

St. Joseph's College
A Two-Day National Conference on 'Interrogating Development: Regional and Sub-Regional Trends in India in the Era of Globalisation' jointly organised by Department of Economics and Department of Sociology, St. Joseph's College, Darjeeling, 29-30 March 2015

Dr. Anjan Chakrabarti
Head, Department of Economics &
Convener of the Conference Organising Committee

On 29th and 30th March, 2015, the Department of Economics and the Department of Sociology, St. Joseph's College, Darjeeling jointly organised ICSSR sponsored National conference on '**Interrogating Development: Regional and Sub-Regional Trends in India in the Era of Globalisation**'. The programme was inaugurated by Dr. C. B. Rai, former principal of St. Joseph's College. In his inaugural speech, Dr. Rai stressed on the contribution of Jesuits in the field of education in Darjeeling hills. He also told that teachers of St. Joseph's College are guided by the philosophy of Rev. Father Arrupe. To him, teaching is an act of bringing social change and everyone should follow this philosophy. He further told that during sixties and seventies, concept of organising seminars, workshops were alien to teaching fraternity, however, a positive change took place from late-nineties, large number of seminars and conferences are now organised by Colleges and Universities and various regional and sub-regional socio-political and economic issues are being highlighted. Principal, Fr. Dr. Donatus Kujur in his welcome address has welcome the distinguished academicians of international repute, namely Professor Sarit Kumar Bhowmik, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai and National Fellow, ICSSR, New Delhi, Professor Virginus Xaxa, Deputy Director, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Gauhati, Professor Sibranjan Mishra, Visva Bharati University, Professor Abhijit Mitra, Burdwan University, Professor Sanchari Roy Mukherjee, North Bengal University, Professor Dilip Sarkar, North Bengal University, Dr Swatasiddha Sarkar, North Bengal University, Dr Debraj Bhattacharya, Institute of Social Sciences, Kolkata and speakers from various Universities, Colleges and Research Institutes of New Delhi, Bombay, Pondicherry, various places from West Bengal, Manipur and Sikkim. He presented brief history of the college and stressed upon the fact that college is continuously thriving towards knowledge creation and dissemination.

Therefore, to him, more emphasis on research and extension activities as a regular feature in the college and college continue to develop innovative teaching-learning and evaluation process as well as shall take initiative in research and extension at fullest extent. He also informed the delegates that the college has been re-accredited with highest grade 'A' in four point scale by NAAC in March 2004. Dr. Anjan Chakrabarti, Head of the Department, Economics and Commerce, told while introducing the conference that strategies and policies for economic development often get contested and become contentious because national and economic strategies mostly focus on economic competitiveness within the knowledge driven global economy. Scant attention is being paid so far to the impact of this on potentially deprived population. Experiences of India, during recent years, do suggest that high economic growth has entailed high income inequality vis-à-vis regional and sub-regional inequality. Widening gap of income between farm sector and non-farm sector, marginalisation of rural workforce has increasingly been felt. Growth of market sector may have created wider space for formal sector but capital intensiveness of the market has forced the rural migrants to settle in expanding informal sector with high degree of uncertainty. At the hind-sight, demands for separate states or various kinds of territorial/regional autonomy movements based on identity, ethnicity, and cultural specificity and demand for 'positive discrimination' have been on the rise in various parts of India and many of the cases those movements tend to be violent. The concept of region becomes a contentious issue. The very concept of 'development' is providing the fertile ground for realization of alternative space, and course of action for alternative praxis at national, regional and sub-regional level. The proposed two-day national conference is precisely an attempt to capture this trend and analyse the implications. Professor Sharit Kumar Bhowmik, Director, Institute of Social Science, Mumbai keynote address that not only the wage differential between organized and unorganized sector on rise, but also that is more so among the same class of labourers in different unorganized sectors. He also brought his research findings on the present and future of the tea-gardens and tea-gardens labourers in Darjeeling and Dooars.



Prof. Virginis Xaxa, Tata Institute of Social Science, Gauhati, in his special lecture he pointed out that any attempt to address inequity/inequality through so called development breeds further inequity/inequality. In addition, he told that development must take into consideration the language, culture, caste etc. and absence of these variables makes a region or sub-region a contested entity. Dr. Dilip Kumar Sarkar expressed his concern regarding place of 'self' in collective action. Professor Sibransan Mishra delved on the impacts of liberalization and globalization policy initiated in 1991, on agriculture and industry at national and regional level. He also explained how present economic policies are breeding regional imbalances. Professor Abhijit Mitra raised serious concerns on changing relations in globalised world where compassion, hospitality, open heartedness, willingness to help others have been experiencing serious deficit in digitised era. He told that new courses should be introduced that will teach basic human values and nurture creativity. He considered Darjeeling is fit case for this because the place is cosmopolitan in nature and simultaneously have strong regards on traditional culture and values.

Professor Swatasiddha Sarkar while presenting his thesis strongly argued that development and politics though have close relation but development always portrayed as free from politics. To him, identity aspirations and agenda for development often becomes mutually exclusive however the reality says differently. In two-days, 24 research papers were presented and covered wide areas from tea and tourism of Darjeeling and dooars, hydro electric projects in Dzongu region of North Sikkim and protest movement by the indigenous people, water crisis in Darjeeling, gender issues of Darjeeling, changing political and economic scenario of Bengal, market penetration in higher education and its future, trade relations with Nepal, Economic and Human Development in Sikkim, Ethnic and socio-economic problems of Manipur, Process of Economic Development in North-eastern states and many more. St. Joseph's College has decided to bring out an edited volume incorporating these research articles which will not only help the researchers of this region but also prove to be important policy document for various government and non-government agencies this region and beyond.



Abandoned

■ Farheen Jamal

2nd Year English Honours

loosing a person, so close to me,
shattered my heart. Which longed to be with thee.
forsaken, Uncared, Unloved.
ponder alone like a lifeless creature, amidst the familiar
crowd.

Now nothing lasts forever,
and you came to leave someday
I did not relinquish my faith that said, 'you'd stay'
betraying my anticipation you went away, making me
sore everyday.

My vanities still upheld the hope
with flooded eyes, of you coming back
Without any complain of my flaws and situations
I cannot cope.
Before you, would I, all my emotions unpack?

All my griefs, then would I adieu,
Long concealed, which have been in the depths of my
heart,
Never had I thought, my happiness would be so few,
When recollected before you with disregard