



Webinar held on ‘Democracy Under Strain’

RONO HILLS, SEP 10:

The third part of the series of events scheduled for observing International Democracy Day by Arunachal Pradesh State Election Commission (SEC) in collaboration with Rajiv Gandhi University (RGU), got underway with the successful conduct of a national webinar titled “Democracy Under Strain : Solution for a Changing World”.

The webinar was coordinated by three Departments in RGU, namely, Institute of Distance Education (IDE, RGU), Department of Political Science, and Department of National Security Studies (NSS, RGU).

The programme was attended by dignitaries from all over the country with four distinguished speakers who gave their perspectives on the topic of the webinar.

Prof Amitava Mitra, Pro VC, RGU, gave a brief overview of the webinar. He stated that in 2007 the United Nations General Assembly resolved to observe 15 September as the International Day of Democracy with the purpose of promoting and upholding the principles of democracy and invited all member states and organizations to commemorate the day in an appropriate manner that contributes to raising public awareness.

He recalled that on the establishment of the Indian nation, after it got independence, many political pundits had predicted the inevitability of decline of democracy in the then newly formulated nation. He expressed his pride on where the nation stands today as the largest democracy in the country.

The first distinguished speaker of the programme was Prof (Retd) Surya Narayan Misra. He retired as a professor from Utkal University, Odisha in the year 2010. He took the audience through a historical flashback of democracy. Although democracy may be a western terminology, he said that the concept of ‘welfare state’ was ever present in the Indian tradition which was reflected in Chanakya’s Arthashastra.

He referred to the recent coup in Afghanistan as a threat to democracy worldwide. The apparent withdrawal of the strongest democracy in the world from Afghanistan and its failure to create a smooth transition of power in over two decades of its rule, has set a panic button in the world, as the next target is going to be the largest democracy in the world, he predicted. This, he said, is the greatest strain to democracy in recent times. He expounded on the various waves of democracy as popularized by various political scientists such as Samuel P Huntington.

With the growing threat to democracy from autocratic regimes, Prof Narayan pointed out that the democratic world has yet not found an ‘hounourable means’ to stop the spread of un-democratic

regimes in the world. He referred to the slogan given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi “Sabka saath, sabka vikas, sabka viswas and sabka prayas” as the ideal voice of Indian democracy.

He, however, noted that India has to take huge strides in achieving this goal as the world looks towards India to lead from the front. He acknowledged that there are many caveats in Indian democracy. In order to get past all these and emerge as a proper democracy, he proposed that India needs to have an accountable, transparent and democratically performative governance model. He opined that democracy is the only form of governance that can bring peace to the volatility of the world.

He also opined that some of the autocratic republics in the world are using economic power to justify their model of ruling over democratic form of governance. Narayan has also been a visiting faculty to the Department of Political Science, Rajiv Gandhi University, till 2017. He lauded the organizing committee for organizing this programme on the day when India is celebrating Ganesh Chaturthi, in his concluding remarks.

“My notion of Peace is not devoid of security”, is how Prof. Priyankar Upadhyaya began his lecture to start the second technical session. He also reiterated Prof. Narayan’s view that democracy may be an alien terminology for India but the democratic value system has always been an intrinsic part of the Indian nation. Traditionally, India imbibed the concept of sastratha and acceptance of opposite and multiple viewpoints.

He expressed that an “ideal democracy cannot exist.” The need of the hour is the continuous evolution of democratic values by the stakeholders of democracy. He stressed that even though democracy in the present context may have many shortcomings, there is no replacement to the democratic form of governance. The real world democracy has changed over the course of its long march through the ages.

He expressed his concern over the manipulation of people’s mandate through various social media platforms. Such subliminal narratives, propounded through the digital media platforms raises the query of whether the electoral results as the true voice of the common masses, he added. The excessive involvement of money in elections is also a blot in the way of evolution of democratic values according to Prof. Upadhyaya.

He currently holds the UNESCO Chair for Peace and Intercultural Understanding and serves on the UNESCO/ UniTwin Executive Committee of Inter-religious Dialogue and Intercultural Understanding (IDIU). He has also served in Banaras Hindu University for over four decades in different teaching and research positions. Despite traveling to many parts of the globe, he expressed that Arunachal Pradesh still remains a ‘Romantic Imagination’ for him. He enunciated his desire to visit Arunachal Pradesh in the near future.

