SAMCS
SOUTH ASIAN MEDIA
& CULTURAL STUDIES
CONFERENCE

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SAMCS
SOUTH ASIAN MEDIA
& CULTURAL STUDIES
CONFERENCE

The 8th South Asian Media & Cultural Studies Conference

IMAGINING FUTURES

February 10-11, 2022
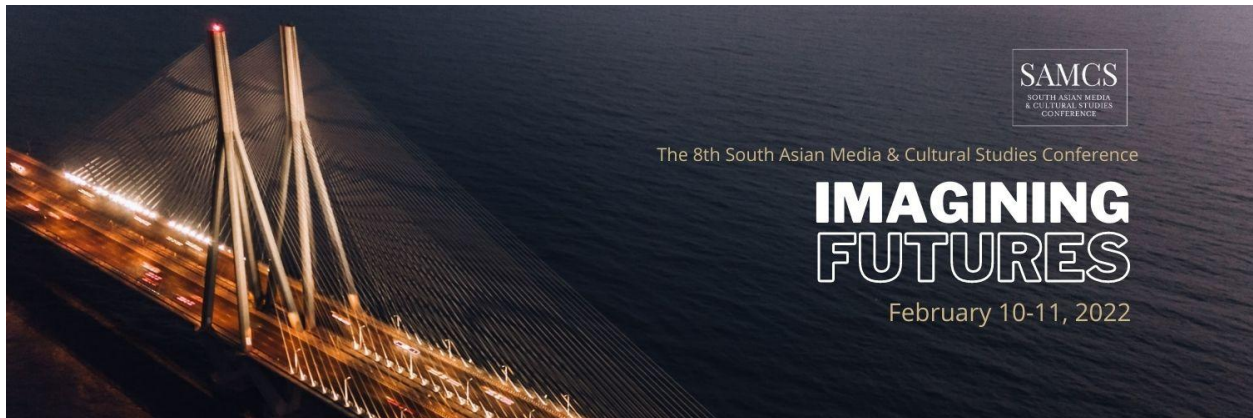
"*Imagining Futures*"

8th Annual South Asian Media and Cultural Studies Conference 2022
February 10-11, 2022 (Hybrid/Virtual)
Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida

Stream DAY 1 (Thursday, February 10) Live on YouTube:
https://youtu.be/dBzP_rnsGsA

Stream DAY 2 (Friday, February 11) Live on YouTube:
https://youtu.be/jCjY8senZRs

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Welcome Message

On behalf of the organizing committee, we welcome you to the 8th South Asian Media & Cultural Studies Conference!

This year's theme, "*Imagining Futures*," has been carefully chosen to mark an important milestone of our conference. At this conference, we celebrate South Asia's rich media and cultural research. Additionally, our future vision is to create even greater value to all

corners of the globe. This year's conference will be one for us to share our thoughts and exchange ideas on how to chart our journey forward to reach new heights together.

This year we are taking a different approach from that of a standard academic conference interaction. We seek to highlight and synthesize the contributions of different presenters, and work together in roundtables to highlight key issues we should be addressing in "Imagining Futures" for South Asian Media and Cultural research and practices.

We have an exciting program at this conference that will allow members to reflect upon and celebrate past accomplishments, renew friendships and extend our networks, and jointly explore future research directions. The program includes a hybrid format including pre-recorded presentation panels, live keynote address, and live roundtable panels. Pre-recorded research presentations organized in panels are posted as videos that can be viewed and commented on YouTube. The links to pre-recorded presentations are included in the conference program. The live sessions will be streamed live on YouTube on both days. You are welcome to leave questions for the pre-recorded panels and the live sessions through the chat option on YouTube. We hope that you will have a productive and fun‑filled time at this very special conference.

We would like to thank our conference partner, CHRIST (Deemed to be University) for their continued support. We want to thank the members of our organizing committee for their tireless efforts to plan this conference. Lastly, we would like to thank all of the conference participants for their contributions which are the foundation of this conference.

Thank you!

Dr. Stephen McDowell
Interim Dean, College of Communication and Information,
John H. Phipps Professor of Communication,
Florida State University

Dr. John K. Mayo
Director, William A. Kerr Intercultural Education & Dialogue Initiative,
College of Social Sciences and Public Policy,
Professor & Dean Emeritus, College of Communication & Information,
Florida State University

Dr. Cynthia Green
Director,
Center for Global Engagement,
Florida State University

Dr. Vaibhav Diwanji
Assistant Professor,
William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications,
University of Kansas

Conference website: bit.ly/samcs22

Facebook: facebook.com/samcsfsu

Instagram: instagram.com/samcsfsu

Twitter: twitter.com/samcsfsu

YouTube: bit.ly/samcsyoutube

CONFERENCE PROGRAM AND SCHEDULE

Thursday, February 10, 2022

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM (EST) (Virtual Networking Session) (*No Live Stream)

Open virtual networking session only for the conference presenters via Zoom.

