

# 19<sup>th</sup> IUAES-WAU World Anthropology Pre-Congress on “Anthropology in/of the Future”

2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2023

## REPORT

IUAES  
International Union of  
Anthropological and  
Ethnological Sciences



### INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY School of Social Sciences Faculty of Anthropology

### 19<sup>th</sup> IUAES-WAU World Anthropology Pre-Congress ANTHROPOLOGY IN/OF THE FUTURE

# INAUGURAL SESSION

Wednesday  
2<sup>nd</sup> August,  
2023



Zoom Link

- ✓ (9:30-9:35 hrs. IST): Kulgeet
- ✓ Welcome Address (9:35-9:45 hrs. IST) Professor Suhas Shetgovekar  
Director, SOSS
- ✓ Presentation on IGNOU (9:45- 9:55 hrs. IST) Dr. Rukshana Zaman  
Faculty of Anthropology, SOSS, IGNOU
- ✓ Presentation on IUAES (9:55-10:05 hrs. IST) Dr. Mitoo Das  
Faculty of Anthropology, SOSS, IGNOU
- ✓ Anthropology in/of the Future (10:05- 10:15 hrs. IST) Professor Rashmi Sinha  
19<sup>th</sup> IUAES-WAU World Anthropology Pre-Congress  
Faculty of Anthropology, SOSS, IGNOU
- ✓ Address by the President, IAA (10:15 – 10:25 hrs. IST) Professor S.M. Patnaik  
Organising Secretary, 19<sup>th</sup> IUAES – WAU World Anthropology Congress  
HOD, Department of Anthropology, DU  
Former Vice Chancellor Utkal University
- ✓ Address by the Chair (10:25-10:35 hrs. IST) Professor Nageshwar Rao  
Honourable Vice Chancellor, IGNOU
- ✓ Address by Guest Speaker (10:35-10:55 hrs. IST) Prof Thomas Reuter  
Asia Institute, University of Melbourne.  
Formerly, Senior Vice President IUAES and Chair, WCAA
- ✓ Vote of Thanks (10:55-11:00 hrs. IST) Dr. P. Venkatramana  
Faculty of Anthropology, SOSS IGNOU

NATIONAL ANTHEM

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The Discipline of Anthropology, School of Social Sciences, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in collaboration with the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (IUAES) as knowledge partners organised a two day international pre-congress via virtual mode on 2nd and 3rd August, 2023. The event was a prelude to the 19<sup>th</sup> IUAES-WAU World Anthropology Congress which begins from 14-20 October, 2023.

The Inaugural session on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2023, began with the welcome address by the Director, SOSS, **Prof. Suhas Shetgovekar**, followed by the faculty members presenting on IGNOU; the Discipline’s activities and achievements; concise note on the IUAES and a gist on what the Pre-Congress “Anthropology in/of the Future” entails. The inaugural also included the address by the Conference Chair, **Prof S.M. Patnaik**, Head of the Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi, who is in charge of hosting the main Congress in October in India this year. The Guest Speaker **Prof. Thomas Reuter** from Asia Institute, University of Melbourne, Formerly, Senior Vice President IUAES and Chair, WCAA addressed the gathering with his insightful deliberation. The inaugural session also saw the honourable Vice Chancellor, **Prof. Nageshwar Rao** addressing the audience and giving his blessings to the event.

Setting the ball rolling for the Pre-Congress, the inaugural was followed by a Guest Lecture given by our invited speaker, **Prof. Heather Horst**, Director, Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University, Australia. This session was moderated by Dr. Mitoo Das. Prof. Horst spoke on the topic, *Decentering Automated Decision-Making: A Manifesto* which aptly captured the theme of this Pre-Congress. Her talk touched upon 5 tenets to influence research and assist in pondering on possible futures in a world of AI and automation. The talk contributed to an understanding of considerations that may be thought of in the development and deployment of AI applications.