Nyali Ete, Secretary, SECAP, gave an administrative perspective to the topic in discussion in the webinar. Being an APCS cadre of 1992 batch and having served as an Extra Assistant Commissioner (EAC) in both West Kameng and Tirap districts of the state, he was specific to Arunachal Pradesh in his address to the online gathering.

He stated that free, fair and timely elections are the key to success of representation of the will of people in the state. Hacking of social media platforms is a serious threat to democratic expression of the common masses, according to Shri Ete. He specified that the erosion of democratic values in the country is a result of degradation of the democratic setup in the country.

He however feels that all is not lost as the administrative stakeholders and the Election Commission of India needs to play a proactive rather than a reactive role in order to revive the faith of people in democracy. Prof. P. K. Panigrahi, Coordinator, Dept. of NSS, RGU, also focused his deliberation on Arunachal Pradesh as he has been a long standing academic witness to the changing geo-political scenario in the state.

He acknowledged that there are many varieties of democracies world over. But he also believes that democracy is the only modus operandi of governance. He lamented on the fact that the democratic setup in India has lost its politeness over the course of time, which can be witnessed with the unparliamentary activities that one is privy to in the Indian temple of democracy. Partisan press, stressed judiciary, coercion and aggression in politics have shaken the four pillars of democracy.

Speaking about Arunachal Pradesh, he said that the democratic setup in the state needs to focus on ideology based politics, which will prevent mass defection of democratically elected representatives in the state. This, according to him, is essential to restoring the faith of people in democracy.

Prof Saket Kushwaha Vice- Chancellor, RGU gave his regards to all the members present in the webinar. He reminded the gathering about the political thought of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and the sacrifice made by him and Sardar Bhagat Singh. We need to ensure that we guard our democracy in order to truly acknowledge the sacrifices of the people who fought for our freedom. In order to do that he said “we need to rhyme our thoughts in one direction in order to find a common axis of democratic existence.”

Nearly 100 participants attended the webinar form across the country.



State Election Commission of Arunachal Pradesh
(SECAP)

in collaboration with

Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh
(A Central University)

organises

NATIONAL WEBINAR

on

**Democracy Under strain:
Solution for a changing world**

on

10th September 2021

11:00 AM - 01:00 PM



About the University

Rajiv Gandhi University (formerly Arunachal University) is the premier institution for higher education in the state of Arunachal Pradesh, located at the picturesque tabloid the Rono Hills, approximately 25 km away from the state Itanagar. Ever since its inception, the University has been trying to achieve excellence and fulfill the objectives as envisaged in the University Act. The University was established on 4th February, 1984 and the foundation stone was laid by the former Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi. Subsequently, the university started Post Graduate course from the academic session 1988-89. The University was converted into a Central University on April 9, 2007 by a notification of Ministry of Human Recourses Development, Government of India. Being, the only affiliating University in the state, it has its jurisdiction encompassing whole the state. In total there are 41 colleges affiliated to this University including private and government. In the tune with motto of the University is "Vidhyaamritshnute" the university has been striving to maintain high standards in both teaching and research.

About the Institute of Distance of Education

Institute of Distance Education was established in 2005 and affiliated to Institute of Distance Education is affiliated to Rajiv Gandhi University. The institute aims is to provide higher education opportunities to those who are unable to join regular academic and vocational education programmes in the affiliated colleges of the University and make higher education reach to the doorsteps in rural and geographically remote areas of Arunachal Pradesh in particular and North-eastern part of India in general. The education through distance mode is an alternative mode of imparting instruction to overcome the problems of access, infrastructure and socio-economic barriers. The institute offers Masters degree, Bachelor degree and Certificate programmes in the field of Art.

About the Webinar

The idea of this webinar is to make the participants aware of the concept of democracy and what are the challenges for democracy. The topic of the webinar is "Democracy Under strain: Solution for a Changing World". This webinar will comprise of all essential knowledge regarding the concept of democracy, especially in India and world's scenario. This in turn, will improve the quality of the teaching and learning which will motivate the student and scholars to take up the challenges in this particular field.

