

The Social Science Perspective

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 3 JULY 2022

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"In the dark times
Will there also be singing?
Yes, there will also be singing.
About the dark times."
— Bertolt Brecht

This Issue of The Social Science Perspective (TSSP) 2022 from CeRSSE comes at a time of flux. It is a mix of colours signifying the Pride Month on the one hand, and the precarity of the world's oldest democracy snatching women's rights over their bodies by the means of abolishing abortion rights on the other. The world celebrates and prepares to resist both at the same time. Standing baffled at the crossroads of pride and precarity, we ask the question: why is it so hard to be able to live a life of dignity? This exasperation lingers... As we wait for answers, we long for change, holding on to hope- after all, the singing should continue even in the dark times, attuning some of the 'sweetest songs' with our 'saddest thought'.

While the world endures this period of societal churning and turmoil, we, at the Centre are committed to act as a mirror, addressing some of the pertinent social concerns. This is the sixth edition of TSSP covering the period between April and June 2022. We start with an introductory piece under Approaching Research exploring Beyond Disruptions vis-a-vis NEP 2020. We also present original articles covering a wide range of issues such as the ongoing Sri Lankan crisis in The World Perspective; an insightful take into India's climate actions in India Matters. Along with this, we also share with you a report on Foreign Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar's interactions with the JAIN (Deemed-to-be University) community; an experiential account of representing the University on the global platform during the BISA 2022 Conference; and an array of reports on the various academic activities undertaken by the Centre, besides showcasing the academic achievements of our scholars. We hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as we take immense pleasure in bringing it together for you.





Priyanca and Debangana

Editors, TSSP



APPROACHING RESEARCH

Beyond Disruptions: In Search of Learning Continuity through Digital Lens

If we teach today's students as we taught yesterday's, we rob them of tomorrow
- John Dewey

In a fast-paced world where shocks and disruptions are an ever-present reality, every aspect of society needs to be carefully viewed through the lens of learning. Disruptions, when go unattended or mismanaged, often come at a huge cost leading to sudden disconnects and shifts. The statement strongly directs our attention to the context of higher learning institutions across the globe today. Besides exposing the growing inequities in our educational system, the disruptive impacts of the Covid pandemic have refashioned the education scenario by compelling universities and students to evolve in a hitherto 'unfamiliar online terrain' in record time. Abrupt campus closures persuaded drastic transition to an online learning environment through remote class sessions, virtual instructions and webinars on virtual learning platforms.

Post pandemic new normal saw the further acceleration of the move towards digitalization of knowledge transmission to sustain an unbroken flow of learning. Complementing the gentle restoration of situational normalcy is a growing realization of the plentiful opportunities unleashed by e-learning in the form of new techniques and methodologies that may take learners on a fairly smooth ride in the digital age. Given the ease and comfort of options such as recorded lessons, tailored experiential learning and enhanced engagement the educational practice of blended learning is being looked upon as a progressive disruptive innovation. In the evolving educational milieu of today convergence of physical and digital learning is recreating classrooms into potentially powerful teaching and learning arenas. Hailed as a "thoughtful fusion" of in-person classroom teaching and ICT-mediated webbased learning, the hybrid learning mode offers expanded scope for collaborative, creative and computer-assisted learning. The complex and adaptive approach combines the components of both online and face-to-face teaching wherein the context stands decisive in determining the proportion and nature of the blend. Pioneers of blended learning prefer using technology as an engine of personalization, deeper learning and optimization of students' progress. To make the blended learning experience profound and meaningful classroom instruction time may be either replaced or augmented by online learning experiences created through virtual laboratories, virtual field trips, read-aloud by authors, gamification, etc. Online learning can thus include varying degrees of interaction or just time alone in independent study and higher-order learning activities. Quality blended courses require both online and in-person activities to be intense, engaging and challenging. Getting the right degree of blend with the appropriate set of tools for each aspect of the course is decisive. Blends are often personalized in keeping with the subject, learners' needs and curriculum requirements. The various learning experiences in synthesis complement each other and are planned or orchestrated in ways so that they run in parallel and converge impeccably towards the realization of pre-defined learning outcomes.

As steered by NEP 2020 policy directions India's current efforts towards mitigating the Covid mayhem are firmly hinged on technology enablement initiatives with a specific focus on strengthening digital learning, digital universities and digital infrastructure. While the potentials of blended learning are limitless (particularly its ability to bring world-class education to the doorsteps of those having restricted flexibility and resources with the help of a single internet connection), digital equity and inclusion are critical to leveraging these benefits. The new policy advocates systematic integration of technology in teaching and learning in higher education institutions through policy development, capacity building and the use of appropriate low-cost technologies. As a powerful booster, the UGC recently floated a host of fresh ideas around the implementation of a blended learning approach, thereby formally announcing the possibility to conduct up to 40 per cent of teaching online.

