

## Textual and Lived Religions: Precepts and Practices

20-21 March 2014

### Call for Paper

#### **Concept Note:**

The manner in which scholars have more often approached, studied and researched 'institutionalized' religions quite patently demonstrate a routine and an archetypal incline towards a certain kind of source material: the texts—considered canonical and sacred. Compiled and composed centuries ago—often by the religious elites who happened to be men—largely undated or dated with difficulty and little accuracy, heavily redacted, these texts have been considered to present a 'concrete' framework of what a particular religion, to which the text belonged to, ideally stood for and believed in : the '*precept*'. Contrary to this small body of material (the texts) on which there has been an over-riding emphasis in researches and towards which scholars have been overtly inclined, there are other alternative sources of reconstructing and researching religions that are firmly datable, and securely located in time and space: archaeological, epigraphical, art, numismatics, folklore, etc. These were probably not meant to function as guidelines of religious precepts, yet they nonetheless reveal what religious groups actually did on the ground : the '*practice*'. Besides both the body of materials, are data gathered through sociological and anthropological enquiries that disclose what a religious community actually believes and practices, which may and often does digress from the picture that emerge from sources that are historical and textual.

The conference *Textual and Lived Religions: Precept and Practice* seeks to explore the complex relationships between the inviolable written words of canonical and non-canonical texts and their dialectics and dimensions in

society. Evidence from archaeology, epigraphy, visual and performing arts, sociological enquiries, context-sensitive case studies, anthropological data, counter-cultures, and orally transmitted folk and primal religions, often questions and deviates from the established and traditional forms considered 'authentic'.

The conference proposes to look at the diverse elements of normative and popular religious cultures and the dichotomies between institutional-diffused, universal-local, folk and elite tiered models of religion. Under the rubric of 'lived' religions a hidden assumption of uniformity and facelessness is challenged. In a pluralistic setting a common religious framework which glues together the entire society, faces theoretical pitfalls, conceptual and empirical limitations and ideological considerations of caste, race, gender, etc. Many manifestations of religion in the contemporary world challenge our assumptions about how religion is or should be lived, believed and practiced. This conference shall consider multiple expressions of religious precept and practice in an increasingly pluralistic and complex social setting.

The conference while reflecting and raising these issues purport to turn a stream afresh and throw up new findings, discover fresh insights and innovative methodological solutions to the study and problems of textuality, orality and lived religious cultures.

#### PROPOSED THEMES

Archaeology of Religion

Historical Perspectives on Religion

Methodologies and Theories for the Study of Religion

Oral Cultures and Tribal Religions

Practices and Discourses

Philosophy of Religion

Pilgrimage: Concepts, Centres, Historical and Cultural Practices

Religion and Politics

Recovery, Conservation and Preservation of Religious Sites

Religion and Civilizational Dialogue

Religion and Ecology

Religion and Ethics

Religion and Ethnicity

Religion and Gender

Religion and Media

Religion and Trade

Religion, Art and Architecture

Religion, Conflict and Peace

Religion, Ritual and Symbolism

Religious Communities: Continuities, Adaptations and Transformations

Religious Identity: Faith and Negotiation

Religious Pluralism

Religious Trends and Patterns of Life in South Asia

Sacred Texts and Literature

Sociology of Religion

**Venue:** Tagore Hall, Dayar-e-Mir

Jamia Millia Islamia

**Last date for submission of abstracts:**

28 February 2014

**Abstracts should be sent at:**

conference.csrc@gmail.com