The guest lecture was followed by the sessions for the day. The first session of Day 1 had the following themes within which papers were presented. They were: P.S. 1 (A) Anthropology of Well-Being; P.S. 1 (B) Indigenous Knowledge Systems; and P.S. 1 (C) Indian Heritage and Culture. The second session had the following panels: P.S. 2 (A) Anthropology of Well-Being; P.S. 2 (B) Indigenous Knowledge Systems; and P.S. 2 (C) Biopolitics and the Covid-19 Pandemic: Lives of People in South Asia and South-East Asia and the last session for the day

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had the panels: P.S 3 (A) Anthropology of Well-Being; P.S. 3 (B) Indigenous Knowledge Systems; P.S. 3 (C) Anthropocene of the Present and Future; and P.S. 3 (D) Indian Heritage and Culture.

Day 2 of the Pre-Congress started with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Guest lecture of the event. The invited speaker was **Dr. Geetha Chittoor**, Bioinformatics Staff Scientist, Population Health Sciences, Geisinger (GI-SINGER), USA. The session was moderated by **Dr. P.Venkatramana** from the Discipline of Anthropology, IGNOU. Her lecture topic was on, *From Biological Anthropology to Biomedical Research and Beyond!* Here she critically touched upon how biological anthropologists effectively are conducting bio-medical research around areas of quantitative genetic analysis, statistical genetic techniques and bio-banks. She also talked about electronic health records and its usefulness.

Following the guest lecture, the sessions for the day started. The first academic session of Day 2 Was Academic Session 4 of the event and had within it four thematic Panels: P.S 4 (A) Anthropology of Well-Being; P.S. 4 (B) Indigenous Knowledge Systems; P.S. 4 (C) Politics And The Covid-19 Pandemic: Lives of People in South Asia and South-East Asia; and P.S. 4 (D) Intersections of Inequality.

The last academic session of Day 2 was Academic Session 5 of the event and had within it four thematic Panels: P.S. 5 (A) Anthropocene of the Present and Future; P.S. 5 (B) Indian Heritage and Culture; P.S. 5 (C) Exploring Virtual/Digital Spaces; and P.S. 5 (D) Shifting Terrains of Anthropological Fieldwork.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> guest lecture of the event was by invited speaker **Prof. Faye Harrison**, Professor of African American Studies and Anthropology, also a Faculty Affiliate with the Program on Women & Gender in Global Perspectives, the Center for African Studies, and the Center for Latin American & Caribbean Studies. This session was moderated by **Dr. Rukshana Zaman**. Prof. Harrison’s talk highlighted how propagation of knowledge in the U.S. is majorly delegated via power and positioned within the main space of struggle. She expressed the role of anthropologists for critical thinking in concerns associated with inequalities of race, gender and sexuality particularly in the context of education in the U.S.

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The Pre-Congress reached its culmination with the Valedictory session. The Director of the School, **Prof. Suhas Shetgovekar** welcomed the gathering and lauded the Discipline for its handling of this conference with diverse relevant themes within the panels and the fruitful discussions that arose. Her appreciative speech was followed by reading of the report of the Pre-Congress by **Dr. Rukshana Zaman** and **Dr. Mitoo Das**. Finally the Conference Chair, **Prof. S. M. Patnaik** gave his concluding remarks for the event. The event ended with the vote of thanks by **Dr. P. Venkatramana**.

The diverse circumstances and surroundings which have been depicted via the papers in this Pre-Congress, Anthropology in/of the Future, manifests a present and a future which need more novel interventions by anthropologists to build means and ways to move on with rational thinking and constructing a global arena with the gathering of local and community driven ideas and application of this for a new accepting world.