9:15 AM - 10:15 AM (EST) (Live Virtual Round-table with YouTube Livestream)
([Click to watch the livestream](#))

Live Virtual Round-table Panel on "The Current State of South Asian Media and Cultural Studies"

Moderator: Tom Taylor, Associate Director, The FSU Social Science Scholars Program and Adjunct Professor, Florida State University

Facilitator: Dr. Vaibhav S. Diwanji, Assistant Professor, William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications, University of Kansas

Panelists:

- Dr. Uma Vangal ShivaKumar, Fulbright-Nehru Research Scholar at Kenyon College and Adjunct Faculty, Asian College of Journalism

- Mr. Asif Ali Bhatti, Journalist, Columnist, Teacher, Unionist

- Dr. Kailash Koushik, Assistant Professor, Media Studies Department, CHRIST (Deemed to be University)

- Prof. Biswajit Das, President, All India Media and Communication Association (AICMA)

- Dr. Stephen McDowell, Interim Dean, College of Communication and Information, John H. Phipps Professor of Communication, Florida State University

10:30 AM - 11:30 AM (EST) (Live Virtual Keynote with YouTube Livestream)
([Click to watch the livestream](#))

KEYNOTE & "Ruth K and Shepard Broad Lectureship on International Affairs" Lecture and Center for Global Engagement's "Engage Your World" Speaker Series

Keynote Speaker Introduction: Dr. John K. Mayo, Director, William A. Kerr Intercultural Education & Dialogue Initiative, College of Social Sciences and Public Policy, Professor & Dean Emeritus, College of Communication & Information, Florida State University

KEYNOTE ADDRESS:

"Disinformation: Shaping the Future Landscape"

Ms. Saima Saleem
Counselor
Pakistan Mission to the United Nations
New York, NY

Dr. Mariam Shaikh
Counselor, Press and Public Diplomacy
Pakistan Mission to the United Nations
New York, NY

End of Day 1

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<mark>Friday, February 11, 2022</mark>

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM (EST) (Virtual Networking Session) (*No Live Stream)

Open virtual networking session only for the conference presenters via Zoom.

9:30 AM - 11:30 AM (EST) (Live Virtual Round-table with YouTube Livestream)
([Click to watch the livestream](#))

"Imagining Futures" Round-table Panel Session

Moderator: Tom Taylor, Associate Director, The FSU Social Science Scholars Program and Adjunct Professor, Florida State University

Facilitator: Dr. Vaibhav Diwanji, Assistant Professor, William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communication, The University of Kansas

Panelists:

- Dr. Rabia Akhtar, Director, Center for Security, Strategy and Policy Research, University of Lahore

- Dr. Madhurima Sarkar-Swaisgood, Economics Affairs Officer in Disaster Risk Reduction at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP)

- Prof. Ravindran Gopalan, Central University of Tamil Nadu

- Prof. Nandini Lakshmikantha, Professor, Manipal Institute of Communication

- Dr. Stephen McDowell, Interim Dean, College of Communication and Information, John H. Phipps Professor of Communication, Florida State University

- Dr. Tanu Kohli Bagwe, Teaching Faculty, Global Citizenship Certificate, Center for Global Engagement, Florida State University

End of Day 2

(The 8th Annual SAMCS Conference Live Sessions Conclude)

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PRE-RECORDED PRESENTATION PANELS

Panel 1: Invited Speakers *(Pre-recorded Presentation Videos)*

- *From Chaos to Cooperation: Framework for Regional Security in South Asia* (Click to watch the pre-recorded presentation video)
  - **Presenter**: Dr. Rabia Akhtar, Director, Center for Security, Strategy and Policy Research, University of Lahore

- *Building resilience to the disaster-climate-health nexus in South Asia- Takeaways for policy and analysis from the Asia Pacific Disaster Report 2021* (Click to watch the pre-recorded presentation video)
  - **Presenter**: Dr. Madhurima Sarkar-Swaisgood, Economics Affairs Officer in Disaster Risk Reduction at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP)

- *Transnational Lives - Digital imaging of identities in a global world* (Click to watch the pre-recorded presentation video)
  - **Presenter**: Dr. Uma Vangal ShivaKumar, Fulbright- Nehru Research Scholar at Kenyon College and Adjunct Faculty, Asian College of Journalism, Chennai

- *Freedom vs. Accountability: Case of Journalistic Ethics of Pakistani Commercial Media* (Click to watch the pre-recorded presentation video)
  - **Presenter**: Mr. Asif Ali Bhatti, Journalist, Columnist, Teacher, Unionist.