While disruptive incidents, given their highly complex and dynamic character, call for holistic, strategic, and adaptive responses, our academic institutions are found wanting in their strategic planning and preparedness initiatives to cope with the ongoing and potentially more frequent crises. Knowledge construction in a connected world requires teachers to approach the classroom creatively and sensitively. The learning process by adapting itself to learners' interests, needs, pace and styles on an everyday basis can standardize experiential learning with a personal touch. To make quality education a reality mere screen-based education can achieve little unless accompanied by meaningful experiential and constructive activity-based learning in both the modes. Learning comes alive only when learners go beyond the classroom dictates of the text/teacher to explore and experience the real-world connections in the environment around them. Blended learning offers a co-learning space designed for collaborative engagement wherein courses may be structured flexibly around short projects based on differential skill levels of students. To reduce feelings of isolation from spreading among introverted or remotely-located students, active collaborative learning can be promoted playfully through a variety of activities- including small group assignments, puzzle-solving, case studies, role-plays, simulations, group discussions, and so on. As a way of avoiding digital fatigue, learning activities may also be designed around fewer screen-based exercises. While emerging technologies may be seen as excellent means to heighten students' motivation and engagement, navigating the slippery virtual terrain calls for an altogether new approach to curriculum design, delivery and assessment.

As architects of learning experiences, the instructor is instrumental in creating a warm and inviting environment of shared goal-setting, collective exploration and meaning-making to forge an online sense of community. The new framework by guaranteeing risk-taking autonomy to teachers urges them to bring out their innovative best. When learning becomes self-directed, customized and differentiated steered by the enhanced role of technology in instruction, the teacher's role shifts proportionately from that of knowledge provider to that of a coach, mentor or discussion moderator offering the much-needed guidance and direction and feedback. Technology, in the hands of artful teachers, can be truly transformational. And, with great and inspiring teachers, blended learning can lead to even bigger and better outcomes at the same or still lower cost. The new learning dynamic, therefore, accentuates the value of specially curated professional development programmes for educational practitioners and support staff alike in the use of digital learning technologies to promote quality, uniqueness and consistency in students' experience.

By upholding freedom and flexibility a well-crafted and evidence-based blended solution makes learning flow seamlessly with minimum interruption in delivery. In-person and online components can be synthesized in any proportion to suit a student's personal learning style and adapt to their physical debilities, family situations and levels of technological access. Learning, in essence, is a continuous process that follows its learners everywhere. In cognizance of this NEP 2020, with a clear intent to liberate learning from erstwhile institutional confines, makes multiple entry and exit points available to learners. The Academic Bank of Credit is no less aspirational in its claim to empower students as key stakeholders by granting them enhanced autonomy to pick teachers and timings; choose creative course combinations; design degrees and diplomas; study through any mode with learning and examinations literally on demand and at will. Cultivating the right connections is fundamental to ensuring learning continuity in a shrinking and porous world. Technology, it is believed, will help draw teachers, students and peers closer besides squeezing the disciplinary/skill gaps. Contemporary internationalization drive in Indian higher education is embedded in the blending principle, one that seeks to integrate the institution and its key stakeholders with the global knowledge and learning network. In advancing the creation and exchange of new knowledge blended internationalization encourages the strengthening of the essential connection between students and their ideas across geographical, cultural and disciplinary borders by combining offline and online communication and networking.

With digital and social media influences pervading the lives of learners it is only natural that learning fuelled by ed-tech innovations goes digital. The post-pandemic blended future envisions the blossoming of students into culturally sensitive and globally competent citizens driven by a growth mindset and an entrepreneurial spirit of continuous improvement. While technology can make potentially robust partners to both learners and educators, the success of this partnership will largely rely on 'what' the teacher chooses to do with technology and 'how' the students make use of technology to regulate their path, pace and place. The systemic inequities notwithstanding, hybrid learning equity approaches can fetch the country rich demographic dividends in the long run by allowing youngsters from across segments to chase their dreams uninhibited. Accessibility is key to integration. Hence, greater affordability and accessibility of quality online education are sure to unlock a range of livelihood opportunities in favour of the last and the lost. In the exceedingly diverse and low-resource Indian setting democratization of digital access is indispensable to taking the big leap to a brighter tomorrow.



Dr. Payel Sen
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THE WORLD PERSPECTIVE

Of Debts and Disasters: Interrogating the Political Dynamics of Sri Lanka's Current Crisis

Sri Lanka's resilience in the face of crisis has been exemplary throughout history; it has overcome recurrent natural disasters and political turmoil since its independence. One must remind oneself of this to remain optimistic while looking at the unprecedented events unfolding in the island country which literally burns at the moment with the economic quagmire being declared by the United Nations as the 'most dire humanitarian crisis.' Sri Lankan economists point out that it is the most devastating crisis since independence (1948), reminiscent of the great depression of the 1930s when Sri Lanka was additionally ailing with a malaria crisis." (Ahilan Kadirgamar, 2022) But even in these exceptional circumstances, there is scope for introspection and turning around the crisis into a catalyst for long-term change.

A sympathetic assessment of the situation would reveal that Sri Lanka is a victim of the pandemic-induced global economic downturns, collateral damage in the Russia-Ukraine war and casualty in the global trend of the rising reactionism and deepening sensitivity against government actions in democracies. But above all, it is guilty of perpetrating a dysfunctional democracy with severe flaws in credibility. Its electoral mandates in successive elections suppress the pandering of majoritarian, populist politics which suits the overwhelming Sinhala-Buddhist community in the island nation. Its ethnic divide has been, and continues to remain the core of its crises, the present economic one included. This article argues that Sri Lanka's crisis is not simply an economic chaos; it is rather symptomatic of the democratic deficit in Sri Lanka.

