




NIAS Newsletter



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Featured Research Programme

NIAS has an integrated approach to the study of the intersections between science and technology, social issues, humanities and leadership. The philosophy underlying NIAS is given shape by its research through the Research Programmes housed by the Schools. In this issue of NIAS Newsletter we feature the Provincial Globalisation Programme.

Provincial Globalisation

The international collaborative research programme entitled 'Provincial Globalisation: The Impact of Reverse Transnational Flows in India's Regional Towns', was initiated in January 2010 and came to a successful close in September 2015. 'ProGlo', which was housed in the School of Social Sciences, was a collaborative programme of NIAS and the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR), University of Amsterdam (UvA), funded by WOTRO Science for Development (the Netherlands). It was co-directed by Prof. Carol Upadhyya of NIAS and (late) Prof. Mario Rutten of the AISSR. The objective of the ProGlo programme was to map the 'reverse flows' of resources (both tangible and intangible) that are sent back to India by migrants and the Indian diaspora, and to explore their implications for processes of social development in the home regions.

"The unique structure of the 'ProGlo' Programme – an international, multi-disciplinary collaboration among scholars and students from India, Holland, and the US conducting research in different regions of India – was very productive. . ."

*- Carol Upadhyya
PI, ProGlo Programme*



NIAS Lily Pond - Photo Courtesy: Rajesh K Ajampura, NIAS

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**In This
Issue ...**



Members of the ProGlo Programme

Co-directors:

Prof. Carol Upadhyia

Prof. Mario Rutten

Doctoral students:

Ms. Sanam Roohi

Ms. Sulagna Mustafi

Dr. Sanderien Verstappen

Postdoctoral researchers:

Dr. Puja Guha

Dr. Leah Koskimaki

Research associates:

Ms. Jananie Kalyanaraman

Ms. Anju Christine Lingham

Ms. Keya Bardalai

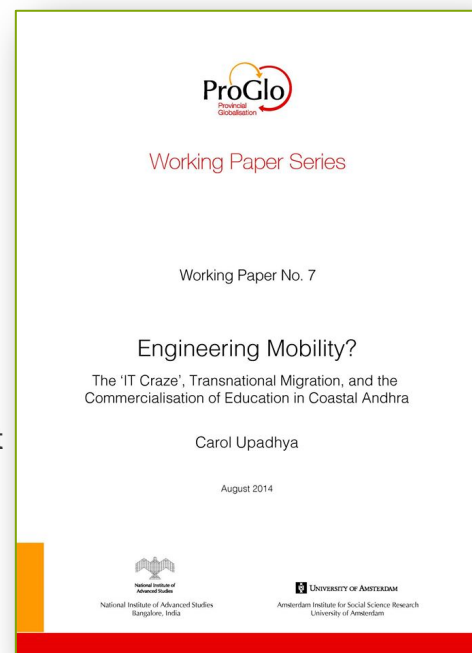
A Five Year International Collaborative Programme

While most research on the relation between international migration and development has focused on the economic impacts of migrant remittances at the national or state levels, our effort was to unravel the multi-dimensional composition and outcomes of transnational flows comparatively across three regions – central Gujarat, coastal Andhra Pradesh and coastal Karnataka.

The Programme consisted of several interlinked research projects: three Ph.D. projects, one in each region, by Sanam Roohi (NIAS), Sulagna Mustafi (NIAS), and Sanderien Verstappen (AISSR). It also included two postdoctoral projects, carried out by Puja Guha (economics) and Leah Koskimaki (cultural anthropology), and the individual research projects of the co-directors Rutten and Upadhyia. The Programme was supported by research consultants Jananie Kalyanaraman, Anju Christine Lingham, and Keya Bardalai.

What is ProGlo? *Carol Upadhyia writes ...*

Provincial Globalisation ('ProGlo'), a five-year international collaborative research programme of the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR), University of Amsterdam (UvA), and the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bangalore, India, was completed successfully in September 2015. The programme explored the diverse material and immaterial resources that are sent back to India by Overseas Indians and their impacts on social development. Although it is well known that Indian migrants often send remittances to support their families at home, such resource flows have primarily been understood through the lens of development economic on a national scale. In contrast, the ProGlo programme focused on the regional variability of transnational networks and diaspora contributions and on the immaterial flows or 'social remittances' that often accompany financial remittances.



