



SOUTH ASIAN ECONOMICS STUDENTS' MEET

21 - 26 January, 2019

Colombo, Sri Lanka

Organized by:

Department of Economics, University of Colombo

In association with SAESM India and SAESM Pakistan

Theme: Development in South Asia: Challenges and Opportunities

Sub Theme	Topic
1	Human Resource Development
2	The Informal Economy in South Asia
3	Environmental Sustainability
4	Gendered Work and Gender Equity
5	Poverty and Food Security
6	Increasing Investment in South Asia
7	Structural Transformation for Growth
8	Regional Connectivity
9	Consumption Patterns: Society and Economy
10	Migration in the Context of South Asia

GUIDELINES for those interested in participating and representing India in the 15th SAESM to be held at Colombo, Sri Lanka

1. Students from Colleges in India *must* be enrolled in a bachelors programme in economics.
2. Every participant has to write a conference paper and take part in an additional event (Budding Economist / Economics Quiz / Panel Discussion / Seeds of Change) which is mandatory.
3. You have to apply with a *paper proposal* which includes the structure of the paper and an indicative bibliography. The paper proposal should have a 500 words / one page A4 size abstract of what you intend to write in the paper.
4. **Co-authored papers will not be accepted.**
5. Submit a CV along with transcript / mark-sheet of your undergraduate study. Please indicate your preference for Budding Economist, Quiz, Panel Discussion or Seeds of Change.

PLEASE NOTE:

1. **All selected candidates will have to pay a registration fee of USD 200.** It will cover travel cost from from Delhi / Kolkata / Mumbai / Chennai to Colombo, and conference meals and stay in Colombo along with other members of South Asian contingent
2. All applicants will have to submit a college ID proof which shows that the applicant is a bonafide student of the college in the academic year 2017-2018.
3. The deadline for submission of relevant material for selection is **August 31, 2018.**
4. The result will be declared by September 15, 2018

Email address for all submissions and other correspondence: IndiaSAESM@gmail.com

Submission Deadlines:

August 31, 2018: Submission of abstract / structure of paper for selection

October 31, 2018: Submission of final paper to country coordinator.

Check SAESM website www.saesm.org for further details and updates.

Mihir Pandey
Deb Kusum Das
Country Coordinators, India



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SAESM is a well-established regional forum of the South Asian undergraduate students, recognized by the World Bank and other donor agencies, government bodies, corporate sector and the higher educational institutes in the region. The event provides an opportunity for the undergraduate students to write academic papers on timely issues in the region, to present the papers at the conference, to share the experience, and to learn from each other, while promoting their knowledge on development and cooperation in the South Asian countries. The annual SAESM usually consists of a conference of the undergraduates in which they present country research papers, a quiz contest, budding economist competition, etc. and a sightseeing retreat for all the delegates.

SAESM is an annual conference and a get-together of undergraduate students following or majoring Economics in Universities and higher educational institutions in South Asia. Country teams of students are organized by the respective Country Coordinators and/or the respective Faculty members who will accompany the respective teams to Colombo. A limited number of opportunities will be provided for University students from other countries who have an academic interest in Economics studies related to South Asia.

Coordinating Institutions

1. Afghanistan: Kabul University, Department of Economics
2. Bangladesh: University of Dhaka, Department of Economics
3. Bhutan: Royal Thimphu College, Department of Economics, and Sherubtse College, Department of Economics
4. India: SAESM India
5. Nepal: Tribhuvan University, Central Department of Economics
6. Pakistan: Lahore University of Management Sciences, Pakistan
7. Sri Lanka: University of Colombo, Department of Economics

