

International Conference on
“Geography of Change : Contemporary Issues in Environment, Development and Society”

The Department of Geography, Joshi-Bedekar College, had organized a two day International Conference titled ‘Geography of Change: Contemporary Issues in Environment, Development and Society’ on 11th and 12th January, 2013.

The conference was sponsored by UGC.

Prior to the conference, there were various pre-conference events organized by the department. The details are as follows:

23 rd August, 2012	Pre-conference workshop for under-graduate and post-graduate Students
15 th September, 2012	Workshop cum meeting for Secondary and junior college Teachers on “innovative techniques in Geography teaching And Learning”
29 th November, 2012	Pre-conference workshop for teachers
8 th December, 2012	Inter-collegiate exhibition cum competition for students

The conference was declared as National level in initial announcement. But as sufficient international participation was observed, it was declared as an international conference.

In all, 262 participants inclusive of students, in house faculty members, NGO workers, teaching fraternity from other colleges and paper presenters attended the conference.

There were five technical sessions arranged apart from inaugural and valedictory functions. On 11th January, 2013, the conference began by keeping the Indian tradition of lighting lamp. It followed by *Powada* (a local musical form extensively used for public education and awareness regarding various social issues). The *Powada* was written by Prof. Prakash Jangale and sung by SYBA (Geography) students – Rupak, Avinash and Himanshu. A welcome speech was delivered by Principal Dr. Shakuntala A. Singh where she highlighted the interdisciplinary nature of the conference and stressed on its significance in addressing contemporary issues. Asst. Prof. Aparna Phadke, Convener of the conference discussed the importance of geography as one of the social sciences and discourse in introducing integrated (spatial) approach in developing a comprehensive understanding towards the current problems prevailing in society.

Dr. Rajendra Shende, a Nobel Laureate and Former Director, UNEP, was the guest of honour who expressed the urgent need to value the ecosystems which otherwise not valued vis-à-vis economic development and its subsidiary process. His speech was titled rightly as 'Valuation of Ecosystem'. He also made reference to significance of Western Ghats and current politics revolving around it.

Dr. Smita Gandhi, Head, department of Geography, University of Mumbai, was invited as key note speaker. The title of her topic was 'Dynamics of Human Development in

Globalising Mega Cities : The Case of Mumbai'. She focused on the various aspects of globalizing cities from South with respect to balanced and just human development. She presented her views by making special reference to the top city of India, i.e. Mumbai and its region. She also suggested that the present pattern of global urbanization is responsible for widening economic and social disparities in city spaces.

In all, five technical sessions were observed where in all 20 research papers were presented. Each technical session was planned with one special lecture. For the same Vidya Bal – eminent social activist and feminist, Ulka Mahajan – Famous social worker and Dr. Archana Godbole – Environmental Activist were invited. The technical session five was a panel discussion which was based on community participation. Vinita Apte – President – TEERE and Shilpa Kashelkar – independent social worker and consultant were invited. The technical sessions were arranged as per the sub themes i.e. development, environment and society.

Technical Session – I (*Contemporary Societal Transformations*) began with a special lecture by **Vidya Bal** on '*Vikas kashasathee Ani Kunacha*'. The questions of who gets what, where and how were well addressed by her. She also spoke regarding the contemporary issues of social segregation, gender inequality and status of women. At the backdrop of globalization, she also questioned the very logic of present form of economic development which excluded the majority of people again. The speech was followed by five research papers.

The first paper was presented by Prof. Sangita S. Mohanty & Prof. Sneha Singh Roy, Joshi- Bedekar College, Thane on 'Impact of Globalization on Children (Positive or Negative) with Reference to Media (TV)'. The paper attempted to find out cultural impact

of globalization on children due to exposure through electronic media like T.V. It tried to find out positivity of the impact and also the critical aspect of borderline issues of cultural degeneration. The researchers also focused on finding out how the process of globalization is affecting family lives and parents-children relationship. They also tried to understand the development of a hybrid multicultural identity as a phase of transition from traditional cultural practice and belief to a diffused global culture which is all inclusive.

