

Bulletin

BASAS
**BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR
SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES**
www.basas.ac.uk

[Abridged for the web]

Volume 8 No.1 ISSN 1461-8907 Autumn 2005

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NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS NEEDED

The Nirman Lecture 2005

BASAS is benefiting from a generous commitment by the Nirman Foundation to endow an annual lecture on a matter of contemporary interest in South Asia. The series was inaugurated by Sir Hilary Synnott, recently British High Commissioner in Islamabad. In January he delivered his lecture on The New Security Agenda in South Asia at the British Academy. The meeting was attended by representatives of the High Commissions as well as by BASAS members, and there was a reception afterwards.

Extracts from Sir Hilary's lecture:

“So what is New Security? And how does it differ from the Old? In one sense, there is nothing very new about it. Indeed, over the decades, almost any contemporary period had been described as being faced with new security challenges.....Other names for the present usage of the term are Human or Non-traditional Security. The concept emerged at the end of the Cold War. It is particularly applied now, in the post 9/11 era, to the challenges of global terrorism. I must of course refer to that aspect, but I want also to venture wider than that. The ‘New’ label, then, I take to apply to issues which go beyond the confines of individual states; which may cross borders; which are not necessarily state-related; which may be based on networks of actors, if I may use that term; or which involve non-state actors or phenomena. The issues, then, may involve linkages which cut across states or which crystallize below the level of states. Essentially, New Security relates to people rather than to nations.”

The arms races which reached their heights in the era of the Cold War were hugely expensive, and depressed expenditure in social welfare nationally and internationally (development aid) while weaponry reached such a massive level of redundancy that security was as much compromised as guaranteed. This can be seen in the post-Cold War era when we have a legacy of dangerous materials and weapons to dispose of, and there is anxiety over the capacity to do that safely, particularly in the former USSR. Most tellingly, conventional armed forces provided no defence against terrorist attacks, whether in the UK, Spain or the USA, or the attacks on the Lok Sabha in India.

What Sir Hilary suggested was that there needs to be a rethinking of not just the balance of expenditure, but

“the entire relationship between states. Put crudely, and perhaps simplistically, if the resources which apparently need to be allocated to national defence against the threat from another country – in the ‘Old Security’ sense - are so high as to be unaffordable, or the diversion of those resources exposes the countries concerned to even greater threats, either internal or of a global nature, then perhaps the time has come to deal with those bilateral threats in a completely different way. To be yet clearer and more simplistic, the bilateral differences which are the root cause

of such postures, threats and expenditures need to be managed and reduced, in the interests of dealing with some of the other issues.”

A demonstration of the need for such rethinking is the fact that Pakistan’s defence expenditure, premised on a confrontation with India over Kashmir, has left education and public infrastructure in Pakistan at woeful levels. At what point will the uneducated and unemployed young threaten the integrity of the state?

In the discussion period afterwards it became apparent that this was indeed a challenge to traditional thinking. Some questions suggested that there was no need for a new perspective, since the ‘old security’ agencies had ‘matters under control’. As Sir Hilary observed, by asking the question the need for his address had been vindicated.

We thank Sir Hilary for starting the series in such a distinguished manner.

The Nirman Lecture 2006

From 2006 the Nirman Lecture is to become an integral part of the Annual Conference. It will however be open to members of the public who apply for (free)tickets, and not restricted to conference members, since the idea is for BASAS to reach out beyond its more academic confines.

At the London Conference at Easter 2006, the second lecture, again thanks to the generosity of the Nirman Foundation, will be delivered by Professor Zoya Hasan, Professor of Political Science, Centre for Political Studies, and Director of the Women’s Studies Program, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

Report: The Leeds Conference 2005

The 2005 Annual Conference of BASAS was organised and hosted by Emma Tomalin and William Gould of :Leeds University. We are indebted to them for the superb organisation and the friendly atmosphere. More than 50 papers were delivered, and still with the usual BASAS time available for thorough discussion. The full programme can be accessed at:

<http://www.basas.ac.uk/conference05/basasc05programme.htm>

The BASAS Prize for the best post-graduate paper was awarded to **Cristiana Natali** (University of Bologna) for her presentation and paper on "Building cemeteries, constructing identities":

The Future of South Asian Studies: Discussion at Leeds.