SAESM 2004 - 2018

Year	Venue	Theme	Main partner
2004	New Delhi	Economic Developments in South Asia: Which Way Ahead	National Foundation of India
2005	Lahore	Issues for South Asian Development	Syed Babar Ali Foundation
2006	Dhaka	Sharing Ideas for a Better Understanding of South Asian Development	Prime Bank
2007	Colombo	Economic Development and Regional Cooperation in South Asia	World Bank
2008	New Delhi	Economic Challenges to Make South Asia Free from Poverty and Deprivation	World Bank
2009	Dhaka	Young Economist's for an Integrated South Asia	National Bank
2010	Colombo	Economic Freedom and Poverty Reduction in South Asia	Friedrich Naumann Stiftung
2011	New Delhi	Development Alternatives in South Asia	Institute for Financial Management and Research
2012	Kathmandu	Towards a Green South Asia	World Bank
2013	Lahore	The Political Economy of South Asia	World Bank
2014	Thimpu	South Asian Integration: Prospects and Challenges	World Bank
2016	Colombo	South Asia in the Asian Century	World Bank
2017	Kathmandu	One South Asia	World Bank
2018	Chittagong	Sustaining South Asia	World Bank

SAESM 2019, COLOMBO

SCHEDULE

DAY	ACTIVITY
1 JAN 21 (MON)	Arrival of foreign students Inauguration and dinner
2 JAN 22 (TUE)	Conference and competitions
3 JAN 23 (WED)	Conference, competitions, award ceremony
4 JAN 24 (THU)	Free daytime in Colombo city Leaving for retreat in the evening
5 JAN 25 (FRI)	Spend the day in the retreat site
6 JAN 26 (SAT)	Departure of foreign students

PARTICIPATION

All the students of Economics in South Asian Universities and Colleges are eligible to participate in the main events of SAESM. The respective country coordinators have the final authority to select the participants representing their country. The decision of the country coordinators will be final and binding. Aspirants should contact their respective country coordinators for applying and further details.

Every participant has to write a conference paper on a sub-theme. **Co-authored papers are not permitted.** Applicants for the conference are selected by the Coordinating Institutions/Universities in each country, which call for applications within their respective countries. Ten delegates with conference papers on the ten sub-themes are selected by each coordinating institution. In addition, every participant has to take part in a second event distributed as follows: 4 in Budding Economist Contest, 4 in South Asian Economics Quiz, 1 in Panel Discussion and 1 in Seeds of Change.

There will be ten official student delegates each from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The total number of participants at the event is expected to be about 200, including the students from the host country, Sri Lanka.

SAESM ACTIVITIES

The event consists following activities:

1. Undergraduate conference
2. Panel Discussion
3. Seeds of Change competition
4. Budding Economist competition
5. Quiz Competition
6. Two-day retreat

Conference Theme

Development in South Asia: Challenges and Opportunities

The development experience of the South Asian countries since the mid-1950s has been rich, though varied. Recent decades have seen accelerated development in many of the South Asian countries, and some of them are now the fastest growing countries in the world. The 15th SAESM explores some of the major challenges and opportunities that the countries now face in the road to further development.

Technical Session Themes

1. Human Resource Development
2. The Informal Economy in South Asia
3. Environmental Sustainability
4. Gendered Work and Gender Equity
5. Poverty and Food Security
6. Increasing Investment in South Asia
7. Structural Transformation for Growth
8. Regional Connectivity
9. Consumption Patterns: Society and Economy
10. Migration in the Context of South Asia

Guidelines for Research Papers

Papers are invited on any of the above ten sub-themes covering different aspects of the theme of the conference. All participants will write a research paper on one of the ten sub-themes. Papers may be evaluation of an own country issues, comparison of their own country with other countries or South Asia as a whole. Papers can be written using primary survey data / case study / review of the issue / modelling economic theory / econometric tools. The expected standard of the presentations takes into account that the delegates are undergraduates and hence the expected academic excellence and competency is of normal academic standards at undergraduate level. Thus, while any of the above methodologies may be used, the papers *must demonstrate application of economics knowledge and analysis in addressing the chosen issue.*

Co-authored papers will not be accepted.

The research papers submitted for the conference by the students are evaluated at two stages. Prior to the conference, the academic quality of the papers is evaluated and marked by a panel of examiners. Presentations at the conference are evaluated by a panel of judges at the conference. The paper with the highest aggregate score is adjudged the best paper in each sub-theme.