### Screenshots of the Virtual Conference



*Photograph 1: Guest Speaker Prof. Thomas Reuter (Asia Institute, University of Melbourne, Formerly, Senior Vice President IUAES and Chair, WCAA) at Pre-congress Inaugural Ceremony.*

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*Photograph 2 : IGNOU Vice Chancellor Prof. Nageshwar Rao emphasizing the need of ‘inclusivity’ in academics.*

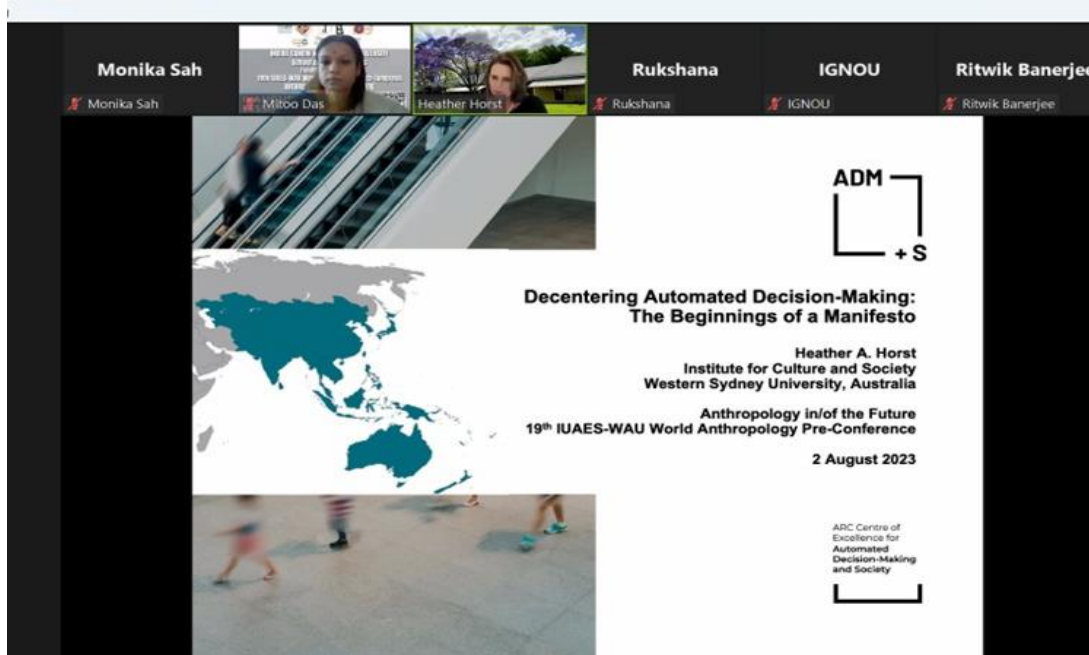


*Photograph 3: Chair of the 19<sup>th</sup> IUAES-WAU World Anthropology Congress 2023, Prof. S.M. Patnaik ( Head of the Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi) gracing the pre-congress with his concluding remarks.*

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Photograph 4: Special Lecture by Prof. Heather A. Horst (Director of the Institute for Culture and Society at Western Sydney University).

