

Call for Papers

“Identity and Cultural Dynamics Tribes of South Africa, Nigeria and North East India”

Rajiv Gandhi University, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh, India

October 28-30, 2009

A three-day International Multidisciplinary Seminar on “**Identity and Cultural Dynamics: Tribes of South Africa, Nigeria and North East India**” is being organized by Rajiv Gandhi University, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh, India in collaboration with the African Studies Association of India, New Delhi, from October 28 to 30, 2009. Papers are invited on any of the sub- themes of the seminar. Please send in the abstracts (not exceeding 300 words) by 30th September 2009 and full research papers by 15 October 2009.

For further details please contact:

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Concept Note

Multiple extraneous dominations, politico-economic, socio-cultural, as also lingual; invasion, onslaught, influx, slavery, settlement, colonialism, contemporary neo-colonial-consumerism; the violation of tribal cultures world over, is brutal and varied. Today tribal socio-cultural traditions, whether in South Africa, Nigeria or North East India, are either extinct or deeply threatened. These mostly kingless, casteless and creedless tribal orders, where communal ownership of land combined with communal ethics and collective consciousness to prevent the creation of coercive state apparatuses, are unfortunately bowing down to the hierarchical diktats of supposedly superior hegemonic mainstream cultures. “Age-grades”, remarkably egalitarian community welfare organizations found in almost all tribal orders are fast vanishing as are the vastly tolerant, reconciliatory traditional law courts. And the three very powerful, very vocal, all women grass root organizations of traditional tribal Igbo Society in Nigeria are nearly nonexistent today. Tribal languages both oral and with distinct scripts are fast-eroding.

Colonialism with its imposition of alien exploitative politico-administrative super structures onto traditional orders, aided and abetted by an ambitious religion doggedly determined to win more and more converts shredded the very matrix of tribal societies. And neo-colonial consumerism covertly packaged in glossy terminology exuding a heady fragrance of easy money has wrecked havoc with all psyches and identities world over, whether tribal or mainstream.

Perhaps it is not too late to redeem the past, to rise above the politics of exclusion and distortion sported by dominant cultures in connivance with master narratives and master languages, to unearth and mainstream fast-vanishing tribal traditions, whether in India, Nigeria or South Africa. Perhaps it is not too late to awaken contemporary nation states to the realization that only through the re-establishment of such democratic, reconciliatory, gender friendly grass-root tribal traditions could one create a more equitable, more just world order. Perhaps the time has come to amplify long marginalized voices. Perhaps the time has come to foreground Caliban in Prospero's narrative.

Sub Themes of the Conference

1. Master Narratives vs Tribal Counter Narratives
2. The Problem of Identity: Who is a Tribal Today?
3. Of Nationalisms and Arbitrary Borders: Insane Cartography and Tribal World Orders
4. Located at "Triple Negative": The Tribal Woman
5. Who Cares for Tribal Pasts? Dying Tribal Socio-Cultural Institutions
6. Lee Cooper Jeans and Ray Ban Sun Glasses: Neo-Colonial Eco-Cultural Invasion of the Tribal Youth
7. The Game of Linguistic Politics: Tribal Vs Mainstream
8. Learning from the Margin: "Amaechina" May the Path Never End