The ***Mahbub ul Haq – Amartya Sen Award*** is given to the best paper across all ten sub-themes, selected by a jury instituted for this purpose.

1. Human Resource Development

When considering human resource development, it is important to focus on human resource management, value change, and various reforms governments must make. The education and health sectors are plagued by various problems. Papers may look into the role of state and public-funded education versus loan-funded private education; supplementary or shadow education system; modes of delivery; returns to education; dearth of skilled personnel and problems relating to skill formation. Further, papers may explore issues related to eradication of diseases; availability of clean water; access to life saving drugs; the emergence of new diseases due to changes in lifestyle or climatic conditions; existence of a functional sanitation system; solid waste management; and social taboos related to sanitation. Authors are encouraged to explore

challenges faced in provision of education, healthcare and sanitation facilities; inequalities in access to these facilities; the impact of lack of these facilities; and the role of new technology.

2. The Informal Economy in South Asia

This sub-theme focuses on the informal economy. The informal sector is of considerable significance in many South Asian economies both because of its contribution to GDP and employment. However, academic and policy concerns about this sector are often inadequate and there is a sense that the sector is either a remainder of the processes in the formal economy or exists parallel to it as just a sector of refuge. Contrary to this, the tendencies of informality are not only on the rise generally in South Asia (and globally) but also specifically so in the formal sector itself. Further, a whole range of globalised production is characterised by various dimensions of informality, particularly the use of casual and flexible labour. Papers in this subtheme may explore the extent and scope of the informal economy in any country of South Asia (or a comparative study between countries). The papers may analyse various aspects of informality – informal labour, informal enterprises and informal practices and strategies (informal contracts, networks etc.) and their social, ethnic and gendered dimensions. Papers are welcome to emphasize the links between the formal and informal sectors, particularly in the current global production networks and commodity chains and their distributional impacts. The papers may also analyse and critique the role and attitude of the state in this regard, both in terms of policy and regulation, and further suggest policy alternatives to address the acute needs of this largely unregulated but crucial segment of our economies.

3. Environmental Sustainability

Environmental degradation poses several challenges for the sustainable, equitable, and inclusive economic growth of South Asian countries. Ineffective environmental management coupled with steep population growth has put an unprecedented strain on the existing stock of natural resources and the assimilative capacity of the environment. Papers can explore issues such as air quality, water management including capacity shortage of dams and reservoirs, absence of water rights, and lack of water pricing structures, deforestation, and sustainable fisheries. There are additional issues resulting from inability of authorities to meet the demands of irrigation, drinking, and hygiene, leading to food and water insecurity.

4. Gendered Work and Gender Equity

This sub-theme aims to analyse various dimensions of gender. Papers may cover areas such as (a) gendered work and division of labour in the economy in general or in the globalized spheres of production such as SEZs, EPZs in particular, or the relevance of home-based work; (b) gendered discrimination in wages and earnings, conditions of labour, entitlements and ownership of resources; various discriminations faced at birth and the stark inequalities in various key economic, demographic and social indicators including those in education and health and workforce participation rates; (c) stressing the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment and policies enabling this for multifaceted development objective as well as removal of poverty; (d) gendering microenterprises and microcredit as a development approach

and experience; (e) various gendered stereotypes and norms and their impact on the economy; (f) the family as a sphere of gendered inequality, contestation, bargaining and cooperation and the household as an institution for designing livelihood strategies.

5. Poverty and Food Security

Papers covering this sub theme may choose to focus on the poverty and income distribution in South Asian Countries and how that links to food security. Papers may also explore the potential impact of food security on poverty and how it may be crucial in breaking out of the poverty trap. The papers can further look at the different dimensions that affect food security in a country such as policy, agricultural productivity and trade and how that plays a role in perpetuation of poverty through the generations and if inter-generational poverty can be countered using consumption smoothing mechanisms.