Interdisciplinarity & Academic Excellence

The Programme design was interdisciplinary, incorporating concepts and methods from sociology, social anthropology, economics, geography, history, and migration and transnational studies. By combining in-depth qualitative field studies with quantitative survey methods and by focusing on the regional scale, the Programme has assembled a rich body of material and theoretical insights on an important issue with policy and academic relevance.

For more information, please visit the Website www.provglo.org and the Programme's public Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Provincial-Globalisation-164674226951228/>



ProGlo Conference Amsterdam - 2013

The Programme consisted of three doctoral and two postdoctoral projects carried out in three regions of India – central Gujarat, coastal Andhra Pradesh and coastal Karnataka – and in the destination countries of migrants from these regions, the UK, USA, and the Gulf. These projects revealed the multi-dimensional, multi-directional, and multi-scalar character of transnational flows, such as household remittances, investments in land or businesses, and philanthropic projects, support for NGOs, as well as intangible remittances that are often transmitted by migrants such as new aspirations, revitalised cultural identities, or religious ideologies. Our research demonstrated that migrant remittances are just one element of larger transnational circuits of mobility and exchange, which in turn are deeply embedded in social networks of kinship, caste, or religious community, or framed by regionally rooted cultural orientations or political agendas. The component projects also traced in detail how diasporic connections with the home region, materialised through the transfer of resources, have been intricately shaped by the specific regional histories and social trajectories of migration from which they have emerged, and reflect the aspirations and imaginations of migrants as well as those of their families and communities at home.



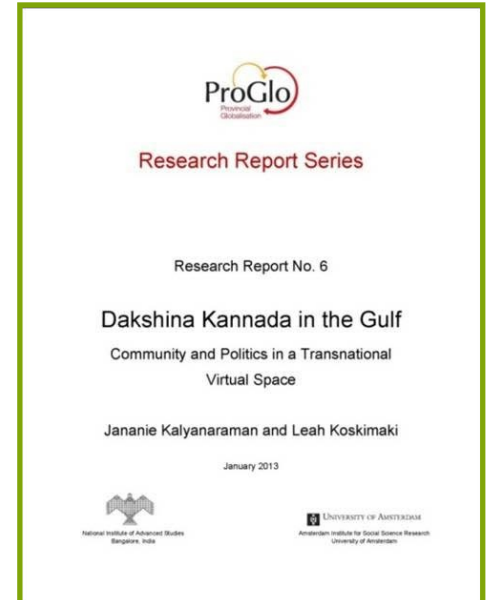
NRI Cell Guntur

Although international policy debates on the question of migration and development have focused mainly on the impacts of household-level remittances, collective remittances (often referred to as ‘diaspora philanthropy’) were more significant in our study regions, where migrant groups were found to be closely involved in a range of development activities.

However, the impacts of ‘NRI’ (Non Resident Indians) interventions for social development are mixed, as they are shaped by local structures of power and social hierarchies or inflected by conflicting social or political aspirations. For instance, migrant interventions for developmental or social welfare purposes are often channeled to their own communities or villages, and well-intentioned donations may become entangled in regional autonomy movements, assertions of community identity, or caste contestations. In addition, development initiatives by NRIs are often accompanied by new images of progress and the ‘good life’, and thereby may become implicated in local politics or conflicts over development priorities or environmental issues.

By mapping the modalities, movements, destinations, and outcomes of migrant resources within their regional contexts, the ProGlo programme has produced new empirical data and insights on the influence of the Indian diaspora and migrants within India, and deepened our understanding of the economic, social, political, and cultural implications of remittances, diaspora philanthropy, and other transnational influences in India’s provincial towns and their rural peripheries. The component projects have produced a series of unique case studies detailing the multifarious connections that regional diasporas maintain with their regions of origin, especially through the various kinds of resources that they transfer to help the development of their communities or home towns.

Report



NRI College Bus





Transnational Village Day

An anthropological film made by Dakxin Bajrange, Mario Rutten and Sanderien Verstappen. It was conceptualised and supervised by Mario Rutten and Sanderien Verstappen, based on the long-term research of Mario Rutten in the central Gujarat region and among migrants from the region in the UK. It is directed by Dakxin Bajrange.

The film is part of the Provincial Globalisation research programme of the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR), University of Amsterdam, and the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bangalore, India, funded by WOTRO Science for Global Development, the Netherlands (NWO).