A substantial repository of analyses and academic opinions have been generated in a short while since the universal media attention was drawn to the violent protests on the streets by the citizens from May 2022 onwards. At the heart of the most critical dissections lies the knowledge that at the end of the civil war between the government forces and the LTTE in 2009, there were two politico-economic choices made by the tremendously popular albeit high-handed regime of Mahinda Rajapakse. First, it began focusing more on providing goods to the domestic market instead of trying to produce exportworthy items in the foreign markets. Secondly, the government started inviting several mega infrastructure projects, whose economic value was often dubious, as reflected in the regional media. The fall-out of these moves corroded the economic basis of the country in dual ways; one, income from exports remained low while the cost of imports kept growing. At the end of 2019, Sri Lanka had \$7.6 billion in foreign currency reserves. Recently this figure had fallen to just \$50 million. (BBC, 2022) Second, total trade as a share of Sri Lanka's GDP fell drastically, from 89 per cent in 2000 to 46 per cent in 2010. While external debts kept growing, external reserves dwindled. Moreover, high domestic spending, coupled with low tax collections led to high fiscal deficits and borrowing needs.

The landslide victory of Gotabaya Rajapakse in 2019, months after the tourism sector had been deeply hurt by the Easter bombings in April, unequivocally asserted a mandate in favour of high politics; security and populist political decisions executed by a leader who was already a war hero in the country. His decision to invite Mahinda Rajapakse as the Prime Minister also did not garner much criticism in a country which seemed to enjoy comfort in dynastic rulings. As crucial portfolios were given out to family members, very few noticed that the popular leaders of the state were committing a series of economic mistakes. The reverence of the electorate was only jolted when the impact of the deep tax cuts was felt as it deprived the government of revenue and made it much harder to borrow money abroad. Finance Minister Ali Sabry has said these lost the government more than \$1.4bn (£1.13bn) a year in revenue. When Sri Lanka's foreign currency shortages became a serious problem in early 2021, the government tried to limit the outflow by banning imports of chemical fertiliser and telling farmers to use locally sourced organic fertilisers instead. This led to widespread crop failure. Sri Lanka had to supplement its food stocks from abroad, which made its foreign currency shortage even worse. The International Monetary Fund reported the fertilizer ban also hurt tea and rubber exports. Sri Lanka's government has racked up \$51bn (£39bn) in foreign debt. (IMF, 2021) Russia's invasion of Ukraine was the final nail in the coffin as it universally and unexceptionally affected global food and fuel prices (both countries being leading exporters of grain). A country which has pandered to the culture of import-dependency for over a decade now, including more than 80 per cent of its medical supplies, Sri Lanka hit rock bottom of its economic strength and the political outburst spiralled.

As the people demand the resignation of Gotabaya Rajapakse at the moment, and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe desperately tries to salvage the economy of the nation through aid and line of credit, it is pertinent to speculate that Sri Lanka may tide over this economic disaster, but more political chaos will continue to mire the country unless it takes serious stocks of its democratic credentials. Sri Lanka practises a unique democracy; which holds periodic elections and grants universal adult franchise but which is dysfunctional, compromised and eludes theoretical categories. Existing literature describes Sri Lanka's democracy as majoritarian, dynastic-driven and eschewing pluralism. This trend in Sri Lanka's politics is observed to be as old as its independence from colonialism; the ethnic divide between the majority Sinhala-Buddhists and minority Tamil-Hindus and Muslims set the tone for divisive politics. Neil De Votta (2017) writes that with the Sinhalese being a clear majority, it was too easy for ambitious politicians to manipulate ethnic sentiments when seeking elected office. However, De Votta (2017) also points out that in the plural, ethnic democracies, minorities have to be accommodated and institutions have to be set up which permit multiculturalism and civic nationalism. But Sri Lanka's leaders went out of their way to do the opposite, and in the process also undermined the liberal democracy that was well within the island's grasp.' This eventually hurled the country towards authoritarianism.

Freedom House, 2021 declares Sri Lanka to be 'Partly Free' (56/100). The regime of the Rajapakse brothers (since 2019) has been a very infamous chapter on centralization, authoritarianism and corruption in Sri Lanka while following a diffused version of neoliberalism. Extremely hostile to criticism, the regime refused to undergo the necessary changes that would have created a democratic space to resolve the economic problems. Instead of promoting domestic production, import substitution and a public distribution system, it bandied the pre-crisis manifesto of Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour (The Hindu, 2022).

In retrospect, the 2015 mandate given to President Maithiripala Sirisena had been exceptional; based on the desire for reforms, restore constitutional democracy and good governance. Sirisena had served in the Rajapakse government for over nine years. He announced his candidature at a time when Mahinda Rajapakse had already served two terms as President and was looking to win a third term (he had abolished the two-term limit on the election to the presidency in 2010 through the 18th Amendment to the 1978 constitution). From the 18th to the 21st Amendments, Sri Lanka witnessed a cycle of removing various restraints on presidential power introduced and re-introducing it again. This further distorted the constitutional imbalances in the separation of powers in Sri Lanka's executive-dominated constitutional system and political culture. A broad coalition was formed against the excessive regime of Mahinda Rajapakse which believed in upholding the democratic traditions of tolerance, pluralism and constitutionalism in the face of Rajapakse's assault and nepotism. Sirisena's government adopted very encouraging democratic measures, including the reduction in the powers of the Presidency. However, in a move touted to be 'unconstitutional', President Sirisena sacked his Prime Minister, Ranil Wickremasinghe in 2018 and named Mahinda Rajapakse as the Prime Minister.