6. Increasing Investment in South Asia

This sub-theme aims to explore the impact of increased investment in South Asia and the ways in which this can be achieved. Papers may focus on capital investment policies to spur economic growth, or the impact that an injection of foreign aid can have on the economy. Similarly, the papers may also analyze the existing policies put in place by South Asian states to generate investment and economic growth such as tax rates, tariffs, export & import policies, trade agreements, and infrastructure and labour productivity, inward and outward movement of financial capital or fixed investment.

7. Structural Transformation for Growth

This sub-theme focuses on the role of reallocation of economic activities across the broad sectors of agriculture, manufacturing and services. Structural Transformation is a process of transfer of labour and other resources from low productivity to high productivity sectors, along with increase in productivity in all the sectors. A stereotypical structural transformation is a shift from agriculture to manufacturing and then to services. However, many developing economies including those of South Asia haven't followed such a script. Should this be a cause for worry or should services and manufacturing be considered twin pillars of growth? Should South Asia emulate China and focus more on manufacturing and manufacturing job creation, or as there is a growing interdependence between services and manufacturing, the approach of South Asia should rather be on services cum manufacturing? A more worrying point is the disparity between the sectoral shifts in GDP and employment in agriculture. In spite of a significant shift away from agriculture in GDP, such a shift is rather muted in employment leading to significant labour resources being trapped in a low productive sector and consequently low income generation. Once again, is a shift away from employment in agriculture / rural sector the only possible transformation or are there possibilities of retaining labour but increasing the productivity in agricultural or rural sectors to address this anomaly? Papers in this sub-theme can be based on recognizing potential linkages between the sectors. Authors are encouraged to explore alternative models and pathways to economic development including a historical analysis of the successful cases and policy lessons learnt thereby. Papers can also concentrate on role of sector specific

policies and role of institutions and technology in achieving balanced transformation both in output and employment.

8. Regional Connectivity

At the 16th Summit of SAARC in 2010, 2010-2020 was declared as the Decade of Intra-regional Connectivity in SAARC. Regional cooperation and integration is a dynamic phenomenon and includes several aspects such as economic, social, political and strategic cooperation. South Asia's diversity provides huge opportunities for trade. However, the South Asian region is weak in inter-country connectivity. Strengthening regional connectivity and trade facilitation would support the regional economic integration and generate higher growth. Papers on this subject can study the role of constructing inter-country road and rail transport systems in promoting regional and industrial development, tourism, connecting markets and increasing economic cooperation. The papers can also focus on the role of development of cross-border infrastructure (especially transportation linkages and energy pipelines) in promoting regional trade and industrial development; the efficiency gains associated with removing non-physical barriers to transport; connectivity between capital or main commercial cities. The papers may also explore how economic and infrastructural connectivity can go a long way in increasing social and political cooperation between the countries.

9. Consumption Patterns: Society and Economy

The economic notions of consumption patterns refer to how different people from different demographics and income groups spend money across or within categories of products, such as food, clothing, and discretionary items. Socio-cultural and political extensions of the consumption pattern idea probe the class, cultural, and symbolic dimensions of organization of economic decision making. Whereas consumption in theory is considered the sole end and purpose of all production, and consumer sovereignty the ultimate determining element of production, in reality "producer sovereignty" may rule in a corporate world with millions of dollars being spent on lifestyle creation, branding and advertisement. In fact, with globalisation reducing tariff barriers and protecting strong patents, global brands and products have replaced local products and cultures of consumption in many spheres. A further complexity is the relationship between income and consumption. Whereas the notions of consumption function relate income to consumption in various ways, where income is a key determinant of consumption (whether current income, permanent income or that over a life cycle), continuous mortgage and credit financed consumption has seriously jeopardised such notions in many countries. Authors are encouraged to analyse the above complexities and any other issue related to consumption. Papers may also explore the conspicuous consumption (of both the rich and the poor), its multiplier effects and whether such conspicuous consumption is perverting the choice of the poor households away from essential spending on human resource expenditures. The papers may also explore the consumption patterns of the population living in rural and urban areas; ecological impact and the effects of consumerism. Papers can also deal with the shifts in consumption in the contemporary globalized world in a Post-Fordist era based on global branding and production based on global value chains.

