

Nordic South Asia Network

Report from Kalyani University Conference on Lifelong Learning

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A two-day International Conference entitled "Lifelong Learning in Developing Countries: Issues and Perspectives" was organized at the University of Kalyani, a leading A-grade University situated only 30 miles away from Kolkata, India, on 17-19 February 2017. The conference was followed by a workshop for developing the curriculum of Lifelong Learning appropriate to post-modern India .

The conference was attended by eminent scholars from USA, Denmark, Norway and Malta. Two eminent scholars, one from UK and another from Mexico, were unable to attend the conference but had sent their papers. Eminent Indian scholars from Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal graced the conference with their presence.

The Inaugural session was addressed by the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Prof. Sankar Kumar Ghosh. He stressed the importance of lifelong learning in countries like India .He wanted lifelong learning initiatives to cover people in the so-called superannuated age group since a large section belonging to this group remain active citizens capable of contributing immensely in the development and welfare of the nation.

The keynote address was delivered by Prof. Peter Mayo of the University of Malta. He is a highly acclaimed personality in the field of lifelong learning globally, and gave a historical perspective of the evolution of the concept and practice of lifelong learning and how the conflict of capital and labour was visible in the implementation of lifelong learning in the West.

Prof. V. Reghu of RGNIYD in his theme address explained how Kerala state achieved phenomenal success in the field of primary education in the state and how Kerala was successfully implementing lifelong learning in all spheres of life and work.

Prof. Asoke Bhattacharya, formerly of the University of Jadavpur, and being a core member of the Organizing Committee stressed the need of lifelong learning for all-round development of the country. He also read out the address sent by Prof. Margaret Ledwith, Emeritus Professor of the University of Cumbria. Prof. Ledwith in her address pointed out how the poor people were being marginalized in the United Kingdom. She called upon the international community to resist such measures.

The welcome address was delivered by Prof. Prasenjit Deb, Head of the Department of Lifelong Learning and Extension at Kalyani.

In the first plenary session, Prof. Anders Holm from the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, spoke about the life of N. F. S. Grundtvig (*photo*) and his contribution in the field of present-day Lifelong Learning scenario.

Dr. Synnöve Sakura Heggem, an eminent Grundtvig scholar from Norway spoke on Grundtvig's Heart – Rhetorics which in her opinion was a universal key to lifelong learning. Dr.Marilyn Wilhelm, a renowned educationist from the United States of America spoke on Education which she considered an art for healing the social maladies.

Rev. Mette Geil from Denmark spoke on the world's first folk high school and non-formal education institution which was established in Denmark way back in 1844. Prof.Mark Bradshaw Busbee, Head of the Department of English of Samford University, USA and a well-known Grundtvig scholar spoke on Grundtvig's educational use of medieval 'nordisk' literature. Among other significant papers were those of Prof. Adinarayan Reddy of the S.V.University, Tirupati, and Prof. Xicotencatl Martinez Luis of Mexico.

The workshop on curriculum development was attended by all the foreign and Indian experts. Prof.Asoke Bhattacharya and Prof.Prasenjit Deb co-ordinated. Around 160 papers were presented at three venues in the university.



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