Sanderien Verstappen's work focused on central Gujarat, and she was awarded the Ph.D. degree in Anthropology by the University of Amsterdam in January 2016 for her thesis entitled 'Mobility and the Region: A Multi-Scalar Ethnography of the Vohra Gujarati Community, in India and Abroad'. Sanam Roohi studied the transnational networks that link Coastal Andhra Pradesh with the region's affluent professional diaspora in the US, and the political implications of their philanthropic projects in Guntur district. Sulagna Mustafi's research in Coastal Karnataka explored the ways in which the identity of the Beary Muslims community has been shaped by their transnational connections with the Gulf, while Leah Koskimaki studied developmental interventions by wealthy Gulf businessmen belonging to other communities from the same region. Our postdoc economist, Dr. Puja Guha, generated fresh national, state, and district-level data on transnational resource flows and their socio-economic outcomes; she also carried out a detailed household-level sample survey of migration and remittances in two districts of Gujarat, in collaboration with the Gujarat Institute of Development Research, Ahmedabad.

Till date, the programme has produced several publications, seven Working Papers, eleven Research Reports, one doctoral dissertation, and two anthropological documentary films, while more publications (including an edited volume) are in the pipeline. Our outputs and information on research and dissemination activities are available on the ProGlo website: www.provglo.org. The website has received 3986 page views till date, with 95 per cent new visitors. The website also hosts our geo-visualisation project, 'Mapping Provincial Globalisation', which presents quantitative and qualitative data on international migration and remittance patterns across different states and regions of India through maps and interactive visual displays (<http://provglo.org/geo/>). Our public Facebook page, which serves as a forum for the exchange of ideas and information with stakeholders, other researchers, and the public, has received 230 'likes' till date.

Overall, the ProGlo programme has made a significant contribution to the scholarly literature on migration, transnationalism, and development, as well as to international policy debates on migration and development, and within India to policy discussions about the country's relation with Overseas Indians.



Binoy V V leading a Workshop ...

'Student Network': A NIAS Initiative for Science Communication and Student-Scientist Partnership

Binoy V V writes ...

Constant monitoring of the oscillations in the socio-environmental parameters and providing scientific information useful for the effective management of such variations to every stratum of the society is essential for maintaining the harmony and sustainability of an ecosystem. However in a geographically large country like India formation and maintenance of such a system is a mammoth task due to the shortage of human resource. Establishment of a student-scientist partnership and enhancing joint knowledge production is an answer to this problem.

The 'student network' is an attempt by NIAS to realize the bridging of general public with research institutions through students. This project aims to develop colleges and schools into the centers for monitoring social and environmental changes under the guidance of professional researchers and generating awareness about the judicious use of ever-depleting natural resources in their localities. Connecting educational institutions with research centers and local NGOs could contribute significantly for communicating science, inducing scientific temper and cultivating environmental pro behavioral behaviours amongst the students.

Workshops ...



For more information about the Student Network:
 Website - <http://www.nias.res.in/wash/>
 Facebook Page - <https://www.facebook.com/studentscientistnias/>

Student Network is a part of a major research project titled “Understanding the Role of ‘Student Networks’ in Creating Awareness about Environment, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Rural and Socio-Economically Marginalized Areas”. This project is financially supported by the Eco Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (Eco-WaSH) program of the National Council for Science and Technology Communication (NCSTC), Department of Science and Technology, Government of India.

‘Student network’ organises various workshops and training camps for the members of the network (known as ‘student scientists’) and their teachers, in various regions of the Kerala and Karnataka.

During the workshop conducted for the student scientists of Bangalore City node Prof. Baldev Raj, Director NIAS emphasized the need for inducing scientific temper amongst the children in a very young age itself. According to Prof. Raj every researcher should find some time to interact with the ‘little scientists’. Prof. Ramamurthy, Former NIAS Director shared his experiences as a scientist, science communicator and science administrator with the students during the workshop. He introduced various projects in which ‘student scientists’ contributed significantly, to the audience. Er. Anuj Sinha, Chairman, Network for Indian Science Communicator Organisations, New Delhi elaborated how students can become the agents of social change in the sectors of water conservation, sanitation and hygiene.