10. Migration in the context of South Asia

This sub-theme studies the aspects of migration within an economy or across different economies. Papers may examine rural to urban migration, the associated push and pull factors, the urbanization accompanying and attracting migration, the creation of megacities and informal sectors. The papers may also analyse new patterns of domestic migration (i.e. not following the standard rural to urban pattern) and relate them to changes in work processes in both urban and rural spheres and may also investigate the gendered aspects of migration. The papers may alternatively deal with international migration and the opportunities and hindrances therein both at micro and macro levels. The papers may also focus on increasing international migration of women from some South Asian countries, particularly in care services (nurses, nannies, domestic workers) and the complexities involved there. The papers may study the characteristics of migration – whether permanent or temporary, legal or illegal; the status of migrants in the society and their living and economic conditions. The papers may also analyse the impact of international migration for both the source and the destination countries or regions in terms of advantages such as provision of cheap labour, resources generation, foreign currency remittances as well as disadvantages such as political instability, burden on urban infrastructure or brain drain. Papers may also discuss reverse migration, anti-migrant movements or trafficking. Papers may not restrict to migration within any South Asian country or across these countries, but also migration to developed countries from South Asia. Authors may also use development models in their explanations and arguments and draw comparisons with other South Asian countries.

Guide line for paper submission:

- a) Font type: Times New Roman
- b) Font size: 16 for section headings, 14 for sub-headings, 12 for text, 10 for footnotes
- c) Bold and italic are accepted
- d) Line spacing: 1.15
- e) Paper size: 5000 words (10-12 pages, excluding cover page)
- f) Page numbers: bottom-right
- g) Color: black and white only
- h) Referencing: Harvard style
- i) Cover page
 - [On the top of the sheet]: **15th South Asian Economics Students' Meet, January 2019, Colombo, Sri Lanka**
 - Session Theme of the paper, as given in this document
 - Title of the paper, as chosen by the author
 - Name of the author, program/ grade, university, country
 - Abstract of the paper, not exceeding 150 words
 - Acknowledgement

Submission of abstract / structure of paper for selection: 31st August 2018

Submission of final paper to country coordinator: 31st October 2018

Guidelines for Panel Discussion**TOPIC: *Can South Asia Benefit from Cross-Border Electricity Cooperation and Trade?***

A panel of student speakers from all participating countries would be engaging with a pre-assigned topic and discuss the pros and cons of the issue at hand. Students can either provide his/her own country perspective to the topic or in terms of overall South Asia perspective. The objective of the panel discussion is to create awareness amongst students of South Asia about the importance of resource sharing in one of the poorest regions of the world as a possible solution towards developing the region. In addition, we also expect the students to provide out-of-the-box thinking towards regional cooperation and economic integration of the least integrated region of the globe and achieving development with peace.

Students who will comprise the panel are expected to prepare in advance and bring to the table their specific inputs towards a well-structured discussion. Each student will have to speak for about 10 minutes on the topic. There will be a floor discussion after the speakers have discussed their point of view. The session will be moderated by a chairperson. The best speaker will be chosen from the panel of speakers by the judges.

Students are advised to consult the following background papers to have an idea about challenges and constraints so as to create their own point of view. These are just background papers for understanding and speaking from these papers is not allowed.

- Govinda R. Timilisina et al (2015), “How Much Could South Asia Benefit from Regional Electricity Cooperation and Trade?” *Policy Research Working paper 7341*, Development Research Group, Environment and Energy Team
- Sultan Hafizur Rahman et al, (2011), “Energy Trade in South Asia: Opportunities And Challenges”, *Asian Development Bank*, Manila

Guidelines for Seeds of Change Competition

Topic: *Changing South Asia: Sowing Seeds of New Ideas*

South Asia has gone through significant changes in the past few decades. There have been dramatic transformations in large parts of the economies, and South Asia now has some of the fastest growing countries in the world. And yet, every country in South Asia continues to face hurdles that put a drag on the economy and society. Issues relating to governance, technology, distribution, social sector, environment, etc. have not only marginalized substantial parts of the economy and the people, it also makes uncertain the future development trajectory.

