

INTERNATIONAL WEBINAR

Jointly organized by:



DEPARTMENT OF
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



DEPARTMENT OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE

RECONSTRUCTING THE 'REGION' IN SOUTH ASIA

The idea of the 'region' in South Asia has had several geographical, economic, historical and cultural connotations which have manifested in several domains bordering on both convergence and discord. As a place inhabiting one-fifth of the world's total population with unique human development challenges and opportunities, the region's commonalities and congruence can hardly be ignored. Links of a common historical past and shared cultural attributes and the resulting impulses of being together would qualify South Asia to be regarded as a natural region on the one hand. On the other hand, South Asia's troubled legacy as a post-colonial, post-partition construct and the ensuing geopolitical fault-lines that emerged negated the very spirit of bringing together what could have been an ideal case of enlightened regionalism, the stalled SAARC process being a case in point. Thus a discussion on South Asian regionalism brings a pessimistic picture characterizes by border conflicts, low level of intra-regional trade, and lack of regional connectivity.

The contemporary global and regional scenario, where constraints of economic decline and increasing inward orientedness, partly shaped by the pandemic are becoming the norm, the idea of the 'region' appears to be all the more problematic. As there is a natural tendency among the nations to assert their nationalist priorities over the region and the world, it remains uncertain whether regional identity and geography can remain sole markers for bringing the region together, and South Asia seems no exception to this. The mention of 'common problems leading to common solutions at best remains episodic both in policy articulation and implementation among the region's leadership when they are primarily (and rightly) concerned about their domestic constituencies.

In the midst of this unprecedented churning, South Asia continues to search for idioms and practices that would still qualify it to be identified as a region, where it is in a position to not only able to recover its due place in the evolving global and regional landscape, but also unlearn from the past in creating a new South Asian compact. The proposed International Conference on 'Reconstructing the Region in South Asia' aims to debate contemporary South Asia by looking at the idea of the region from a multidisciplinary perspective and explore whether it is time for a new definition of the region that suits its people and their aspirations.

The thematic sessions around which various ideas can be discussed, include:

- Defining the Region: South Asia's history, politics, culture and identity
- Internal markers of South Asian politics impinging on the region
- Borders, connectivity and South Asian regionalism.
- External geopolitics and its impact on South Asia
- Approaches to Regional Cooperation and the SAARC dilemma
- Nationalism and the Region in South Asia
- A New South Asian Compact: Strategies for a post-Pandemic World

IMPORTANT DATES

- Abstract Submission : 31st March 2021
- Selection of Papers : 15th April 2021
- International Webinar : 3rd June 2021

Send your abstract with max.
300 words and a brief CV to:

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