

Session I. Religion and Punjab studies

Chair: Jaskiran Bhogal, PhD Candidate, London School of Economics, United Kingdom

Punjab and Sind Bank and the Creation of Sikh Heritage

Kanika Singh, Director, Centre for Writing & Communication, Ashoka University

This paper discusses the role of Punjab and Sind Bank (PSB) in promoting Sikh heritage in contemporary India. Founded in 1908, by three Singh Sabha reformers as a community bank for the Sikhs, PSB was nationalised in 1980 and is now a government enterprise. In independent India, it has remained an institution with considerable influence in the Sikh community. The bank has regularly published annual calendars on Sikh history since 1974. These illustrated calendars depict portraits of the Gurus and Sikh warriors and the most important stories from the Sikh tradition. PSB especially commissioned paintings for its calendars and these visual narrations have become tremendously popular and are recognised as authoritative sources of Sikh history. They are widely reproduced—in academic and popular literature, children’s books, posters, animation, advertisements and museums. This paper examines the process of creation of PSB calendars and the notion of Sikh heritage they

represent. How is PSB located in the network of heritage production among the Sikhs? Further, PSB’s activities are studied in context of developments affecting the Sikh community in independent India. How does a ‘Sikh institution’ like PSB negotiate its desire to promote Sikh heritage while being a government entity, especially through the 1980s and 1990s? This paper attempts to answer these questions through an examination of the content of the calendars, and interviews with PSB officials and artists who made the paintings.

Referendum 2020: A view from Punjab

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The demand for a separate Sikh homeland, ever since the first announcement of Independence, has been a part of post-independence politics and history of India. The narratives of Punjabi Suba led the way to dharma yudh morcha and finally to Sikh genocide in 1984. These incidents are so powerful on historical scenario of Punjab that the green revolution, migrations abroad and drug menace can all be embedded in one discourse of “demand for separate country- Khalistan”.

It took numerous innocent lives and heart-breaking bloodshed to suppress the Khalistan movement. However, this movement ever lived in many minds and hearts abroad. Thus referendum 2020, an idea of Punjabi Diaspora, is being seen as a comeback of Khalistan movement and is surely going to be of certain impact on the lives of Punjabi residents. This paper, therefore, deals with a voice of people whose life is going to be affected largely. It is a study of certain facts based on interviews and questionnaire from Punjab about referendum. The paper tends to answer: What is the concept of Sikh homeland today for people of Punjab? Is referendum 2020 a logical step today? How and to what extent the past is related to this response?

It is an endeavor to understand the relevance of past in present Punjab and to give an insight into the needs of present Punjab.

The jama’at of Allah’s Friends: Maulana Allahyar’s reformist Movement and sacralising the space of the Armed Forces of Pakistan

Saadia Sumbal, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Forman Christian College University Lahore

In this paper, I seek to put to scrutiny the national narrative, which had a reformist streak with sharia holding precedence over shrine-based denomination(s). The concept of Khatam-i-Nubuwwat (finality of the Prophet-hood) became the central postulate of reformist version of Islam in the second half of the 19th century. The study explores how exclusionary tendencies became more pronounced, Takferi fatwas therefore kept pouring in denouncing the various sects. That exclusionism had set in motion the process of 'Othering' from within the Muslims. That internecine conflict was the abiding feature of the 20th century Islam, which provides the context to this paper. It also brings into focus the emergence of Sufi-inspired reformist movement in Chakrala, a town in Mianwali district in the South-West of Punjab (Pakistan) during 1950s and 1960s by Maulana Allahyar Chakralwi (1904-1984) a reformist with Deobandi leanings. The movement arose as a response to the preaching and proselytizing activities of Shi'i and Ahmedi missionaries. His emphasis on Sharia and foundational texts disrupted the plural social setting of Mianwali and drove sectarian wedge in the society. The paper also examines the establishment of his tableeghi jama'at, and its expansion into the cadre of armed forces of Pakistan and the interface between army and religion which found expression among prisoners of war at Gaya (India) camp in 1971.

Session II. Land reforms, rural economy, politics and governance

Chair: Pritam Singh, Visiting Professor, Oxford School of Global and Area Studies, University of Oxford

Killing the two birds with one stone? Land Reforms as Power Sustenance and Peasants' Suppression Tool in the West Punjab

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Land is not only a source of economic earning, but also political power, and social influence for the landed aristocrats in agrarian societies. Generally, land reforms are aimed at improving the living conditions of the peasantry and to mitigate inequality of landholdings between peasants and landlords and peasants and also among peasants. The literature on land reforms in South Asia introduces us to three land reform models: land to the tiller, tenure reforms, and ceiling redistribution. It is the latter two approaches that motivated political entrepreneurs in Pakistan to bring the reforms onto the political agenda, drafting the policies and implementing them. With respect to Pakistan in general and the West Punjab in particular, peasants do not seem to have been part of either of legislative or of implementation processes relating to the land reforms. This paper explores whether these reforms served their stated purpose or proved a tool of control to repress peasants' uprising that could have socio-economic and political dividends for rural life across the country.