Objectives of the Webinar

- Give a deeper understanding of the concept of democracy.
- To introduce what is the real strain upon democracy.
- To discuss the need of democracy in India and world's politics.
- Making the participants aware of how to strengthen democracy.
- To understand the linkage between India's democracy, regional democracy and world democracy and its impact upon the entire world.

Who can participate?

- Faculty members of Colleges and Universities
- Eminent academicians.
- Students' and Research Scholars
- Any individual who has the desire to understanding about India's democracy and world democracy.

About the Dept. of National Security Studies (NSS)

The Department of National Security Studies (NSS) was established in the year 2017. The state of Arunachal Pradesh is considered as a security and strategic hot-spot in South East Asia, as it has inherent potential to promote academic research on policy analysis on the issue related to national, regional and international security; particularly border security management in the hills and forests. Apart from curricular activities the students and scholars of the department are introduced to policy analysis using innovative teaching and research skills along with field visits. Students and faculties of National Security Studies (NSS) intend to study and examine all conflicting issues of national and international importance from the prism of Indian security traditions, to protect its national interest, territorial integrity and world peace. This would pave the way for all the stakeholders to engage in constructive dialogue on issues related to national diplomacy, security and strategy. The core values of the department are to develop critical thinking, building spirit of democratic values and contributing towards nation building process.

About the Dept. of Political Science

The Department of Political Science has completed 32 (Thirty two) years of its existence in May 2020. Ever since its inception it has been successfully implementing its mission of providing quality and innovative education and carrying out research activities with thrust on innovation. Now the Department offers M. Phil. & Ph. D. programmes on regular basis along with the Postgraduate programme. Apart from conventional areas it is giving special emphases on the studies related to East and South East Asian Studies, North East India, Traditional Institutions and Indegenious Governance. Apart from this, while the department is engaged with fulfilling the objectives of the Rajiv Gandhi University, has contributed in building up of a strong and meritorious bureaucracy selected through APPSC and other recruiting agencies.

Chief Patrons



**Shri.
Hage Kojeen**
Hon'ble State Election Commissioner
State Election Commission of
Arunachal Pradesh



**Prof.
Saket Kushwaha**
Vice Chancellor
Rajiv Gandhi University

Patrons



**Dr.
N. T. Rikam**
Registrar
Rajiv Gandhi University



**Prof.
Amitava Mitra**
Pro Vice Chancellor
Rajiv Gandhi University



**Prof.
Nabam Naka Hina**
Head,
Dept. of Political Science
Rajiv Gandhi University



**Prof.
P. K. Panigrahi**
Coordinator,
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**Ms.
Bide Mindo**
Guest Faculty
Institute for Distant Education
Rajiv Gandhi University



**Mr.
Karana Pradhan**
PA to Director
Institute for Distant Education
Rajiv Gandhi University

11:00am **Welcome Address**

Welcome Address by Dr. N. T. Rikam

11:05am **Address by**

Prof. Amitabh Mitra, Pro Vice Chancellor, Rajiv Gandhi University, Rono Hills, Doimukh, Arunachal Pradesh.

11:10am **Technical Session 1**

A talk by Prof. Surya Narayan Misra, Former Head, Department of Political Science, Utkal University, Odisha

11:40am **Technical Session II**

A talk by Prof. Priyanka Upadhyay, UNESCO, Chair of Peace and Inter-Cultural Understanding & Faculty of Social Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, Uttar Pradesh

12:10pm **Technical Session III**

A talk by Shri Nyali Ete, Secretary, State Election Commission of Arunachal Pradesh.

12:40pm **Technical Session IV**

Prof. P.K. Panigrahi, Coordinator Dept. of National Security Studies (NSS), Rajiv Gandhi University, Rono Hills, Doimukh, Arunachal Pradesh.

01:10pm **Special Address**

Shri Hage Kojeen, Honourable State Election Commissioner, State Election Commission of Arunachal Pradesh

01:20pm **Special Remarks**

Prof. Saket Kushwaha, Honourable Vice Chancellor, Rajiv Gandhi University, Rono Hills, Doimukh, Arunachal Pradesh

01:30pm **Vote for Thanks**

Head, Department of Political Science, Rajiv Gandhi University

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