

**Panel 7:** Rethinking the Role of Religion in Processes of Development and Social Change in South Asia

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**Abstract:** The issue of religion has rarely been taken into consideration in the study of development in South Asia. However, there is a growing awareness of the importance of religion both in terms of its role in political and social processes as well as in the practical delivery of services related to poverty reduction, education, and health. The proposed panel will look at the role of religion in politics and governance historically and in the current period, and will examine how religion has influenced states' policies with regards to development as well as its influence in shaping the strategies and identities of political parties.

In addition to the analysis of the more formal realms of the state the papers will also focus on the relationships between religion and social movements, religion and conflict, and globalization and transnational links between religious groups. Finally, the panel will discuss the influence of religion on the values and beliefs of individuals in terms of conceptions of well-being, as well as in attitudes towards corruption.

The majority of the papers will be based on the results from the South Asian aspects of the 5 year DFID Religions and Development Research Programme,<sup>1</sup> which is a research consortium based at the University of Birmingham, but with partners in institutions across South Asia, particularly Pakistan, Bangladesh and India. We also invite papers from others working in this emerging field.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information visit <http://www.rad.bham.ac.uk/>