The second paper was presented by Prof. Udhav Zarekar, Jai Hind College, Mumbai on 'A Metamorphosed Tribal Society'. The paper analysed the problems related to socio-economic and demographic factors of change in tribal society in Vidarbha region of Maharashtra. The issues of deprivation of land and forests and its resultant breakdown of community life and a steady cultural death were discussed by the presenter.

The third paper was presented on 'Perspective of Society towards Religion' by Akshay Tarfe, SYBA, Nisha Jacob & Vaidehi Bhujbal, Students of Ruparel College. These students made an attempt to present the prevailing viewpoints of people from different age groups regarding religion. They concluded that with increasing modernization, the religious identity does not matter much when it comes to interpersonal and social relationships.

The fourth paper was presented on the topic, 'Trailing The Fence: Dalit Emancipation and Global Constraints' by YashThakoor, student of Xavier's College, Mumbai. This paper probed into the margins and marginalized communities in the urban space; attempting to create an understanding of them, not merely as literally identifiable geopolitical regions but also as conceptual spaces of consciousness and contestation. With a specific focus on the discourse based analysis of global processes and theoretical observations of the marginalized identity and community, the paper investigated the fundamental incapability

of global mechanisms to address the contribution of modernities, border thinking, geopolitics of knowledge, subalternity and Pre-Occidentalism in making us think “with, against and beyond the legacy of Western epistemology.” The paper could successfully envisage the process of marginalization and the fate of marginalized communities (Dalits) in shadow of global urban infrastructures.

Paper five was presented on the topic of ‘Globalisation and the Changing Lives of the Fisherwomen in Mumbai: A Case in the Geography of Gender’ by Prof. Deepali Bhide and Dr. Dipesh Karmarkar. The paper tried to examine the nature and magnitude of the impact of globalisation on the lives of Koli women in Mumbai. It also endeavoured to understand how such a change has altered the gender geographies of the Koli women. For this purpose, fisherwomen from sample fishing quarters (Koliwadadas) in Mumbai were interviewed. The core focus of the paper was to trace the changing gender geographies of the Koli women in Mumbai.

Technical Session – II (The Silent Killing) included six paper presentations. The session started with the Documentary Screening – Planet Earth. The film was based on the diversity of nature by capturing various landforms in major climatic regions. The first paper, ‘Variation of Temperature Profile with Growth of the City: Study Over Indian Cities’ was presented by Hemant Bherwani, R. S. Patil and Rakesh Kumar from IIT Powai, Mumbai. The paper made observations regarding the relationship between increase in population, growth of the city and urbanization. It is seen that the temperature profile is adversely affected due to urbanization. In this paper, a relationship between temperature of the city and population is determined. Major

cities of India like Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata are studied. Further analysis of relationship between population and change in temperature profile of the city suggested that, the major Indian cities follow a similar trend. Time series analysis on temperature profile of cities was carried out and forecasted. This was used to validate the model which was developed by method of curve fitting.

The second paper, 'Challenges Faced by Sunderban - Once world's heritage site' was presented by Prof Manjusri Ganguly, ICLES MJ College, Vashi. The paper focused on the larger need to preserve Sunderban in the present context of tourism. The paper provided valuable information regarding Sundarban which is the home to the only mangrove tiger(Royal Bengal)(WHICH) has voted out of the race this year(2012) from the new seven natural wonder. The paper suggested the need to explore Sundarban in the different angle of sustainable ecotourism as it has now attracted the attention of many Indian and international environmental protection organizations. Everyone is desperately trying to preserve and protect the Sundarban from the effects of climate change, the human-wildlife conflict, deterioration of biodiversity, etc. The researcher expressed that unless immediate action is taken, the Sundarban, its wildlife and the natural resources that sustain millions of people may disappear within 50 to 90 years. The ~~present~~ paper made a successful attempt in assessing how this 'once heritage site' is facing challenges and how to preserve it.