Political analysts were quick to comment that this was largely done by President Sirisena to eye an electoral win in the upcoming Parliamentary elections in 2018. Sirisena had received the mandate of the minorities while the Sinhala-Buddhist majority continued to rally for the Rajapakse clan. Thus, pandering to populist sentiments, Sirisena capitulated and joined hands with Rajapakse again. The overall political climate in the country veered towards majority-pampering by the political elites and minority insecurities at the grassroots. The revival of Sinhala Buddhist ethnic clashes with minority Muslims in areas like Kandy in 2018 witnessed the declaration of a state of emergency. The Easter Attacks in April 2019, conducted by the ISIS-inspired National Thowheeth Jaa'maat across churches, heightened Islamophobia in the island country as well as insecurity among the Christians and foreign tourists. The stage was set for welcoming a hard regime, but it was grossly overlooked that voting in autocrats into democratic power seems to have formed a cyclical political pattern that the people are unable to break out of.

It would not be an oversimplification to state that the country has fallen in a conundrum where democracy is consistently being compromised by political elites who are wresting power by appealing to ethnic majoritarianism and enforcing a form of coercive democracy, and pushing the economy to the worst forms of patron-client networks. The avowed purpose of development projects is to bring welfare to the people; but in the long run, the crisis of leadership, as well as autocratic economic decisions, is tugging at the core of the political fabric of the country. The model of development tuned to the fluid and dynamic neoliberal markets have left the people with empty hands. Ranil Wickremasinghe being brought back as the Prime Minister by Gotabaya Rajapakse seems a vindication of justice served too late. Thus, Sri Lanka needs to rework its political matrix. Electoral victory based on the ethnic mandate is tantamount to political pandering to populism for narrow gains. If Sri Lanka continues on this path, it will be almost impossible to revive its democratic credentials. Militarisation of civilian spaces will continue leading to a possible coup. Strong, ethical (and not ethnical) political leadership based on the promise of the development of the nation is required; its democracy, as well as development, has to be re-envisioned by a willing political leadership.



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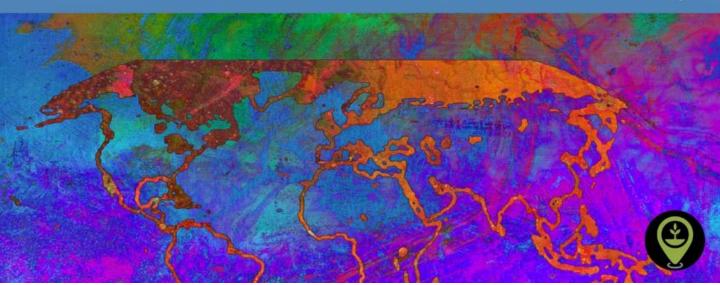
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INDIA MATTERS

IPCC Report 2022 - Is Climate Resilient Development the Solution to Planetary Apocalypse?

ipcc

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON Climate change



The 6th Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was released recently. As the leading international body for the assessment of Climate Change, the IPCC is a key source of scientific information and technical guidance for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. This report is the second part of the Sixth Assessment Report that lays focus on Climate Change impacts, risks and vulnerabilities and explores options to adapt. The first part was released in August 2021 and talked about the scientific basis of climate change.

This report assesses the impacts of Climate Change, by looking at ecosystems, biodiversity, and human communities at global and regional levels. It also reviews vulnerabilities and the capacities, and limits of the natural world and human societies to adapt to Climate Change. And most importantly, it adds a new term to the existing literature on Sustainable Development - Climate Resilient Development.

What are the new insights on climate impacts, vulnerability and adaptation from IPCC?

Increasing heat and extreme weather are driving plants and animals on land and in the ocean towards the poles, to higher altitudes, or to the deeper ocean waters. Many species are reaching limits in their ability to adapt to Climate Change, and those that cannot adjust or move fast enough are at risk of extinction. As a result, the distribution of plants and animals across the globe is changing and the timing of key biological events such as breeding or flowering is altering. These trends are affecting food webs.

Changes in temperature, rainfall, and extreme weather have increased the frequency and spread of diseases in wildlife, agriculture, and people. We see a lengthening wildfire season and increases in the area burned. Roughly half of the world's population currently experiences severe water shortages at some point during the year. We see more and more extreme events such as flooding and droughts.

How will Climate Change affect the lives of today's children tomorrow, if no immediate action is taken?

According to the IPCC Report, today's young people and future generations will witness stronger negative effects of Climate Change on food production and availability. The warmer it gets, the more difficult it will become to grow or produce, transport, distribute, buy, and store food – a trend that is projected to hit poor populations the hardest. Depending on future policies and climate and adaptation actions, the number of people suffering from hunger in 2050 will range from 8 million to 80 million people, with the most severely affected populations concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Central America. Under a high vulnerability-high warming scenario, up to 183 million additional people are projected to become undernourished in low-income countries due to climate change by 2050.

