

***The New Multiculturalism in Latin American,  
Erudite Lecture by Argentina Scholar***

The Latin American societies witness a peculiar social transformation across states in which the crisis in traditional socio-cultural and institutional entities leads to the emergence of charismatic figures, according to Prof. Juan Fernando Calderon, Director of Research and Professor at the Latin American Faculty in Social Sciences at the National University of San Martin, Argentina. Prof. Calderon was delivering Erudite Lecture on “*The New Multiculturalism in Latin American Societies*” hosted by the Inter-University Centre for Social Science Research and Extension (IUCSSRE), Mahatma Gandhi University in collaboration with the Kerala State Higher Education Council (KSHEC) and the Kerala Council for Historical Research (KCHR).

Prof. Calderon said that this charisma-based politics has been the pattern during the last decades which saw the rise of Lula, Chavez, Morales, Pope Frances and others. The new multiculturalism that emerged in these societies has culture at the centre of conflicts, with human dignity as a central issue. The local level conflicts get connected to the national and the global platforms. One dark side of this process would be a possible assertion of fundamentalism and chauvinism. Politics is also redefined through a communication policy that in turn redefines the public space. This new public space becomes the site for social and economic changes. In many countries, finance capital has taken the central stage of cultural and capitalist transformation. In this changed situation of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the new social movements are defined by the feminist, human rights, ecological and indigenous affirmations, he said. Prof. Calderon also marked certain tendencies that characterize this transformation, including the pervasive presence of new media and social networks, culture of techno-sociability, primarily operating through the youth, a focus on cultural diversity and identity, emergence of new religiosities and a rise in feminist and ecological assertions.

Prof Michael Tharakan, Chairman of KCHR chaired the session. Prof Sabu Thomas, Vice Chancellor, Mahatma Gandhi University delivered inaugural Address. Prof. K.M. Seethi, Honorary Director, IUCSSRE welcomed and Prof. Sanal Mohan, Director, KCHR proposed a vote of thanks. Prof. Juan Fernando Calderon also served as Simon Bolivar Professor in the University of Cambridge, UK.