- *Communication, Spatial Practices, Everyday Lives of "Subalterns" and Covid Pandemic in Chennai* (Click to watch the pre-recorded presentation video)
  - **Presenter**: Prof. Ravindran Gopalan, Central University of Tamil Nadu

- *Road Safety in Indian Western Ghats: State of Knowledge and way forward* (Click to watch the pre-recorded presentation video)
  - **Presenter**: Prof. Nandini Lakshmikantha, Professor, Manipal Institute of Communication

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Panel 2: Imagining Futures of Labor and Media in South Asia *(Pre-recorded Presentation Videos)*

- *Children of a Lesser God: A Social History of Indian Circus* ([Click to watch the pre-recorded presentation video](#))
  - **Presenter**: Nisha Poyyaprath Rayaroth, Fulbright Postdoctoral Fellow, South Asian Studies Council, Yale University
  - *Abstract: I hope to pursue some key questions regarding legality, state and the rights of children and interrogate ahistorical constructions of the idea of "childhood" in the context of a historic judgment by the Supreme Court of India on 18th April 2011. After a long legal battle on a petition filed by a non-governmental organization Bachpan Bachao Andolan [Save the Childhood Movement] founded by the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize laureate Kailash Satyarthi, the Supreme Court banned the training, employment and performance of children below fourteen in Indian circus industry. The scenario under discussion assumes transnational dimensions as many of the children caught up in this battle are from the neighboring country, Nepal. Thus it teases open uncomfortable questions not only about the trendy discourse on child trafficking but also fuzzy borders in the face of livelihood and survival. The petitioners proposed to notify circus as a "hazardous industry" and argued that there is instability in the children's life due to the "nomadic existence". I wish to probe the violence implicit in this gaze of "cruelty" and some key aspects regarding body, performance, dignity and livelihood which are rendered invisible in this discourse. I shall analyse the historical context in which many had found in this"nomadic existence" a liberating potential against the atrocious social proscriptions within which they live.*

- *Process of Stress Management of Ready-made Garment (RMG) Workers: A Case Study in Bangladesh* ([Click to watch the pre-recorded presentation video](#))
  - **Presenter**: Sherin Farhana Moni, School of Communication, University of Southern Mississippi
  - *Abstract: Bangladesh is the second largest apparel exporter in the world and ranked third in the list of RMG exporters to the United States. Despite of this it becomes a frequent headline of world media because of garment factory collapse and fire break out. It is very much likely that work related stress and frustration among RMG workers poses a severe threat for stability and continuity of production in the RMG sector in Bangladesh. This study addressed the necessity of investigating the reasons of stresses among Bangladesh RMG workers. Based on the reasons, this paper examined how do the occupational stresses of workers lead them to cope with and communicate about such stresses. Data was collected from the workers through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGD). A qualitative analysis of collected data indicated three main patterns under the category of source of stress: Job Insecurity, Fear of Death at Workplace, and Sexual Harassment. Two patterns emerged that explain the coping mechanisms: Family Communication and Humorous Media Contents.*

- *Women at work: Feminism and All-Female film Crew* (Video not available)
  - **Presenter**: Nirmala MN, Assistant Professor, Department of Media Studies, CHRIST (deemed to be University)
  - *Abstract: Indian cinema is male-dominated both on-screen as well as off-screen. Though the condition of women in the film labour market is witnessing a transition with a growing demand for gender-inclusive workspaces, there are very few critical studies on understanding female labour in the film production process and the difficulties female workers encounter in an otherwise male-dominated workspace. Films made by all-female film crew is uncommon and the study aims to critically examine such films and their contribution towards understanding women in cinema both on and off-screen.*

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Panel 3: Imagining Futures of Representation and Media in South Asia
(Pre-recorded Presentation Videos)

- *Life under the New Taliban: Visual Rhetoric Analysis of Photographs from a Western View in Afghanistan* (Click to watch the pre-recorded presentation video)
    - **Presenter**: Fariba Pajooh, Department of Communication, Wayne State University