How are people adapting to the effects of Climate Change and what are the known limits to adaptation?

The report states that current adaptation-related responses across all sectors and regions are dominated by minor modifications to usual practices. Whilst this may suffice in the short term, the long-term risks may require more extensive, transformative changes in our behaviour and infrastructure.

What strategies could increase the climate resilience of people and Nature?

The IPCC is convinced that climatic risks to people can be lowered by strengthening Nature, meaning that we invest in protecting Nature and rebuilding ecosystems to benefit both people and biodiversity. Flood risk along rivers, for instance, can be reduced by restoring wetlands and other natural habitats in flood plains, restoring the natural courses of rivers, and using trees to create shade. Cities can be cooled by parks and ponds and by greening streets and buildings' rooftops and walls. Farmers may increase their businesses' climate resilience by diversifying their crops and livestock, planting trees and bushes on the fields for shade and organic manure (agroecological farming), increasing soil health, and combining crops, livestock and natural elements.

The report highlights a solutions framework that it calls *Climate Resilient Development*, which combines strategies to adapt to Climate Change with actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to support sustainable development for everyone.

As the leading international body for assessment of Climate Change and in suggesting responses to it, one expected much more from the IPCC. The new term, *Climate Resilient Development*, as well as its predecessors, *Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation*, or even the catch-all term, *Sustainable Development*, miss one critical acknowledgement. That all these terms have been framed within the dominant Capitalist ideology and mainstream economic theory. They all refuse to acknowledge that Capitalism is, overwhelmingly, the main driver of planetary ecological collapse.

From Climate Change to resource over-consumption to environmental degradation, Capitalism is the engine that has powered three centuries of accelerating economic development. Today, it is a roaring out-of-control locomotive mowing down continents of forests, squeezing out oceans of life, clawing out mountains of minerals, drilling and pumping out lakes of fuels, and devouring the planet's last accessible resources to turn them all into "products", all the while destroying the fragile global ecologies built up over aeons of time.

The IPCC Report is disappointing because it does not acknowledge the above reality, which is staring us in the face. Instead, it perpetuates and reaffirms questionable ethnocentric, technocentric and anthropocentric policies. It does not pay adequate attention to excessive consumption in the West and the replication of consumerist lifestyles in other parts of the world. It ignores the immense concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a few, around the world.

The need of the hour is to undertake a Gandhian analysis and reformation of the ideological and foundational underpinnings of the current model of development. We need a revised and reformed project of Sustainable Development that is simultaneously concerned with well-being, equity and ecological integrity. We need an *alternative* paradigm which is symbiotic with Nature and its eco-system, where economy, ecology and spirituality are interrelated. The application of Gandhian principles allows human beings to satisfy their basic needs, without harming Mother Earth. Gandhi stated: "The earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need but not for every man's greed". This well-known dictum of Gandhi reminds us that man cannot infinitely exploit Nature to satisfy his unlimited wants.



Dr. D. Jeevan Kumar

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VISIT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER DR. S. JAISHANKAR

The International Studies Network of Bangalore (ISBN), of which Centre for Research in Social Sciences and Education (CeRSSE), JAIN (Deemed-to-be University) is a founding member, hosted Dr. S Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister, Government of India, S Jaishankar, at the National Institute for Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bengaluru for a lecture and interaction with faculty and students on 'Eight Years of National Security'. The event was attended by Dr. Raj Singh, Vice Chancellor, Dr. NVH Krishnan, Registrar, Dr. Sridhar Murthy, Director, Academics and Planning, JAIN (Deemed-to-be University), along with Faculty Members and students, who all got an opportunity to interact with the Honbl. Minister.





National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS)

International Studies Network

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PROGRAMME

09 June 2022, Thursday IRD Auditorium, NIAS

1830 -1900 hrs: Tea

1900-1905 hrs: Welcome by
Prof Shailesh Nayak
Director, National Institute of Advanced

rector, Nation udies (NIAS)

Introduction by Amb PS Raghavan Former Chairman, National Security Advisory Board

1910-1925 hrs Initial Remarks by Dr S Jaishankar External Affairs Minister, Govt of India

1925-2025 hrs: Q&A

2025-2030 hrs: Concluding Remarks & Vote of Thanks



Members of the International Studies Bangalore (ISBN) Network with Dr. S. Jaishankar including Dr. Raj Singh, Vice Chancellor, JAIN (Deemed-to-be University) and Dr. Priyanca Mathur, Head, CeRSSE, JAIN (Deemed-to-be University)



Dr. Raj Singh, Vice Chancellor, JAIN (Deemed-to-be University) greeting Dr. S Jaishankar



Dr. Priyanca Mathur, Head of CeRSSE, JAIN (Deemed-to-be University), raising a question to the Minister. Dr. NVH Krishnan, Registrar and Dr. Sridhar Murthy, Director, Academics and Planning, in the audience



Mr. Jameel, Syrian Student at JAIN (Deemedto-be University) raising his question to the Minister



Ms. Tania Sengupta, Ph.D Research Scholar in Public Policy at JAIN addressing her questions to the Minister.