The last session was an open forum to think about the future of South Asian Studies.

Many members of BASAS are rightly sceptical about the possibilities and even the desirability of organising a strategy. Area studies is under threat in the UK, as pointed out in the last issue of the Bulletin. Within UK Area Studies, judging by the size and wealth of Area Studies Associations, South Asian Studies is comparatively weak. This is a strange state of affairs, given the historical and contemporary ties between the UK and South Asia.

South Asian Studies are represented by two major organisations in the UK: this one, BASAS, and the Society for South Asian Studies, supported by the British Academy. (It is one of what is known as a BASIS – British Academy Supported Institute or Society.) SSAS has historically grown out of Afghan Studies (primarily archaeological) into a Society which focuses mostly on Indology. It is however broadening its scope, and has more members now from, and more concern for, contemporary social sciences and languages. BASAS is independent, and has attracted membership mostly from academics interested in contemporary arts, humanities and social sciences, though it has not been very successful in attracting economists, who have their own fitfully-functioning association in the UK. BASAS has attracted a large number of scholars working on the South Asian diaspora in the UK. There is reputed to be a medium sized Association for South Asian Economists – but this group seems dormant at present. Smaller groups include the active association of South Asian Anthropologists, and the annually active Pakistani Studies Circle. BASAS and SSAS will shortly be using a common and permanent postal London address (c/o the Society for South Asian Studies - which however is just about to begin a rather protracted move during which archives will be held in store), and a common subscription membership form, so that joint membership is encouraged, and members of both can have discounted access to the SSAS Journal South Asian Studies, and the BASAS connected journal Contemporary South Asia.

SSAS supported the last session at Leeds, by covering the costs of three invited speakers, who could share with us their experience from a European perspective. These three were; the Director of the Swedish South Asian Studies Network (www.sasnet.lu.se), Professor Staffan Lindberg of Lund University; Professor S N R. Balangadhara (below known as Balu) of the centre for Comparative Science of Culture in the University of Ghent, Belgium (<http://aivwww.ugent.be/Onderzoeksbeleid/techno2002/EN/LW/I-LW18V01.htm>), and Professor Subrata Mitra, Head of Political Science at the South Asian Institute of the University of Heidelberg (www.sai.uni-heidelberg.de).

We thank our guest speakers for finding the time to come to Leeds. Each spoke for about 20m minutes to share their very different experiences. After they had spoken there was a session of about one and a half hours during which 40 members of BASAS freely aired their thoughts in an unstructured “brain-storming” exercise.

Balu started by saying that South Asian Studies (in Europe) were not cumulative. They were not because they were still trapped within the constructs generated by the colonial encounter. This leads to the notion that South Asian Studies should at least in part be about giving back agency to the colonised. He also pointed out that people in South Asia believed they in turn understood Western culture, whereas in fact they did not. In essence he suggested that much more thought be given to the problems of self-understanding as a basis for inter-cultural understanding. His thinking is exemplified by the programme of the department Comparative Science of Culture in Ghent. “The general focus of research is on the relations between learning/knowing and culture, in a comparative perspective.... Development of a comparative model for the relation(s) between religion and knowing/learning in three cultures (Christian European, Hindu and Navajo Indian) so that the types of argumentation, proof, and criteria of relevance in each of the three traditions can be deduced as cultural particularities...”. In the UK some of the work on diaspora studies touches on these themes, though not necessarily within the Ghent model.