A series of training programmes on different topics such as water conservation, river conservation, methodologies for studying water resources and water use etc. were conducted by Dr. V V Binoy (Principal Investigator, Student Network Project), T R Kumaraswami and A Arun (Junior Research Fellows) in association with various schools, colleges and NGOs and a many programmes are in pipeline for the forthcoming academic year. Profs Sindhu Radhakrishna and Anitha Kurup (Co-Principal Investigators) are also associated with this project and supports the research activities of the students. The team Student Network is in constant touch with the student scientists and is providing materials, training and guidance to conduct studies on water, sanitation and hygiene in their schools and neighborhoods.



Women Peace League School in Basavanagudi, Bengaluru

Promotion of Psychosocial Development and Quality Education in Urban Government Schools

Malavika Kapur reports ...

This project was funded by NIAS July to December 2015. The project covered 30 children (class 1 to 7) in Government Primary School and 70 children (class 1 and 2) in Women Peace League School in Basavanagudi, Bengaluru. The approach was through child centred play activities, everyday for 90 minutes - conducted in small groups.

Activities towards promotion of psychosocial development for tribal school children with Balavana Foundation in HD Kote was organised from June 2015 onwards. During this period a workshop of play activities for 100 children in DB Kuppe and 68 children in Penjalli Ashram Schools were organised on 11th September 2015. 50 children in class 10 in Ekalavya School were addressed on 12th September 2015, and a training workshop was held for 50 teachers in Ashram Schools on child centred play on 12th September 2015.

Play activities ...





Activities of Balavana Foundation were organised between 6th and 8th February 2016. Malavika Kapur and 8 volunteers trained in child counselling carried out the following activities in the tribal / SC&ST Schools in H.D. Kote Taluk between 6th and 8th February 2016. Basavanagiri Ashram School (Tribal Residential School) has 125 children from class 1 to 6 on its rolls with 5 teachers (temporary teachers). Four volunteers carried out child-centred play activities in 3 groups of class 1 to 6, the total number being 58 (of the 125 on the rolls). The programme was conducted between 10.30 am and 12.30 noon. 17 teachers from different Ashram Schools observed the programme in action.



At Ekalavya School (Sollepura, H.D. Kote). Residential School for SC/ST children. Five volunteers along with Prof Kapur did various child centred play activities with children from classes 6th to 10th. Total of 255 children were provided different play activities between 10.30 and 12.30. The programme ended with a session by Prof Kapur for 22 teachers on child centred play. The highlight of the programme was that Mr Jagadish, Taluk



Social Welfare Officer came for inspection and was impressed by the activities that the children carried out on their own.

The team visited D.B. Kuppe Ashram School, with 170 children from class 1 to 6 on the rolls. Class 1 to 2 with 20 children, 3rd and 4th 23 children, 5th 18 children, 6th 17 children, 7th 10 children participated. Total of 88 children and 9 volunteers engaged the children in different play activities from 10.30 am to 12.30 noon.

Recent MoUs Signed at NIAS . . .

- ◆ *Centre for Advancement of Global Health (CAGH), Kerala*
The purpose of this MoU is to establish a framework that will guide NIAS and the CAGH in establishing a cooperative working relationship for planning and accomplishing mutually beneficial research project and activities. Such cooperation is intended to particularly benefit the advancement of studies in biology, health science, ecology and education, and capacity building.
- ◆ *Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai*
NIAS has signed an MoU with Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai on "Connected Learning Initiative". The Connected Learning Initiative is a collaboration between TISS, Mumbai, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Cambridge and the Tata Trusts. The initiative seeks to build a model at a scale that establishes the local ecosystem connecting youth and teachers with local communities, education institutions, domain experts and creating an environment that supports active learning and seamless technological use in the schools and the teaching-learning process.

Coordinator: V V Binoy

They completed a fulfilling career . . .

S Revanna, Support Staff (Garden) retired on March 31, 2016 after 23 years of service.

Sukhdev Behera, Driver-cum-Support Staff retired on February 29, 2016 after 20 years of service.



NIAS Doctoral Students with the Academic Head and the Office staff

NIAS PhD Programme Updates

Gopi Rethinaraj (Academic Head) reports ...

NIAS offered various courses for the PhD students of the Institute and research associates in the second semester of the 2015-16 academic year, which runs from February through second week of May. The Institute's faculty members offered courses various disciplines and specialised areas keeping in view specific requirement of students and other research associates working in the Institute. NIAS courses are also taken by students from other institutions and are open to public free of cost.