Faculty and Students of JAIN (Deemed-to-be University) at the Lecture

The lecture can be viewed here - https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/ukraine-war-implications-will-lead-to-hunger-situation-in-many-countries-jaishankar/article65512127.ece



#BISA2022

Newcastle-upon-Tyne 15-17 June conference.bisa.ac.uk



EXPERIENTIAL ACCOUNT

British International Studies Association (BISA) 2022 Conference - Learnings and Take-aways

There was a striking difference in how I experienced this year's British International Studies Association (BISA) conference compared to the previous occasion. It has been the advent of multiple firsts for me- my first international conference as an academic professional and my first physical international conference in the post-pandemic world. This year's conference - BISA 2022- which was held at Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK, from June 15 to 17, remained true to its purpose on all counts. The collective of scholars from across the globe reflected the organisational ethos of BISA which is renowned for providing an inclusive, diverse and friendly platform for the community of academics to discuss, promote and develop international studies.

This was my second BISA conference, having attended BISA 2018 while pursuing my Ph.D at the Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi. On that occasion, there was a sense of awe at being part of such a prestigious gathering, while at the same time, as a student, the experience was inspiring and a little intimidating. This year, representing JAIN (Deemed-to-be University)'s Centre for Research in Social Sciences and Education (CeRSSE) as an Assistant Professor, I had the additional responsibility of presenting not just my work or the voice of not just my research unit, but also that of the many scholars from the Global South who face challenges that could be ironed out to a large extent with the kind of support and collaboration opportunities a platform like BISA provides. Back in 2018, despite having experience in research, I was yet to experience the challenges a social sciences or international relations researcher faces while out on the field after shedding the cocoon student life provides.

This year's BISA was a landmark platform in itself on many counts. It was the first physical conference staged in the post-Covid-19 era, and true to the need of the hour, it attempted to address means to cooperate effectively to deal with global challenges posed by the pandemic. The conference looked at major shifts in global politics taking place out of sight, while some scholars attempted to shed light on how the digitisation of international politics creates new forms of hybrid activism and change, or even exaggerates existing divides and inequalities.

True to its aims, BISA provided me with a platform to present my paper and get critical and creative inputs on how to add new dimensions to its research to make it a complete piece of academic work. That apart, I, along with other scholars from Asia and Africa, was given the opportunity to address the larger gathering, including accomplished and acclaimed academics from Europe and the USA, and present the challenges we face while pursuing research in the Global South. In a workshop, titled Gender, Race and the Intersections of Precarity organised by BISA in association with the Political Science Association (PSA) within the conference, I was given the platform to speak on behalf of the underrepresented Global South Scholars at the conference. From institutional shortcomings to fund crunches to sheer lack of infrastructure for field initiatives- a myriad of issues were presented. The idea was not to present a bleak picture but to present reality, which, through collaboration, can be overcome, thereby facilitating novel and pertinent research work - ones capable of touching lives and making a difference - to take place in all corners of the world. At the end of the workshop, the International Affairs blog offered me their platform to write on the theme of Inclusive IR.

My paper, titled - The Masking Performative in the Post-Pandemic World: Meanings, Evolution and Knowledge Production, was presented as part of the first session on the opening day of the conference. In the paper, I was able to look at the current two-pronged perceptions on masking -- post-pandemic medical masking based on science and the traditional cultural and religious forms of masking -- through lenses provided by the theoretical conclusions from studies in the past six decades or so. Based on both theories as well as observations from the happenings around the world at present where the acceptability of masking as a pandemic norm has not paved the way for the acceptance of other face covers, I was able to conclude that the parameters for adjudging the different forms are located at drastically different planes. And that is a result of the lingering colonial past and hence, belief systems are yet to be decolonised. I could successfully present the need to reinstate the idea of the timelessness of post-coloniality.

The feedback on the paper was positive with creative inputs ensuring the scope of my work gets further enhanced. That, for me, is the real gain of attending conferences such as BISA. The enriching academic experience and the inspiration one gets rubbing shoulders with some of the best in the world are priceless. And, the humility and the camaraderie by which the senior academics address us juniors -- guide us, help us or simply extend support -- reiterates the universal philosophy on which academia should be based: knowledge assimilation, sharing, collaboration and universal growth.

Snippets from the author's gallery







Dr. Debangana Chatterjee Assistant Professor

JAIN (Deemed-to-be University), Centre for Research in Social Sciences and Education (CeRSSE)

Lectures Organised for Army Staff College, Bengaluru

As part of the MOU between JAIN (Deemed-to-be University) and ASC, Bengaluru, CeRSSE organised a series of lectures for the Army Staff College (ASC) Bengaluru for Foreign Officers stationed there from Nigeria, Sudan and Berin to facilitate the conduct of their 'Indian Cultural Studies Programme'. These lectures were delivered by distinguished academics from all over India and much appreciated by ASC. We look forward to curating it again for their next batch of foreign officers stationed.





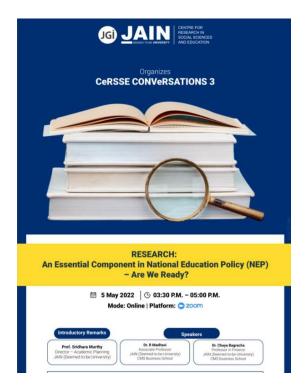
Brig Sandeep Dhupar, BGS Trg, presenting a token of appreciation on behalf of ASC to JAIN (Deemed-to-be University).

