

CONCEPT NOTE

Theme: India after a Quarter Century of Economic Reforms -- The Benefits and Costs

India launched its market-oriented reforms in 1991. The fundamental objective of these measures was to bring about rapid and sustained improvement in the quality of life of the people of India through sustained growth in income and productive employment. More than a quarter of a century has elapsed since the implementation of these ambitious reforms. Views on the impact of these structural reforms on various sectors of the Indian economy are divergent. While some economists and analysts highlight the significant gains to the economy in terms of acceleration of growth, trade and market expansion and industrial competitiveness, among other things, there are others who vehemently argue that economic success has not contributed expected outcomes in social indicators. Which is why these skeptics point to the surging inequality in income, low rate of employment creation and sluggishness in agriculture to question the much-touted success of these 1991 reforms. Critics aver that it is no secret that the country witnessed its slowest social improvement during this period, and that, specifically, educational and health indicators grew at a substantially slower rate. The recent slump in growth and greater tendency toward protection have further strengthened the arguments of these critics. In the wake of these conflicting views, a serious deliberation on the benefits and costs of reforms has remained elusive. The 1991 reforms is more than 25 years old now, and perhaps time is more ripe than ever to discuss and deliberate on their achievements, limits and limitations.

In this context, the Department of Economics, Sikkim University, proposes to organize a 2-day national conference on 'India after a Quarter Century of Economic Reforms -- The Benefits and Costs' during **5-6 October 2018**. The conference is expected to offer an opportunity for policy makers, academicians, researchers and leading social scientists to dwell on the transformation of the Indian economy in the past two-and-a-half decades of economic reforms. Along with reviewing the story of the reforms over the past 25 years, the participants will also get to deliberate on newer ideas for the next quarter of a century that can help India reduce poverty and inequality, and embark on the path of growth and sustainability. The conference expects to bring together policy makers, academicians, researchers and leading social scientists to discuss threadbare various issues as mentioned below. The topics are only indicative and certainly not exhaustive.

Sub-themes of the Seminar:

- Growth & Changing Role of Institutions
- Public Finance & Infrastructure
- Micro-finance and Financial Inclusion
- Health, Education and Gender
- Energy & Environment
- Poverty, Food Security & Inequality
- Land & Labour Relations
- Agriculture, Forestry and Allied Activities
- Migration, Industry and Urban Development
- Trade, FDI & Financial Liberalization

Special Session:

Regional Economy of Sikkim & North East India

Paper Submission:

Full-length papers (not more than 10,000 words, including an abstract of around 150 words) along with full contact details of the author(s) must be submitted to the conference organizer at the following e-mail ID: suconref18@gmail.com on or before 31st July, 2018. 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 2nd August 2018. Selected papers from the conference will be considered for publication in a special issue of a reputed journal or in an edited book by a reputed international publisher.

Travel and Local Hospitality:

Expenses toward travel and local hospitality (Boarding, lodging and local transport) of the paper presenters will be borne by the conference organizer (for the lead author/one presenter only, if the paper is jointly authored).

About Sikkim University:

Sikkim University, established by an Act of Parliament of India, came into existence on 2 July 2007. Currently, the University has 32 full-fledged academic departments, organized under 6 schools of studies, offering Master, MPhil and PhD programme. The University is home to more than 165 faculty members, 115 non-teaching staff and 2060 students. Currently, it is functioning from the rented buildings, located at Gangtok -- the capital city of Sikkim. Its permanent campus is coming up at Yangang (South Sikkim), about 56 kilometers away from the Gangtok. The University has been accredited with grade 'B' by the NAAC. Although only 9 years old, Sikkim University has been listed among India's top 200 universities (out of 720 odd universities in the country) according to EW National University Rankings 2015.

The nearest airport is at Bagdogra (8 km from Siliguri, West Bengal) and the distance between Bagdogra and Gangtok is about 124 km. A helicopter service is also operated daily between Bagdogra and Gangtok by the Sikkim Tourism Development Corporation. The nearest railway station is New Jalpaiguri Station (NJP), which is 125 kms from Gangtok. All trains to and from Northeast India stop at this junction. Gangtok is well-connected by road with Siliguri by the NH 10. There are regular bus services between Gangtok and Siliguri. Regular taxis/ shared vehicles are also available from Bagdogra Airport/New Jalpaiguri (NJP) to Gangtok.

About Department of Economics:

The department of Economics was set up in 2010 as an institution for advanced studies and research in economics. Since then, the department has been at the forefront of post-graduate teaching and research in economics. The department offers Post-Graduate (MA), MPhil and Doctoral (PhD) programmes in Economics, which draws a fair number of applicants from all over the country. At present, the department is managed by seven (7) faculty members and two support staff. The programmes offered by the department have a strong theoretical and quantitative focus with an emphasis on empirical application. Their hallmark is the dynamic curriculum offered, which is continuously reviewed and updated in line with the latest developments in the subject. The thrust areas of research of the faculty members include agricultural economics, development

economics, informal sector, industrial economics, environmental economics, public finance and among others.

Important Dates:

Last date for submission of the full paper:	31 st July 2018
Notification of acceptance of full paper:	2 nd August 2018
Conference Date:	5-6 October 2018

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Patron: Prof. Jyoti Prakash Tamang, Vice-Chancellor (Officiating), Sikkim University

Co-ordinators:

Dr. Komol Singha, Head and Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Sikkim University

Dr. Rajesh Raj S.N., Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Sikkim University

Professor Jeta Sankrityayana, Department of Economics, Sikkim University

Professor Manesh Choubey, Department of Economics, Sikkim University

Members:

Dr. Ruma Kundu, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Sikkim University

Dr. Pradyut Guha, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Sikkim University

Dr. Rangalal Mohapatra, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Sikkim University

Dr. Sohel Firdos, Associate Professor, Department of Geography, Sikkim University

Mr. Ph. Newton Singh, Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations, Sikkim University

Mr. Thupten Geleg, Assistant Director, DESM&E, Government of Sikkim

Mr. Bivek Tamang, Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Sikkim University