

A Report on the National Seminar
on

**"APPROACHES TO ENVIRONMENT: SOCIETY, CULTURE, POLITY AND
ECONOMY"**

Organised by:

**Acharya Brojendra Nath Seal College,
Cooch Behar,
West Bengal, Pin- 736101**

Held on:

26th and 27th February, 2018

Under the Financial Assistance from the ABNSCPTA in collaboration with IGNOU

Introduction:

Since the dawn of the civilizations 'Nature' has been used and abused indiscriminately by the humans for satisfying their wants. Due to the limited population, the scale of initial damage to the environment was not so soaring. With the passage of time, environmental degradation became inevitable due to population boom. Although scientific inventions radically changed the primeval lifestyle of man, it had ushered in the slow poisoning effect of pollution and resource depletion resulting to environmental deterioration. The escalating economic growth provoked for more development and affluence which in turn led to the butchery of forests, wetlands and biodiversity; increased desertification, soil erosion, groundwater pollution along with the deterioration of the rivers.

Hence, 'sustainability' in true sense of the term in each and every respect is the need of the hour. The natural environment must be taken care of in order to ensure human sustenance. Environmental approach therefore is of utmost importance to every sphere of life. Just like a sound mind resides in a sound body, an unsoiled society will reside in a clean environment.

The Host Institution:

Acharya Brojendra Nath Seal College, formerly Victoria College, was established on 15th June, 1888 under the initiative of His Highness Maharaja Nripendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur of Cooch Behar. Presently this College is under the direct supervision of the Department and Directorate of Higher Education, Govt. of West Bengal. Having crossed a glowing life-span of 128 years, it became accredited in the year 2008 with a CGPA of 2.89 on a four point Scale at B grade by the *National Assessment and Accreditation Council* (NAAC) for the first time. In the year 2010, this College acquired the coveted status of a College with *Centre with Potential for Excellence* (CPE) by UGC. In the year 2017, the *National Assessment and Accreditation Council* (NAAC) has awarded the College with the prestigious 'A' grade in thir Cycle-II visit.

The Collaborating Institution:

Indira Gandhi National Open University known as IGNOU, is a distance learning national university located in Maidan Garhi, New Delhi, India. Named after former Prime Minister of India Indira Gandhi, the university was established in 1985 with a budget of ₹20 million, after the Parliament of India passed the *Indira Gandhi National Open University Act, 1985* (IGNOU Act 1985). IGNOU is run by the central government of India, and with total active enrollment of over 4 million students, claims to be the largest university in the world.

IGNOU was founded to serve the Indian population by means of distance and open education, providing higher education opportunities particularly to the disadvantaged segments of society. It also aims to encourage, coordinate and set standards for distance and open education in India, and to strengthen the human resources of India through education. Apart from teaching and research, extension and training form the mainstay of its academic activities. It also acts as a national resource centre, and serves to promote and maintain standards of distance education in India. IGNOU hosts the Secretariats of the SAARC Consortium on Open and Distance Learning (SACODiL) and the Global Mega Universities Network (GMUNET), initially supported by UNESCO.

IGNOU has started a decentralisation process by setting up five zones; north, south, east, west and north east. The A.B.N. Seal College Center of IGNOU is one of the most sorted out center of learning in West Bengal and North-Eastern India.

The Funding Association:

Acharya Brojendra Nath Seal College Parent Teacher Association (ABNSCPTA) is a trust under Indian Trust Act 1882, 1883, 1920 and onwards modifications/ammendments having registration number IV-195/2016. The association, built in collaboration with the guardians and the faculty of the institution, works for the better functionong of the institution and serving the society as a whole by different altrustic activities, especially towards financially deprived students. A number of academic and cultural events of the institution have been generously funded by the association.

Theme of the Seminar:

Nature or natural environment has been addressed diversely by the scriptural, cultural as well as literary social narratives since the beginning of civilization. The relationship between man and environment has been celebrated in different religious, ethnic as well as political *habitus*; the world's ancient Cultural Hearths have been shaped to Cultural Realms in its care; it has been questioned, analysed and repeatedly interpreted by the systems of civilization. However, from the earliest of times, 'Nature' has also been abused indiscriminately by the humans for satisfying their wants. Due to the limited population, the scale of initial damage to the environment was not so soaring. With the passage of time, environmental degradation became inevitable due to population boom. Although scientific inventions radically changed the primeval lifestyle of man, it had ushered in the slow poisoning effect of pollution and resource depletion resulting to environmental deterioration. The escalating economic growth provoked for more development and affluence which in turn led to the butchery of forests, wetlands and biodiversity; increased desertification, soil erosion, groundwater pollution along with the deterioration of the rivers.

Turning the other side of the coin, polluting technology gradually spread its filth in culture and society as well. Unequal distribution of wealth gives rise to the vicious cycle of poverty, hunger, illiteracy, crime, hatred etc. leading to decadence in the social environment at large. Control of global economy defines the political relations too. The inimical relation among the wealthy and dependent nations triggers rivalry. It is the man who invents, it is him who holds weapon and it is him again who remains the most affected. Hence, 'sustainability' in true sense of the term in each and every respect is the need of the hour. The natural environment must be taken care of in order to ensure human sustenance. Environmental approach therefore is of utmost importance to every sphere of life. Just like a sound mind resides in a sound body, an unsoiled society will reside in a clean environment.

