

PRESS NOTE

Amaravati, March 20, 2025

“Democracy Unravelled” – SRM University-AP Hosts International Conference on Exploring the South Asian Political Perspective

Academicians, research scholars, and social scientists from renowned institutions across the world assembled at the two-day international conference on “Democracy’s Undoing: South Asia and its Politics” hosted by SRM University-AP to explore the pressing issues and challenges faced by various democracies in South Asia. The conference organised under the aegis of the Department of Political Science, Easwari School of Liberal Arts, explored the concept of democracy and its relevance to the current political landscape in South Asia.

Prof. Vishnupad, Dean – Easwari School of Liberal Arts set the tone for the conference in his welcome address. He deliberated on various aspects of democracy and shared the vision behind Easwari School of Liberal Arts, now home to seven vibrant departments, each oriented towards the holistic growth of its students-intellectual, emotional, and ethical. Dr Idris Hassan Bhat, Assistant Professor of the Department of Political Science and the convener of the conference, addressed the resilience of democratic ideals in South Asian nations.

Prof. Ashok Acharya, from the Department of Political Science, University of Delhi, delivered the first keynote session on the contextual explorations of liberalism. He examined liberal values and how they align with democracy in today’s complex political climate. Tracing the relationship between liberalism and democracy, Prof. Acharya stated, “The 20th century saw democracy take root as a regime, while liberalism functioned as a guiding ideology with an emphasis on liberty, self-governance, and diversity.” He elaborated on the significance of ‘dissensus’ in a liberal democratic society.

The second keynote address welcomed Dr Kurt Annen, a Professor of Economics at the University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada, who offered a global perspective on democracies. One of the central themes of the lecture was the challenge of establishing a clear causal relationship between democracy and economic growth. He also highlighted the importance of understanding the mechanisms through which democracies may foster economic development.

The conference also featured thought-provoking panel discussions, roundtable sessions, and paper presentations on various topics, ranging from Religious Nationalism and Homeland Fantasies in South Asia to the State of Minorities in South Asia to the Challenges of Inequality and Poverty to Democracy, that provided intense academic engagement and fresh perspectives for the participants and students at the Easwari School of Liberal Arts.