



Australian Consulate-General
Kolkata, India



International Conference on
MULTICULTURALISM & DEMOCRACY
AUSTRALIAN & INDIAN CONTEXTS



to be organised by
**Centre for Australian Studies,
The University of Burdwan**
in collaboration with
Australian Consulate-General, Kolkata

8-9 January 2025
at
The University of Burdwan



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Despite concerns about its effectiveness in praxis, multiculturalism has not only developed as a philosophy and state-policy across the globe during the last sixty years but has also taken various forms prompting social scientists to talk about *multiculturalisms* instead of multiculturalism (Eriksen). Ideologically multiculturalism acknowledges the socio-cultural diversity of a country and calls for the maintenance of both group distinctions and social cohesion. Encouraging the practice of tolerance, mutual respect and equity, it ensures the rights of different minority and ethnic communities to create a just society. Multiculturalism is also inseparably related with democracy. A true multicultural society strengthens the democratic structure of a nation since modern democracies acknowledge equal status and rights of the minorities.

The relationship between multiculturalism and democracy in Australian and Indian contexts demands close scrutiny since in the Asia-Pacific region both the countries are big multicultural democracies. In fact, post-Second World War migration to Australia has made the country multicultural to the extent that it has now “the largest overseas-born population of all large OECD nations” (Scanlon Foundation, 2016). All post-1975 Australian governments encouraged multiculturalism and adopted major policies to boost it. Indian multiculturalism, much older than the Australian, is, however, not a post-Second World War phenomenon. It is the result of many outside influences brought in by conquerors and traders, many of whom have become permanent settlers in the country. Regional and cultural varieties of the geopolitical landmass India have also contributed to the multicultural fabric of the nation, making its cultural diversity hereditary in nature. Despite this difference in the history of the origin and growth of multiculturalism in Australia and India, both countries have federal structures and tailor-made policies to integrate minority populations. In fact, in the context of the recent high-level bilateral dialogues and exchanges between the two countries, it has become imperative to study how both the countries are confronting the challenges of the politicization of ethnocultural diversity. It is high time to examine the two countries’ policies and strategies with regard to the demands of the minority communities which are seeking greater recognition, freedom and opportunities for retaining and strengthening their distinctive socio-cultural identities.

Keeping these goals in view, this conference will try to explore the commonalities and differences between Australian and Indian versions of multiculturalism and their interface with democracy highlighting how these two multicultural democracies have been negotiating different ethnocultural challenges over the years.





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Conference Sub-themes

- Multiculturalism and Democracy: Contours and Parameters
- Diaspora, Multiculturalism and Democracy
- Multiculturalism and Democracy in Australia
- Multiculturalism and Democracy in India
- Multiculturalism and Democracy in Australia and India: Comparative Perspectives
- Multiculturalism, Democracy and Citizenship in Australia and India
- Multiculturalism, Democracy and Equity in Australia and India
- Multiculturalism, Democracy and Justice in Australia and India
- Literary and Other Cultural Representations of the Interface between Multiculturalism and Democracy in Australia and India

Abstracts in 300 words are to be sent to cas.buruniv@gmail.com by **10 December 2024**. Decisions regarding acceptance of abstracts will be notified by **15 December 2024**.

Participant Category	Registration Fee (in INR)	Online Presentation	Board and Lodging
Faculty Members	2500	No	Yes
Students and Research Scholars of Other Institutes	1500	No	Yes
Students and Research Scholars of The University of Burdwan	Nil	No	No
International Participants	8000	Yes	Yes

Conference Corodinator

Prof. Angshuman Kar
Director
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The University of Burdwan

Convenors

Dr Arnab Kumar Sinha
Head, Dept of English and Culture
Studies

Dr Sanjoy Malik
Asstt. Professor
Dept of English and
Culture Studies