Staffan is Director of SASNET – a centre funded at Lund after an open competition in Sweden. The model proposed and operationalised was to develop a network using modern web technology, rather than to found an area studies centre in the traditional sense. It only has one full-time employee – Lars Eklund – who manages the site. Members of the network stay firmly anchored in their original disciplines. SASNET is lowish -cost – its expenditure £175000 per year. (This compares with the BA grant to SSAS in Britain of £100,000). The web site lists projects, funding opportunities, courses, studentships. It also offers small grants in the range £7000 - £15000 on a competitive basis for research and networking opportunities, for persons working in Swedish institutions. Staffan stressed that the network was trying to foster links with disciplines which had money – mostly meaning, science disciplines. Few research programmes on scientific topics in South Asia – e.g. HIV/Aids, water, biotechnology such as genetic engineering in agriculture – would not benefit from collaboration with cultural experts. He stressed that the future of South Asian studies was of concern to the people of South Asia. Our categories tend to frame the discussion of development in South Asia.

Subrata is head of the Department of Political Science at the South Asia Institute (University of Heidelberg) and previously taught at the Universities of Hull, Nottingham and California/Berkeley. The South Asia Institute in Heidelberg is older than the institutions of the previous two speakers. It is divided into disciplinary departments. It has supported the European Association of South Asian Studies (www.easas.org) and hosted some of its biennial conferences, but its primary focus has been to be the Institute for South Asia within the German university systems. Subrata pointed out that area studies could be the ultimate sanctuary from the hegemony of western science and social science: but, of course, not if, for example, South Asian studies was locked in western categories. He stressed the need to understand the agendas and the agenda setters: those within South Asia, and those without. He mentioned specifically security and welfare as two major concerns. Indeed, South Asia has registered centrally in global security terms in the last decades, and will continue to do so under the new security agenda as well. He mentioned the possibility of using Erasmus Mundus as a programme to sponsor training in Europe.

Collectively, our visitors remarked on the width, depth and vigour of the expertise they had encountered at Leeds, and that compared with Europe (“much devoted to Indology”) the UK had a huge potential resource.

The general conversation which followed, pursued the idea that areas studies could be one way of integrating hard and soft sciences, but the question remained how to attract scientists to areas studies conferences. Practical suggestions for aiding South Asian Studies included:

lobbying more effectively funding bodies such as ESRC (it was noted that a South Asianist Professor Jonathan Spencer is on the PG Training Board); Roger Jeffery said we needed to make more noise; better support of research networks (on that score BASAS has published two years ago its own research register, and the update is in this issue of the Bulletin); William Gould suggested that we could form networks to screen each others’ research grant applications to get helpful suggestions and perhaps new support. This we can take to the Exec Committee,

In sum, it seemed that there could be no agreement on prioritising specific research themes (this is not a surprising finding) but that we could all benefit simply by raising the profile of South Asian studies, probably within a European context, and advertising to science, industry and government as well as within traditional academic fora, the enormous research potential within the UK.. One way of doing this would be to put more resources into the Website (i.e. find the equivalent of SASNET’s Lars Eklund). Apurba Kundu, BASAS webmaster, has done a superb job with the website, but a full-time (or even part-time) coordinator researching the possible links and advertising them could dramatically transform the situation.

BASAS joint workshop December 2005: "Religious Revivalism and Political Extremism in Pakistan and Bangladesh

16 December 2005 International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)Londo

sponsored by BASAS in conjunction with the Politics of South Asia Specialist Group of the Political Studies Association and the South Asia Programme of the International Institute for Strategic Studies. Please see more details at the web-site <http://www.basas.ac.uk/workshop05/basasw05.html> or contact **Dr Lawrence Saez** of the Asia Research Centre at the London School of Economics (LSE) at L.saez@lse.ac.uk

The BASAS Annual Conference 19-21 April 2006 at Birkbeck College, University of London, UK

is being organised by Dr Emma Mawdsley (e.mawdsley@bbk.ac.uk)of Birkbeck Department of Geography, to whom the Exec Committee publicly expresses its thanks (and support!).

