



**St. Joseph's College**  
D A R J E E L I N G , I N D I A

**International Conference  
on  
DIGITAL  
GOVERNANCE  
&  
DIGITAL POLITICS  
IN  
SOUTH ASIA**

**September 15-16, 2022**

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
St. Joseph's College  
North Point  
Darjeeling (WB) -India

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
DIGITAL GOVERNANCE AND DIGITAL POLITICS IN SOUTH ASIA  
September 15-16, 2022**

*organized by*

**Department of Political Science  
St. Joseph's College  
North Point, Darjeeling (WB)  
India – 734104**

**Call for Papers**

Through initiatives such as “Digital India” (2015), “Digital Nepal Framework” (2018), “Digital Drukyl Initiative” of Bhutan (approved in 2019), “Digital Pakistan Policy” (2018), and “Vision 2021” for Digital Bangladesh, many South Asian states have sought to harness the power of the “digital”. This harnessing is also evident in the performance of South Asian states such as Bhutan and Bangladesh who have advanced from the “middle to the high” in the *E-Government Development Index* (EGDI) published by UN-DESA (2020). In view of these initiatives, the latest World Bank report titled “*South Asia's Digital Opportunity Accelerating Growth, Transforming Lives (2022)*” notes that while there is no doubt that South Asia is benefiting from expanded digital access, the “full game-changing potential remains untapped”. A concrete, comprehensive and comparative interrogation of the “digital” therefore can help advance South Asia's urgent needs of development and access.

The emerging literature on digital governance and politics has made it clear that in the contemporary world, policy, governance and politics cannot be examined in isolation from digital developments where two interrelated trends must be recognized. Firstly, as noted at the outset, it is observed that efforts have been made at multiple levels by the South Asian states to improve the delivery of digital public goods/services and to simplify the process of accessing them. This not only involves multiple (and multi-sectoral) stakeholders/actors, but also attempts to cut across significant cultural, political, economic, and social differences. Secondly (and simultaneously) it is also observed that digital cultures have grown exponentially through various social media platforms and other digital technologies. This expansion and percolation of the digital has therefore paved the way for the emergence of new forms of “digital politics” involving novel modes of political participation, political socialization, political articulation and political communication. This nascent emergence of “digital politics” as complementary to state policies with regard to ICT legislation, digital governance, digital information, digital rights to (dis)connect, digital citizenship and digital literacy has now expanded to include engagements beyond the state which is observed in cross-border and diasporic interactions. Hence, it is extremely important to examine the manner in which these new transformations utilize and realize the digital potential of South Asia.

The implication of the above two trends for both for the political leadership of states and for South Asia is definitely a rich field of research and exploration. For instance, new issues concerning “digital sovereignty” seen in debates over data protection, use and ownership of technology provided by private companies, trust and legitimacy between the state and the “citizen” has asked us to reexamine the digital-democratic relationship. This is significant given the “democratic” credentials of many South Asian states. Nevertheless, in South Asia, despite the obstacles of differential access to technology and pervasive social inequities, people have engaged with digital platforms not only as an organizational and a mobilizational tool, but also for the crucial access of services. New developments such as the proposal for data-driven governance (for e.g. “e-Census” in India) attempt novel methods of accessing, retrieving and analyzing digital information for effective and efficient policy-making as well as decision-making. Further, the potential of the rural, borderland and peripheral regions within South Asian states to unlock and fully realize the potential of the “digital” must also be discussed in light of the various developments and obstacles. The aim of the Conference is therefore to create comparable, actionable and practical recommendations for academics, research scholars, professionals, and practitioners at the international, national and regional levels. It is in this spirit that the Conference proposes to act as a forum for presentation, discussion, and demonstration of interdisciplinary and comparative research on the various aspects of the ‘digital’ emerging in South Asia. We invite original, rigorous, creative reflections and contributions in the form of research papers based on the discussions above and covering the thematic areas listed below:

#### **THEMATIC AREAS:**

- Theoretical/Conceptual Perspectives on the “digital”
- (De)regulation of emerging digital spaces/ virtual landscapes: “Metaverse” and “Cyberspace”
- Perspectives on Digital Government, Governance, Digital Diplomacy and e-Governance in South Asia
- Digital Governance: Policy perspectives in India and South Asia
- Comparative studies of the past, present and future of digital infrastructures in South Asia
- Prospects and challenges of digital democracy in India and South Asia
- Digital space/ecosystem in South Asia: Issues of Privacy, Security, Cybercrime and Accountability
- Digital technologies and health (Special focus on Covid-19 in South Asia)
- Digital Finance in South Asia: Impact on trade and commerce
- Digital Politics in the South Asian Diaspora
- Digital and Gender in South Asia
- Digital and Elections in South Asia: Public Opinion, Campaigns and Funding
- Digital and Journalism: Locating transformations in communication
- Impact of digital on cultures and identities in South Asia

## SUBMISSION & SELECTION OF ABSTRACTS:

Original and unpublished abstracts of research papers from interested participants may be submitted to the Screening Committee at [sjcnorthpoint1@gmail.com](mailto:sjcnorthpoint1@gmail.com) within 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2022. Selected participants shall be informed by the Committee within 28<sup>th</sup> August, 2022 and full papers must be submitted by 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2022.

## REGISTRATION:

All participants whose abstracts are accepted are requested to register themselves as per the following payment details so as to confirm their participation in the Conference:

**For faculty and other participants:** Rs. 2000/- ; **For Research Scholars:** Rs. 1500/-

For joint papers, two or more participants must register separately as Certificates shall be awarded separately. The participants are requested to make their own arrangements for travel and accommodation. Once registered, the Organizers will be providing all the paper presenters with lunch, refreshments and kits for the duration of the Conference.

## ACCOUNT DETAILS:

**A/C Name:** SJC Exempted Items

**A/C No.:** 20520100000744

**IFSC Code:** UCBA0002052

**Branch:** North Point, Singmari

**Name:** UCO Bank

*N.B Selected participants who wish to register offline can contact the Convener/Jt. Convener either through e-mail or mobile numbers which are given below.*

## ORGANIZING COMMITTEE:

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IMPORTANT DATES	
Submission of Abstracts	25 <sup>th</sup> August, 2022
Email for Submission	<a href="mailto:sjcnorthpoint1@gmail.com">sjcnorthpoint1@gmail.com</a>
Selection of Abstracts	28 <sup>th</sup> August, 2022
Opening of Registration	29 <sup>th</sup> August, 2022
Submission of Full Paper	13 <sup>th</sup> September, 2022