    - ***Abstract:*** *In the first photo, a group of extremist Muslim soldiers, dressed in local clothes and long beards, are praying. Their American automatic weapons are placed on the ground next to them. They seem to be in an amusement park. Behind them is a blue pirate ship. In another photo, the Taliban are seen boarding a pirate ship. They have fun for free in a park whose doors are closed to the public and children. They ride the pirate ship with AK-47, and M4 assault rifles strapped to their chests. The Taliban soldiers were mostly children from impoverished Pakistani or Afghan families whose fathers sent them to Islamic schools, or "madrasas." (Azami, 2014). These children in what is known as "Hanafi - Wahhabi Islamic schools" are subject to strict religious teaching. (Halverson, 2010). They have no chance to experience the "Childish world" and according to some traditions, they may be raped by their religious teachers (Bache Bazi, 2021; Prey & Spears, 2021). This paper's visual rhetoric analysis will focus on the visual contradiction of the behavior of Taliban and what they have learned in religious schools, as portrayed in Andrew Quilty's Instagram photography, late August 2021, through visual juxtaposition (Shapiro, 2007). This paper will argue that these images remind the viewer that the Taliban were once children and teenagers educated in Pakistani religious schools.*

- *The Importance of Accurate South Asian Representation in Western Literature* (Click to watch the pre-recorded presentation video)
    - **Presenter**: Anum Afra, Habib University

    - ***Abstract:*** *Even in the 21st century, when the world is grappling with issues of inclusion and diversity, only 1% of all children's literature feature a lead character from a black, asian, or minority ethnic origin, and only 4% of books have any black, asian, or minority ethnic characters at all. For children and adults alike, stories are not only a window into another world, but also a way for people to see themselves and their struggles being portrayed and explored by protagonists. Hence, lack of representation of any community can often lead to internalised self-hate and doubt, as those people would never see themselves or their culture as normal. The rest of the population would start regarding them as bizarre because they would never hear, see, or read of anyone who has had similar experiences. This paper, therefore, sheds light on the lack of South Asian representation in children's and young adult literature and the long-term implications it has. When it comes to representation, we also struggle to witness people from the South Asian community being accurately represented. The South Asian community consists of many identities, ethnicities, religions, cultures, and languages, making it very different and unique. Therefore, using one person to represent the entire community is not an accurate portrayal and it simply perpetuates dangerous stereotypes to develop. Thus, this paper also delves deeper into the stereotypical portrayal of the South Asian community in western literature and the need to counter the harmful consequences it may lead to. Moreover, it attempts to challenge the misconceptions built around South Asians due to the characters that have been caricatured by the west in many of their writings.*

- *What's in a Name?: Preserving South Asian Name Identity through a shared Phonetic Sound System for Pronunciation* ([Click to watch the pre-recorded presentation video](#))
  - **Presenter**: Gaurav Harshe, Sara Collins, Amber Noor Mustafa, and Amogh Basavaraj, Florida State University
  - *Abstract: Aim of the Session Establish the cultural significance of a name as an integral part of a person's identity. Provide tools that allow for successful articulation of unique phonetic sound units of names Context According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child every individual is entitled to a name which is to be their identity. The state must ensure that this identity is safeguarded and respected. In the past, devaluing people's identities has been a tool of imperialism. By 'othering' indigenous cultures, traditions, languages, names, artifacts and knowledge local communities and peoples have been marginalized in their own homelands. The same is experienced if a name is not used properly in a foreign context and therefore everyone must make an effort to pronounce names correctly. With a shared speech-governing system, such as IPA phonetics, individuals from contrasting cultures can learn to pronounce names with reliance on individual sound units rather than an orthographic system. This poses important implications for improved relationships and interactions between people of different cultures. This presentation will identify the impact of this experience and will also highlight 2 steps to preserve and safeguard the cultural significance of names and name identities. How people of international origin can preserve their identity through their names. How the community can understand and utilize the necessary tools to ensure names are pronounced correctly.*