If you wish to convene a panel, or submit a paper, keep in touch with Emma and keep an eye on the web-site www.basas.ac.uk

Timetable of Deadlines for London 2006

| | | | | |
|----|-----|------|---|--|
| 15 | Nov | 2005 | • | Submission of panel abstracts |
| 1 | Dec | 2005 | • | Confirmation of panel line-up |
| 15 | Dec | 2005 | • | Submission of independent paper abstracts |
| 2 | Jan | 2006 | • | Confirmation of independent papers |
| 15 | Jan | 2006 | • | Submission of posters |
| 1 | Feb | 2006 | • | Confirmation of posters |
| 1 | Feb | 2006 | • | Panel convenors to confirm final line-up of papers |

Liverpool John Moores University 6th-7th July 2006

Conference on Muslim Women In Higher Education, Employment and Equal Opportunities

Panels already suggested include:

Islamophobia and racism, Unsettling 'race', unsettling 'religion': Muslim women and higher education, Reconsidering agency and achievement: Muslim women students' experiences, Gender, race, religion and the construction of student identities in higher education, Constructing the 'employable' graduate, Gender, space and power in institutionalized racism, Gender, race and inter-group relations on campus,

For further information or to register an interest in submitting an abstract or organising a panel, please contact d.tyrer@livjm.ac.uk

Workshop Funding from the FCO: from Alexander Evans

Small conference support grants: A reminder that the Foreign Office may be able to provide small sums of support (not exceeding hundreds) for conferences on contemporary South Asia. Ideally there should be a read-across to issues of interest to HMG (eg contemporary politics, security, water conflicts, terrorism, political Islam etc.). The funding is for conference organisers rather than participants. If you have a proposal, please drop a short e-mail to Alexander.Evans@fco.gov.uk or call him on 020 7008 6901.

Members' News

Congratulations to **Eleanor Nesbitt** for her publications:

- *Sikhism A Very Short Introduction* (2005) , Oxford: Oxford University Press
- *Faith Guides for Higher Education: A Guide to Sikhism*(2005) (series editor Gary Bunt), Leeds: The Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies, University of Leeds.
- *Intercultural Education: Ethnographic and Religious Approaches*(2004) (see <http://www.sussex-academic.co.uk/titles/education/nesbitt.asp>) Sussex Academic. It consists almost entirely of reflections on ethnographic studies of young people from South Asian families in the UK. Issues addressed include identity formation and 'belief'.

Congratulations to **Katharine Adeney** and **Lawrence Saez** on the publication of their edited book:

- *Coalition Politics and Hindu Nationalism* London: Routledge (2005). The Chapters are by: Katharine Adeney, James Chiriyankandath, Meghnad Desai, Christophe Jaffrelot, Rob Jenkins, Apurba Kundu, Marie Lall, James Manor, Alistair McMillan, Subrata Mitra, Gurharpal Singh, Andrew Wyatt, John Zavos

New Journal News from Pritam Singh (psingh@brookes.ac.uk)

NORTH EAST INDIA STUDIES

ISSN 0973-1180

The NORTH EASTERN INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES (NEIDS) announces launching of a multidisciplinary, peer reviewed and non-partisan, bi-annual academic journal, *NORTH EAST INDIA STUDIES*, (NEIS) committed to studying contemporary developments of North East India because a large amount of research on the region fails to find adequate space for publication. The Journal seeks to provide a forum to researchers, opinion builders and policy makers for discussing major issues of concern.

The journal will have an issue editor for each issue who will organize articles on special themes in consultation with the General Editors and the Editorial Advisory Board. The first issue on *Contemporary Identity Politics in North East India* comes out in May 2005.

