

Seminar
on
**“Ethnicity and Development in South Asia:
Issues and Challenges”**

21-22 January, 2016

Organized by



**School of Extension and Development Studies,
Indira Gandhi National Open University,
Maidan Garhi, New Delhi**

Call for paper: Research papers are invited for above mentioned theme for presentation at the two days seminar 21-22 January 2016, IGNOU, New Delhi.

- **Abstract:** Abstract of the research paper should be limited to 300 to 400 words and submitted on or before 10th September 2015 to eadisa.soeds@gmail.com. If you are sending hardcopy, it should be sent earlier so as to reach us by 10th September 2015 (Correspondence address is given below).
- **Full Paper:** Final confirmation will be considered only after receiving full research paper for presentation before 30th November 2015.

Registration: There is no registration charge for participation/ paper presentation; however, it is mandatory to submit filled-in registration form along with full paper before 30th November 2015.

Concept and Relevance

Today world is witness of various frictions and fusions of ethnic identity which has resulted in myriads of social processes, political upheavals, economic transformations and most important cultural syncretism. It has been observed that interface of ethnic identities is very common in contemporary social system that led to ethnic conflict, social mobility, changes in nation state boundaries and new forms of economic development. These ethnic identity acts as double sword in changing society and affecting development. It often creates barriers to development and social progress. On the other hand collective and unified larger national identity curbs divisive tendencies of fragmented ethnic identities. In this globalised society the challenge is to preserve collective identities by maintaining co-existence of plural ethnic identities to ensure development

and progress. Development is viewed as the process of advancement of individuals or groups towards planned objectives. The major indicators of development are economic growth, equity in distribution and overall good quality of life, which is very difficult to achieve and sustain without solidarity and harmony among various ethnic groups.

An ethnicity refers a common ancestral, social and cultural experience and more often identify with race, region, religion, language and other cultural elements, it overlaps more than one identity. Fredrik Barth (1969) is of the opinion that boundaries between neighboring groups and individuals are maintained in order to explain one's identity. Ronald Cohen (1978) viewed it as not so concrete or simple. His notion of ethnic identity is rather a fluid concept by which members distinguish "in groups" from "out groups" and which can be in a state of constant change due to various situational applications. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith see ethnicity by the following six Connotations: shares a common name; a myth of common ancestry; memories of a common past; other elements of a common cultural-religion, custom and language; a link with a homeland or region; and most important; a sense of solidarity. These connotations cover different aspects of ethnic identity worldwide with certain variations. However, post modernist approach viewed ethnicity as a subjective human construction where ethnic identity is constructed by a certain group in a community as an instrument to build a power base within a state society; it has no existence outside this power game. Thus ethnicity could be viewed as a product of certain objective conditions as well as subjective construct for a particular purpose.

South Asian region is an abode of diverse ethnic groups and deep rooted historicity. A rough estimate shows that the region has more than 8000 ethnic communities living together for more than 5000 years. After colonial rule this region has been divided into eight different countries. These eight countries having diversity in terms of ethnic groups and its origin, political structure, economic condition, however, it has many similarities in terms of ethnic co-existence, geographical proximity, trans-acculturation, common historicity and above all continuous exchanges at various levels. Each country of this region having a large number of ethnic groups based races/ castes, creed, languages and other socio-cultural criteria. India alone claims more than 4635 caste based communities (ASI 1991), Nepal has more than 90 ethnic groups which is further subdivided on languages, caste, clan and migrated outsiders. Apart from numerous minor ethnic groups in Pakistan, major population is broadly divided into eight communities based on languages; which is further subdivided into various religions, *biradaries* and clans. Afghanistan predominately a society of multiple ethnic groups, in terms of various tribes, language and traditional features. Similarly, we observe numerous ethnic compositions in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Bhutan. Maldives viewed as melting pot of various cultural contents from southern India, Sri Lanka, Arab, Africa and Southeast Asia, however, relatively less ethnic diversity.

