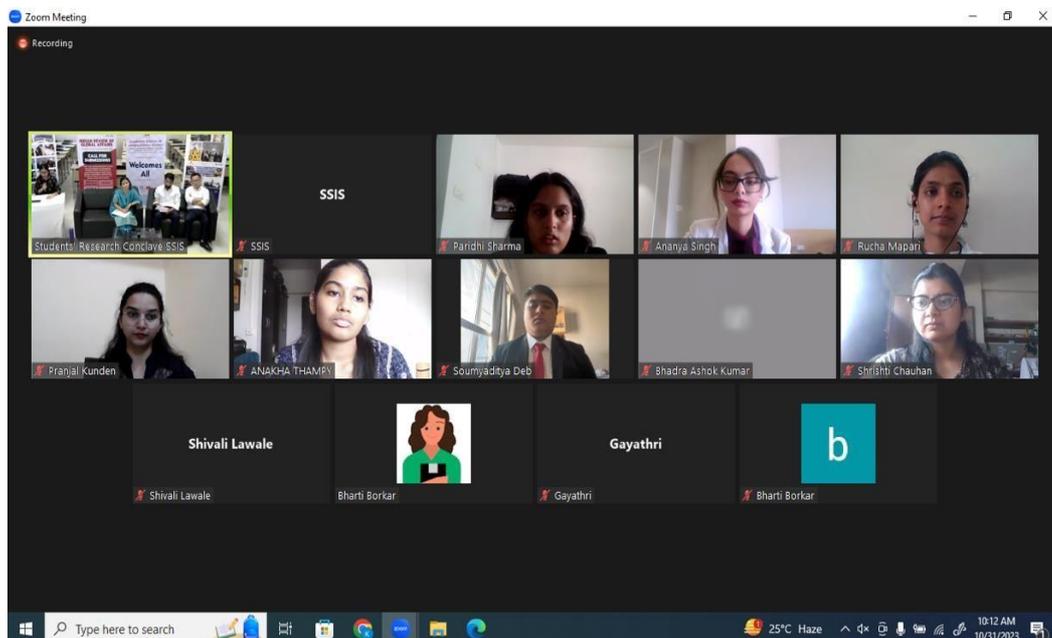


## SSIS All India Students' Research Conclave 2023

### "India's Strategic Culture: Addressing Global & Regional Challenges"

Organized by the Symbiosis School of International Studies (SSIS) Pune, as a precursor to the International Relations Conference (IRC) 2023, the All India Students' Research Conclave on "India's Strategic Culture: Addressing Global & Regional Challenges" held virtually on October 31, 2023, attracted participation from students at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, representing diverse institutions nationwide. It provided a forum for students to share their original research and hone their communication skills and offered the participating students the opportunity to compete for a Best Essay and Presenter award, with various criteria taken into consideration in the selection of candidates.

The conclave explored three thought-provoking sub-themes: India's 'Strategic Autonomy' in Big Power Politics, India's Strategy in the Indo-Pacific, and the Role of Narratives in India's Foreign Policy. Prof. Shivali Lawale, Director of SSIS, set the tone with welcoming remarks, creating an atmosphere of intellectual enthusiasm. The participants showcased impressive insights into the chosen themes. Following each presentation, a stimulating Q&A session allowed for further exploration of ideas. The esteemed judging panel, comprised of Dr. Md. Tahir Ganie and Dr. Anamika Asthana from the faculty of SSIS, provided invaluable feedback, enhancing the academic experience for all involved. The conclave served as a platform for the exchange of ideas and perspectives, fostering a deeper understanding of India's strategic culture amidst global and regional challenges. It ended with the vote of thanks delivered by Ms. Hima Mishra, Research Assistant at SSIS.



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### Award Winners

#### **1. First Place: Ms. Rucha S. Mapari, MA First Year Student, Manipal University**

**Title of Essay:** *India's "strategic autonomy" in big power politics*

**Abstract:** India's strategic autonomy is evolving and taking shape with its growing internal power and dynamic external environment. It is, in turn, also shaping the international system. As India successfully finds its way through the obstacles of strategic autonomy, it is important to explore its impact on India. The article sheds light on the emergence of 'strategically autonomous' India and its relevance. It explores the current practices of India's multi-alignment and challenges in maintaining its continuity. Finally, it attempts to distinguish India from the other states that attempt to follow 'strategic autonomy' and emphasizes the special way it influences international politics.

#### **2. Second Place: Ms. Ananya Singh, BA Second Year Student, FLAME University**

**Title of Essay:** *India's Strategy in the Indo-Pacific: The Centrality of the Mozambique Channel in the WIOR*

**Abstract:** Examining India's security strategy in the Indo-Pacific, this research essay focuses on its relatively underemphasized Western Indian Ocean Region (WIOR) policy. Contrary to India's extensive focus on the East Indian Ocean as a domain for regional power competition with China, it argues that the West provides a more feasible playground in which to counter Chinese influence. The essay highlights the importance of India fortifying its maritime presence through having control over key chokepoints in the region. It specifically focuses on the central yet overlooked Mozambique channel and the renewed opportunities it provides India to achieve its aspirations of becoming a regional provider of security. India's defence and maritime cooperation with neighbouring islands and African coastal nations (Mozambique, Seychelles, Mauritius and Comoros) is assessed against this backdrop. The essay provides recommendations stemming from the premise that India should be cognizant of the critical connection between a country's maritime ambitions vis-a-vis its status as a great power. To this end India needs to expand its influence in the WIO and securing the Mozambique channel has to be a central aspect in its Indo-Pacific policy.

#### **3. Third Place: Ms. Anakha S Thampy, MA Second Year Student, Symbiosis School of International Studies**

**Title of Essay:** *Role of Narratives in India's Foreign Policy*

**Abstract:** As the world's largest democracy and a major global participant, India has a distinct and complicated set of narratives that shape its foreign policy strategies. These are not isolated stories but are ones that are firmly anchored in the nation's rich history, diverse culture, and ever-changing political scene. Among other factors, elections, public opinion, and party ideology influence the narratives that India projects on the world stage. These narratives, in turn, determine the country's diplomatic postures, alliances, and interactions with other

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countries. The paper proposes to focus on domestic political narratives as a tangent that influences the country's foreign policy-making and explores how it helps the country develop a discourse on the world stage, as a means to examine the role of narratives in Indian foreign policy.



**Venue:** SSIS Pune (Virtual Mode)

**Date-** 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023

**Time:** 10:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m.