



Two Day National Seminar

On

Syncretism in Indian History with Special

Reference to Kashmir

(November 01 and 2nd 2023)

Organized by

**Department of History,
University of Kashmir**

Funded by

ICHR, New-Delhi

Concept Note:

The civilizational course of India has witnessed a long process of synthesis of diverse views, ideas, philosophies and faiths. The richness and syncretic nature of Indian civilization can be gleaned from the onset of Vedic times, emergence of non-conformist movements like Buddhism, Jainism, Ajvikism, Charvaka thoughts that were actively synthesized to evolve the composite Indian culture. The wider subsumptions of tribal cults and elite philosophies were reinforced with writings of Puranas that paved the way for accommodation. The coming of Islam and rise of Sufi-Bhakti traditions enriched the civilizational capital of India. The rise of Sikhism added further diversity to India's cultural landscape. The accommodative nature of the Indian culture can be gauged from the space accorded to, Christianity, Zoroastrian and Bahai faith in the country. The mantra of unity in diversity makes India epitome of the world. The richness of civilization is showcased by finest art from cave paintings to medieval monuments, sublime poetry, drama, folktales and performing arts. The idea of unity in diversity is enshrined in the civilizational ethos of India. Kashmir, the garden of Gandhara as Kalhana calls it has been exceptionally rich and fecund since remotest past. Being located at the crossroads of Indian, Chinese, Central Asian and Persian civilizations, the Valley has seen the ingress of people and ideas that have shaped its syncretic culture. The syncretic culture of Kashmir was best reflected in the fusion of the distinctive philosophies, faiths, art and architecture. The refined learning, production of literature and art earned Kashmir the distinctive title of Sarda Pith. The commingling of Shiva, Vaishnava and Buddhist philosophies capitalized on the earlier Naga tradition and created a unique blend of religious syncretism. The process of assimilation, negotiation and synthesis are best explained by archeological evidence and literary texts like Nilmat Purana. The resurgence of Shaivism especially its Trika School during Lahora rule bears testimony to the fact, how the elite philosophies, pantheons and beliefs were negotiated. The rise of highest standard of Sanskrit language connected all these traditions. It is curious to note, that the texts of, non-conformist movements like Buddhism were written in Sanskrit unlike others part of the country where they were written in Prakrit. The establishment of Sultanate and subsequent Islamization of Valley added further richness to the already established religious and cultural philosophies. The spread of Islam and its culture was paved by Sufism. The Sufi saints disseminated the message of oneness and humanism in different corners of the Valley. In this process the greatest example of synthesis comes in form of the Reshi movement. Using the old

Vedic appellation, the founder of Reshi movement Sheikh Nur -ud-din- invoked the spiritual legacy of pre-Islamic legendary Reshis and above all the mystic Shiva Yogini Lala Ded. Reshis denounced caste system, preferred vegetarianism, and lived exemplary austere lives. They planted fruit trees, cleaned streams, ponds, and offered social services. They chose vernacular, and the ascetics like Lala Ded and Nund Rishi gave respectability to common men's tongue. These syncretic traditions have served as the bedrock of Kashmiri ethos. The synthesis gained further ground during the subsequent times with saints like Sheikh Hamzah Makhdom, Mullah Akhun Shah, Swami Parmanand and Krishna Joo Razdan who spread the message of love and peace and tolerance. Therefore, the reflection of syncretic tradition in philosophy, religion, mysticism, gnosis, art, architecture, music has literary culture, folklore, arts, crafts, and technology has often invited the scholarly attention. The proposed seminar as such aims at exploring the syncretism in Indian History with special reference to Kashmir.

Sub-Themes:

- Pluralism in India: Historical Overview
- Interfaith dialogue and syncretism in Kashmiri Shivite and Sufi traditions
- Syncretism as reflected in the art and architecture of Kashmir
- Reflections of syncretism in Kashmiri/Dogri/Punjabi/Gojri literature

