

Conference Report
13th Annual International Conference of CESI, 2023

Theme:
***Changing Dynamics of Education:
Perspectives and New Directions from the Global South***

The 13th Annual International Conference of CESI, 2023 hosted by Tezpur University proved to be an extremely enriching three-day event that brought together educators, scholars, policymakers, and practitioners from diverse disciplines, fields of research, sectors and geographies across India and its neighbouring countries. This year's CESI conference was focused on a very important theme "*Changing Dynamics of Education: Perspectives and New Directions from the Global South.*" The conference was a collaborative effort of Comparative Education Society of India (CESI) and Tezpur University, drawing support from various funding entities, including the host institution and the society. The generous financial support by NIEPA and ICSSR, North East Region are duly acknowledged and appreciated in the conference. The academic contributions of all the participants, distinguished speakers, panelists, and attendees made the conference a great success.

The conference aimed at critically examining the educational developments and their contentious trajectories, particularly in the Global South. It aimed to explore how various factors such as politics, culture, corporatization, technology, consumerism, and global capitalism are defining the purpose of education today. The scope extended to interrogate the power dynamics and political economy of knowledge production, distribution, and representation, especially in the context of marginalized communities.

The thematic focus of CESI 2023 encompassed critical areas of education, including equity in education, the intersection of caste, gender, religion, and ethnicity in educational discourses, and the impact of socio-political dynamics on educational practices. Throughout the conference, participants engaged in though provoking, insightful discussions that shed light on the challenges and opportunities vis a vis education. The conference was marked by its inclusivity and diversity, showcasing a wide range of perspectives on the educational challenges and opportunities in the Global South. Speakers from various disciplinary and research backgrounds provided their understandings and perspectives into how educational systems have evolved and are continuing to transform. The event was rich with discussions on the role of education in societal, political, economic, and cultural contexts, especially in the face of globalization, liberalization, privatization, and changing state democracies. The conference's format was highly interactive, involving panel discussions, keynote addresses, and open forums. This dynamic format facilitated a robust exchange of ideas, encouraging active interaction of the participants. The diversity of themes and perspectives offered an enriching experience, fostering a deeper understanding of the

multifaceted issues in education. Deliberations highlighted the disparities in educational benefits among different communities, especially those at the margins, and the growing inequalities across regions, social groups, and geographies. The conference emphasized the critical need to address these disparities through a reimagined role of education.

The conference was meticulously structured to cover a broad spectrum of topics relevant.

- The inaugural session of the conference commenced with the introduction of the society by the CESI office bearers followed by the narration of the concept note. The keynote address was delivered by renowned sociologist and public intellectual, Prof. Satish Deshpande, who spoke on the topic “*What is Higher Education Good for? India after the National Education Policy, 2020*”. The session was chaired by Prof. Farheena Danta, Dean School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tezpur University, Tezpur. The key note address set the tone of the conference for the subsequent discussions.
- The plenary sessions delved into specific themes. The one on North East India was titled, *Education, Power and Knowledge in North East India* that highlighted the prevailing discourses on the Northeast by experts like Prof. P.K Das, Tezpur University, Prof. Joydeep Barua, Krishna Kanta Handique State University and Dr. Saswati Chaudhury, OKD Institute of Social Change and Development, Guwahati, working on north east concerns. The session was chaired by Prof. Maiyatree Chaudhuri, form, formerly with JNU. The plenary of former presidents of CESI was titled, *Education Policy Perspectives from the Global South* where Prof. Saumen Chattopadhyay, JNU, Prof, S. Srinivasa Rao, Mahindra University and Prof. Nandini Manjrekar, TISS Mumbai discussed the different dimensions of policy impacts from the economical, sociological and educational lenses. The session was chaired by Prof. Renu Nanda, President CESI and professor of Education, Jammu University.
- The 36 parallel sessions covered in three days allowed for more focused discussions and exchange of ideas on specialized themes.