Editorial Communications are to be sent to Prof. Apurba K Baruah, Political Science, NEHU, Mawlai, Shillong, India, 793022. Or, Prof. Manorama Sharma, History, NEHU, Mawlai, Shillong, India, 793022. E-mails: akbaruah2000@yahoo.com and manorama50in@yahoo.com

GENERAL EDITORS: Apurba K Baruah, Manorama Sharma. COPY EDITOR: Aparna Bhattacharyya. EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD: A.C. Bhagabati, Ex-Vice Chancellor, Arunachal University; Prabhat Patnaik, Jawaharlal Nehru University; G. Haragopal, University of Hyderabad; Pramod Kumar, Institute of Development and Communication; Pritam Singh, Oxford Brookes University; Manoranjan Mohanti,

University of Delhi; Sumi Krishna, Independent Researcher, Bangalore; Randhir Singh, formerly of University of Delhi; Temsula Ao, North Eastern Hill University.

All Subscriptions are to be sent to Circulation Manager, NEIS, by Demand Draft to be drawn in favour of Circulation Manager NEIS, to be drawn at SBI, GMC Branch, Guwahati or, by Money order and addressed to Monojita Baruah, C-201Arunudoi Apartment, G. S. Road, Opposite Borah Service, Ulubari, Guwahati-781007 Assam, India. Out station cheques are not entertained.

- ANNUAL INDIVIDUAL: In India: Rs. 200.00 (postage included). Outside India: \$20 (Add\$5 if air mail preferred)
- INSTITUTIONAL: In India: Rs. 400.00(postage included). Outside India: \$40(Add \$5 if air mail preferred)
- SINGLE COPIES: In India Rs. 120.00. Out side India \$25.

Notes for contributors. The Journal will carry the following sections:

- *Special articles* will carry original research articles subject to vetting by experts in the relevant field.
- *Reflections* will carry contributions from social activist and thinkers on matters of contemporary importance.
- *Commentary* will carry well argued original comments on matters of importance related to NEI and its studies.
- *Perspectives* will carry discussions on matters published in the journal and also on social issues of contemporary interest.

All contributions for the Journal should be sent to the editorial address in a hard copy along with a soft copy in a disk in MS Word.

NEIS is coordinated by Millie Hazarika, Anup Kr Das, Aparna Bhattacharyya, Monojita Baruah, Prosanta Borua of North East India Study Group.

The 2nd Edition of the Index of Members' Research Interests

Who is included?

Everyone who is in our active membership list, AND who has completed the slot on their sub form which says what their interests are, has been included – plus one or two others who responded to the Editor's e-mail of last May saying their would be a new edition.

There are 274 entries, 40 up on the first edition – signs of life!

If you spot any mistakes, please let the Membership Secretary Carole Spary (c.spary@bristol.ac.uk) know.

Some addresses are blank

We have only included e-mail addresses – for the sake of the privacy of members. As a rule we do not have individual permissions to publish postal addresses. Where we either have no e-mail address or it has been with-held, so you see a blank by a name, you can ask Carole Spary to forward a message if desired.

How is the Index Organised?

Persons included are listed alphabetically, with an identifying number.

People's interests have been listed as one or more gobbits of information, separated by colons. Two examples are

educational achievements: Muslim Educational issues: small businesses
Indian and Pakistani Federalism: Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict

The words South Asia and India are eliminated. All entries are assumed to refer to South Asia at least in some degree, and the overwhelming majority of entries are explicitly or implicitly referring at least in part to India. But Nepal, Pakistan etc are retained.

All the gobbits from all entries are listed alphabetically, eliminating redundancies (e.g. the word 'rural' will appear only once, not many times.) This gives a basic dictionary of 607 entries – up from 485 last time. Higher level categories are tagged to each entry in the dictionary. These categories were devised by your Membership Secretary as seemed appropriate while scanning the dictionary. The words obviously reflect what is said by members. There is, for example, no word for Orissa, since no-one put Orissa in their entry. Last time, for example, Iran was not a word: this time it is. Anybody else could use other categories. I settled on list below. I have added words for (for example) urbanization – but I have not added a word for nuclear issues – they still come under international relations. Someone else doing this would have come up with a different list. However, those people who mention nuclear issues can still be found.