'Changes in Agriculture and Degradation of Water Resources In Punjab' was the third paper presented by Dr. Jaspal Singh, Government College Kotkapur, Punjab. He began

by describing the background of agriculture in Punjab which is the most significant agriculture state of India. He also suggested that with the introduction of Green Revolution Package in 1965-66 in Punjab in the form of high yielding varieties of seed, chemicals, assured irrigation, mechanization, remunerative prices of wheat-rice and assured marketing etc. remarkable changes in state's agriculture has taken place but on the other hand, Punjab while achieving this goal in a short span of time has been losing water resources both in quantitative and qualitative level. The same problem was very well presented while discussing about the causes and consequences of the same.

Paper four, ' A socio-economic geography of disaster and development at Char Sthal Noahata, Bangladesh' was presented by Shaikh Mehdee Mohammad and Prof. Andrew E. Collins. The paper presented an analysis of the interplay between disaster and development which is fragile in balancing the socio-economic conditions for local people in Bangladesh. The study was carried out in the Char Sthal Noahata in Sirajgonj District in Bangladesh. It was also revealed through the paper that unless there is access to the means to the means of socio-economic transformation for all the categories of people, the measures taken to reduce vulnerability to environmental hazards cannot be controlled.

Paper five 'Impact of Development on Environment: Role of Law to protect Forest and forest dwellers' by Prof. Pradnya Rajebahadur made an attempt to develop an understanding towards the role of judiciary in the protection of not only forests but also the forest dwellers. The paper also focused on how these traditional societies are observing major transformations in their social, economic and cultural life spaces with

the advent of globalization. Some case studies were presented by the researcher to discuss the role played by judiciary in the same.

On Day two - 12th January, 2013, The technical session III (Spaces of Development : Contestations & Claims) began with the paper on 'Development and Spatial Conflict – A Case of Northeast India' by Dr. Leishipem Khamrang, Research Officer, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. The paper discussed on the development issues in Northeast India which stand out critical, concomitant with political instability, insurgency activities, social unrest, uneven development and conflicts. The researcher suggested that though all these problems nested are together but generally debate revolves round the issue of underdevelopment and insurgency problems. He further suggested that the ethnic conflicts in contemporary forms have been wrought by historical construct of colonial regime, inheritance of structural policies and the logic of new economic system in the post reform period. Keeping this backdrop in mind, the paper made an attempt to highlight the politics of development and its associate problems in Northeast India.

The second paper was presented on the topic, 'Quality of Life of The Migrated Construction Workers to Mumbai' by Amrita Anilkumar Agrawal, MA-I (Geography), Khandwala College, Malad, Mumbai. The paper critically analyzed the quality of life of the migrated construction workers to Mumbai and also tried to find out whether the workers are satisfied with the quality of their life. Two sites- Redevelopment of Gopal Co-operative Housing Society Limited at Liberty Garden and MHADA project of B.G.

Shirke at Charkop-Marve Link Road, both, in Malad (West) area were selected for the same. The researcher observed that the quality of workers in terms of housing, basic infrastructural facilities and other facilities is derogatory and affecting their health badly. The researcher also gave suggestions regarding uplifting them by constructive special policies for them.

The third paper titled as 'Study of changing occupational structure: A case study of Thane district of Maharashtra' was presented by Prof. Neeta Pathak, Prof. Sagar Thakkar and Prof. Geetanjali Raut. The paper focused upon the changing constitution of occupational structure with reference to India, Maharashtra and Thane District. The paper also tried to establish the correlation between the workforce participation rate and pattern of economic development changing with new policy of globalisation. It showed that how the Indian economy being agricultural is observing massive change in the occupational structure with modernization, urbanization and industrial development picking up. This paper made an attempt to study the changing occupational structure and also economic profile of workforce in Maharashtra with special reference to Thane District.

Paper four, 'Enclave Urbanism: restructuring of the Inner city of Mumbai' was presented by an Architect, Prof. Ginella George, Kamla Raheja Vidyanidhi Institute for Architecture, Mumbai. The paper focused on ongoing restructuring of 'city-regions' of metropolises or mega-cities like Mumbai - are driven by the agenda of creating "world class" cities. It made an enquiry into the transformation process where the old and heritage rich Inner city fabric of Mumbai is being inserted with new programmes like luxury apartments, condominiums, new commercial types etc that are leading to the

emergence of a drastically changed landscape that give rise to enclaves or gated communities. The paper suggested that however in the process, there is formation of spatially distinct areas of mono-cultural, mono-functional, and mono-economic social groups in the urban development process. It was also revealed through this paper that these new urban types are a resultant of several forms of displacements that have implications on urban form of the city, patterns of living and social structure leading to gentrification, loss of livelihoods, social value and traditions and a changed cultural economy.