- *Doing Television Ethnography in Bangladesh: Experience, Experiments and Challenges* ([Click to watch the pre-recorded presentation video](#))
  - **Presenter**: Dr. Ratan Kumar Roy, Coordinator, International Research Center, SIMEC Institute of Technology
  - *Abstract: Without an ethnographic framework, it is nearly impossible to examine the sociocultural and politico-ideological undercurrents of television news-making and the viewing practices of the audience. The dual prospects of ethnography open up a dynamic ground for media research; it enables us to know and offers a unique way of knowing, qualifies us to participate and observe, simultaneously appears to be ontological and epistemological, theoretical and methodological, and a way of researching and writing. For any explorations in the world of media, in this case for television, ethnography is significant because the media practices are central to our lives although never up to our expectations, all the participants and non-participants have something to say about it and we hardly know about its internal dynamic. Why is ethnography of television in the context of Bangladesh significant? By attempting to answer this question, this paper outlines the experiences of doing a television ethnography in the context of news and audiences interface. Experiments of conducting multi-sited ethnography blended with auto-ethnographic accounts amount to reflexivity and ethnographic sensibility. The dearth of audiences ethnography on the one hand and dominant trend of content analysis in the media studies on the other side made it more difficult to attempt media ethnography in Bangladesh. The paper indicated the challenges to conducting television ethnography in Bangladesh while highlighting the possible ways to overcome those by conducting long-term study among the audiences, engaging with them in their sociocultural context, reflecting back into the intervals of the fieldwork, examining the culture and politics of television media production and finally pointing out the interface between the audiences and television.*

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Panel 4: Imagining Futures of Media beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic in South Asia *(Pre-recorded Presentation Videos)*

- *A pandemic within a pandemic: The impact of COVID-19 on help-seeking and service utilization by South Asian victims of intimate partner violence in the U.S.* ([Click to watch the pre-recorded presentation video](#))
  - **Presenter**: Dr. Satarupa Dasgupta, Assistant Professor of Applied Communication, Ramapo College of New Jersey
  - *Abstract: The paper delineates the impact of COVID-19 on help-seeking and service utilization by South Asian victims of intimate partner violence (IPV) living in the US. The paper focuses on an understudied part of IPV response and services---culture specific communication strategies and response techniques used in help-seeking and service provision. The study utilizes the conceptual framework of intersectionality which recognizes that immigrant women and women of color negotiate a pandemic through multiple systems of oppression. It is anticipated that the study findings will help to reevaluate current intervention modalities, explore best practices, and offer recommendations to cater better to the needs of immigrant victims of violence within the context of the pandemic. The study also hopes to address the gaps in current research, and demonstrate that culture specific communication techniques and response strategies can play a crucial role in victim advocacy for sexual and gender-based violence---especially among underserved immigrant communities.*

- *Usage and Consumption of mobile media applications by Internal Migrant Workers during the COVID-19 Pandemic in India* ([Click to watch the pre-recorded presentation video](#))
  - **Presenter**: Amoolya Rajappa, Fulbright Scholar, Florida State University
  - *Abstract: Mobile media is intricately interwoven into the public and private lives of migrant workers because it brings together multiple, previously divergent functions. The COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent migrant exodus in India reveals a startling range of diversification of mobile media usage and consumption among migrant labourers. This paper tries to chart out the many ways in which the pandemic forced them to find more urgent, meaningful uses for mobile-led media applications, turning them into producers of their own symbolic space. Drawing on reports that assessed the impact of COVID-19 lockdown on internal migrant workers and ethnographic interviews, the article also reiterates the importance of educating migrant workers on the access and correct usage of valuable mobile media applications.*

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Panel 5: Imagining Futures of Entertainment, Culture, and Media in South Asia *(Pre-recorded Presentation Videos)*

- *Towards 'infictotainment': a study of coverage of Bollywood actor Sushant Rajput's death on Indian TV news* ([Click to watch the pre-recorded presentation video](#))
  - **Presenter**: Anilesh Kumar, Hong Kong Baptist University
  - *Abstract: A binary approach to comprehend infotainment in relation to journalism has added more obscurity to this underexplored concept than conceptual clarity. While scholars have been researching infotainment since the 1980s, the changing nature of journalism in the digital age has made the genre of news elusive. Moreover, much of its theoretical application has been centred around 'soft news' limiting the scope of its*

applicability rather than broadening its use in journalism studies. This study aims to fill the gap in existing literature by extending the dimensions of infotainment and stress the consideration of 'hard news' as its sub-genre. More importantly, within this sub-genre, it proposes the concept of 'infictotainment' as a new genre of news which pertains to a fusion of information, fiction, and entertainment. Building on the seminal work of Brants and Neijens (2007) this study analyses the coverage of the 2020 controversial death of a Bollywood star, using their infotainment scale and expands it by adding fiction as content characteristics to map the changing nature of infotainment. The findings of this study are expected to have two important implications: the proposed new dimension will help expand theorising infotainment; and contribute to understanding the changing nature of television news, particularly in the context of developing countries.

