

3. Popular Cults and Religious practices, with special reference to Vaishnavism and Saivism
4. Socio-economic changes and its impact on Religious system
5. Important Religious Centers and their significance
6. Bhakti and Sufi Movements

Scholars are requested to present research papers on the above themes and related topics.

**Last date for Submission of Abstracts – 15th March, 2023**

**Last Date for Submission of Full Paper- 20th March 2023**

#### ABOUT THE CENTER

The Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Research Centre, Osmania University, is a multidisciplinary research centre established as a part of the University Centenary Celebration during the year 2018. The Centre aims to conduct research in the broad field of Ambedkar Studies and undertakes various academic activities in convergence with Central and State Government agencies in promoting the welfare activities for the downtrodden communities. The major areas identified include the questions of social justice, equity, democracy, representation and participation of disadvantaged section of Indian society. It undertakes studies on the historically deprived communities such as Dalits, Tribes, Other Backward Classes, Minorities and Women. The studies in these areas would be undertaken within the framework of social science disciplines. The Centre also promotes public reasoning by organizing Conferences/ Seminars/ Workshops, Lectures, and so on. The Centre undertakes research by the internal faculty and external resource persons on invitation/selection.

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**Dr. B.R. AMBEDKAR RESEARCH CENTRE (DRBRARC),  
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**TWO-DAY NATIONAL SEMINAR  
ON**

**RELIGION AND SOCIETY IN TELANGANA:  
FROM SATAVAHANAS TO KAKATIYAS**

(Sponsored by the Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi)

**(27<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2023)**



Telangana region has distinct religious and belief systems rooted in its heterogeneous ecological and social formation. The Mother-Goddess cult forms the core of the religious-cultural system of the region from time immemorial. Village Gods and Goddesses are associated with production and protection from natural calamities, disease and disasters. In the Deccan, during the hunting and food gathering stage humans worshipped nature and animals, as it was believed the nature had endowed with super natural powers. Mother-Goddess was treated as a symbol of creation and production, while Naga and Nagini worship represented protection from evil spirits. In Telangana the Gondi tribal community worships Nagoba (the serpent God) with utmost reverence. Every local community/clan has plants and animals as totems, which are worshipped along with family gods, goddesses and elders. This practice has been prevalent from early historical period and archeological evidence suggests that there was widespread worship of mother-goddess from the Megalithic period. Mother-Goddess figures have been found at Madumala and Yeleswaram in Mahabubnagar district; and at Pedabankuru and Dhulikatta in Karimnagar district. A rock-cut painting of the mother-goddess was also found at Madumala village in Makhhal mandal of Mahabubnagar district. Historically, the Aryans expanded southwards subduing the local population and the Aryan literature refers to the latter as Nagas, Yakshas, Nisadas, Rakshasas, and Vanaras. The Dravidians were fairly widespread and they resisted the Aryan advance under the leadership of the local tribes. In its historical setting, the Ramayana represents the expansion of Aryan culture over Deccan and South India. According to Nilakanta Sastri, the Aryanization of south India was a slow process spread over several centuries. Beginning around 1000 BCE it had reached its completion in the 4th century BCE.

The advent of Buddhism into Telangana has been traced back to the lifetime of the Buddha himself, viz., the 5th

century BCE. Two of the Jataka Stories, Bhimasena Jataka and Serivanija Jataka refer to Andhra. The Suttanipata story of Sage Bavari, who lived on an island between Assaka and Mulaka Janapadas helps us in determining the date of the advent of Buddhism into Telangana. Bavari was a contemporary of the Buddha. The fact that more than two millennia ago, Gautama Buddha's teachings had influenced the land and people of Telangana is attested by the Buddhist literature, Kathavattu/Abhidamm Pitaka. An islet on the river Godavari called Badankurthi surrounded by the present-day districts of Karimnagar, Adilabad, and Nizamabad was the center of Buddhism. Thus Buddhism as a popular religion had a profound influence on the history and culture of the region for more than a millennium. According to archaeologists, Buddhism flourished between the fourth century and first century BCE and spread from Badanakurthi through Kotilingala, Dhulikatta, Kondapur, Phanigiri, Gajulabanda, Nelakondapalli, and Nagarjunakonda. It further spread rapidly in the kingdoms of the Satavahanas and Ikshvakus. The royal families patronized Buddhism and followed the policy of religious toleration. In Telangana, along with elites, common people like Gahapatis, merchants, artisan/craft communities and women also embraced Buddhism. For about eight centuries, Buddhism flourished as a popular religion in Ancient and Medieval Telangana.

Jainism came to the Deccan/south India in the 4-3rd century BCE and spread in Telangana region during the early medieval period. It enjoyed state patronage as the early Satavahanas, Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas and Kakatiyas were Jains. In Telangana, Hanumakonda, Vemulawada, Kolanupaka and Patancheruvu became famous Jaina centers and Jainism was embraced by peasants and merchant communities. The use of local languages like prakrit/pali in earlier times and vernacular languages like Kannada and Telugu in early

medieval period attracted people towards Jainism. The Bhakti/devotion tradition has also become central characteristic feature of Jainism, as monastery and guild became the main centers. The humanistic and rationalistic ideas propagated by Jainism have remained integral to religious-cultural tradition of Telangana society.

Vedic religious practices and rituals propagated by Bhagavatism and puranic/bhakti tradition gained prominence in Telangana since early medieval period. The famous sutrakaras like Bodhayana and Apastambha preached liberal values which gained social acceptance and broadened the scope of popular Hinduism. The fall of Satavahana dynasty and the rise of several small dynasties such as Abhiras, Ikshvakus, Vakatakas, Pallavas, Salankayanas, Vishnukundis have brought about many changes in the socio-religious and cultural conditions in Telangana. Popular beliefs, cults and religious practices have witnessed transformation as new sets like saivism and vaishnavis flourished during the post-Satavahana period. While Vishnukundi rulers patronized Vaisnavism, the Chalukays and Kakatiya rulers have played an important role in the development of Saivism in Telangana. Subsequently Virasaivism and Vaishnavism gained popularity during rule of Kakatiyas and Padmanayakas respectively. Growth of agriculture, trade and commerce and urbanization has brought about many changes in the social, cultural and religious domains in medieval Telangana. The identity and personality of Telangana are historically rooted in its religious tradition, as it shaped the distinct cultural synthesis of the region.

Therefore, the proposed National seminar will examine the changing religious conditions and its impact on society in Telangana during the ancient and medieval period. The following themes will be explored:

1. The origin and growth of the Mother Goddess and nature worship
2. The rise and fall of Buddhism and Jainism