

ICSSR Sponsored Two Day Nation Seminar on
Reversing the Western Gaze: Rediscovery and Resurgence of the Idea of Bharat
11-12 March, 2024

Janata College, Kabuganj, Cachar, Assam-788121

Call for Paper

India is moving through a transitional phase after the completion of 75 years of its Independence and heading towards 'Amrit Kaal'. It is a transitional phase from the viewpoint of shifting our focus from external world to the internal home, of releasing our mind from slave mentality for self-esteeming identity, of conviction to explore the truth to reverse the colonial gaze of the world at us, of presenting us from a mere loser to a winner, of confirming us from a beggar to a giver for the world. In doing so our voyage demands to take its turn within than outside, where our task is to revisit our rich cultural heritage and explore the diversity which is inherent in this soil.

A few months back the whole world had been caught in the deadly grip of Corona virus; it is in this crucial moment that the world realizes the value of saving environment so much as it was never before. In the west environment consciousness as a movement took its shape hardly 60 to 70 years back. Many high-sounding phrases like Eco-criticism, Eco-feminism, etc. developed from there. But if we reverse our gaze from Western world to our Eastern home, we can locate everything existing in our system of knowledge since the time immemorial. There are plenty of references of how to care Nature in Rig Vedas, Upanisadas. In the Shanti mantra of Yajurveda we can find the devotee is praying the different objects and elements of nature to stay in peace so that the balance can be maintained. The poets of the British Romantic period like Wordsworth realized the contribution of nature in the growth of human mind, made confession like nature never betrayed the heart that loved it, could learn to look into the life of things realizing the existence of a spirit or soul that runs both through microcosm and macrocosm. But there is nothing new or alien from the perspective of Indian system of knowledge where we get the mantras like 'naisarga rakshati rakshitaha'. The existence of divinity in each and every object of nature is one of the core concerns of Indian value system.

The environmental consciousness is not merely documented in the written texts but vividly reflected in the life style of the people of India. Sun is considered as the source of energy and in accordance to that concept the life style of most of the tribal communities of India is sun-synchronized. They wake up at the dawn and go to sleep with the sunset and this process helps them to store energy and as a result the tribal peoples are very much hard working. Worshipping animals, rivers, mountains, stones, trees etc. are parts of showing reverence for nature. India has rich folk cultures of different ethnic communities that displays the cultural diversity along with the silent stream of national integration. Each community has a mythical story of the origin and the stories are somehow linked to the Dharmic tradition of this land.

Indian society and its value system had a unique feature that differs greatly from the western ways of looking at life. So, the different -isms or ideologies developed on the western soil during different phases of its socio-political journey hardly have anything great to offer for India. As for instance, Marxism speaks for equality. But is it possible to provide equal environment to all people residing in different regions of India? Is it possible to bind everyone to develop an equal food habit? The life style of people residing on hilly regions can never get matched with those on the plains. No man can ever bear the half of the pain of giving birth that a woman goes through. So, the term 'equality' has to surrender itself to the notion of unity that Bharatiya Dharmic tradition cherishes. It is on the basis of this underlying unity in the cosmos that the concept of 'basudaivya kutumbakam' developed, and the people of India pray for 'sarve bhavantu sukhinah.'

There is a lack of clarity about the underlying basis of Indian civilization, mainly due to the dependency on the distorted version of India by the British colonial rulers. The British administrators, scholars, got bewildered at the vastness and diversity of the land and declared it a land without any sort of unity. There is nothing called Indian nation or 'people of India.' Unfortunately, many historians in post-independence India are also found to follow the legacy of colonial thinkers. But the fact is that cultural continuity and 'national consciousness' in India can be traced back to many millennia that are coming to light from the relentless efforts of archaeologists, Indologists as well as Sanskrit scholars. "Identification with, and adoration of, the land was expressed in the sixty-three verses long Prithvi Sukta of the Atharva Veda, described as the first 'national song' in the world." [Meenakshi Jain]

It is only in the twentieth century that the western psychoanalysts like Jacques Lacan or Queer theorists like Judith Butler are found revealing the non-existence of anything like essentially masculine or essentially feminine in nature. But in our Dharmic tradition we have been carrying the notion of Ardhanariswara since thousands of years. It is only in India that the Divinity is conceived in female form also who is praised as the possessor of shakti (power). In Indian culture and religious beliefs woman is given an esteemed position which is beyond imagination in any other civilization. Likewise, there are plenty of avenues where India left its golden steps; but by following the western influenced narrative, we have ignored our culture and knowledge tradition even after seventy-five years of Independence. Now it is high time to revisit Bharat to reverse the western gaze.

The proposed National Seminar aims at engaging the academic community in the dialogue of the "Idea of Bharat" through an Indic lens that challenges the western gaze. The research papers are invited to be presented from the faculty members, research scholars and other academicians in the two-day National Seminar proposed to be held on 11th & 12th March, 2024 at Janata College, Kabuganj, Cachar, Assam on the topic "Reversing the Western Gaze: Rediscovery and Resurgence of the Idea of Bharat". Abstracts are invited on the following sub themes:

- 1) The Idea of India versus the Idea of Bharat
- 2) Cultural continuity and the Idea of Bharat
- 3) Dharmic Tradition and the Idea of Bharat
- 4) The Idea of the Nation: Geo-political versus geo-cultural
- 5) Post Independence Historiography: Construction or Distortion
- 6) The Idea of Bharat: Revisiting Literature
- 7) The Epic Tradition: Itihas or Myths
- 8) Folk/Oral Tradition and Cultural connectivity
- 9) Ritualistic Practices: Similarities and Synergies
- 10) Woman in Bharat: An Epitome of Shakti or Shackled
- 11) Cultural and Dharmic Tradition of Northeast India: Connecting the Idea of Bharat
- 12) Ecological and Environmental consciousness: Dharmic and Cultural Tradition

Venue: Janata College, Kabuganj, Cachar, Assam-788121

About Janata College, Kabuganj:

Since its founding in 1964, Janata College, Kabuganj, Cachar, Assam has made a concerted effort to provide higher education to the rural population, which is mostly made up of the SC, ST(H), ST(P), OBC, and MOBC communities. One of the prominent coeducational colleges in the valley, the college enrolls a sizable number of female students.

Procedure for submitting Papers and Abstracts:

- ❖ Papers must be original research work and related to the main theme of the seminar.
- ❖ Maximum length of the paper is 5000 words
- ❖ An abstract of 250 words (maximum) is to be sent to munnidm@gmail.com
- ❖ Only one soft copy will be accepted in MS Word (2007 or later), Font: Times New Roman, Size: 12-point, line space: 1.5 and Paper A4 and a copy in PDF with the same specifications.
- ❖ Languages: English

Important Dates:

- ❖ Last date of Abstract submission: 28th February, 2024
- ❖ Confirmation of the acceptance of the abstract: 1st March, 2024
- ❖ Last date of the submission of the full paper: 5th March, 2024
- ❖ Last date of Registration: 5th March, 2024
- ❖ Seminar Dates: March 11-12, 2024

Publication:

Selected papers will be published in book form having ISBN by the College.

How to reach the Venue?

Janata College, Kabuganj is located 20 kms away from the district head quarter Silchar. Silchar is well connected through direct train service from Delhi, Kolkata,

Chennai, Tiruvanthapuram, Guwahati, Dibrugarh, Naharlagun, Secunderabad, Yashvantapur (Bangaluru) and other major cities of India. There is direct bus service from Guwahati which is 330 kms away. The nearest airport is Kumbhirgram, Silchar which is 42 kms away and air connectivity is there with Delhi, Kolkata, Bangaluru, Guwahati, Imphal, Shillong etc.

Registration Details:

- ❖ Faculty and other academicians: Rs. 1000/
- ❖ Research Scholars: Rs. 500/

Bank Account Details:

- ❖ Account Holder's Name: Janata College Seminar & Workshop Fund
- ❖ Account No.: 42141720640
- ❖ Bank & Branch: SBI, Kabuganj Branch
- ❖ IFS Code: SBIN0009402

Accommodation:

The participants will be assisted in booking their accommodation if it is communicated by 5th March, 2024

Contact Details:

Dr Muni Deb Mazumder
Assistant Professor of English
Janata College, Kabuganj, Cachar, Assam-788121
Mobile No. 9101607441
Email: munnidm@gmail.com

For Registration, please click on the following link

<https://forms.gle/uUVmmKUYH5KQ3cwb7>