- *Transmedia Imagination of Contemporary Hindi Cinema* ([Click to watch the pre-recorded presentation video](#))
  - **Presenter**: Dr. Ipsita Barat, Assistant Professor in the Department of Mass Communication and Videography, St. Xavier's College
  - *Abstract: Films are now being watched in smaller formats such as on television, laptop, and mobile screens. Simultaneously, films are also being distributed for such smaller formats along with theaters and multiplexes. This has led to the death of a particular brand of cinephilia, for whom the definition of the same only constituted the ritual of watching films in theaters. With the advent of digital media, we saw a rapid decline of celluloid cinephilia and an emergence of 'mutated' cinephilia (Michelson 1998, Valck & Hagener, 2005). Despite having access to film theaters, the new cinephile watches a multitude of films on television or other home video options as well as on the internet. Thus, new cinephilia can be referred to as technology-mediated cinephilia. This new technology mediated cinephile comprises a migratory audience who constantly shift from one media to another as well as from one device to another, giving prominence to transmedia storytelling with films like Ra.One and Dhoom 3 being examples of such intermedia transactions. The economic logic of transmedia storytelling is effectively the media conglomeration and horizontal integration of the media industry. In this, the content (film) is exploited across various franchises such as television shows, video games, live shows, merchandise among others. In addition, contemporary media practices such as licensing and selling of media rights also enable the process of co-creation of multiple media industries.*

- *Gendering the future Indian smart city: hip-hop song by the Khadar Girls* ([Click to watch the pre-recorded presentation video](#))
  - **Presenter**: Dr. Radhika Khanna, Faculty, School of Media and Communication, Pondicherry University
  - *Abstract: This paper focuses on Khadar ki Ladkiyan (Girls of Khadar), a hip-hop music video co-produced with young women from a marginalised settlement in Delhi's urban periphery, Madanpur Khadar JJ Colony. The paper examines the music video produced by Khadar ki Ladkiyan using textual analysis to demonstrate how the group fosters voice and enables agency by contesting the deeply entrenched patriarchal social and cultural values of their families, neighbourhoods, and social networks to reclaim public spaces in India. The production and circulation of the music video on YouTube is about enabling visibility and opening up a representational space in the digital ecology for women to have their voices heard. As the video's description on YouTube states, "The song co-produces with the women, an alternate visual language and rhetoric that uses digital technologies to speak back and gender the future Indian smart city."Whether articulated as the ability to move out of the house into the public domain or the ability to form new social networks via social media, mobility can engender changes in young women's identity and challenge normalised gendered practices. What is at stake in Khadar ki Ladkiyan is the reclaiming of the masculine streets of Delhi. The paper critically charts*

the journey of these young women to demonstrate how this initiative materialised through the coming together of several individuals, organisations and technologies to produce a creative, political music video. In "Imagining Futures", we can draw on the practices and insights from an international research network of "academics, ICT enterprises, feminist NGOs and creative industries from UK and India" that have reflected on crucial challenges young women everyday experience daily as they navigate and live in the city. 'Gendering the Smart City, ' which combines "approaches from urban geography, gender studies and Geographic Information System (GIS)", is an international collaboration between King's College London, societal partners Safetipin and Jagori in India. Funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK, the partners work towards building a collective future. The hip-hop song by the Khadar Girls is an outcome from this project that has endeavoured to cross disciplinary, geographic, and cultural boundaries.

- *Portrayal of Dalit Female Protagonists in 'Geeli Pucchi' and '200 Halla Ho'* ([Click to watch the pre-recorded presentation video](#))
    - **Presenter**: Chandrakant Goutam Kamble, Symbiosis Institute of Media and Communication
    - ***Abstract:*** *Dalit women form an oppressed class under caste hierarchy, and the early Hindi cinema had to portrait them as victims. Even contemporary filmmakers continue the trend to portray Dalits stereotypical by upper-caste. Dalit women's problems encompass gender and economic deprivation and discrimination associated with religion, caste, and untouchability, resulting in the denial of their social, economic, cultural, and political rights. They are triply oppressed, facing caste, class, and gender discrimination. Dalit women-centric movies are very few, and they have been made from the upper-caste perspective. The study examines the portrayal of Dalit female protagonists in selected Hindi cinema. Through Gayatri Spivak's subaltern terms, can the subaltern speak? Spivak argues that west scholars discussing the others (third world) authoritatively presented without interest, and scientific and accurate produced knowledge as objectives. Precisely, upper-caste filmmakers are producing movies about the Dalit experiences. The study will explore how they portrayed of Dalit female body in their cinema.*