| Category | Broad meaning | | |
|----------|--|-------------|---|
| afgh | Afghanistan | law | controlled |
| agrar | Agrarian, agriculture,rural | ling | Law, litigation, legal systems |
| anchist | Ancient History | literature | Linguistics and Languages |
| anthrop | Anthropology | maharashtra | Literature |
| arch | Archaeology | maldives | Maharashtra |
| asia | Asia outside S Asia | matart | Maldives |
| bengal | Bengal and Bangladesh | media | Material Arts |
| britain | Britain/UK | migration | Mass Media |
| canad | Canada | modhist | Migration – nearly all international |
| china | China | music | Modern History – sort of later than C16th |
| computer | Computers and IT | myan | Music, music manuscripts, musicology |
| crime | Crime, violence, law-breaking | mysore | Myanmar – Burma |
| demog | Demography and population | nepal | Mysore |
| dev | Development Studies | north | Nepal |
| diasp | Diaspora | northeast | North India in general or some mentioned region |
| econ | Economics | pak | Northeastern states of India |
| educ | Education | politic | Pakistan |
| env | Environment | punjab | Politics and Political Science |
| gender | Gender, women’s studies | rajasthan | Punjab – both India and Pakistan |
| geog | Geography | reference | Rajasthan |
| gov | Government | rel | People selling books etc |
| gujarat | Gujarat | science | Religion |
| health | Health/sickness/Medical | sociol | Science and technology |
| himalaya | Himalayas | south | Sociology |
| hist | History undefined by period | srilanka | South India |
| ident | Identity | tibet | Sri Lanka/ Ceylon |
| internat | International relations, international trade and economics | up | Tibet, Tibetan studies |
| islam | Islam, Islamic studies, Islamic culture | | Uttar Pradesh |
| kashmir | Kashmir – Pakistani and Indian | | |

A few of the middle lines of the dictionary look like this:

| | |
|----------------------|----------------|
| local government | gov |
| local state | gov |
| low caste | sociol |
| low class movements | sociol:politic |
| maharashtra | maharashtra |
| maldives | maldives |
| manchester | britain |
| manipur | northeast |
| manuscripts | literature |
| material culture | matart |
| material culture;art | matart |
| media | media |
| media analysis | media |
| medical | health |
| medical anthropology | health:anthrop |

Note that multiple classification is possible.

This dictionary is then used to replace the original gobbits of information for each person with the higher level categories. So :

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| educational | achievements:Muslim | econ:educ:islam |
| Educational issues:small businesses | | |
| Indian | and Pakistani | crime:gov:ident:internat:pak |
| Federalism:Nationalism | and Ethnic | |
| Conflict | | |

The index is based on these categories. All people are first listed under all possible combinations of their categories. For example “econ:educ:islam” gives rise to 8 combinations (including the null set) – namely

- “econ:educ:islam”
- “econ:educ”
- “econ:islam”
- “educ:islam”
- “econ”
- “educ”
- “islam”
- “”

More than 3000 combinations occur in this data set. This number is reduced by retaining only those combinations that reflect an original entry in full, or which occur for more than one person. So subsets of an entry that occur for only one person are excluded. This reduces the number of combinations used in this Index to just over 700 – twice as much as the last time 350. Obviously for a third edition I shall have to apply fiercer filters.

The categories are always in alphabetical order. If you want to look for Development and Government, look for “dev gov”, not for “gov dev”.

*** Privacy**

Because names and contacts are included in this Index, it is not being placed on the web. It is for members only for their private use, and must not be passed on to third parties.

Graham Chapman, Lancaster University

The BASAS Executive Committee

Your executive committee needs constant renewal, so that it is open to new ideas and new enthusiasms. Dr Katharine Adeney said at Leeds that she wished to stand down as Secretary and that someone else might like to think about volunteering. In any event, all memberships of the committee (other than President) are up for renewal or replacement at the next AGM in London. Is anyone out there listening? If you want to volunteer, please contact Katharine Adeney in the first instance. The current incumbents are:

| | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--|
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