, 2017 hosted by the Department of Sociology, University of Lucknow. The conference had about 600 participants from the different parts of the world. During the conference we had three plenary sessions having 14 speakers, 15 technical sessions, and inaugural and valedictory sessions. The conference had 552 registered delegates, 146 out station delegates and many solicited speakers. The Hon'ble Governor of Uttar Pradesh Shri Ram Naik graced the inaugural session. Prof. Anand Kumar, Jawahar Lal Nehru University delivered the key note address. He said that the concept of South Asia is a territorial category where various countries are interconnected and simultaneously disconnected. Economically South Asia has seen the neo liberal system along with the development of crony capitalism. There are various phases of political, social and cultural condition in South Asia. There are binaries found between colonization and swadeshi movement; westernization and national self reliance, democracy and de –democracy, ethnicity and nationalism.

Prof. Francis Lobo, Australia was the Guest of Honour, who analyzed the concept of happiness which is considered as a measure of social progress and a goal of public policy. The president Sri G. Pattanaik in his presidential address said that South Asian countries share a distinct geographical, political and cultural identity. This region was the cradle of early human civilization. Four major religions of the world also were founded in Indian sub-continent. The interplay of geography, politics, religion and culture has evolved in to a syncretic civilization. The K.S. Mathur Memorial Lecture was delivered by eminent anthropologist Prof. P. Venkata Rao.

The conference covered a wide range of topics, discussed alternative perspectives to examine various concepts pertaining to the understanding of politics, society and culture in South Asia. Beginning from the keynote address all the plenary speakers dealt with South Asia as a vibrant territorial and cultural category necessitating a trans- disciplinary perspective.

Critical examination of issues effecting South Asia and emerging problems such as cross border terrorism, drug and human trafficking, ethnic violence and youth leadership etc. It also analysed on the mapping out of the pathways of the future of South Asia. The idea of nation as a sovereign entity having control over resources came up vis-a-vis tradition, modernity and civilisation. The role of multinational corporation and its effect on Indian

economy and democracy also found place in the discussion. The role of anthropology in synthesizing the micro causes and macro cause also came up in a nutshell. Very fruitful discussions have been made on the theme of the conference.

Prof. Nilika Mehrotra, Chairperson, CSSS, School of Social Sciences, JNU in her valedictory address said that gender analysis though has entered Indian scholarship; it is almost neglected in the arena of politics. South Asia has a strikingly similar kinship pattern and household structure. Women face similar structural inequalities hence such inequalities must be delicately dealt in our ethnographies. The conference was sponsored by ICSSR and Department of Higher Education, U.P. Government and University of Lucknow.

Sukant K. Chaudhury
Organising Secretary