



Indo Canadian Studies Centre



Indian Diaspora Centre



Centre for Advanced Studies in India

Joint International Conference The Past, Present and Post ‘Diaspora’: New Directions in Diaspora Studies A Report

The CoHaB Indian Diaspora Centre (CoHaB IDC), the Indo Canadian Centre Studies (ICSC), University of Mumbai and the Centre for Advances Studies in India (CASII) conducted a Joint International Conference at the University of Mumbai, entitled ‘The Past, Present and Post ‘Diaspora’: New Directions in Diaspora Studies’ on the 18th, 19th and 20th of November, 2016. The Conference was inaugurated by the Vice Chancellor of the University of Mumbai, Professor Sanjay Deshmukh. Professor Deshmukh delivered an enlightening talk on the significance of Diaspora Studies. He also offered to publish the proceedings of the conference as part of the 160 planned publications to celebrate the 160th anniversary of the University of Mumbai in 2017. The Consulate General of Canada, Jordan Reeves, was the Guest of Honour at the inaugural session. His speech was focused on Indo-Canadians and their role and contribution to the Canadian society, culture and economy. Professor Klaus Stierstorfer, University of Muenster, Coordinator of CoHaB offered his remarks on the conference. Professor Nilufer Bharucha, Director, CoHaB IDC and Professor Sridhar Rajeswaran, Director CASII welcomed the guests and Professor Shobha Ghosh, Jt. Director, CoHaB IDC, proposed the vote of thanks.



From left to right: Shoba Ghosh, Klaus Stierstorfer, Jordan Reeves, Sanjay Deshmukh, Nilufer E. Bharucha, Sridhar Rajeswaran



From left to right: Barbara Schmidt-Haberkamp, Jordan Reeves, Klaus Stierstorfer, Nilufer E. Bharucha, Sridhar Rajeswaran

The inaugural session was followed by the academic sessions of the conference at which National and International keynote speakers, plenary speakers, research-in-progress speakers presented insightful papers on various aspects of Diaspora Studies. There were also papers focused on the Future of Diaspora Studies in the global context. The Conference had also invited Skype Presentations from speakers in the USA and Romania.

Some of the Keynote and Plenary speakers were Professor Somdatta Mandal, Viswabharati University, Shantiniketan; Professor Barbara Schmidt-Haberkamp, University of Bonn, Germany; Dr. Ajaya Sahoo, Indian Diaspora Centre, University of Hyderabad; Dr. Roxana Marinescu, The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania; Dr. Mala Pandurang, BMN College of Home Science, Mumbai; Dr. Preeti Bhatt, Malaviya National University of Technology, Jaipur; Dr. Asis De, Vidyasagar University, Bengal; Dr. Manpreet Singh, University of Delhi; Dr. Preeti Shirodkar, MET, Mumbai; Dr. Ruta Dharmadhikar, LAD and Smt. R.P. College for Women, Nagpur; Dr. Bhagayshree Varma, University of Mumbai; Dr. Karin Ebeling, Otto Von Guericke University, Magdeburg, Germany; Dr. Clelia Clini, John Cabot University, Rome; Dr. Sooshilla Gopaul, Open University, Mauritius and Dr. Angelica Marinescu, University of Bucharest, Romania.



From left to right: Chair: Shoba Ghosh. Keynote Speakers: Somdatta Mandal, Barbara Schmidt-Haberkamp and Roxana Marinescu.



From left to right: Chair: Sachin Labade, Keynote Speaker: Ajaya Sahoo

The Skype Session speakers from the USA were Professor Nalini Iyer, Seattle University and Dr. Melanie Wattenbarger, Former CoHaB researcher, University of Mumbai.



On screen from left to right: USA Skype Speakers: Nalini Iyer and Melanie Wattenbarger



On screen: Romania Skype Speaker: Iulia Rascanu, The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

Members of the CoHaB IDC Advisory Board participated in a Panel Discussion titled 'The Future of Diaspora Studies'. The Conference addressed key issues in matters of the Diaspora and opened up new avenues of research in the field.



Panel Discussion

From left to right: Sridhar Rajeswaran, Chair: Klaus Stierstorfer, Kamala Ganesh, Nilufer E. Bharucha.

The papers presented at the conference focused on topics such as the distinction between Transnationalism and Diaspora, Second Generation Diasporics, Diaspora in Post-Communist states and Diaspora in Postcolonial nations. The presentations also tackled nuanced research topics such as media, material culture and Diasporic identity, the mother figure in Diasporic fiction and Sikh identity in British Columbia, Canada. The question of Queer Diaspora was also taken up. The Panel Discussion accommodated the fluidity of the term 'Diaspora' in today's globalised world of transnational living. Research-in-progress papers received encouraging responses from all delegates present.



From left to right: Chair: Somdatta Mandal
Keynote Speaker: Karin Ebeling
Plenary Speaker: Ruta Dharmadhikari



From left to right: Plenary Speaker: Kaustav Chakraborty, Chair: Roxana Marinescu
Plenary Speakers: Preeti Shirodkar and Manpreet Singh.



From left to right: Chair: Preeti Shirodkar
Research-in-progress Speakers: Sai Diwan and Baldeep Grewal.



From left to right: Chair: Preeti Shirodkar
Research-in-progress Speaker: Mushtaq Ahmed.

The Valedictory Address was delivered by the renowned poet and National Fellow, Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla, Dr K. Satchidanandan. He addressed the idea of the 'Third Space' in Diaspora Studies.



Valedictory Session

From left to right: Nilufer E. Bharucha, Chair: Klaus Stierstorfer, Valedictory Speaker: K. Satchidanandan, Sridhar Rajeswaran.

The main take-away from the conference regarding new directions in diaspora studies was that diaspora studies in India needs to take a fresh look at the older diasporas from India such as the Maritime Diaspora along the East African coast and the Arab Peninsula and the migration of Indians from Western India into Eastern Europe, especially Romania, and the resultant Roma community. What also emerged from the deliberations of the conference was that Internal Diasporas whether professional, labour, student or due to marriage especially among women, provide ample ground for research.

The conference not only provided these new directions for diaspora studies but also revisited traditional concepts to add new meaning to Diaspora Studies as we know it today. All the sessions of the conference were well attended on all three days by not just the delegates, but also faculty and students from the various postgraduate departments of the University of Mumbai.