



CALL FOR PAPER SUBMISSION



Revitalizing BIMSTEC: Promoting Peace through Cultural and Economic Integration

14-15 MARCH 2019

Venue: Conference Hall, 6th Mile, Barad Sadan, Sikkim University, Gangtok

CONVENER

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CONCEPT NOTE

Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his message on the 20th anniversary of the establishment of BIMSTEC, described the sub-regional grouping as “a natural platform” to fulfill India’s “key foreign policy priorities of ‘Neighbourhood First’ and ‘Act East’”. Earlier in October 2016, India had hosted the BIMSTEC members at Goa during the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) Outreach Summit. It was viewed as a pragmatic step on India’s part, demonstrating its potential to play the role of a regional leader, an aspiration which was instrumental in transforming its ‘Look East’ into ‘Act East’ policy. One of the cornerstones of India’s strategy has been to develop the country economically and technologically. Since the emergence of regional economic cooperation among neighbouring countries is becoming a dominant feature of the world’s economy, India’s policy has also been adapting these collaborative measures to restore its traditional links and integrate India with its immediate and extended neighbourhood specifically the countries of South-East Asia and North-East Asia. These networks would facilitate trade and investment, exchange of energy, promotion of tourism and increase of communication links. India was largely disengaged with most of the South-East Asian countries during the Cold War.

Though BIMSTEC came into existence very recently, its formation can be traced back to mid-1960s, when both India and Sri Lanka were invited to join ASEAN but declined. In 1981, Sri Lanka made an unsuccessful attempt to join ASEAN, but it was both India and Pakistan which obtained Dialogue Partner status in 1993. The approach of South Asian countries to establish link and enhance economic cooperation shows their intention to strengthen economic relations with the ASEAN countries. BIMSTEC may be used as a conduit for South Asian countries to establish and develop a good relationship with the ASEAN countries. Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) comprising Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand brings together 1.5 billion people or 21 percent of the world

population, and a combined GDP of over US\$ 2.5 trillion. BIST-EC (Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand-Economic Cooperation) was formed at a meeting in Jun 1997 in Bangkok. Myanmar was admitted in Dec 1997 and the organization was renamed as BIMST-EC. The grouping expanded when Nepal and Bhutan were admitted in Feb 2004. The grouping's name was changed to BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) at 1st Summit Meeting held in Bangkok in July 2004.

The formation of BIMSTEC can be attributed to two things: (i) one is the failure of SAARC to form a vibrant regional forum for trade and economic cooperation; and (ii) ongoing process of liberalization of South Asian economies desperate to discover new markets in the ASEAN region as a substitute of SAARC, whose scope is limited due to non-economic factor that is unlikely to change in the near future. Another factor, which may be cited for the formation of this bloc, is Thailand's desire to establish strong foothold on the Indian subcontinent because of increasing competition it has been facing in the ASEAN markets. BIMSTEC was initiated with the goal to combine the 'Look West' policy of Thailand and ASEAN with the 'Look East' policy of India and South Asia. BIMSTEC has identified 14 priority areas where a member country takes lead. India is lead country for Transport & Communication, Tourism, Environment & Disaster Management and Counter Terrorism & Transnational Crime. BIMSTEC cooperation under CTTC has been divided into 4 sub-groups with lead shepherds - Intelligence Sharing (Sri Lanka); Combating Financing of Terrorism (Thailand), Legal and Law Enforcement Issues (India) and Prevention of Illicit Trafficking in Narcotics Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursors (Myanmar).

Over a period of time the BIMSTEC has definitely gone beyond its initial mandate of securing technological and economic cooperation among the member nations. The current prospects for a BIMSTEC Free Trade Area Framework Agreement are currently more optimistic than for the South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA), and BIMSTEC has the potential to become a global manufacturing hub. Despite SAARC's existence since the last 30 years, intra-regional trade stands at only around five percent, while on the other hand intra-regional trade in BIMSTEC has reached around six percent within the last decade. The formation of a free trade agreement (FTA) between BIMSTEC countries will also enhance intra-regional trade potential. The proposed BIMSTEC FTA has the potential of US \$43-\$59 billion annual trade creation, when the full FTA comes into effect from 2017. Intra-regional trade in BIMSTEC region could rise by as much as 60 percent, and this group's trade with the world could grow by 30 percent if trade facilitation systems could be raised to international standards. Thus, it shows greater chances of trade potentiality within BIMSTEC countries.

