

Presentation of Report by Prof. N.Muthumohan, G.N.D.U

The three days Philosophy Teachers Meet of the North Western sponsored by Indian Council of Philosophical Research, New Delhi and organized by Department of Guru Nanak Studies, was held from 29th Dec. to 31st Dec. 2015 at Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. The Theme of the meet was "The Crisis of Multiple Identities in the Contemporary World". A brief report of this meet was presented by Prof. N. Muthumohan, Senior Prof. from the Center on Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

The Three Days Meet was divided into Three Technical Sessions and another Three Sessions of Panel Discussion, apart from the Inaugural and Valedictory Sessions. There were 15 invited Resource persons presenting their papers on chosen topics and 45 and more registered delegates-philosophy teachers participated in the panel discussions. Altogether there were 65 outside participants took part in the Program apart from the local staff, research scholars and students. The Abstracts of the papers of Resource Persons and the Delegates were given in advance to the participants in the form of Bound Volumes.

The Inaugural Session comprised of the Presidential address of Professor Manendra Paratap Singh, Member-Secretary of the Indian Council of Philosophical Research, the Key Note address was presented by Professor S.P. Gautam, Director, Centre for Philosophy, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and the program was inaugurated by the Worthy Vice Chancellor of Guru Nanak Dev University, Prof. Ajaib Singh Brar. The Rationale of the theme was presented by Professor Shashi Bala, Head of the Department of Guru Nanak Studies, Guru Nanak Dev University, Coordinator of the Philosophy Teachers Meet.

Among the invited Resource Persons there were learned Professors from West Bengal, Karnataka, Kashmir, Varanasi, Delhi and other places. A good number of participants attended from the Universities and colleges of Kurushetra, Patiala, Jalandhar, Batindha, Batala, Kapurthala, Gurgaon, Jind, Chandigarh, Adampur, Jammu, Aligarh, Noida, Haridwar, Faridabad, Meerat and Amritsar adequately representing the North Western Region and beyond. It has to be noted with satisfaction that there were 24 women teachers of philosophy among the outside participants.

Now I pass over to the content of the research papers presented and issues deliberated. The main tone of the academic discussions was set by the key note, Presidential and the inaugural addresses of the leaders of the Program.

Many papers were dedicated, as it can be expected from philosophers, to the conceptual explorations of the theme and topics mostly using western analytical categories. Erik Erickson was quoted more, apart from Benedict Anderson, Ernest Gellner and Anthony Smith in this regard. Concepts such as Identity and Difference, Modernity and Tradition, Globalization and Localization, Individual and Group Identity, Multiple identities, Identity crisis, Loss of identity, Distortion of identities etc were scrutinized by the learned philosophers. Most of the participants addressed the theme of Globalization with utmost concern trying to decipher the impacts of it to countries like India.

It is pleasing to inform that a good number of papers were dedicated to relate the theme of identities and multiple identities with Indian philosophical categories. Parallel categories from traditional schools were picked out. Concepts such as Self and Ego as identity, Ekanta vada, Anekanta vada, Abheda, Bheda, Advaita, Vishesha and other categories were brought into the discussions. It was noted often that ideals such as annihilation of ego, anatma vada, loss of one's identity by merging with the ultimate reality or with the Sangat as mukti or liberation etc are relevant to be discussed in this regard. It is anticipated that Philosophers have to invest more of their efforts on such topics.

There were certain Punjab specific or North-Western region-specific topics discussed during the sessions. The inter-religious and inter-cultural experiences of the region in history and during modern period were brought to discussion, and the Sufi and Sikh Gurus' experiences of encountering the conflicts, tensions and ambiguities were prominently represented by the learned scholars of the region. May be, it was one of the advantages of the present conclave of the North Western region. It was suggested that those experiences ought to be studied fresh to enrich our potentials.

A few papers that stand different during the sessions may be noted towards concluding this reporting: one is a paper relating the theme of crisis of multiple identities with the theme of Social justice. It was an interesting inter-conceptual or cross-conceptual exercise that may bring creative results. Another paper was on Moral

Identity. This too is a less explored area where scholars have to contribute more. Thirdly, there was a paper on Mistaken Identity in diaspora conditions that takes our theories of identity to current global scenario. Fourthly, there was a paper on Resistance Identities that too pertinent to Indian conditions.

We are pleased to note that the technical and panel sessions were fruitful and the philosophical reflections were creative as it can be expected from a philosophy teachers Meet. Yesterday evening when we came out the hall after the Panel Discussion, a young scholar was telling that the panel discussions are becoming hot and interesting, turning more and more relevant and close to our immediate problems. That may be the good outcome of the present meet. Thanking you.

Vote of Thanks : Prof. Shashi Bala, G.N.D.U

- We the faculty members of Department of Guru Nanak Studies express our deep gratitude to the Chairman, Prof. S.R.Bhatt, Member Secretary, Prof. Manendra Partap Singh and other members of Indian Council of Philosophical Research (Govt of India, HRD Ministry , New Delhi) for sponsoring this three days' Philosophy Teachers Meet for North-West Zone at Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.
- We are grateful to our Worthy Vice Chancellor Prof. Ajaib Singh Brar for giving his consent to organize this meet in the university campus and gracing the occasion by his Inaugural address.
- We owe our gratitude to Prof. Manendra Partap Singh, Member Secretary, ICPR for his Presidential address and his presence throughout all the technical sessions. We are thankful to Prof. Satya P.Gautam , for enlightening us with his keynote address.
- We are grateful to Prof. Sharanjit Singh Dhillon, Registrar for vote of thanks during the Inaugural Session and Prof. Paramjit Singh Judge, Dean Academic Affairs for presiding over the Valedictory Session and Prof. N. Muthumohan for presenting the report of the three days proceedings.
- We are grateful to all resource persons who have presented their scholarly papers and all participants who have come from the different universities and colleges of different states and have actively participated in the panel discussions. I acknowledge my thanks to Mr. Husal-chirag , a well –known environmentalist for his participation

- We are thankful to university authorities for providing the infrastructure, university accommodation and university buses for delegates' visit to border. We are grateful to PRO, Press & media, and administrative officers who supported us for organizing this meet by their active cooperation. We are thankful to S.G.P.C for providing us Buses to facilitate delegates to have darshan of the Harimandar Sahib.
- I owe my gratitude to members of organizing committee, my colleagues, non-teaching staff and students who helped and supported me and acted as a team for making all arrangements and preparing for cultural program.
- Once again We thank you all for your cooperation and dedication for the promotion of philosophy and for establishment of harmonious co-existence .

Cultural Programme : 12.30 p.m. onward

Our department students of M.A (Philosophy & Religious Studies, M.Phil and Ph.D) performed certain cultural item relating to multiple identities and diverse cultures highlighting harmonious co-existence within diversity. These items included music, kathak dance, bhangra, giddha, ghazals, songs and martial arts at the end of the three-day Philosophy Teachers' Meet which was highly appreciated by all the participants.