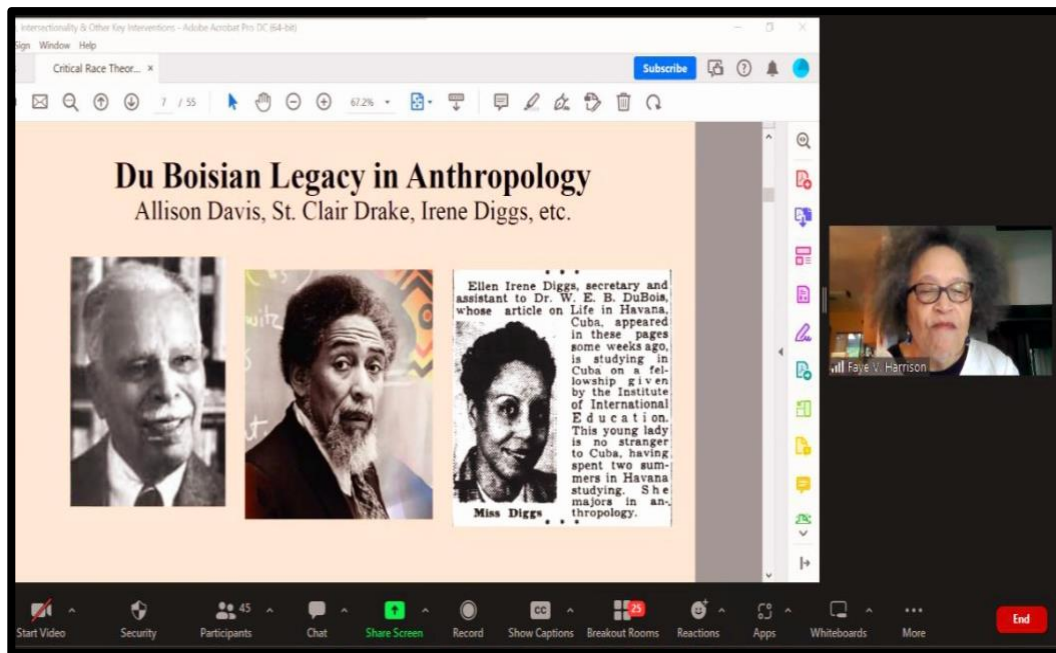


Photograph 5: Guest Lecture on Day 2 by Prof. Geetha Chittoor (Bioinformatics Staff Scientist, Population Health Sciences, Geisinger (GI-SINGER), USA)

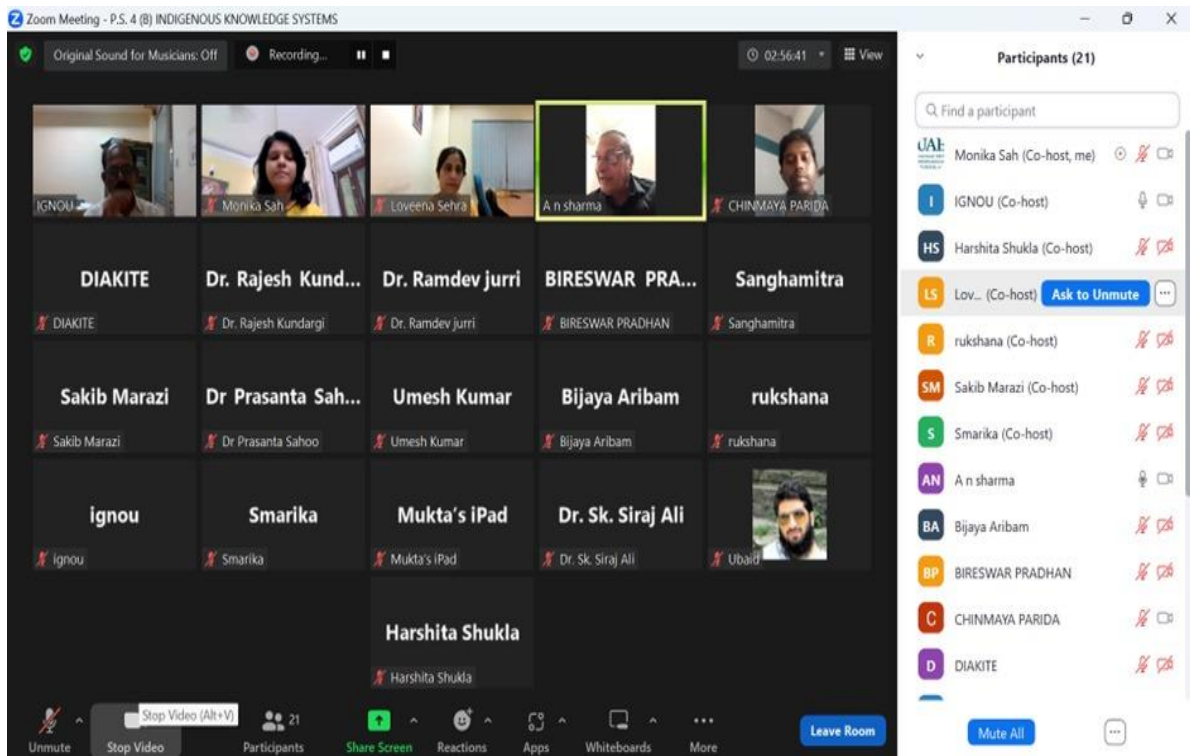
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*Photograph 6: Guest Lecture by Prof. Faye V. Harrison, Faculty Affiliate in Women & Gender in Global Perspectives; African Studies; and Latin American & Caribbean Studies, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Former President of the International Union of Anthropological & Ethnological Sciences, IUAES.*

