

Background

Historically, the South Asian region constitutes an extended cultural zone which has contributed tremendously in practically all fields of human endeavour. Its pluralistic, multi-layered and often overlapping ethos is manifested in the region's dresses, cuisine, customs, religions, traditions, rituals, languages, scripts and many other socio-cultural spheres, all unfolding within a greater cultural space. The region has served both as a melting pot as well as a fulcrum for the circulation of men and goods, ideas and cultures, money and material across the globe and today it boasts of the largest share in world's diasporic population. This itinerant populace of South Asia have also served as the unnamed and unsung cultural ambassadors, not only within the region but also across the globe.

- What causes and precipitates circulation of ideas and cultures, and diaspora formation?
- What restricts the circulation of cultures and what promotes it? What are the barriers and filters? What are the dynamics of the diaspora?
- How is this circulation driven by global as well as local, regional, and national cultural and intellectual currents?
- How does the circulation of cultures contribute to the strengthening (in some cases subsuming or metamorphosing) of local cultures and traditions as well as cross-fertilization?

These are some of the questions that the proposed research project will seek to address through a series of studies focussing on the history of circulation of the South Asian cultures during the last three centuries, which was a period of great political turmoil in the region. It saw both the consolidation as well as collapse of a number of colonial powers and also the fructification of liberal and democratic aspirations of its people. This period also witnessed an unprecedented surge in the migration of South Asian workers to other colonial settlements across the globe. All these factors influenced and shaped the diasporic cultures of the region.

Thus through specific examples and research on ethnicity and immigration the proposed research project will analyse various aspects of the historicity of cultural circulation, the role of geo-political factors in shaping it, and also in terms of the ownership of ideas.

The Project will address issues within three broad themes, viz.:

- Circulation of South Asian Peoples and Commodities;
- Circulation of Ideas and Cultural Expressions; and
- Monetary and Trade Networks

(within and outside the South Asian region).

Research Programme

This Programme has the following two steps:

- SAARC Regional Conference on 'Circulation of Cultures and Culture of Circulation: Diasporic Cultures of South Asia during 18th to 20th Centuries' to identify themes and subthemes for the research projects, and
- Research Projects on Diasporic Cultures of South Asia during 18th to 20th Centuries that will be conducted by researchers from SAARC member States.

SAARC Regional Conference on 'Circulation of Cultures and Culture of Circulation: Diasporic Cultures of South Asia during 18th to 20th Centuries'

Introduction

SAARC Regional Conference on 'Circulation of Cultures and Culture of Circulation: Diasporic Cultures of South Asia during 18th to 20th Centuries' will be a brainstorming session to discuss the key issues and moot research questions and also to identify themes and subthemes of diasporic cultures of South Asia that merit independent and in-depth research. Academics and experts on the subject are invited for the Conference to present papers on a relevant theme.

Objectives Of The Regional Conference

- To identify the diasporic cultures in and of the Region;
- To discuss the country situation (of the SAARC Member States) related to diasporic cultures;
- To identify research topics and questions related to diasporic cultures in the Region that need further investigation; and
- To recognize research approaches and methods for further research in diasporic cultures of the region.

Dates And Venue

The SAARC Regional Conference on Diasporic Cultures will be held in Galle, Sri Lanka for 3 days from 15 to 17 March 2012.

Post-conference Tour

One day Post-Conference tour will be organized on 18 March 2012 to Katargama, for all registered delegates of the Conference. Katargama is one of the leading historical places where multi-ethnic and multi-religious involvement could be seen in Sri Lanka.



Participation At The Regional Conference

Official Nominees From The Member States:

The SAARC Cultural Centre invites all the Member States to send a minimum of three nominations (maximum 10 persons can be nominated by a Member State) from amongst the experts and academicians of their country.

Accompanying Persons:

Every person accompanying the official nominees of the SAARC Member States (viz. the Delegates/ Resource Persons-cum-Panel Heads) should pay a registration fee of US \$ 300/- towards his/her boarding and lodging during the Conference. All such accompanying persons will be accommodated with the respective official nominee on full board/ twin-sharing basis.

Other Participants:

The SAARC Cultural Centre would also accept the participation of other experts from the region (other than the nominees of the respective SAARC Member States) as well as from those residing outside the SAARC Region provided they are able to meet their travel and accommodation expenses to attend the Conference. However, to facilitate their stay during the Conference, the SAARC Cultural Centre would assist them in securing accommodation in guest houses/ hostels at economic/ subsidized rates.

The SAARC Cultural Centre, however, reserves the right to accept or reject any request for participation in the Conference.

Registration Fee:

Official nominees of the SAARC Member States	:	Nil
Accompanying persons of the Official nominees	:	300.00 US\$
Other participants	:	Local : 500.00 (LKR)
	:	Overseas : 50.00 US\$

All payments are to be made in favour of the **SAARC Cultural Centre, Colombo**, either through e-payment OR in cash at the registration counter at the Conference.

For E-payment:

Name of the Bank	:	Bank of Ceylon
Address	:	Torrington Square Branch, Colombo 07 (Sri Lanka)
Sri Lankan Rupee A/c	:	0009773920
US \$ A/c	:	9825298
Swift Code	:	BCEYLK LX



Nomination Process:

All nominations should include:

- i. Full Name and affiliation of the Person with a detailed CV; and
- ii. An Abstract (c. 500 words) of the proposed paper/ presentation.

The participants would be required to submit their full papers before the Conference and make a short presentation at the Conference.

The language for the Conference would be English.

The last date for sending the nominations/ registration forms is 1 February 2012.

Logistic Support

The SAARC Cultural Centre would provide the local hospitality (hotel accommodation on full board basis) and the local transport to all official nominees of the SAARC Member States (viz. the Delegates/ Resource Persons-cum-Panel Heads) and the registered accompanying persons.

The airfare of the nominees of the SAARC Member States is to be borne by the respective Member State. Other participants are required to make their own arrangement to meet the airfare and accommodation expenses.

The conference facilities (delegate kit, tea, working lunch), as well as invitation to special events and the field trip would be extended to all registered participants and accompanying persons.

Conference Outcome

The last session of the Conference will hold a Plenary Session which would prepare a document summarising the main recommendations emerging out of the deliberations and also chalking out a road-map for the research projects. The SAARC Cultural Centre will, subsequently, publish a report on the Conference and would invite research proposals on the identified themes.



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Registration Form

Category: (Please mark the relevant category)

- Official Nominee of (Name of the SAARC Member State)
- Other Participant

Personal Details:

1. Name (in block letters with surname underlined):
2. Nationality (please give National ID No. or Passport No.):
3. Postal Address:

Phone No. FAX. Email:
4. Institution of affiliation:
 - a. Present Designation:
 - b. Name and address, of the institute:
 - c. Name, designation, email and phone number(s) of the head of the institute:
5. Educational qualifications:
6. Awards and Distinctions*:
7. Publications*:
8. Title of the Proposed Paper:
9. Whether attending with any accompanying person? Yes/ No (If yes, please give the details)
 - a. Name of the accompanying person (in block letters with surname underlined):
 - b. Nationality (please give National ID No. or Passport No.):
10. Mode of payment of the Registration fee (not applicable for the official nominees of the SAARC Member States)
 - a. Through E-payment (Please indicate the Transaction Reference Number and date)
 - b. In cash at the Registration Desk

Place:

Date:

(Signature)

(Full Name)

*Please use extra sheets, if required



SAARC Regional Conference Circulation of Cultures and Culture of Circulation



Diasporic Cultures of South Asia During 18th to 20th Centuries

SAARC CULTURAL CENTRE - SRI LANKA



South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation