**REPORT**

IACLALS ANNUAL CONFERENCE, IIT Guwahati, 15-17 February, 2017

IIT Guwahati opened a piece of their edenic campus and their generous hearts to us for this year’s Annual IACLALS Conference, Location, Identity, Solidarity – Hegemonic Formations and Contestations (With a Special Focus on the Northeast). Verdant, tree lined and with many lakes, the stunningly beautiful campus offered photo ops at every corner, and thus the 10 minute walk from the guest house to the conference venue usually stretched to half an hour or more. The luxurious accommodation and the conference halls were also near perfect and topping this hospitality was the fabulous array of Assamese food served each day.

Easy as it would have been to rapturously lose ourselves in all this, it was the high standard of papers presented and the invigorating discussions at each session that really gave this conference its greatest high. The better part of the proceedings was given to papers that looked at the North East, its poetry, popular theatre, children's literature, and of course its cultures of protest through some valuable new areas of research and work.

The Meenakshi Mukherjee Prize this year went to our youngest prize winner yet, Shailendra Kumar Singh. Shailendera is a Research scholar at Jamia Millia lslamia, and he won the prize for his paper "Premchand’s Prose of Counter-Insurgency in Colonial North India", published in *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*. The CD Narasimhaiah panel had 5 finalists, as against the usual count of 4, thanks to excellent papers. Despite the toughest competition ever, Natasa Thoudam, Research Scholar from IIT Bombay, won the Prize with a convincing lead for her paper, "Houses and Maps as Boundaries of Home and Homeland in Ashuli Kaisa’s Blogs". Many congratulations to both the MM and CDN Prize winners, Shailendera and Natasa.

The conference’s only dampener was the absence of our keynote speakers, Prof Hiren Gohain and Prof Temsula Ao. Prof Gohain's ill health prevented him from being able to join us and the tense ground situation in Nagaland made it difficult for Temsula Ao to travel. Indeed we missed them, even as Mamang Dai our Plenary speaker brought in great intensity, exuberance and spirit with her address as she did to the much appreciated reading session.

Since this was election year, a GBM was held under the able stewardship of Prof Somdatta Mandal. The unanimous say of the house requested continuity of charge and the existing team, as under, was re-elected.

Prof GJV Prasad CHAIRPERSON

Prof M Asaduddin VICE CHAIR

Prof Subhendu Mund VICE CHAIR

Dr Rina Ramdev SECRETARY

Dr Angelie Multani TREASURER

We at the IACLALS would like to thank all our members for reposing their faith in us and also for continuing to make this an intellectually vibrant space of shared ideas and research.

Our warmest thanks once again to our wonderful co-hosts Prof Rohini Mokashi-Punekar, Prof Liza Das, Prof Archana Barua, Dr Sukanya Sharma and Dr Debapriya Basu, as also the enthusiastic, ever smiling and helpful student volunteers who took care of all the conference and hosting details including time-keeping during the sessions, relieving the chairpersons of this burden! So impressed was everyone with this method of keeping time that many suggested this be followed in future conferences too.

We look forward to taking the 2018 Annual conference to greater strength, buoyed by the high standards maintained by this year's conference at IIT Guwahati.

**Rina Ramdev**

**Secretary, IACLALS**