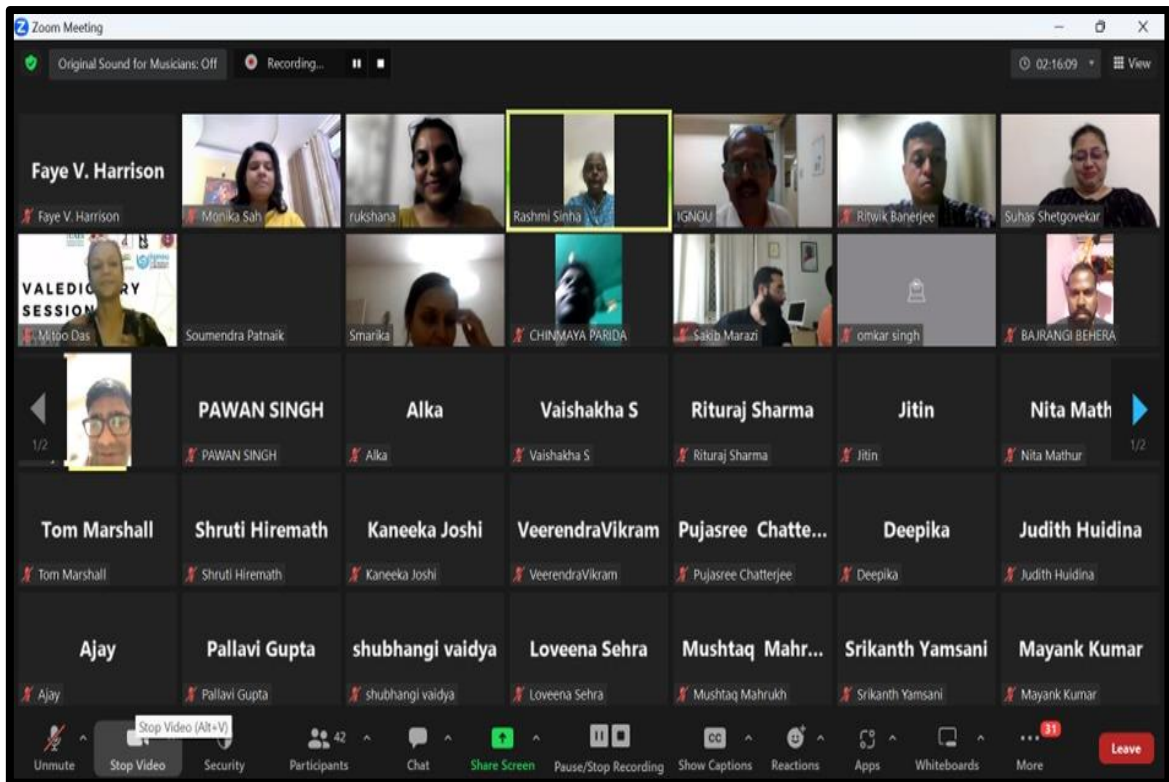


*Photograph 4: Proceedings of the Panel on Indigenous Knowledge Systems*

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*Photograph 5 Concluding the Pre-Congress on a congratulatory note.*