

International Conference, Department of Liberal Arts

The Department of Liberal Arts of IIT Bhilai in collaboration with the Association for Literary Urban Studies organised its first international conference on November 15, 2021. Titled “Narrating the South Asian City: Critical Perspectives”, the conference was held online. Prof P. D. Srivastava, Head of the Department of Liberal Arts commenced the proceedings with an overview of the department’s achievements and activities. Prof Rajat Moona, Director, IIT Bhilai gave the Welcome Address, wherein he emphasised the importance of understanding urbanisation to make meaningful contributions to India’s growth journey in the twenty-first century.

Dr Stuti Khanna from the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at IIT Delhi gave the first keynote of the conference, in which she discussed the multiple ways in which South Asian cities have been seen and imagined by writers over the past hundred years. The second keynote address was delivered by Dr Dominic Davies, Department of English, City, University of London. Dr Davies proposed a new paradigm for understanding literary non-fiction from South Asia in the context of aestheticization of infrastructure and the agency of urban informality.

The conference also saw paper presentations by nine scholars from various disciplines and institutions. The first panel focussed largely on materiality in the depiction of South Asian cities, while the second panel dealt with postcolonial motifs in the articulation of urban lived experience. The third and final panel engaged with emergent, digital forms of literary expression of the city. The conference was attended by a wide range of faculty and researchers from within as well as outside India. The Department of Liberal Arts aims to continue organising conferences in collaboration with professional bodies and eminent institutes on issues of topical relevance.

