

Research Committee-26 (Minority Studies), ISS

History: At the 40th Indian Sociological Society annual conference held at Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith, Varanasi, from 29th November 2014 to 1st December 2015, a group of scholars came together to formally initiate a new research committee which was subsequently titled as Ethnicity and Minority Studies. The first inaugural address of research committee was delivered by Late Prof. Imtiaz Ahmad (Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University). The session was chaired by the then president of Indian Sociological Society, Prof Anand Kumar. It was attended by about fifty scholars belonging to different research areas. From 2014 to 2017, Ethnicity and Minority Studies functioned as an Ad-hoc Group of the Indian Sociological Society. In 2018, this ad-hoc group was formally constituted as Research Committee-26 (Minority Studies). Since its inception, first as ad-hoc group and now as RC-26, Minority Studies has made its presence felt in the sociological fraternity both in India and abroad. Many national and international academic events have been organised under its banner. Prof Imtiaz Ahmad, Prof. Anand Kumar, Prof. Arvinder A Ansari, Prof. Gulam K. Dasthagir, Dr. Imtiaz Ahmad Ansari, Prof. Rajni Bala, Dr. K. M. Ziyauddin are some of the founding members of the RC-26. Prof. Arvinder A. Ansari was the first Convener of the RC who has played an instrumental role in making this RC one of the most vibrant and growing research committee of ISS. After her, Dr. Ziyauddin became the Convener from 2018-2021.

Research Interest: The research interest of RC-26 covers a wider frame and is not narrowed to the popular conception of minorities in terms of religion or language only. Religious, linguistic, cultural minorities are integral area of interest of RC-26. In this context the research interest of the RC is much broader that cuts across caste, religion, language, race, ethnicity, gender, etc. RC-26 is equally interested in research and discussion about what is now termed as ‘new’ or ‘emerging’ minorities, especially based on disability, sexuality, and age. There is also need to widen the research area of the RC focusing upon sects and denominations, and how they consider themselves as set apart from the mainstream society. There is a need to identify such groups and communities and study their culture and social life. It needs to researched and discussed at wider platform. RC-26 can be such a platform.

The purpose of the research committee is to work as a “think-tank” facilitating focused and productive discussions across disciplines about the democratizing role of ethnic and minority identity and participation in a multicultural society. Efforts would also be made to engage academic institutions with a primary interest on different issues of ethnic and minority groups and social transformation. The research committee will be used as platform to initiate an informed discussion on the study of inter-ethnic relations, minority problems and protection of minority rights, and new challenges of inter-cultural integration.

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