

### CONCEPT NOTE

The Indian society, culture and history encompasses varieties of thought traditions. The ancient thought had two major strands, sanatan and shramanik. The larger philosophical premises of these traditions was to enter into the deep metaphysical and transcendental realm of the existence, being, self and the super self or cosmos. Interestingly, the deep insight of these traditions could not prevent them to deliberate on the day-to-day practical life-worlds. In fact, the gist or the telos of their philosophical inwardness helped to produce thoughts on the practical courses for all beings. The thoughts of Vedic and Buddhist and Jaina Shramaik thinkers, Gautama (the Buddha), Mahavir Jaina, Charvaka, Nagarjuna, Brihsapati, Vedvyasa, Kumarila, and many more ancient intellectuals provides a gamut of thoughts not only on the greater discourses of life and after life, but mainly they provide how to create an environment of osmosis, sahanvavtu (togetherness), inclusive society, just and welfare for all beings including humans.

With the coming of Bhakti, there was an emergence of new reformist Indian thought traditions that had started since 12<sup>th</sup> century AD. The great saints such as Kabir, Ravidas, Raheem, Meera, Raskhan, Nanak, Chokhamela, Tukaram etc. taught the values of life and revolutionised the relationship between human and the God. They provide the philosophy of immediacy and removes all ritualism and mediators between the devotee and the God. Their other central concern was to create an all-inclusive society without any discrimination. The Bhakti movement, in India, was birthed by the urge to dissemble the rigid, orthodox and fractionated society that flourished under the shelter of the caste system. The Bhakti leaders manifested their will in forms of songs and literary pieces. Their aim was to propagate a more fulfilling method of worship that was inclusive of the underbelly of Indian society. They emphasised absolute surrender to God, one's direct connection to the supreme being without any intermediary, and an egalitarian society. Started by Basavanna in the 12th century, Bhakti movement still continues as an evolved phenomena today. The literature that came out of the Bhakti saints challenged the societal norms of their times and wanted to bring about a change in the way society treated its vulnerable groups who were supposedly 'lowborns'. It was a threat to caste hierarchy and a conscious effort to broaden the social fabric. In Maharashtra, Bhakti leaders like Tukaram, a Shudra by caste, wrote on religious matters in Marathi- the language of the people. The rebellion became

intersectional. With the writer being a Shudra, the orthodoxy was challenged, while the language broke the barrier of Sanskrit writings. There were others like Mirabai, who challenged the patriarchal norms by devoting herself to Krishna while fighting her family for the same, Guru Nanak, who founded Sikhism, a syncretic religion that preached devotion devoid of ritualism, Kabir, whose songs appealed to the poor due to its practise of worshipping one god and even attaining salvation without any help from the upper caste. The Bhakti Movement was aimed at social regeneration and was a way of celebrating the people from the periphery.

Another paradigm in history of Indian thought on marginality and inclusiveness comes with the arrival of modern times. The thinkers such as Dayanand Sarasvati, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Jyotiba Phule, Savitribai Phule, Aurobindo, Swami Vivekananda, Ram Krishna Paramhansa, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, M. K. Gandhi, V. D. Savarkar, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Ram Manohar, Lohia etc. transformed the thought tradition of India in many ways. The modern Indian thinkers were not much engaged with the deeper questions of divinity and transcendence except Vivekananda, Aurobindo, Gandhi and Tagore, but all of them were concerned about the contemporary problem of society which was marginality and social inclusion. Having a great thought tradition on social inclusion since from ancient (Vedic), Bhakti and post bhakti period, these two days national seminar endeavours to not only revisit the social and cultural thoughts of the great thinkers of India but also explores various other less known thinkers who have contributed to idea and practice of social inclusion and attempted to build the nation. Though the seminar will focus on the following themes, yet they are indicative and interesting papers from other related areas shall also be appreciated.

This Seminar invites social scientists who are engaging in the field of Marginalisation and social inclusions in their research to reflect on the manners of social-philosophical-spiritual thinkers and their contribution towards cultivation of Indian Socio-cultural thought throughout ages. In their work, they may trace the origin and evolution, contribution and present-day relevance in policy making and development towards social inclusions. They may also use existing categories and develop a critical stand, or develop new ones as analytical tools.

We encourage participants to discuss social inclusion through empirical observations and case studies, and/or submit methodological and theoretical reflections. Young teachers and senior research scholars, of the Humanities and Social Sciences among the various disciplines are invited to submit their proposals.

The last date of submission of the abstract (300 words) is **8<sup>th</sup> March, 2022**, along with a brief bio-note (100 words) of the participant. Successful applicants will be notified by (15<sup>th</sup> March 2022). **Draft papers of maximum 6000 words should be submitted by 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022.**

- **Social Inclusion and Marginality in ancient Indian thought**
- **Social Inclusion and Marginality during Bhakti movement**
- **Social Inclusion. and Marginality : Modern Indian Thinkers**
- **Social Inclusion and Marginality : Intellectual contributions of leaders**
- **Inclusivity and Social Cohesion : A way Forward**

The accepted papers shall be published in special series of the SSF Journal **Unheard Voices**.

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Seminar Coordinator



## **Two Days National Seminar**

**Organised by:**

**Centre for the Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy  
School of Social Sciences  
Jawaharlal Nehru University  
New Delhi - 110 067, India**

**In collaboration  
Social Studies Foundation (SSF)**

**on**

**Marginalisation and Social Inclusion:  
The cultivation of Indian Social Cultural thought**

**13-14 April, 2022**

**Venue:**

**Jawaharlal Nehru University**