THRUST AREAS:

The Seminar endeavoured to locate the contemporary environmental issues emanating from all levels of the society under the following sub-themes:

- **Environmental Changes: A Historical Perspective**

- **Processes and forms of Environmental Degradation, Environmental Hazards and Environmental Management**
- **Development and Economic Growth Vs. Environment**
- **Application of modern technology for Sustainable Environmental Approach**
- **Human and Humanistic Approaches to Environment**
- **Social Environmental Issues**
- **Gender and Environment**
- **Environment and Literature**
- **Politics and Environment**
- **Environment, Religion and Culture**
- **Environment, Critical Theories and Philosophy**
- **Science and Environment**

The Objective of the Seminar:

The chief objective of the Seminar is to arouse environmental consciousness among all. the other aims include the development of the concept of environmental management and conservation of environment from different aspects yet keeping pace with development.

Formation of Organizing Committee:

The Seminar Research Subcommittee ABN Seal College, Cooch Behar proposed and formed the Seminar Organizing Committee:

Seminar Organizing Committee:

President :

Dr. Bimal Kumar Saha
Officer-in-Charge, A.B.N. Seal College,
Cooch Behar-736101

Convenor:

Smt. Writuparna Chakraborty
Assistant Professor of Geography,
A.B.N. Seal College

Co-convenors:

1. Smt. Shampa Dutta,
Assistant Professor of Political Science,
A.B.N. Seal College
2. Sri Santanu Mondal,
Assistant Professor of Bengali,
A.B.N. Seal College

3. Sri Debapratim Chakraborty
Assistant Professor of English,
A.B.N. Seal College

Treasurer & Cashier:

Sri Dilip Das,
Assistant Professor of Economics,
A.B.N. Seal College

Members:

Sri Mrinal Kanti Basak, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, A.B.N. Seal College
Smt. Soma Basu, Librarian, A.B.N. Seal College
Sri Ratul Ghosh, Assistant Professor of Bengali, A.B.N. Seal College
Sri Dibyatanu Dasgupta, Assistant Professor of Bengali, A.B.N. Seal College
Smt. Pemu T. Lepcha, Assistant Professor of Political Science, A.B.N. Seal College
Sri Durbadal Mandal, Assistant Professor of Sanskrit, A.B.N. Seal College
Sri Arka Acharjee, Assistant Professor of History, A.B.N. Seal College
Smt. Bishnupriya Saha, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, A.B.N. Seal College

Fund management related Advisor:

Sri Jayanta Maitra, Accountant, A.B.N. Seal College

Registration:

150 participants had registered themselves wherein about 80 participants presented their papers. The participants were mostly faculties from far and nearby colleges and from our college as well. Some research scholars and students also registered themselves.

The Seminar:

Welcome Address was delivered by **Smt. Writuparna Chakraborty**, Assistant Professor, Department of Geography who was the Convener of National Seminar "APPROACHES TO ENVIRONMENT: SOCIETY, CULTURE, POLITY AND ECONOMY".

Dr. Bimal Kumar Saha, The President of the Seminar and the Officer-in Charge, A.B.N. Seal College addressed the august assemblage by his forewords.

Guest of Honour:

Prof. Debkumar Mukherjee, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University had graced the occasion and delivered his inaugural speech.

Keynote Speaker:

Prof. Ananda Gopal Ghosh, Historian and Retired Professor of the Department of History, University of North Bengal addressed the eminent gathering by his illuminating keynote address.

Resource Persons:

The notable speakers who had delivered Plenary Lectures to the house on the Day-1 were:

Prof. Amal Harh, Department of Philosophy, CBPBU and **Prof. Shaunak Samajder**, Department of English, CBPBU

On the following day (Day-2) **Prof. Sushma Rohatgi**, Former Head, Department of Geography and Applied Geography, University of North Bengal & Director, Centre for Women's Studies, University of North Bengal spoke about the Theme of the Seminar.

Prof. Dipendra Chandra Adhikary, Department of Assamese, B.N. College, Dhubri, Assam also delivered a Plenary Lecture after Prof. Rohatgi.

Prof. Debabrata Lahiri, Associate Professor and Head, Department of Economics, A.B.N. Seal College, Cooch Behar and also the Coordinator, I.Q.A.C. of the college illuminated the house with his thought provoking Plenary Speech.

Eminent Guest:

Prof. Dyutish Chakraborty, Professor and former Head, Department of Political Science, University of North Bengal also graced the occasion and chaired Technical Session on the Day-2 of the Seminar.

Valedictory Session and Vote of Thanks:

The vote of thanks in the Valedictory Session was delivered by **Dr. Samir Kumar Samanta**, Associate Professor & Head, Department of Geography, A.B.N. Seal College. The Seminar was thus officially concluded.

Outcome of the Seminar:

The Seminar provided a platform for all the participants to gain knowledge about the present situation especially throwing light on to the dichotomy that exists between 'Development and Environmental degradation'. All the resource persons presented vividly the uses and abuses of nature and the anthropogenetic influence upon it. The interactive sessions gave insight into several queries of the participants. As the participants were from various fields, the Seminar got a varied spectrum of discussions which were appreciated.

The Seminar ended with a grand success.