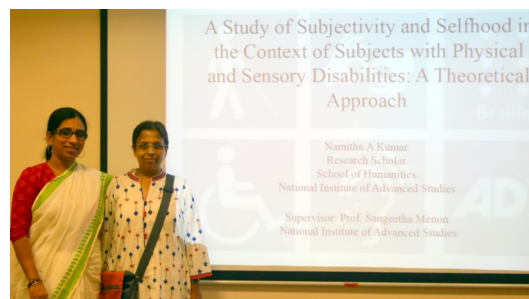
The Research Methodology is being offered to the students who entered the PhD programme in August 2015. This course focuses on the central debates, practices and skills associated with doing research in different disciplines. This course also examines the enterprise of research, history, and theory of methodology, and academic writing practices and then moves on to specific methodological practices from the relevant disciplines taught collaboratively by the Institute's faculty members.

Four students (Ms Savita Suresh Babu, Ms Anupama Mahajan, Ms Krupa Rajangam, and Mr Murlu Murti) successfully completed registration with Manipal University during January and February 2016. Also, three NIAS students were awarded PhD degree by Manipal University and Mysore University during the reported period.



Ms Shreejata Gupta, doctoral candidate working under the supervision of Prof. Anindya Sinha from the School of Natural and Engineering Sciences, defended her thesis on "Other Voices: Gestural Communication of Wild Bonnet Macaques *Macaca radiata* in the Bandipur National Park, Southern India" and was awarded PhD on January 14, 2016 by Manipal University.

Ms Namitha A Kumar, doctoral candidate working under the supervision of Prof. Sangeetha Menon from the School of Humanities, defended her thesis on "A Study of Subjectivity and Selfhood in the context of subjects with Physical Disabilities: A Theoretical Approach" and was awarded PhD degree on February 29, 2016 by University of Mysore.



Ms Rolla Das, doctoral candidate working under the supervision of Dr Rajesh Kasturirangan from the School of Humanities, defended her thesis on "The Listeners: A Multi-perspective Analysis of *AcchA* and Other Bangla Response Tokens" and was awarded on February 29, 2016 by the Manipal University.

With the three students who graduated during this period, a total of 31 students from the NIAS PhD Programme have been awarded PhD degrees by University of Mysore and Manipal University.

Recent Meetings @ NIAS

Training Programmes, Public Lectures & Events

Ian M Cook, Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Central European University, Budapest, and Visiting Scholar, Indian Institute of Human Settlements, Bengaluru spoke on *The Immoral City: Community, Love and Vigilantism in Mangaluru*, on March 29, 2016

CV Vishveshwara, Former Senior Professor, Indian Institute of Astrophysics, and Emeritus Director, Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium, Bengaluru spoke on *Black Holes and Gravitational Waves- What LIGO Saw*, on March 24, 2016

Ananta Kumar Giri, Madras Institute of Development Studies, Chennai, spoke on *With and Beyond Epistemologies of the South: Ontological Epistemology of Participation and Multi-topical Hermeneutics*, on March 23, 2016

John Bryden, Prince Mohammed University spoke on *Recognizing Knots*, on March 18, 2016

Ustad Rafique Khan and Ustad Shafique Khan offered a Sitar Jugalbandi on March 10, 2016

Darshan Shankar, Vice-Chancellor, The Institute of Trans-disciplinary Health Sciences and Technology spoke on *Integrative Health Care: Emerging Paradigm in 21st Century*, on March 7, 2016

An Interactive Panel Discussion on *Autonomy, Democracy and Academic Spaces* with the Participants: Shalini Dixit, Bharat Rout, Jeebanlata Salam and Chetan B Singai, was held on March 4, 2016

International Strategic and Security Studies Programme organised a Book Release Function of *ISSSP Reports* on March 3, 2016

Amrita Shah, Visiting Faculty, Centre for Contemporary Studies, Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, spoke on *Writing the City*, on March 3, 2016

Bishnu N Mohapatra, Formerly Professor at the School of Development, Azim Premji University, Bengaluru, spoke on *Insertion into Law and Impossibility of Justice*, on March 1, 2016

A Film Screening and Discussion were held on Gouri Patwardhan's *Two Tales of Modikhana (Modikhanyachya Don Goshti)*, on February 11, 2016

Esha Shah, Independent Researcher, Bengaluru, spoke on *Philosophy of Reductionism in Genetic Science: A Historical View*, on February 11, 2016