Paper five, ' Redeveloping Slums : A spatial deconstruction of Mumbai's informal economy' was presented by Prof. George Jacob, Architect Kamla Raheja Vidyaniidhi Institute for Architecture, Mumbai. The paper made an attempt towards understanding the status of slums as against the 'Mumbai - Shanghai' dream where 'messy' ' banal' and 'potentially dangerous' spaces need to be done away with, in order to create a ' world class' city that would form entry points for global capital and manifest a new landscape. The paper also focused on the fact that while redeveloping slums one needs to consider its horizontal pattern of growth before it could be converted into vertical realities. The need was stressed to inspect closely these neighbourhood slums show different layers of growth thus bringing to light the incremental development of the land through creation of jobs & setting up of their informal economy. It was also highlighted that slums are networked heavily with actors & their respective activities & that spaces within them are appropriated to play host to varied activities.

After the technical session three, a documentary ‘Special Economic Zone ‘ was screened where the issues related with the current industrial policy of developing SEZs throughout the country were focused. The documentary was followed by a special lecture by Ulka Mahajan on ‘SEZ & Industrial Corridors and its impact on Society and Environment’. She challenged the vary logic of developing SEZ on the fertile and productive agricultural lands. The decision of offering special subsidies to the investors in SEZ was also challenged by her. She also informed that all over country when already some thousand hectares of land will be acquired for SEZ, the new policy of industrial corridors will acquire some lakh hectares of land. She concluded by saying that the issues of displacement, environmental degradation and survival of traditional societies need to be addressed carefully.

The technical session began with a special lecture by Archana Godbole on ‘Globalisation and emerging environmental challenges at regional/local level’. She explained the challenges before the environmentalists at the backdrop of liberalization and privatization. She made a special mention of Western Ghats as this area is observing rapid environmental degradation due to various developmental projects like mining, thermal power plants, etc. She stressed upon the necessity of collective efforts towards sustainable development of this region.

Her lecture was followed by the paper ‘ Eco-Efficiency and Competitiveness: Trends And Strategies With Common Goals’ which was written by José G. Vargas-Hernández, University Center for Economic and Managerial Sciences, University of Guadalajara Periférico Norte 799 Edif. G201-7, Núcleo Universitario Los Belenes, Zapopan, Jalisco 45100, México.

The paper was presented in his absence as per his directions. The paper aimed at developing the idea that merges eco-efficiency and competitiveness as elements in harmony for the sustainable development of a country. The paper proposed a framework of empirical research based on the theories of resources and capabilities and competitive advantage-structural theory. By considering this theoretical basis, he tried to align the competitiveness and eco-efficiency along the path of economic development, sustainable businesses and thereby strengthening the economy which in turn can improve the quality of life of its inhabitants. It is concluded that sustainability and competitiveness are major goals that should not be separated, if now the real efficiency lies in exploiting the economic competitiveness in a sustainable manner.

The next paper was on the topic, 'Identification of Plant Species for Promotion of Cluster Plantation in Urban Areas to Improve Biodiversity' which was presented by Prof. Meghana Ghaisas, Model College, Dombivali. The paper successfully showed that interconnection between the rapid pace of urbanization, population concentration, commercialisation of urban space, reckless housing construction, dense transport networks and privatised transport and environmental degradation. The paper suggested an innovative approach towards ecological restoration through cluster plantations in urban areas. The researcher also suggested that the current plantation is either of monoculture type or exotic varieties which do not have any local relations and hence remain foreigner. For cluster plantation hence various native / indigenous faunal and floral components interdependent on each other and flourish with each other's support should be selected for enhancing the overall biodiversity. It further suggested that careful selection of plants

and properly planned green areas can be a source of rich biodiversity even in polluted and populated cities.