The analysis is based on data from the debates, discussions and question hours of the National Assembly of Pakistan and provincial assembly of the Punjab province; autobiographies of leading peasant leaders such as Chaudhary Fateh Muhammad and Sheikh Muhammad Rashid; agricultural reports of the Pakistan Muslim League, the Land Commission, the Pakistan Workers Party, and the Pakistan Socialist Party; and weekly magazines of Kisan Committee as well as interviews with Chaudhary Fateh Muhammad, C. R. Aslam, and Abid Hassan Manto who were among the leading figures of Punjab Kisan Tehreek. An Analysis of these data suggests that the land reforms in the West

Punjab were an instrument of power control mechanisms and arguably a strategy to suppress peasants uprising.

The Quality of Employment in Rural Non-Farm Sector of Punjab

Anupama Uppal, Professor, Economics Department of Economics, Punjabi University, Patiala, Punjab - India

Rural non-farm sector is being considered as an important source of employment generation in the state of Punjab which is ailing from stagnation in agricultural sector. But the rural non-farm sector of the state is dominated by tiny, own account enterprises which provide low paid and insecure jobs. Some activities, especially the services, provide good quality jobs which have too many entry barriers like lack of education, skills, assets etc. Hence, present study tries to identify the determinants, problems as well as prospects of the rural non-farm sector of the state. By taking a sample of 659 rural non-farm households and 1124 non-farm workers, it has been found that the 19 per cent of the sampled workers live below poverty line out of which 5.27 per cent are extremely poor. The incidence of poverty is higher for the casual workers than other categories. We have also found high incidence of indebtedness among the sampled non-farm households which is higher among the casual workers and the lowest among the regular workers in the government sector. After exploring various determinants of income and poverty of the rural non-farm workers in the state, this study points towards a need of a holistic approach of rural development aiming at improving the quality of rural infrastructure, education, health and other related services.

Governing (In-) Security Practices in the Punjab Borderland

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The Punjab borderland is a microcosm of relations between India and Pakistan, where everyday life has been structured by numerous crises in bilateral relations. The latter brought the Punjab borderland under the control of state and central security forces. Their primary responsibility is to provide security to the nation and its people. Yet, everyday practices of security forces in East Punjab rather created insecurities for people living in the borderland. In times of crises, border dwellers were forced to leave their homes and stay with relatives further away from the international boundary to be out of harm's way. The construction of a fence (1988-1993) for security purposes inhibits access to fields and makes it difficult for people to earn their livelihood. It is this relationship between everyday security practices along the international boundary in the Punjab across time and the insecurities it creates for people living in the Punjab borderland that I will explore in this presentation. The latter builds on ethnographically informed research conducted in East Punjab between 2015 and 2017. It is framed through Pierre Bourdieu's practice theory, his core concepts of field, capital and habitus, and related to the borderland literature.

Session III. Gender studies

Chair: Dr. Pippa Virdee, Senior Lecturer, De Montfort University, Leicester

The role of East Punjabi women in textiles manufacturing – Sewing for success

Harminder Kaur Bhogal, Project Director of Community Education Academy of Leadership (CEAL), West Midlands, England

This presentation is aimed at highlighting the pivotal role of textiles manufacturing during the heyday of Britain's Industrial Revolution (19th century) to the shocking decline in the last century. The Punjabi Sikh migration story will be contextualised, using primary data of 50 women (aged 50-94) whose inestimable contribution to the textiles industry during 1950 to 2000, remains unrecognised and unsung.

Once an industrial hub that attracted migrant communities, the West Midlands have been chosen as the demographic focus. This paper will also highlight women's work life, family and other social relations, opportunities, aspirations and various industrial relations practices. I will also shed light on the dark side of this trade based on an unwritten informal economy system that facilitated exploitation (of human labour) and its impact on future family relations.

It is hoped that this paper will offer greater credence, by manifesting a programmatic platform for legitimising the unwritten, but unique economic contribution by Punjabi Sikh women to local textiles manufacturing.

Continued efforts to recognise the textiles work by Community Education Academy of Leadership, a local organisation based in the West Midlands will be discussed.