Ranjani Ramachandran, Hindustani Classical Vocalist, Swar Ganga Music Foundation, Kolkata, offered Classical Hindustani

Vocal Recital, on February 10, 2016

Raj Verma, Assistant Professor in International Relations, School of International and Public Affairs, Jilin University, China., spoke on *Will China Supersede the US?: Distilling Facts From Fiction*, on January 27, 2016

Charlotte Sleigh, Lecturer, School of History, University of Kent, spoke on *Electric Monks and Pathology Biscuits: What Is Science Communication and Why Does It Matter*, on January 27, 2016. The event was organised in association with Centre for Contemporary Studies, IISc.

Geert De Neve, Reader in Anthropology, University of Sussex, spoke on *Caste Discrimination in Contemporary Tamil Nadu: Evidence from the Tiruppur Textile Region (by Grace Carswell, Geert De Neve and Judith Heyer)*, on January 21, 2016

Baradwaj Rangan, Film Critic and Senior Deputy Editor, The Hindu, spoke on, *Cinema and Social Change*, on January 21, 2016

Manjula Murthy and Party offered a Mohiniyattam recital, organised by SPICMACAY, on January 20, 2016

Justice Prabha Sridevan, Chennai, spoke on *Judiciary and Change*, on January 18, 2016

David Gellner, Professor of Social Anthropology and Fellow of All Souls College, University of Oxford, spoke on *Ethnogenesis and Open Borders: Reflections on Nepal's Tarai-Madhes and What Went Wrong in India-Nepal Relations*, on January 18, 2016

A book reading by Rukmini Srinivas, was held on *Tiffin: Memories and Recipes of Indian Vegetarian Food*, on January 8, 2016

A Gender Training Workshop for NIAS Faculty, Staff, Students and Research Staff was held on March 8 and 23, 2016.

A Roundtable on India's Economic Challenges lead by Prof TN Srinivasan, Yale University, was held on January 20, 2016

The NIAS-DST Training Programme on *Science Policy and General Management* was organised by the Coordinators: Suba Chandran and HSK Nathan from February 29 to March 11, 2016

The NIAS-DST Training Programme for Women Scientists on *Science for Progress in India: Focus on Sustainability* was organised by the Coordinator: Shivali Tukdeo, from February 8 to 12, 2016.

The 30th NIAS Programme for Senior Executives was organised by the Coordinators: Sindhu Radhakrishna and Chidambaran G Iyer, from January 18 to 23, 2016.

The Fifteenth Annual MN Srinivas Memorial Lecture was given by TN Srinivasan, Samuel C Park, Jr Professor Emeritus of Economics, Yale University, on *Micro Foundations of Public Policy: Some Thoughts Inspired by the Contributions of MN Srinivas*, on January 19, 2016

NIAS Wednesday Discussion Meetings

NIAS Wednesday Discussion Meetings is one of the outreach events that has continued since the inception of the Institute. The faculty of the Institute meets every Wednesday morning for a lecture, followed by discussion, usually delivered by one of its members. Sangeetha Menon is the Coordinator of NIAS Wednesday Discussion Meetings.

VV Binoy, NIAS spoke on *Animal Personality: Insights from Ichthyology*, on March 30, 2016

V Bhujanga Rao, Former Distinguished Scientist and Director General (Naval Systems and Materials), DRDO, spoke on

Underwater Technologies for Stealth, Security and Society, on March 16, 2016

Ullas Karanth, Director for Science-Asia, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Bengaluru, spoke on *Science, Technology and Conservation*, on March 9, 2016

Anil Razdan, Former Secretary, Ministry of Power, Government of India, spoke on *Science, Technology and Energy, (Fossil Fuels)*, on March 2, 2016

Posina Venkata Rayudu, NIAS, spoke on *Mind: Structure and Logic*, on February 24, 2016

Janaki Balakrishnan, NIAS, spoke on *The Case of the Missing Budmoth Population Cycles*, on February 17, 2016

Garima Jain, Consultant, Indian Institute for Human Settlements, spoke on *How Smart is "Smart"? A Reflection on the Case of Vishakhapatnam*, on February 10, 2016

Gagan Deep Kaur, NIAS, spoke on *Design Coding and Decoding in Kashmiri Carpet Weaving*, on February 3, 2016

