

- Paper writers are advised to give references in the middle of the text at the appropriate place by quoting author's name and year and also at the end of the paper in the prescribed format, i.e., Name of the author, Year, Title, published source, book or journal article, vol. number, page numbers in font size 10.
- Correspondence shall be made to the first named author unless otherwise indicated.
- A committee will review the abstracts submitted and acceptance will be communicated to the authors subsequently
- The selected papers will be published in an edited book.
- The authors are requested to send their abstracts and full papers to the following e-mail:minoritiesseminar@gmail.com.

REGISTRATION FEE

Academicians and others:Rs.500/- Research scholars and students:Rs.300/- The registration fee can be paid at the Seminar Venue.

TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION

Sleeper class fare will be given to participants whose paper is accepted for presentation. However the participants are requested to seek sponsorship of their institution for their travel. Moderate accommodation and local hospitality will be provided to outstation participants. In case of multi-authors, only one author will be paid travel charges. The participants are advised to make their own travel arrangements and inform the arrival and departure dates for making necessary arrangements.

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NATIONAL SEMINAR ON

RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN INDIA: STRATEGIES FOR EMPOWERMENT (March 10-11, 2016)

Sponsored by
**University Grants Commission,
New Delhi**

Dr. P. Subba Rao
Director & Staff

**CENTRE FOR STUDY OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION
AND INCLUSIVE POLICY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES BUILDING
ANDHRA UNIVERSITY, VISAKHAPATNAM-530 003
ANDHRA PRADESH**

Background

India is a plural and multi-cultural society and home for several religious communities. According to the 2011 Religious Census, Hindus constituted the majority and six religious communities viz., Muslims (14.2%), Christians (2.34%), Sikhs (1.87%), Buddhists (0.77%), Jains (0.4%) and Zoroastrians (0.06%) are considered as Minorities in India. The minority population is scattered and spread across different parts of the country. India with several pluralistic traits such as being multi-ethnic, multi-religious, continue to survive as the largest democratic state and society in conditions not very conducive to the sustenance of democracy-beset with several challenges, underdevelopment, mass poverty, illiteracy and extreme regional disparities, etc. (Zoya Hasan, 2009). The national and international legal instruments attest and confer the religious freedom and several other rights on individuals. In view of the country's diversity, the framers of the Indian Constitution rightly adopted the nation state as sovereign, socialist, secular democratic republic. The hallmark of this magnificent document lies in the institutionalization of secularism with the State having no officially recognized religion. The Constitution grants religious freedom by Article 25 which provides that "all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion" subject to public order, morality and health. Article 15 explicitly prohibits discrimination based on religion and Article 51 imposes a positive duty on the citizens to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood among all the people of India. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) also proclaim that every individual has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right includes the freedom to change one's religion or belief.

Notwithstanding the sanctimonious declarations conferring rights to safeguard the interests of minorities in the context of religious freedom, the harsh reality is that most of these provisions are observed more in their breach. The issues confronting the Religious Minorities are manifold and varied. They are manifested in the form of Social Exclusion and Discrimination in various settings. The major groups among the Minorities particularly Muslims and Christians face the wrath of the forms of discrimination, exclusion and even alienation based on their religious identity. Poverty, social and educational backwardness are the major problems confronting most of the minorities in particular Muslims, Christians and Sikhs while these apart, the major issue faced by Buddhists, Jains and Zoroastrians is their declining population in addition to denial of opportunities.

The Child sex ratio in 0-6 population is lowest among Sikhs (786) and Jains (870), while Christians (964) Muslims (950) have a higher sex-ratio than the national average of 927 per 1000. As far as Education is concerned, Jains have the highest total literacy rate (94.1 per cent), followed by, Christians (80.3 per cent), Buddhists (72.7 per cent), Sikhs (69.4 per cent), and Muslims (59.1 per cent). Additionally, the most worrisome attribute for human co-existence, is the phenomenal trends of disharmony and instances of religious persecution leading to clashes at the instance of dominant religious groups in India which consequently made even the National Commission on Minorities apprehensive. Religious conversion on one's volition is allowed by law, while forcible ones are undoubtedly disallowed. The benefits of policy are linked with caste and religion and as such dissuade the marginalized communities among the Minorities from exercising their freedom of religion and faith in realistic sense. These issues need to be dealt with in a holistic perspective requiring a platform for a discourse that helps in arriving at decisions useful for policy making.

In this backdrop, the Centre for Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, Andhra University proposes to organize a Two-day seminar at the national level to engage with the historical and causative factors to examine the cultural economic and political structures of discrimination and violence and the challenges these issues pose in making India's Religious Minorities inaccessible to resources, education, health, rights and other entitlements. The seminar shall address the existing socio-economic problems confronting Minorities in India which stand in their way towards realizing the goal of 'equal religious freedom' and other policy benefits meant for their development. Academics, Scholars, Demographers, NGOs, and Bureaucrats will also be involved in the deliberations to critically reflect on this subject and open up different views and perspectives. The seminar, hopefully, shall come out with a range of alternatives.

THEMES OF THE SEMINAR

- Religious Minorities in India: Issues of Identity based Discrimination and Exclusion
- Socio-Cultural, Economic and Livelihood Issues
- Health, Education and Development Issues
- Policy Initiatives and Rights of Minorities – International and National Perspectives
- Religious Minorities and Demography
- Political Participation and Governance
- Human Rights and Violence on Religious Minorities
- Religious Minorities and Victims of armed conflict and custody
- Caste and Religion including Positive Discrimination Issues concerning Religious Minorities
- Religious Conversions, Marriage and Family
- Gender and Children Issues including Advocacy – Role of NGOs
- Any other issue relating to Religious Minorities including Case and Intervention Studies on any of the above themes

CALL FOR PAPERS

Papers are invited from participants on any of the themes mentioned in thrust areas.

MODE OF PRESENTATION

Resource persons are invited to make presentations on any key theme. The duration of presentation for selected papers will be for 15 minutes.

GUIDELINES FOR AUTHOR(S)

- Abstract not exceeding 300 words typed on MS word format (Time News Roman, Font size 12). The abstract shall have the paper title, name of author(s), complete address, telephone number and e-mail of the author should reach the Director of the seminar by a mail attachment to e-mail: minoritiesseminar@gmail.com by 25th February, 2016. In case of co-authors, these details should also be provided for each co-author.
- Full papers along with abstracts not exceeding 5000 words in MS word format, Times New Roman, Font size 12, mentioning the paper title, author's name, complete address, telephone number and e-mail of the author be mailed by 5th March, 2016.