

Three Day National Seminar
on
Composite Culture in Indian History with Special Reference to
Kashmir

Organized by UGC (SAP), Department of History in collaboration with ICSSR (NERC), Chandigarh
between **28th of October - 2017 and 30th of October - 2017**

Since its hoary past India has been a meeting place of hordes of people viz. conquerors, seers, sages, pilgrims, adventurers, traders etc. The centuries of interaction and synthesis with these diverse ethnic, religious and linguistic communities, made India a melting pot of cross cultural fertilization. In its orbit the Indian culture continued to accommodate unabatedly beliefs, customs, traditions, rites, rituals, institutions, arts, religions and philosophies of various civilizations and always tried to seek unity of such heterogeneous elements. The unity in diversity thus has been the hallmark of Indian culture as it contained in itself different sects and religious traditions such as Buddhism, Jainism, Brahmanism, Islam and Sikhism etc. The Bhakti and Sufi leaders while espousing the cause of inclusiveness rather than orthodoxy, denounced any form of bigotry, thereby played a crucial role in cementing the bonds of universal brotherhood, humanism, love, compassion, spiritualism etc and this message transcended the frontiers of time and space. Emphasizing upon the common features of different faiths, these leaders regarded them different roads leading to the same God. The dissemination of such values served as a beacon light for India's socio-cultural and religio-political life. Notwithstanding the occasional ruptures of communalism and hatred, the fabric of Indian society has (had) remained highly composite in its spirit and character as it has shown remarkable flexibility, elasticity and resilience in accommodating and assimilating the different socio-religio-cultural perspectives and made indigenous culture the most vibrant in the annals of history.

The movement for cultural assimilation between these religious traditions went on apace from the time of Amir Khasrau and was further strength by Akhar whose policy of religious toleration or "sulhikul" stood the test of time and became a part of Mughal code. Such a tolerant religious policy is akin to the policy earlier pursued by the famous Sultan of Kashmir Zain-ul-Abidin. What is important to understand is that medieval

state was essentially secular in nature and rulers not unoften refused their policies to be determined by orthodox ulama.

The historian Zia-ud-din Barani though orthodox yet believed that Islamic state could not exist in India rather state had only outer trappings of Islam. A state policy called "Jahandari" always distinguished itself from policy of "Dindari". Zawabit or secular laws were given ascendancy over Shariat laws. In the same manner one comes across glaring examples that State in Ancient India too was secular in nature as king's duty was derived from both Dharam Shastras and Arthshashtra that is canon laws and politics.

The same kind of communal amity and cooperation and cultural integration could be depicted from regional states as not only the Hindus shouldered the responsibility of manning the administration but matrimonial alliances conducted between the two communities was itself an index of convergence of their interests. Thus Feroz shah Bahman married the daughter of Vijayanagra ruler Deva Raya, the Gujrat ruler married Rajputprincesses and from Kashmir the favourite queens of the ruler Zain-ul-Abidin were Hindus.

The ruptures in the inter-community relations that surfaced during the 19th and 20th centuries are seen as colonial machinations to enforce control on Indian society. The enmeshes of National Leaders on communal harmony and composite ethos was not an out of box remedy for pluralistic society of India but the advocacy of the centuries old ethos of composite culture.

From the times of Mahajanpadas, Kashmir the part of Ghandhara witnessed cross fertilization of human civilization owing to its geographical location-the place where three Empires met. Like India the Valley for centuries had nourished composite culture perfected by Bhaktas, Sufis and Rishis. The mutual relations between different communities had been progressively responded to and absorbed by the basic spirit of mutual existence forced by political demands of life.

Given the vitiated political religious and cultural climate of India at the hands of fringe elements in the contemporary times, the theme of the seminar gains significance with an underlying objective of rediscovering, resuscitating and popularizing the centuries old rich legacy of composite culture so as to allow humans of any shade of opinion to live in an atmosphere of peace, tranquility and communal amity.

Considering the significance of the theme the department contemplates to organize a three day National Seminar on the said theme 28th and 30th of October - 2017.

The Major Themes of the Seminar.

1. Pluralism in Indian History
2. Roots of Pluralism.
3. Impact of Pluralism on India Society.
4. Bhakti Saints and the Making of Composite Culture.
5. Contribution of Sufis to Composite culture.
6. Challenges to Pluralism

➤ Call for Abstracts

The soft copy of the abstract with a maximum of 500 words, double spaced (in Times New Roman font size 12) written in English should be sent for acceptance at historydepartment12ku@gmail.com by or before 5th of October, 2017. After scrutiny of the abstracts the authors will be notified regarding the acceptance of papers on 10th of October, 2017.

➤ Final Submission of Papers

The soft copy of the full paper, double spaced (in Times Roman on size 12), within 15-20 pages written in English should be sent at historydepartment12ku@gmail.com. The deadline for paper submission is 20th of October, 2017.

➤ **Registration:**

All participants are required to register by or before 25th of October, 2017. The registration fees (which includes Snacks and food for three days) is rupees 1000/- for locals and rupees 1500/- for outside participants.

➤ **Mode of Payment**

Payment is to be made in form of cash or through Demand Draft drawn in favour of Head, Department of History, University of Kashmir.

➤ **Accommodation:**

The organizers will provide accommodation to the paper presenters hailing from outside Valley.

➤ **Publication:**

The proceedings of the seminar will be duly published by the Department of History, University of Kashmir.

➤ **Contact Information:**

Send in your queries at historydepartment12ku@gmail.com

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