

Call for Papers

Second South Asian Border Studies Conference on Beyond Boundaries and Borders: South Asian Quest for Peace, Development and Regional Connectivity

Date: 1-2nd March 2019

Venue: Department of Civics and Politics, University of Mumbai

Concept Note

Background:

South Asia is one of the fastest growing regions that exhibit a potential to emerge as a leading economic centre of the world. Nevertheless, South Asia is riddled with inter and intraregional conflicts embedded in ethnicity, religion, border disputes, and resource politics. These conflicts act as an impediment to peace, development and regional cooperation. In the post-1990's economic restructuring (liberalisation and privatisation) paved the way for economic growth in the region. Not only India but other South Asian countries Like Nepal and Bangladesh recently earned a reputation of moving swiftly on the path of economic growth. It is a region, nascent in development and growth trajectory and all these are in favour of South Asia. It is expected that in the next couple of years both Nepal and Bangladesh will graduate from the category of the Least Developing Country (LDC) to Developing Country. At the same time, India with its newly acquired economic strength now transited from aid recipient to a donor country. While these are positive indications for a post-colonial region but some issues require serious academic deliberations. The foremost is the question of lack of peace, stability, development and regional integration that is also related to dismal connectivity and lack of cross-border mobility management/governance in South Asia. This is related to the fact that South Asian economies remained open to globalisation, but the same enthusiasm is missing for regional cooperation. Therefore the benefits associated with regional integration are still to be reaped. In short, South Asia is a region of hope and despair and the realisation of potentialities and overcoming the challenges largely depends on the prospect of peace, stability and regional cooperation/ integration.

Rationale:

Experts blame political division across borders in South Asia as one of the main reasons for low level of regional integration. The borders in South Asia remained rigid and intact but the regional economic growth is likely to make cracks in the walls. This is because trade in goods and services, as well as the significant movement of people across borders, are complementary to economic growth. Here there is a need for regional mobility framework which can facilitate the labour migration across the borders within the region. In this regard, regional cooperation and connectivity is the impending issue that cannot be ignored for a long. While there is an acknowledgement of the relevance of regional peace, cooperation and connectivity, it is a long way to achieve in reality. To cite few illustrations, there is lack of cooperation which is reflected in the fact that SAARC Motor Vehicles Agreement and SAARC Railways Agreement was approved by the Inter-Governmental Group on Transport in its New Delhi meeting in 2014, unfortunately, again due to the political mistrust the agreements were not signed at the 18th SAARC summit held at Kathmandu in 2014. Still, four South Asian countries Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) have pledged to go

ahead with more extensive connectivity projects, and BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement was signed in 2015, and presently it is in the implementation stage.

Similarly, there is no regional framework for addressing refugees and statelessness, which is a huge humanitarian issue. It is a notable fact that despite highly securitised borders, borderlands and boundaries in South Asia there remains a mixed flow of migration covering economic migration and victims of persecution. Large-scale migration issue is a relevant question for South Asian states. Still, none of the South Asian countries except Afghanistan, are signatories to 1951 Convention (for refugees) and 1954 Convention (for stateless). There is a need for proper mapping of these vulnerable populations for effective advocacy and seeking solutions.

India is also making efforts to connect South Asia with East and Central Asia restructuring the borders of the region. In a way, regional connectivity will also open doors for regional integration in South Asia. South Asian region is today standing at a juncture where things are moving fast, and it is going to influence the idea of peace, cooperation and regionalism. Notably, in a connected region like Europe, the sense of borders and boundaries are different. In a connected region borders are not seen as barriers but a facilitator of trade and movement of people.

While there are seemingly inevitable changes at the same time, there are critical issues that too requires attention from analysts and scholars. In this eagerness of establishing regional peace, development and connectivity, it is also important that one must not lose the sight of environmental hazards, natural disasters and instability that at times are related to the big infrastructure projects. These regional issues like connectivity projects, peace and development will also impact the life and livelihood of people in the border regions. Thus, in the discussion on peace, development and connectivity, we cannot overlook the critical interrelated points that need to be addressed.

Objectives:

1. To have an enhanced understanding of South Asian borders, borderlands and related challenges in the region
2. To deliberate and evolve a better understanding of peace, development and regional connectivity scope in South Asia
3. To discuss the inter and intra-regional challenges and prospects in the realm of economic and humanitarian aspects.

In the background of these challenges and prospects, the IInd South Asian Border Studies Conference is jointly organised by the University of Mumbai, South Asian University and Tata Institute of Social Sciences. It is focused on South Asian peace, development and regional connectivity issues. We invite academics, think-tanks, research scholars, policymakers and stakeholders to join us in a discussion on various dimensions of South Asian Peace, Development and Connectivity. We are also interested in discussing relevant examples of the border, borderland issues/ boundaries and connectivity from other regions of the world and the conference is not restricted to South Asian participants. We invite abstracts and panels on the following suggested themes, but innovative ideas are welcome.

Proposed themes:

1. The Concept and Ideas of Borders, Borderlands, Boundaries, Peace, Development and Connectivity
2. South Asian Regionalism
3. SAARC- Its role and functions in promoting peace, development and regional connectivity
4. South Asia and Sub-Regional and inter-regional Cooperation
5. Different Connectivity Projects in South Asia
6. Role of India in South Asian Connectivity Projects
7. Critical Issues Related to Connectivity in South Asia
8. Comparative Border Studies and Regionalism
9. Humanitarian challenges- conflicts, displacement and forced migration
10. Addressing refugee protection issues and statelessness

Key Speakers:

Keynote Address:



David Newman

David Newman is Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Ben-Gurion University (since 2010), Israel and Professor of Political Geography and Geopolitics there. He founded the Department of Politics and Government at BGU in 1998 and served as its first chairperson until 2003. He also facilitated the establishment of the Center for the Study of European Politics and Society (CSEPS) in 2003. He has been the Chief Editor of the International journal of Geopolitics for a period of fifteen years before stepping down in 2014.