Cersse conversations

Lecture Series Organised the Centre













EVENT REPORT

Cersse conversations 2

As the world has again unleashed the demon of war, unfolding at the heart of Europe, the Russia-Ukraine War 2022 became a part of CeRSSE CONVeRSATIONS- a bi-monthly lecture series encapsulating research as well as the contemporary issues of concern. On 21 April 2022, the Centre for Research in Social Sciences and Education (CeRSSE), JAIN (Deemed-to-be University), brought to its academic audience a panel discussion titled Politics and the Humanitarian Dilemma: Russia-Ukraine War 2022. Speaking of the war, Russia, clearly played the role of an aggressor violating Ukrainian sovereignty. While war always brings with it destruction, this war involves global interests and complex scenarios- ranging from its economic and geostrategic implications to the humanitarian ones.

To address these challenges emanating from the war scenario- an array of scholars discussed the issue from an international studies perspective. While the soaring oil prices are touching our daily lives, thousands of Ukrainian refugees are fleeing their country- knocking on the doors of others. On a whole, the discussion encompassed several facets in it- institutional, humanitarian, economic and political.

The panel was chaired by Dr. Archna Negi, Associate Professor, at the Centre for International Politics, Organisation and Disarmament (CIPOD), Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Dr. Negi, a specialist in international laws and organisations, not only weaved the discussion together but also threw light upon the role of the United Nations mechanism within the ambit of a world crisis. Dr. Vivek Mishra, a Research Fellow at the Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi and Visiting Faculty at Symbiosis School of International Studies and Rashtriya Raksha University, Gandhinagar, analysed the role of the United States primarily in dealing with the crisis. Alongside, he also reflected upon the role India and China play in their diplomatic capacities vis-à-vis the USA regarding the Ukrainian crisis. Dr. Nanda Kishor M S, an Associate Professor at the Department of Politics and International Studies, Pondicherry University, discussed the war scenario from a rather theoretical perspective with two theoretical focal points- realism and liberalism. He reflected upon the inadequacies of liberal world order in contemporary international politics and brought in the realist perspective to explain the ongoing crisis. Dr. Karamala Areesh Kumar, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, St. Joseph's College, Bengaluru, focused specifically on the facet of energy security reflecting upon the complex geopolitical dynamics of the war.

Ukraine is raging the newsrooms across the world incessantly and perhaps, rightfully so. But at the same time, this world remains oblivious to many other such crises. The question is- is it simply the war that matters to the world? Or is it the question of who wages it against whom, curving the geopolitics of the day? On this note, the panellists also viewed the global crisis from a racial perspective and critiqued the inefficiency of the international legal mechanisms as a preventive tool. Overall, beyond the academic deliberations and engaging discourses, war hardly has a triumphant side and thus, the discussion was put to an end with the hope of relative peace and security worldwide.



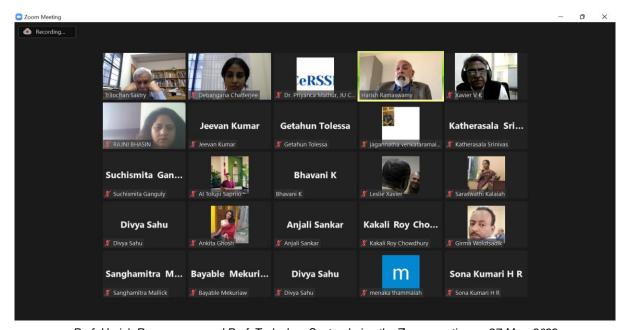
Inaugural Panel Discussion on Tackling Electoral Challenges- Contemporary Debates and Regional Perspective.

Electoral Reforms in Indian Democracy-Vestiges of Past, Volatility Now, & Vision Ahead

The Representation of the People Act (RPA) of 1951 undoubtedly provides a constitutional roadmap for conducting elections to the Centre and State Legislatures. Though the act has been amended over the years to reflect upon the changing needs, it seeks further room for healthy engagements with the stakeholders. In 2019, debates on electoral reforms at the Parliament touched upon contentious issues such as the appointment processes of Election Commissioners; political funding; Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs); the proposition for conducting multi-level simultaneous elections; the role of social media; and the usage of data targeting the swing voters. To this may be added more electoral concerns of contemporary times- organisational weakness of political parties generating the routine cases of political defections, perpetuating political violence, and caste, gender, and communal dynamics shaping political practices.

Echoing the ethos of upholding a vigorously functioning democracy, in January 2022, Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri, the honourable Speaker of the Karnataka Legislative Assembly, spoke at length at a press conference on the pressing need for electoral reforms in the country. He envisioned establishing a healthy democratic space for discussion on this matter seeking insights from the stakeholders and engagement with the students. And to this end of spreading greater electoral awareness, educational institutions may be the vanguard because they engage with young minds.

We, at JAIN (Deemed-to-be University), would like to ensure that these young minds are nurtured in a well-informed manner. After all, at an interface of elections and democracy lies people and their interests. How much of the contemporary electoral mechanism and practices are true to its democratic spirit - remains at the heart of the question. Therefore, in the series of events on electoral reforms, titled as- Electoral Reforms in Indian Democracy- Vestiges of Past, Volatility Now, and Vision Ahead, through the course of its various sessions, we would be addressing the Constitutional facet of India's Electoral Reforms, its debates, the current challenges, the issue of gender parity in the Electoral Process, and its regional reflections upon the state of Karnataka. The proposed variety of events includes online lectures and panel discussions along with topical Presentations and debate competitions among the students.



