

A REPORT OF THE XIXTH IIG MEET

The XIXth annual Meet of the Institute of Indian Geographers' (IIG) was held from 14th to 16th March 1998, at the Department of Geography, University of Pune. The Meet was well attended with over a 100 delegates from all over the country participating in the deliberations and panel discussion. About 93 papers from various specializations were presented in the XII technical sessions, spread over the three days of the Meet individually, Geomorphology received the largest number of papers (16), while social and cultural, population and settlement geography together received (21) papers, followed by climatology and hydrology with (18) papers. It was heartening to note that the newly emerging fields like Remote Sensing, GIS and applied geography were well represented with (20) papers.

Professor (Ms) Swarnjit Mehta, the president of the IIG delivered the presidential address emphasizing the need for upgrading geography syllabi at different levels, from the secondary to the post-graduate teaching to conform to the development in our times.

The focal theme of the Meet, "*Economic Growth and Social Justice : The Indian Context*", was deliberately chosen to draw attention to the growing importance and greater relevance of Applied geography in contemporary geographical research. To deliver the Key-note address on the focal theme, we were fortunate to have with us Dr. Neelkanth Rath, retired director, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (GIPE) whose views on poverty in India are well

known. The Vice-Chancellor, University of Pune, Dr. Vasant Gowariker's remarks on the focal theme at the inaugural function were rather unconventional and at the same time quite thought provoking.

An added attraction of the XIXth Meet was the presence of the members of the UGC panel in geography. This was made possible, courtesy the panel chairman, Dr. S. C. Gupte, who went out of his way to move the UGC to convene the panel meeting to coincide with the dates of the Meet. This gave the delegates an excellent opportunity to interact with the panel members at the special session held on 16th March. The main items on the agenda in this session, were issues relating to the syllabus of geography, of the need for reviewing the quality of geography education, and the strategy to be adopted for making the subject of geography more applied in content. The panel recommended a thorough review of geography teaching in Indian Universities, in order to determine the direction which needs to be given to geography in future. Reflecting on 50 years of Indian Geography, the participants raised several questions related to thrust areas in contemporary Indian geography, the geography versus non geography debate, and a strong case was also made here for making the subject of geography more relevant to the needs of society.

The XIXth IIG Meet, concluded with a day's excursion to the Mahabaleshwar plateau - an area where a good deal of work has been carried out by the department of Geography.

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