For this event, students are invited to come up with ideas on any of the above issues that will positively impact and lead to a change in any one country or South Asia as a whole. It may relate to a problem for which conventional policies do not seem to be working, but where fresh out-of-the-box thinking may sow the seeds of change that is required. The idea may be presented as a hypothetical project, or as a policy package with appropriate analysis, or an initiative for social change, either in their own countries or for the South Asia as a whole. It may also be an agreement of cooperation among all the countries of South Asia that will lead to change. Students are required to clearly spell out the problem that they are addressing and analyse how their idea will help meet specific goals and what the expected outcome is.

Students will be required to make a ten-minute presentation, followed by a five-minute defense. The session will be moderated by a chairperson. The best speaker will be chosen from the panel of speakers by the judges.

Students are advised to consult the following web links. These are just to give the students an idea on how to develop ideas for sowing new seeds for change in South Asia.

- <https://www.hellotractor.com/#smart-tractor> (accessed on May 18, 2018)
- <http://barakatbundle.org/mission/> (accessed on May 18, 2018)

Important: Submission of Seeds of Change presentations - 30th December 2018
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Guidelines for South Asia Budding Economist Competition

Four participants from each team can compete in the Budding Economist competition. This is a competition that seeks to test individuals on a variety of skill sets. The Budding Economist competition will consist of the following events:

- Paper Presentation: This will carry 50 marks, and the marks scored by the student will be carried forward in the next round.
- Written test: There will be a written test on Economic Theory (which includes Microeconomics and Macroeconomics), Quantitative Economics (which includes Mathematical Economics, Statistics and Econometrics), and Development Economics. It will be a 125 marks test, with a weightage of 50:50:25. The marks scored will be carried forward to the next round. Detailed syllabus for the written test will be provided.
- Visual Round: The participants will have to discuss an image shown to them by applying any economics theory and vocabulary. This will carry 25 marks.
- Panel Interview: The participants will have to answer questions from a panel of judges in the final round of the competition which will carry 100 marks. The finalist will be selected based on the marks scored in the previous three rounds, i.e. out of 200.

Note:

1. Marks obtained by a participant in each event will be carried forward. First round of elimination will be done by combining the marks of the research paper and the written test. Top twelve participants will qualify for the next round and take part in the visual round. Top five participants with the highest cumulative scores will proceed to the final round of panel interview. The participant with highest aggregate marks will be declared the winner.
2. The syllabus of the competition will be made available to all participants

Guidelines for South Asian Economics Quiz

A team of four participants from each country will participate in the quiz competition. The quiz competition will consist of several rounds on different aspects of economics, like economic theory (microeconomics / macroeconomics), development economics; South Asia and general economic awareness.

Retreat

After two days of rigorous academic activities, the participants will have two days of retreat. This will be a field trip for all the participants, with emphasis on introducing Sri Lankan economy, culture, history, geography, politics and people to the foreign delegates.

HOW TO APPLY

Coordinating Institutions/Universities are responsible for the selection procedure in each country. Students from South Asia should contact the respective Country Coordinators for applying.

Every participant has to write a conference paper on a sub-theme. **Co-authored papers are not permitted.** Applicants for the conference are selected by the Coordinating Institutions/Universities in each country, which call for applications within their respective countries. Ten delegates with conference papers on the ten sub-themes are selected by each coordinating institution. In addition, every participant has to take part in a second event distributed as follows: 4 in Budding Economist Contest, 4 in South Asian Economics Quiz, 1 in Panel Discussion and 1 in Seeds of Change.

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6. **Email address for all submissions and other correspondence:**
IndiaSAESM@gmail.com

Registration fee

The students selected to represent India at SAESM 2019 in Colombo will have to pay **USD 200** as registration fee. It will cover travel cost from from Delhi / Kolkata / Mumbai / Chennai to Colombo, and conference meals and stay in Colombo along with other members of South Asian contingent

Check SAESM website www.saesm.org for further details and updates