Prof. Newman obtained his PhD at the University of Durham (1981), and his BA from the University of London (1978). His research is primarily concerned with issues of borders and settlements and is an active member of a number of border networks, including ABS, IBRU, ABORNE and BRIT. He is currently a consortium member of the EU FP7 research project (including 19 universities throughout Europe) entitled EUROBORDERSCAPES, the RELATE consortium of the Finnish Academy of Sciences on Territory and Nationalism; and the SSHRC Consortium (Canadian Academy of Sciences), on Borders and Globalization.

Valedictory Address



Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly

Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly is a Professor of Public Policy at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, where he is *Jean Monnet Chair in Innovative Governance (2016-19)* and Director of *UVic's European Union Jean Monnet Center of Excellence*. He studied Law and Political Science at Paris IV- Sorbonne and for a Ph.D. in Political Science at the University of Western Ontario, Canada. The author of about 90 articles and chapters, and 8 books and special issues of scholarly journals in urban and border studies, his most recent publication includes an *Encyclopaedia of Border Disputes (2015)*. Currently, he is the research 'lead' (principal investigator) for *Borders In Globalization a research program* funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (2013-19) and the European Union (2016-19) that brings together 30 university research centres in 20 countries, and over 100 students to do research on borders. He was the chief editor of the *Journal of Borderland Studies* (Taylor and Francis / Routledge) and of the *Canadian American Public Policy* series (Universities of Maine, USA & Victoria, BC, Canada).



Prof. Sanjay Chaturvedi

Before joining South Asian University in June 2018, Sanjay Chaturvedi was Lala Lajpat Rai Professor in Political Science at Panjab University, Chandigarh. He has more than 35 years of experience in research and teaching, including post-doc at University of Cambridge, England (1992-1995) with Nehru Centenary British Commonwealth Fellowship, followed by the award of highly coveted Leverhulme Research Grant. He has authored two, co-authored three and co-edited eight books (under the imprint of Palgrave Macmillan, Springer, Routledge, John Wiley and Sage) and published in international peer-reviewed journals including *Geopolitics*, *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, *Third World Quarterly*, *Australian Journal of Political Science*,

Cooperation and Conflict, The Polar Journal, Proceedings of Indian National Science Academy, and Asian Affairs: An American Review, and Journal of Economic and Social Geography. He is the founding Vice-Chair of Indian Ocean Research Group, Inc.



Professor Paula Banerjee

Professor Paula Banerjee is the Vice Chancellor, Sanskrit College and University, Kolkata. She is best known for her work on women in borderlands and women and forced migration, is the *President of International Association For Studies in Forced Migration*. Winner of many awards and accolades, in 2013 she was awarded the Distinguished Fulbright SIR Award and a Visiting Professorship to *SUNY, Oswego*. Her recent publications include *Statelessness in South Asia (2016)*, *Unstable Populations, Anxious States* (edited 2013), *Women in Indian Borderlands* (edited, 2012) and *Borders, Histories, Existences: Gender and Beyond* (2010) which has been acclaimed as a best seller. She is the editor of *Refugee Watch* and the editorial board member of a number of international journals such as *Oxford Journal of Refugees*. She has written and edited over 15 books and monographs and has published widely in international journals such as *Journal of Borderland Studies, Canadian Journal of Women's Studies, Forced Migration Review* and *Journal of International Studies*. Acknowledged as a radical and prolific speaker she has delivered lectures in all five continents. She has been a visiting professor in a number of universities including Helsinki University (Finland), Yunnan University (China) University of Paris 7 (France) and New School, New York (USA) and others.



Shri. Shakti Sinha

Shri. Shakti Sinha is the Director of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi. Mr. Sinha, an IAS officer of the 1979 batch, was considered a highly influential Joint Secretary in Mr. Vajpayee's Prime Minister's Office in the late 1990s. He had taken voluntary retirement in 2013 when serving as Finance Secretary in the Delhi government. While in service he went to Washington DC as senior adviser to executive director of the World Bank. He was on a UN mission to Afghanistan coordinating issues relating to national development strategy and governance issues and wrote a number of newspaper articles on the subject.

Round Table Discussions

- Borders in Europe and South Asia and the Ideas of Regional Integration
- Past, Present and Future of South Asian Border Studies

Important Dates

- **Last Date of Sending the Abstract:** 27th January 2019 (Max: 300 words)
- **Notification of Acceptance:** 31 January 2019

Send abstract to: borderconference2@gmail.com

All the selected participants need to register by paying the registration fees of INR 500/- for students and INR 1000/- for scholars.

Depending on the availability of funds partial financial support towards travel and accommodation may be available for the participants from India. Kindly indicate in your submission in case if want to apply for travel and accommodation grant.

Organised by:

- Department of Civics and Politics, University of Mumbai, Mumbai
- Department of International Relations, South Asia University, New Delhi
- Center of Statelessness and Refugee Studies, School of Law, Rights and Constitutional Governance, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai
- Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi



Partners:



Borders in Globalisation Association for Borderland Studies