Air Cmde Ramesh V Phadke (Retd) Freelance Researcher, Bengaluru, spoke on *Future of Air Power in India*, on January 27, 2016

Wednesday Discussion Meetings



Ricky Kej, Proprietor, Music Producer, Music Director, Raveolution Studios, Bengaluru, spoke on *Music and Leadership*, on January 20, 2016

NIAS Literary, Arts and Heritage Forum

NIAS Literary, Art and Heritage Forum aims to facilitate the appreciation, promotion and study of crucial cultural and artistic aspects. In addition to lectures and book readings, the Forum aims to hold screenings of films and to promote art appreciation related to exhibitions. Sharada Srinivasan and Sangeetha Menon are the Coordinators of NIAS Literary, Arts and Heritage Forum.

Mekhola Gomes, Doctoral Scholar, Centre for Historical Studies, JNU, New Delhi, spoke on *The Aesthetics of Power: Representations of Kingship within the Early Pallava Imperium*, on March 21, 2016

Corinna Wessels-Mevissen, an Independent Researcher affiliated with the Asian Art Museum, Berlin/Germany, spoke on *Orientation and Protection: Some Aspects of the Depiction of the Guardians of the Directions (Dikpalas) in Southern India*, on January 28, 2016

A Film Screening of *From Africa to India: Sidi Music in the Indian Ocean Diaspora*

Directed by Prof Amy Catlin-Jairazbhoy (UCLA), was held on January 1, 2016, in association with Centre for Contemporary Studies, IISc.

NIAS Literary Arts & Heritage Forum



New Faces ...



Nithin Nagaraj, Assistant Professor,
Consciousness Studies Programme,
School of Humanities



Srikumar Menon, Research Officer,
Heritage Science and Society
Programme, School of Humanities



Subir Rana, Post Doctoral
Associate, Skill, Livelihoods
and Mobilities Programme



D Suba Chandran
Professor, International Strategic and
Security Studies Programme



Bharat Chandra Rout, Post Doctoral
Associate, Education Programme, School
of Social Sciences



Bharat Chandra BK,
Communication Officer, IAS



Shalini Dixit, Assistant Professor,
Education Programme, School of Social
Sciences



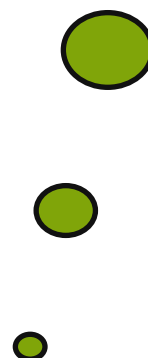
Debosree Banerjee, Post Doctoral
Associate, IAS-UNDP Policy Research
Initiative on Inequality and Human
Development, School of Social Sciences



Jeebanlata Salam, Assistant Professor,
Education Programme, School of Social
Sciences



Prakash Panneerselvam, Post Doctoral
Associate, International Strategic and
Security Studies Programme



Birds and Blooms

M B Rajani presents . . .



One morning as I was driving towards the parking area from the back gate of NIAS, I briefly gazed out of my car window near the hostel. When I caught sight of a couple of my colleagues peering reaching into a bush, I was overcome by curiosity and I stopped to find my friends relishing the taste of a fruit I had never seen before. I was initially reluctant to taste something unfamiliar, but their happy expressions convinced me to change my mind.

Upon tasting them, I found the texture quite similar to the Indian gooseberry. The taste, however, is far more bland and it has a hint of sourness. It is a bit too mild in flavour for my liking, but it is such a pretty fruit. It has several names too: Bell fruit, Paneer fruit, Water apple, Nukavicca, Chambakka, Jamrul and many more. This bell-shaped fruit is grown and cultivated in tropical regions from South East Asia to the Pacific to the Carribean, with colours ranging from white, pale green or green to red, purple, or crimson, to deep purple or even black.

Botanical name: *Syzygium samarangense*

Family: Myrtaceae

Origin: Greater Sunda Islands, Malay Peninsula and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Common name: Bell fruit, Java apple, Semarang rose-apple, Wax apple, and Wax jambu



Photo Courtesy: Rajani MB



Whirls of Words: The Writer's Space

M B Rajani narrates the story "My New Home"...