- *An immersive virtual experience of Kathakali: An experiment in virtual reality* ([Click to watch the pre-recorded presentation video](#))
    - **Presenters**: Vishnu Achutha Menon, School of Communication, Central University of Tamil Nadu; N Boobalakrishnan, Assistant Professor, School of Communication, Central University of Tamil Nadu; and Aswathi Prasad Clinical Psychologist, Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, PK Das Institute of Medical Sciences
    - ***Abstract****: An experiment was conducted to study the immersive virtual environment experience of the audience for the Redbeard festival of Kathakali performance, Kathakali is a major form of classical Indian theatre. The performance was recorded in Insta 360 camera, they are designed to shoot high-resolution content specially designed for Virtual reality (VR) or 360 degrees and projected the visuals in Head-Mounted Display (HMD). The experiment was carried out among 33 participants (general audience) recruited through purposive sampling. Descriptive measures suggest that nearly half of the participants had prior awareness regarding virtual reality, however, only a few participants had prior virtual experience of Kathakali. The range of scores obtained for engagement and immersion was found to be relatively consistent with the other components. Correlation analysis indicates significant positive and negative associations between various components of immersive virtual experience. No significant difference was found in the immersive virtual experience of presence, engagement, immersion, flow, emotion, skill, judgement, experience consequence and technology adaptation of the participants*

across different age and education groups, however, a significant difference was found in judgment, experience consequence and technology adaptation of the participants hailing from different localities.

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Panel 6: Imagining Futures of Public Policy, and Media in South Asia
(Pre-recorded Presentation Videos)

- *The Nexus between Media and Democracy: Examining the Impact of Media on the Backsliding Democracy in South Asia* ([Click to watch the pre-recorded presentation video](#))
  - **Presenter**: D.G. Niruka Sanjeewani, Lecturer in International Relations, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University
  - ***Abstract***: *It is obvious that the proper implementation of democracy needs to make citizens responsible. In relation to this, there is an inevitable linkage between the media and democracy. It means that the access information often utilized as an inspection function which ascertain the elected representatives uphold their promises. Within this parameter, though Democracy can be strengthened through independent media, such kind of situation is not prevalent in South Asia as media is often controlled by the ruling parties but not by the ordinary citizens. Most importantly, South Asia is characterized by its large population, growing poverty, as well as weak governance and feeble democratic institutions which creates negative impact on the assurance of democracy. Consequently, countries in South Asia, specifically countries like Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and India have imposed restrictions on the effective usage of media, mainly in gathering and expressing news. The Digital Security Act of Bangladesh, four new bills proposed by the government of Nepal in 2020 namely the Advertisement Regulation Bill, the IT Bill, the Nepal Media Council Bill, and the Public Service Broadcasting Bill and the formation of s regulatory body in Pakistan to oversee media have led to restrict the media freedom. On the other hand, social media has also changed the scope of democracy by creating much more benefits for governing authorities. In this regard, the 2014 general elections in India can be considered as the very first social media election" in India's political history, that started a brand chapter of social media revolution in Indian politics. In this landscape, the key objective of this paper is to examine how far the people can be mis leaded by the media that anyway designates the opposite role of the democracy. In order to attain the relevant objective, the qualitative method will be used by the researcher to analyze both primary and secondary data. The paper will also conclude that the present day the media's role and behavior have changed the scope and parameters of democracy as media is often controlled and influenced by governments. It also brings an argument that the independence of media is still a big issue in the region.*

- *Digital India: An analytical Study of Communication and Digital divide with perspective to Jammu and Kashmir* ([Click to watch the pre-recorded presentation video](#))
  - **Presenters**: Dr. Monisa Qadiri, Sr. Asst. Prof. & Former Head, Journalism & Mass Communication (DJMC) Islamic University of Science & Technology; and Umer Iqbal, Department of Journalism & Mass Communication, IUST Bridge Institute
  - ***Abstract***: *This descriptive and analytical research paper aims to study and analyse connectivity and communication perspective of J&K citizens with government through Digital India e- governance platforms by employing the survey method using probability random sampling This research paper also tries to stipulate the importance of*

digitalization and Digital India Program to bridge the persisting communication digital divide. This research also examined the impact of Digital India program over the way the J&K citizens view it. Keywords: Digital divide, Digital India, e-governance, empowerment, J&K.

