

Interdisciplinary Explorations on The Fragmented Self: Conference Organised at Indraprastha College for Women, University of Delhi

The Department of Psychology at Indraprastha College for Women, University of Delhi organised an International Conference on 30 & 31st October, 2017 titled 'The Fragmented Self: An Interdisciplinary Exploration into Notions of Self and Identity in Contemporary Life'. The Conference was inaugurated by the Dean of Colleges, University of Delhi, Prof. Devesh Sinha along with the Conference Chair & College Principal, Dr. Babli Moitra Saraf. Dr. Surabhika Maheshwari, the Conference Coordinator, presented the Conference Introduction. The Keynote address by Prof. Michael Mascolo of Merrimack University, USA touched upon important facets of personality development and the many intertwined fragments of identity. The Conference was a confluence of multidisciplinary ideas on the concepts of *Self* and Identity. Eminent academicians, practitioners and specialists from around the world participated in the Conference. The Conference design included three important components: i) invited papers that were presented in the plenary sessions on contemporary academic themes, ii) paper presentations of selected works of scholars that were selected after receiving entries to the call for papers on the said theme, and iii) workshops conducted by international experts, addressing concerns of mental health, anomy, suicide, gender, social media and identity. The Conference hosted twenty seven invited speakers, chairs and discussants over two days and four plenary sessions, thirty two selected papers (out of over a

hundred abstracts received for review) and five exploratory workshops. The total registered national and international participants were over two hundred and fifty. The Conference was financially supported by ICSSR, JK Cement, Max India Foundation, CNN News 18, Jai Ingredients Pvt. Ltd, Indian Oil and Videocon DTH.

The first plenary session on Day 1 titled 'Exploring Self, Identity and Fragmentation' brought together deliberation on positioning the ideas of Self and Identity in the context of the contemporary life. The session was chaired by Prof. Girishwar Misra, Vice Chancellor, Mahatma Gandhi International Hindi University, Wardha, Maharashtra and Social Scientist and Psychologist. The speakers of this session included Dr. Sanjay Chugh, Senior Consultant Neuropsychologist from Delhi, Dr. Neil Altman, Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist from New York, Dr. Jillian Stile, Clinical Psychologist from University of Columbia, USA and Prof. Sangeetha Menon from the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru. The second panel of the day titled, 'Of Me and We: Deliberations on Society, Culture and Identity' discussed the self in the relational world, exploring the nuances of culture, socialization and identity. This session was chaired by Dr. Bimol Akoijam from Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi. The speakers in this session included Dr. Sieun An, an experimental Psychologist teaching at Ashoka

University, Dr. Raghuram Raju from University of Hyderabad and Sociologist Prof. Siri Hettige from the University of Colombo. An exciting addition was a Skype session with Prof. Kenneth Gergen from Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania. He reflected upon the digital revolution and its impact on *Self*.

Day 2 of the Conference began with an engrossing session on 'Stories of Love, Loss and Conflict'. The session was chaired by Prof. Anand Prakash from Department of Psychology, University of Delhi. Dr. Anurag Mishra, Practicing Psychiatrist from Fortis Healthcare, Delhi beautifully wove a tale of dark forces against the backdrop of the magical world of Harry Potter for his paper titled, 'The Dark Lord has Risen: Hate, Envy and Corruption in Institutions'. Building on the analytical framework, the next paper by Dr. Anup Dhar from Ambedkar University Delhi, titled, 'Love's Letters: Between Barthes and Badiou' analysed philosophies and scripts on writing love. Dr. Suriya Nayak from the University of Salford, Manchester presented on women activism, racism and addressed the idea of loss and betrayal with her paper, 'Can the Racial Grief of Women Speak? The Implications of Racial Mourning and Melancholia for Feminist Collective Activism'. The next session aimed at consolidating the explored fragments. The session was titled, 'Towards Wellness: Revisiting Fragmentation and Integrating Selves'. This session, which was chaired by Prof. Namita Ranganathan

from Central Institute of Education, University of Delhi, encouraged discussion and interaction. The speakers for this session included Prof. Meenakshi Thapan from Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi, Ms. Reshma Valliappan, Founder & CEO of 'The Red Door' and Prof. Girishwar Misra. The afternoon of the second day included five parallel workshops that participants could register for. These were designed and moderated by celebrated practitioners and experts: Prof. Michael F. Mascolo facilitated a workshop titled 'Building a Self

Portrait: Exploring Fragmentation and Integration', Dr. Niel. Altman & Dr. Jillian Stile did one on 'Contemporary Social Media and Fragmented Self', Prof. Siri Hettige moderated 'The Violence Within: Understanding Suicide and Interpreting Suicide Data', Ms. Reshma Valliappan conducted 'Exploring Mental Health through Creativity' and Dr. Suriya Nayak facilitated 'Gender, Oppression and Identity'. All workshops saw enthusiastic participation and promoted insight development and exploration. The conference was well

received and appreciated by academicians and students alike. It proved to be a meeting ground for academicians, practitioners, researchers and students and provided a space for active discussion and learning on the theme and beyond.

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Rajputana Society for Natural History (Rajasthan, India) Conducted Seminar on Nature - Human - Wildlife and Mutual Co-Existence

The Rajputana Society of Natural History (Rajasthan, India) organised a Two Days Seminar on "Nature Human Wildlife and Mutual Co-Existence" in collaboration with Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti (Delhi, India), and a few other local bodies like the Confederation of Community Based Organisations of India, IIP Foundation, *Nari Manch*, and The Voice of Community. The Seminar was hosted at Rajputana's Shakuntalam (Village *Ramnagar*, Bharatpur, Rajasthan), located adjacent to the World Heritage and Ramsar Site - Keoladeo National Park. The Seminar brought together experts from different disciplines to discuss and analyse the centuries old inter-connectedness between nature, human and wildlife, the now disappearing relationship between these entities and the need for reconnecting human society with the

other two realms of Nature and Wildlife. The Seminar also discussed the need and importance of overcoming the urban-rural divide while carrying out developmental activities for human communities. For development to be sustainable, it must focus not only on economic growth but also on environmental protection and social development of all sections of the society. This was the underlying theme of the Two Day Seminar, which witnessed large-scale participation of people from urban as well as rural areas. The Seminar was also joined by considerable number of youth mainly from the village communities.

The first day of the Seminar included two sessions, in which a series of presentations and talks were delivered by various Dignitaries and Experts from different disciplines.

Both the Sessions were moderated by Dr. Satya Prakash Mehra, eminent Wildlife Scientist and Founder-Advisor of Rajputana Society of Natural History (RSNH). The first session was conducted in the rural environment of Rajputana's Shakuntalam, Village Ramnagar and the second session was conducted within the boundaries of an academic institute J.K. College, Bharatpur. The Chief Guest of the occasion was Dr. Swaraj Vidan, Member of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC), Government of India. Dr Vidan urged all participants to not let the Indian culture and heritage be forgotten and reminded them that it is this rich heritage of India which makes her a culturally developed nation in the world. Dr. Vidan was joined by Mr. Abhay Singh of National Bank For Agriculture And Rural Development