‘Carbon Trading and Carbon Tax : Challenges, Oppurtunities & Concerns’ was the last paper presented by Asst. Prof. Chandana Chakraborti, Dahanukar college, Mumbai. The paper gave outline of two major market-based options to lower Carbon dioxide emissions, i.e. CARBON TRADE- Carbon credits are certificates awarded to countries that are successful in reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, and can be sold privately or in the international market at the prevailing market price and CARBON TAX - It is a tax on pollution. The paper made an enquiry into the effectiveness of both the options in lowering the carbon emissions as it is seen that global Warming has got a fairly simple and cheap technical solution.

One paper was not presented in this session.

The session was followed by a special lecture on ‘ Eco-friendly gardens ‘ by Mr. Nandu Kulkarni where he insisted upon the need to educate people in the concept of eco-friendly gardens. He also gave the description on how to develop eco-friendly gardens i.e. without using insecticides, pesticides and chemical fertilizers. He also showcased his own terrace garden which has become now the home for around 120 birds.

Technical session V (*Creative Energies*) was a Panel Discussion where Vinita Apte and Shilpa Kashelkar participated. Both of them spoke about community participation. Shilpa stressed role of women in improving community participation. Both of them stressed on the fact that social and/ or environmental issues, can be solved through

community participation is must. They also briefed details about their organizations and how their modus operandi in getting support at community level.

The technical session five was followed by the documentary “*Gao Chodab Nahi*” which is developed by the leaders of Jal, Jameen and Jangle Bachao Abhiyan.

For valedictory function Mr. Anthony Flint, urban planner and fellow at Lincoln Land Policy Institute, Boston, USA and Dr. S. D. Mahajan – Taxonomist and Botanist was invited to give valedictory speech. Mr. Flint spoke on ‘Le Corbusier, Housing and the Global Urban Expansion Project’. He explored the impact of Jane Jacob’s framework for urbanism in American Cities. He also explained the importance of planning vision proposed by Le Corbusier in providing better living in rapidly urbanizing cities especially from Global South.

Dr. S. D. Mahajan explained the impact of anthropogenic changes and its role in environmental downgradation in his speech, ‘Geography of Anthropogenic Changes and Ecorestoration through Tree Plantation’. He also insisted upon the urgent need of ecorestoration through plantation of indigenous species of plants and not the foreign one. He also suggested a list of such indigenous plants which can be promoted in plantations.

The list of experts and guest invited for the International Conference.

Guest of Honour

Dr. Rajendra Shende,

Nobel Laureate and

Former Director, UNEP

Key Note Speaker	Dr. Smita Gandhi	Head, department of Geography, University of Mumbai
Technical Session I	Vidya Bal	Eminent social activist and feminist
Technical Session III	Ulka Mahajan	Famous social worker
Technical Session IV	Dr. Archana Godbole	Environmental Activist
Valedictory Speakers	Mr. Anthony Flint	Urban planner and fellow at Lincoln Land Policy Institute, Boston, USA
	Dr. S. D. Mahajan	Taxonomist and Botanist

List of the Documentaries screened:

Technical Session I	Monkeys
Technical Session II	Planet Earth
Technical Session III	SEZ by Atul Pethe
Technical Session V	Gaon Chodab Nahi, Earthsong

There was also a small exhibition organized where students from FY Bcom , BA and TYBA displayed models and posters based on the theme “eco-friendly lifestyle”.

Following the same the conference was arranged in environmental friendly manner by avoiding plastic folders, use and throw pen, flower bouquet, etc. The program ended with the ‘Earth song’ and ‘Pasaydan’.

The department has decided to continue its efforts in having long association with all the invited dignitaries in the form of special lectures, short term courses and so on. There is also proposal from TEERE to initiate a programme called ‘Energy Efficient Campus’ and rain water harvesting. As per the guidance of Principal Dr. Shakuntala Singh, all the future projects will be carried out.

Convener

Principal

Asst. Prof. Aparna Phadke

Dr. Shakuntala A. Singh