If you were a squirrel like I am, you would love the trees on the Vyalikaval main road! I was born there, and I spent my days leaping from one leafy villa to another searching for food. Far below me, I would see a stream of metal monsters – I understand that these are called "cars". This stream is unlike any other I have seen – it flows swiftly and silently early in the morning, but as the sun rises, it becomes thicker and slower and noisier. Oh, how these noises would hurt my little ears! Also, funnily enough, the air would steadily get more and more difficult to breathe. As the morning wore on, I would sometimes feel quite groggy. On one particular morning, this grogginess nearly cost me my life. In doing so, it also completely changed it – *c'est la vie!*

I was upside down on a branch, and from this viewpoint I spotted a particularly tasty looking nut that no other squirrel had noticed. As I leapt towards it, I suddenly felt faint. In my panic, I snatched at the branch instead of grasping it neatly, and my grip failed! In terror, I plunged helplessly into the screaming, snarling stream.

An ordinary stream would welcome my descent with a SPLASH, but here I fell directly onto a car's roof with a resounding BANG! If I hadn't been knocked out immediately, I would have heard a pair of gasps from the two occupants of that vehicle – a mother (who worked at Ramaiah hospital) being driven by her daughter (who worked at NIAS). As the daughter braked, I rolled rather gracefully down the windshield, but ended up at an undignified angle, with my right hind leg stuck beneath a wiper blade.

"Anil...! Anil...!" shouted the mother, using the word for squirrel in her language. The daughter saw that my leg was painfully trapped, and thought of switching on the wipers... but that would have hurt me even more. I was rudely brought to consciousness by piercing horns as the cars behind angrily hooted at one that was (from their viewpoint) inexplicably immobile. I twisted and turned, and this time I heard the mother's joyous screams: "He's alive...! He's Alive...!"

They drove on until they reached the hospital. The mother got out quickly – vehicles were not allowed to wait there – and whispered to me "You'll be fine dear... hold on. My daughter's taking you to her institute."
By now, however, the pain was unbearable. Mercifully, I passed out.

The daughter entered her institute's campus, lined with beautiful trees, with cool fragrant breeze caressing colourful flowers and fluttering leaves. When she stopped the car and pulled the wiper, I did not move. "Don't die now little one – you're free! Go on!" Still I did not stir. A tear rolled down the daughter's cheek, and she felt despair well up inside her. She reached out to gently caress my swollen leg...

...and I JUMPED in fright! Instinct took hold at once and I flew to the ground and rushed up the nearest tree. It was only then I paused and took in my surroundings. "This is my new home...! How marvellous it is!" I looked down and saw the anguish in my saviour's eyes turn to pure joy. She raised her hand in farewell, and with a quick swish of my tail, I disappeared.

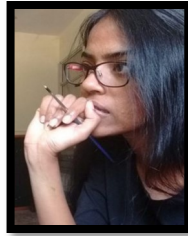


(Well, not for long – you'll see me around at NIAS now and then. And to my saviour – thank you for co-authoring this account of that memorable day in our lives.)

Photo Courtesy: Rajani MB

Through Ekta's Lens

Ekta Gupta continues to capture Nature's beauties @ NIAS ...



To me Nature is like an ocean of wonders. It amazes me everyday and in every way. The astonishing and inspiring fact is that Nature looks different and new every time I see it. I never get bored of a place which is amidst natural beauty, like NIAS, because to me Nature is a place full of newness and wonders.

I always ask myself *why didn't I see this yesterday?* *Why does that blossom look new as if it came up last night?* and so on... Reasons can be numerous - 'novelty in nature' can be attributed to the everyday slight apparent change in the Sun's angle and day-length; interplay of all atmospheric components that affect sunlight; or my encounter with things at slightly different times; or may be simply my inability to receive everything at one time.

Whatever the reason is I am awestruck by the pristine beauty of Nature. And that's what inspires me to capture the novelty which I see everyday in nature through my camera lens.





The Common Jezebel (*Delias eucharis*) butterfly enjoying the sips of nectar!

Photo Courtesy: Ekta Gupta

About NIAS



Founder Chairman
JRD TATA

The National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) was conceived and established by the vision and initiative of the late Mr. J. R. D. Tata. Dr. Raja Ramanna, as the Founder Director, immensely



Founder Director
RAJA RAMANNA

contributed to the growth and development of the Institute. In subsequent years, Prof Roddam Narasimha, Dr. K. Kasturirangan and Dr. V.S. Ramamurthy became the



Current Director
BALDEV RAJ

Directors of NIAS. Presently Prof. Baldev Raj is the Director.

NIAS celebrates its Foundation Day on 20 June.

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