ORGANIZING INSTITUTION

UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR

The University of Jammu and Kashmir was founded in the year 1948. In the year 1969 it was bifurcated into two full-fledged Universities: University of Kashmir at Srinagar and University of Jammu at Jammu. The University of Kashmir is situated at Hazratbal in Srinagar. It is flanked by the world famous Dal Lake on its eastern side and Nigeen Lake on the western side. The Main Campus of the University spread over 247 acres of land is divided into three parts – Hazratbal Campus, Naseem Bagh Campus and Mirza Bagh Campus (serving residential purpose). Additional land has been acquired at Zakura near the main campus for further expansion of the University. The tranquil ambience of the Campus provides the right kind of atmosphere for serious study and research. Over the Years University of Kashmir has expanded substantially. It has established Satellite Campuses at Anantnag (South Campus), Baramulla (North Campus) and at Kupwara, to make higher education more accessible to people living in remote areas of Kashmir valley. The University has also established a Sub-Office at Jammu to cater to the needs of the candidates enrolled with the University from outside Kashmir. The University is committed to provide an intellectually stimulating environment for productive learning to enhance the educational, economic, scientific, business and cultural environment of the region. The University offers programmes in all the major faculties. It has been constantly introducing innovative programmes to cater to the needs and demands of the students and the society at large. Over the years, the University has marched towards excellence in its programme and activities. It has been re-accredited as Grade-A+ University by the National Assessment & Accreditation Council (NAAC) of India. This is recognition and reflection of the high standard of quality in teaching and research at the University of Kashmir. The University of Kashmir is eulogized for its exceptional contribution towards teaching, research, and its service in nationbuilding. It also provides equal opportunity for students from different streams at various levels of education. To meet the challenges in higher education, University has accepted from time to time the Semester system, Choice Based Credit System and now the New Education Policy (NEP).

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

The Department of History was established in 1965. Ever since its inception, the department has been in the process of growth in terms of the number of students and scholars, admission process, curriculum updating, teaching-learning process, research and publication output, holding of seminars and conferences, resource mobilization, consultancy, infrastructure building, internal quality assurance system, evaluation and student progression. From 50 students in 1978, the roll increased to 120 by 2002 and 172 by 2010. Similarly, the number of research scholars has also risen spectacularly from 06 in 1978 to 19 by 2002 to 45 at present.

INDIAN COUNCIL OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH, NEW DELHI

The Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) is an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Education, Government of India, It was established by the Ministry of Education & Social Welfare, Govt. of India (now, Ministry of Education) on 27th March 1972 on the recommendation of a Working Group set up by the Government of India in December 1971. The respective members of the committee were Professor R.S. Sharma, Patna University (Chairman): Professor Satish Chandra, Jawaharlal Nehru University: Professor Tapan Ray Chaudhuri, Delhi University: Dr. S.N. Prasad, Director, National Archives: Shri J. Veeraraghvan, Director (Internal Finance), Ministry of Education & Social Welfare: and Smt. S. Doraiswami, Deputy Education Adviser, Ministry of Education & Social Welfare. ICHR was registered under Societies Registration Act (Act xxi of 1860) being an Act for registration of Literary, Scientific and Charitable Societies in India.

CALL FOR PAPERS / ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Presentations on identified themes are welcomed. We would be receiving abstracts only at hodhistory@uok.edu.in The abstract body should be short (300 words), clear, concise, and written in English language with correct spelling and sentence structure. The sequence of the abstracts should be as under::

- Title of the paper
- Author(s) name(s)

- Affiliation, address
- Email ID
- Abstract body
- Key words

Abstract should clearly indicate the significance of the paper, sources used and the findings of the study. All abstracts will be reviewed by the Committee to ensure that the title of the paper is consistent with the scope of the seminar. Successfully submitted abstracts will be acknowledged with an electronic receipt including an abstract reference number, which should be quoted in all correspondence. Abstracts will be accepted until Thursday October 12, 2023 till 5:00 p.m. only.

IMPORTANT DATES

- **Last Date of Abstract Submission Thursday October 12, 2023**
- **Notification of the acceptance October 25, 2023**
- **Last Date of Registration for the Seminar October 30, 2023**

Seminar Registration Fee

Research Scholars without accommodation	Rs 750
Research Scholars with accommodation	Rs 5000
Faculty without accommodation	Rs 1500
Faculty with accommodation	Rs 6500

The Registration fee can be submitted through Net Banking on the details given below:

Name of Account Holder	HOD History, KU
Account Number	0007010100000005
Name of the Bank	Jammu and Kashmir Bank Ltd
Branch	Hazratbal
IFSC Code	JAKA0NASEEM (0-Zero)

Note: On spot registration shall also be available on the inaugural day of the seminar

ORGANIZERS

- **Parton:** Prof. Nilofer Khan, Vice Chancellor, University of Kashmir
- **Organizer:** Prof. M. Y. Ganai, Head Department of History, University of Kashmir
- **Convener:** Dr Younus Rashid, Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Kashmir

MEMBERS

- Dr Javeed Ul Aziz
- Dr Abdul Rashid Lone
- Dr Sajad Ahmad Darzi

Note: For any kind of query kindly feel free to contact: **9906965082/ youniszaha@gmail.com**

Yours sincerely

**Dr Younus Rashid
Assistant Professor
Department of History
Seminar Convener**