South Asia has the largest concentration of tribal population after Africa known by tribe, schedule tribe, *adiwasi*, *janjati*, indigenous or aborigine ethnic groups. While country wise, India is a home of largest number of tribe 8.6 percent (2011 census) which includes 72 primitive tribal groups. Ethnicity is closely associated with tribes owing to strong common identity, largely having common habitat, environment and other cultural contents; even the tribes and ethnic groups are viewed synonymous. Ideally each tribe is a self contained unit with certain limits of interaction in their culture, political milieu, and economic spheres. After the British rule, these indigenous ethnic group's development planning has started by respective countries, each

country have had their own specific planning and development process, however, everywhere these indigenous groups are in minority status except Afghanistan. Despite several decades of tribal development programs and policy it is far behind the target laid down for development today.

The relationship between development and ethnicity is quite complex, a seminar on it would enable us in furthering our understanding of the complexities involved. Thus it is essential to call for papers on related themes for a thought provoking and stimulating exercise by presenting substantive research papers for further academic pursuits and making the needful dent in effective policy making.

Objectives

The main objectives of the seminar are:

- To discuss the development dynamics and spatial issues and challenges of various ethnic groups in south Asia,
- To analyze the impact of ethnicity and regional social pluralism on society, polity and economic changes and development policy,
- To discuss the different aspects of the existing constraints and legal provisions,
- To evaluate the affirmative action's for the marginalized ethnic groups and the process of homogenization and development.
- Report of the seminar will be produced for various purposes.

Sub-themes:

1. Ethnicity: evolving concept and change, its interface with modernization and development in south Asia context.
2. Ethnic conflict: ethnic composition largely diversified in terms of size, level of development and other ethnic dynamics in each country or within various regions in south Asia, causes and impact,
3. Ethnic groups, social mobility and development: the process *sanskritisation* (ritually upward mobility), homogenization and heterogeneity with globalization, various forms of social mobility and social change in south Asia.
4. Ethnicity and the role of civil society: The growing pace of civil society influencing both ethnicity and development, both traditional collective and individual philanthropy as well as new forms of modern civil society are playing important role for development.
5. Gender and ethnic groups: Gender gaps and inequality is pervasive across the ethnic groups worldwide, and this inequality is less in primitive ethnic groups. The nature and variation of gender inequality is very significant for development in south Asia. It has various dimensions needs to be unraveled to include remaining half of the population towards development.

6. Tribal culture and development policy: Tribal culture includes education, health, traditional knowledge and practices. Various tribal development approaches followed are country specific (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Maldives). Comparative evaluation between two or more tribal policies of this region or associated areas.
7. Tribal economy: tribal economy and livelihood closely embedded in tribal culture and its surrounding. Any changes in livelihood are bound to change economic conditions. It has been observed that tribal development, deforestation, intervention in forest rights has deeper implication in their culture.
8. Tribal political structure, administration and change, political empowerment, constitutional provisions and affirmative action for development.

Seminar coordinators: -

1. Dr. Pradeep Kumar, SOEDS, IGNOU, New Delhi
2. Prof. B. K. Pattanaik, SOEDS, IGNOU, New Delhi

Organizing committee

- (1) Dr. Nehal A. Farrooque, Director (SOEDS) New Delhi
- (2) Prof. B. K. Pattanaik, SOEDS, IGNOU, New Delhi
- (3) Dr. PVK Sasidhar, SOEDS, IGNOU, New Delhi
- (4) Dr. Nisha Varghese, SOEDS, IGNOU, New Delhi
- (5) Dr. G. D. Nemching, SOEDS, IGNOU, New Delhi
- (6) Dr. S.K. Palit, SOCE, IGNOU, New Delhi
- (7) Dr. Sadanand Sahu, SOITS, IGNOU, New Delhi
- (8) Dr. Pradeep Kumar, SOEDS, IGNOU, New Delhi

Contact:

Dr. Pradeep Kumar,
School of Extension and Development Studies (SOEDS)
Block- 15 F, Indira Gandhi National Open University,
Maidan Garhi, New Delhi- 110068, (India)
Email- eadisa.soeds@gmail.com,
Ph. +91-11-2957-1667 (office)