The unique position of the seven-member BIMSTEC presents itself fittingly in New Delhi's current diplomatic interest. The strategic salience of the BIMSTEC forum for India can be ascertained when seen through India's sub-regions. The BIMSTEC connects three important sub-regions of India (a) Nepal and Bhutan in the Himalayan sub-region; (b) Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in the Bay of Bengal

sub-region; and (c) Myanmar and Thailand in the Mekong sub-region. BIMSTEC is the only forum that brings together India's strategic peripheries (South, East and North) under one single grouping.

Keeping these in focus, it is proposed to organize a **two day** international conference on ***“Revitalizing BIMSTEC: Promoting Peace through Cultural and Economic Integration”*** in Sikkim University, Gangtok (Sikkim) during **14-15 March 2019** and inviting scholars (academicians, researchers, practitioners, representatives of civil society and media) and policy-makers from India and abroad (neighbouring countries) to discuss in-depth a range of issues pertinent to the overall theme. This proposed international seminar is an attempt to assess how BIMSTEC can promote peace through cultural and economic integration in the region and highlights the emerging challenges in revitalization of this grouping.

The following major themes are proposed to be discussed at this two days international conference:

1. India's Neighbourhood Policy and its changing dynamics;
2. Traditional methods of conflict resolution in BIMSTEC region;
3. Bilateral and regional trade potential and investment opportunity in BIMSTEC;
4. Tourism services promotion and Buddhist circuit Tourism potential in the region;
5. Transport, communication and people to people connectivity issues of BIMSTEC;
6. Historical, Cultural, Political and economic linkages of the region;
7. Mechanisms to combating international terrorism, trans-national organised crime and illicit drug trafficking in BIMSTEC for peace;
8. Promoting peace through cultural & economic integration in BIMSTEC region; and
9. Any other relevant topic related to theme.

PAPER SUBMISSION:

The conference is open to all who wish to submit full paper and make a presentation. The Full-length papers (not more than 8000 words, including an abstract of around 200 words) along with Author's contact details (author's name, designation, organization, address, telephone, mobile, and email) must be submitted to the conference organizer at the following e-mail ID: **<nkpaswan@cus.ac.in>** on or **before 10th Feb. 2019**. All papers submitted for possible presentation at the Conference are subjected to a double-blind, peer review process. Decision on whether paper submissions have been accepted for the Conference will be communicated by **15th Feb. 2019**. Selected papers from the conference will be considered for publication in a special issue of a reputed refereed journal or in an edited book by a reputed national or international publisher. Guideline of submission of full paper:

- Author's contact details (author's name, designation, organization, address, telephone, mobile, and email) should be mentioned along with a short biographical note (max. 100 words).

- Abstracts (exact 300 words) should describe the objective/scope of the paper, methodology, implication, and its main findings/ conclusions.
- At least three Keywords should be mentioned at the end of the Abstract.
- The participants should attach a **self-declaration** mentioning that paper is plagiarism free.
- Full paper submission in max 8000 words (incl. table, charts and graphs) and **APA 6th Edition** must be followed for referencing style.
- Times New Roman 11point font Microsoft Word, 1.5 Spacing should be used.

LOCAL HOSPITALITY:

Expenses toward local travel and hospitality (boarding, lodging and transport in Gangtok) of the paper presenters will be borne by the conference organizer (for the lead author/one presenter only, if the paper is jointly authored). All outstation resource persons and paper presenters will be provided modest accommodation in the hotel and University Guest House, Development Area, Gangtok from the evening of **13 to 15 March 2019**. Accommodation for accompanying persons and extended stay shall be chargeable and has to be communicated well in advance to the organisers.

IMPORTANT DATES:

Last date for submission of the full paper: **10th February 2019**

Notification of acceptance of full paper: **15th February 2019**

Conference Date: **14-15 March 2019**

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

- **Patron:** Prof. Avinash Khare, Vice-Chancellor, Sikkim University, Gangtok
- **Convener:** Prof. Nawal K. Paswan, Dean, School of Social Sciences and Professor in the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies and Management, Sikkim University, Gangtok.

COORDINATORS:

- **Dr. Vimal Khawas**, Head and Associate Professor, Department of Peace and Conflict Studies and Management, Sikkim University, Gangtok.
- **Dr. Salvin Paul**, Assistant Professor, Department of Peace and Conflict Studies and Management, Sikkim University, Gangtok.
- **Dr. Sanghamitra Choudhury**, Assistant Professor, Department of Peace and Conflict Studies and Management, Sikkim University, Gangtok.
- **Dr. Dinesh K. Ahirwar**, Assistant Professor, Department of Peace and Conflict Studies and Management, Sikkim University, Gangtok.

VENUE OF THE CONFERENCE

The venue of the conference is Barad Sadan Conference Hall, Sikkim University, Gangtok.