Christian lenses, Christian goals: two centuries of western women's reporting of Sikhs

Eleanor Nesbitt, Professor Emeritus, Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit, Centre for Education Studies, University of Warwick

This paper examines how, over the past 200 years, Christian culture and belief have shaped western women's accounts of encounters with Sikhs and their religious practices. In many cases their reporting of elements of Sikh religiosity refers, implicitly or explicitly, to Christian theology or devotional practice. The seventy women whose output is the basis for this paper were travellers, painters, diarists, letter-writers and novelists and, in some cases, Protestant missionaries – most of them in the nineteenth century. (They do not include the twentieth- and twenty-first century academics in Sikh Studies or converts to Sikh Dharma). Sikh men's picturesque appearance, the visually striking Akali warriors and the beauty of the 'Golden Temple' feature prominently in their writings and paintings. The missionaries, especially, tried to acquire proficiency in an Indian language, and established relationships with Sikh villagers. They reported conversations with Sikhs about religion. We particularly consider 'idolatry', one recurrent theme in the nineteenth-century women's coverage of Sikhs: it was also a preoccupation of wider colonial discourse and an issue too for Sikh reformists.

Women freedom in Bahawalpur State and the Colonial Punjab

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This article will contrast Colonial Punjab and Bahawalpur State within the context of women liberty. In the Punjab, women had to struggle for their rights pertaining to/apropos divorce, property ownership, and acquisition of education whereas Bahawalpur provided far better picture of women freedom. Women hailing from all groups enjoyed the privileges of personal liberties with the exception of royal ladies. In Bahawalpur, the lower class ladies were fully empowered to move freely in society in search of subsistence. They could decide for marriage and asking for divorce after their hearts' accord. Nevertheless, women belonging to middle-class customarily travel in veils and were not free to take decision about their marriage or occupations but they had rights to own property and could succeed to the position of lambardars consequent upon the death of husband. Widow was exempt from payment of all taxes. Bahawalpur State patronized such systems that extended equal health and education facilities to men and the women. In short, Bahawalpur society was

better as compared to the surrounding areas with reference to the facilitating women. On the other hand, women had to struggle for basic rights i.e. education, health, property ownership, and employment in colonial Punjab.

Session IV. History and art studies

Chair: Professor Iftikhar H. Malik, Bath Spa University

Social Transformation of Sikh Identity in Colonial Punjab: Portraits of Guru Nanak, the Founder of Sikhism

Mr. Atsushi Ikeda, PhD Candidate, Department of the History of Art and Archaeology, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)

Today, single portraits of Guru Nanak are very popular among Sikhs and are frequently hung on the walls of their houses and temples. However, the Sikh doctrine has long criticized idolatry since its late fifteenth century inception. Thus, the current prevalence of portraits of Guru Nanak is the cause of annoyance for Sikhs. The primary focus of this research is the late nineteenth century portrait, Guru Nanak Dressed in an Inscribed Robe, which appears to be a prototype of the most popular Guru Nanak print at present.

It is evident that Sikh identity was threatened in the early British period. After the 1849 annexation of Punjab into the British territories, the Sikh newly formed upper class who received the Western education emerged under the capitalist dominated economy. They later engaged in the socio-religious movement led by the Singh Sabhas, the Sikh intellectual unions, that aimed for the normalization of the Sikh orthodoxy in opposition to the Christian propagation. In these circumstances, single portraits of Guru Nanak got painted in three quarter face and hung on Sikh's walls. Eventually, it is demonstrated that Sikhs obtained a new identity in the late nineteenth century.

Heer Waris Shah: A Meme of Punjabiyaat

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Taking clue from Richard Dawkins concept of "memes", a unit of cultural transmission analogous to genetic transmission, the present paper attempts to scrutinize the characters in *Heer Waris Shah* and even the folktale itself as memes. Though written in the eighteenth century, this folktale has witnessed the evolution of Punjabiyaat and continues to do so even today. *Heer Waris* has transcended territorial and generational boundaries blurring east/west categories of Punjab creating a unified Punjabi identity. The tale of two lovers has been reworded, rewritten and reproduced several times keeping Waris as an ideal. It resonates passionately in Punjabi culture in the form contemporary cinema and music. Punjabiyaat and *Heer* are mutually assisting memes reinforcing the strong Punjabi identity and co-adapting each other for the greater survival of both. The tragedy of lovers becomes of the entire Punjabi community when the poetess Amrita Pritam calls out to Waris during the grim times of partition. Ranjha's migration is symbolic of Punjabis having intense attachment with their land and an insatiable wander lust which takes them away from it. *Heer* remains an undifferentiated symbol of Punjabiyaat. Like their readers and audiences, these characters also undergo various ordeals and remind us of what we are and discover within of what more we could be. Life not only imitates but also collaborates with art and forms imperative impressions which are subtle and hard to ignore as it is through books and media that the generic impressions are formed, marred, altered and then restored to communities.