

Seminar
on
**“Ethnicity and Development in South Asia:
Issues and Challenges” 21-22 January, 2016**

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.

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 aborigines 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.

Sub-themes: Dynamics of Ethnicity, Ethnic conflicts, its causes and impact on development; The role of civil society; Social mobility, entrepreneurship and development; Gender and ethnic groups, Tribal culture and development policy, Migration, Traditional knowledge system and practices.

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 constrains and legal provisions,
- To evaluate the affirmative action's for the marginalized ethnic groups and the process of homogenization and development.

Call for paper: Research papers are invited for above mentioned theme for presentation at the two days seminar 21-22 January 2016 (tentative), 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 (by post) then send it earlier so it should reach to us on or before 10th September 2015 (Correspondence address is given below). Submitted abstracts will be scrutinized by a committee of experts and selected paper presenters will be intimated by 20th September 2015.
- **Full Paper:** Final confirmation will be considered only after receiving full research paper for presentation on or 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 on or before 30th November 2015.

Accommodation: - Accommodation to the outstation participants will be provided by the organizer at IGNOU guest house. It has limited number of accommodation; hence, priority will be given to first 20 out station paper presenters only.

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