Prof. Harish Ramaswamy and Prof. Trolochan Sastry during the Zoom meeting on 27 May, 2022

To this end, the first event under the series was held on 27 May between 3.30 pm and 5 pm under the theme titled- Tackling Electoral Challenges- Contemporary Debates and Regional Perspective. The event was chaired by Prof. Jeevan Kumar, a superannuated Professor of Bangalore University, and an Hon. Professor, at Panchayati Raj University, in Gadag, Karnataka. The panellists were Prof. Trilochan Sastry who is a Professor at IIM Bangalore and the chairman of the Association for Democratic Reforms and a frontline advocate of the Right to Information campaign, and Prof. Harish Ramaswamy, currently serving as the Vice-Chancellor, Raichur University, Karnataka with over two decades of experience in teaching and research in the Postgraduate Department of Political Science both, at the University of Mysore, Mysore and at Karnataka University, Dharwad, Karnataka, India. Through the course of the session, while Prof. Sastry's pragmatic cynicism emphasised people's democratic participation, Prof. Ramaswamy deliberated upon the theme through the lens of the conceptual framework by highlighting the fallouts of reforms in the country's current democratic set-up. On a whole, the discussion paved the way for future deliberations on the matter from a much more nuanced perspective.

Student Achievements



Mohammed Shafiullah R, B.A. Student at JAIN (Deemed-to-be University), speaking at a session on Youth Voices on Inequality at the Dadabhai Naoroji Conference on Inequality at National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bengaluru, on 22nd June, 2022.

Madhulika Srivatsa, Ph.D Research Scholar in Performing Arts (Dance), has been recognised as a Mentor expert for guiding Interns for research projects in dance (both theory and performance based) as per the Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) - an initiative of the Ministry of Education, Government of India.

Sunil Kumar K, Ph.D Research Scholar in Mass Communications, attended Workshop 'Empowering knowledge on ethical publishing: Mastering the art of identifying predatory, fake and cloned journals' presented by Vishal Gupta, Senior Customer Consultant-Elsevier, and Prof. Sumit Narula, Deputy Dean (Research & Publications)- Amity University Gwalior, organised by Elesvier on 8th June, 2022.

Tania Sengupta, Ph.D Research Scholar in Public Policy, published "Migrant Labourers from Eastern States of India to Bengaluru-An Empirical Study on their Challenges". International Journal on Research & Analytical Reviews, Volume 9, Issue 2, 2022, ; PP 832-842. E-ISSN-2348-1269; P-ISSN-2349-5138. https://www.ijrar.org/

- Mathur, Priyanca and Sengupta, Tania, (2022). "Bridging the Gap-Response of Civil Society Organisations towards the Stranded Migrant Labourers in COVID-19 Lockdown-A Case study of Bengaluru, India". Refugee Review. ESPMI Network Volume 5. PP 123-142. ISSN 2371-9001. http://www.espminetwork/refugee_review.com
- Sengupta, Tania and P Swati, (2022). "Gender Biased Socio-Economic Challenges Faced by Educated Working Women-A Case Study on Bengaluru. Information Edge & Education Policy in India & Europe, PP 337-352. ISBN 978-93-81778-99-9; Associated Publishing House, Agra.

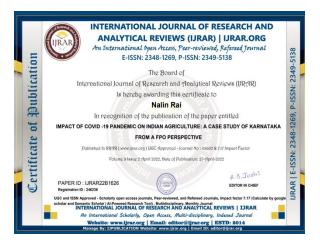
Jayan Philip, Ph.D Research Scholar in Political Science, successfully defended his Ph.D thesis, under the guidance of Dr. Sandeep Shastri, titled 'Freedom Struggles in Afro Asian Societies through the prism of leadership with special focus on Nelson Mandela and Mahatma Gandhi' on 16th June, 2022.

Chitresh Srivastava, Ph.D Research Scholar in Public Policy, delivered an online lecture at the National Rail and Transportation Institute, Vadodara on the topic "Emerging Forms and Challenges of Railway Diplomacy" on 24th June, 2022. The session was addressed to the students of B.Sc, B.Tech, BBA, MBA and M.Sc batches.

Treesa Joy, Ph.D Research Scholar in Economics, presented a paper at International Conference on Building Resilience for Sustainable Industry 4.0 titled "Impact of Geo-Political Risk in an Integrated World Economy: Evidence from Russia-Ukraine War of 2022" organized by JAIN (Deemed to be University) in collaboration with Veleučilište U Požegi, Pozega, Croatia & Erasmus+ on 6th May 2022 at Kochi, India.

Roshni Sharma, Ph.D Research Scholar in Political Science, Participated in Five-Day virtual National Level Faculty Development Programme, organised by Department of Humanities, Presidency College (Autonomous), Bengaluru, from 25th – 29th April 29, 2022.















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JAIN (Deemed-to-be University)
Centre for Research in Social Sciences
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Please send us your feedback, comments and writings at cersse@jainuniversity.ac.in