● *Media and Diplomacy in the trajectory of Indo-Pak relations* (Video not available)
  ○ **Presenter**: Dr. Monisa Qadiri, Sr. Asst. Prof. & Former Head, Journalism & Mass Communication (DJMC) Islamic University of Science & Technology
  ○ ***Abstract:*** *The present study takes-off from an extensive literature review whereby a significant and a multifarious role of news media in international scenario has been highlighted. The South Asian backdrop has been increasingly viewed through a 'mediatized' lens and thus, this work is an extension of research in this direction as it concerns the media portrayal of a bilateral relationship between India and Pakistan— two significant nations in South Asia. The centrality of India-Pakistan in the South Asian discourse has played a consequential role in shaping this study. Although, the strong-state and weak-state binary has always existed between India and Pakistan but in the Western official discourses and media circles, the two have been bracketed together considering their strategic importance vis-à-vis South Asia. Thus, understanding the media's position in reinforcing the concept of this bilateralism has been attempted. This study has attempted to analyse this oft-frozen relationship between India-Pakistan via perspectives concerning the role of media in foreign relations and diplomacy, which is an important aspect of Indo-Pak context. This study is primarily an analysis of how print media's portrayal of bilateralism between India and Pakistan has evolved over years. This paper describes the media representation of discourses around three landmark events in the course of Indo-Pak relations post-26/11 and attempts at understanding the nature of coverage given to them. The work derives its significance from the fact that a South Asian perspective is offered on media and foreign affairs, which is mostly studied from western point of view. It will help in developing an understanding about the Agenda Setting role of media vis-à-vis Indo-Pak ties and in global south. Also being contemporary in nature, it explores the recent events and traces a recent graph in framing of Indo-Pak relations.*

● *Public in Media Policy : A study of Five Year Plans in India* (Click to watch the pre-recorded presentation video)
  ○ **Presenter**: Ridhi Kakkar, Centre for Culture, Media & Governance, Jamia Millia Islamia
  ○ ***Abstract***: *Media scholarship has discussed Public as spectator, crowd, communities etc. as well as 'persona ficta' (a fictive being) that emerges 'as' & 'in' various conceptualization of public. Also the idea of Media & Public has been elaborated, especially from an indecisive position of 'what public wants? v/s what public need?' manifesting the quest between value consensus v/s value-tradeoff. The search of 'public' also brings along itself the speculations related to identification of public. Questions such as - how do we observe public?, where do we find them?, how do we address them?, started gearing up. This chapter attempts to explore how public has been understood 'by' and 'in' media policy in India and construes the idea of public in policy discourse in Indian communication. In order to address some of the questions a preliminary attempt has been made to interrogate the idea of public in Indian policy discourse. For this, in this paper Five-Year Plans (FYPs) of India, have been looked upon to chart out the 'intent' of the government planning for media sector. The technocratic style of media planning in India has always proclaimed to bracket the partisan interests and presented itself as harbinger of public interest. Government 'in' the name of public has been taking the decisions, which for decades has been shaping the media milieu of the country. This intrigues the curiosity – to what extent the public was considered as a factor for policy*

change, and whether the users were envisioned as participants. This paper shall showcase varying notions of 'public' that government as opted over the decades of media planning, which shall elaborate about role of communication media in society.

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Panel 7: Journalism Education in South Asia: Mapping the Present and Imagining the Future *(Pre-recorded Panel Presentation Video)* (Click to watch the pre-recorded panel video)

By *All India Media and Communication Association (AICMA)* New Delhi; and *International Research Center, SIMEC Institute of Technology*, Dhaka

Abstract*: Journalism education today seems to be at a crossroad both as a discipline as well as a profession in South Asia. Its professional demands in varied circumstances and times impinged upon the growth of the discipline. The outcome is a mismatch between theory and practice of journalism as profession and education. The realities are almost similar across the borders in South Asia. The universalising project of journalism and models of news undermines that news existed in some form or the other in other societies but the western hegemonic project of journalism rued imagination of local sensibilities and cultural priorities in South Asian societies. The proposed panel would address the changing contours and emerging challenges in the field to set a context to imagine future in the field in South Asia.*

Panel Chair: Prof. Biswajit Das, President, AICMA

Panel Moderator: Dr. Ratan Kumar Roy, International Research Center, SIMEC Institute of Technology

Panel Speakers:
- Prof. Ravindran Gopalan, Central University of Tamil Nadu
- Prof. Mira Desai, SNDT University
- Dr. S M Shameem Reza, University of Dhaka
- Dr. Pradeep N' Weerasinghe, University of Colombo
- Mr. Vibodh Parthasarathi, CCMG, Jamia Millia Islamia