



# Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR)

## Sponsored National Seminar

On

*Verses from the Void: Bhima Bhoi's writings - Continuity and Rupture with the Indic tradition*

March 22-23 (Saturday-Sunday)- 2025

Organized by

School of History

Gangadhar Meher University, Sambalpur

The Mahima Cult, a significant religious and social movement that originated in Odisha during the 19th century, offers a profound philosophical framework emphasizing values such as love, compassion, tranquility, and simplicity. By exploring the teachings and practices of the Mahima Cult, this seminar seeks to understand how these principles can inform and influence modern policymaking, especially in the areas of ethics, social structure, and religious practices.

### Objective:

The primary goal of this seminar is to examine how the ethical, spiritual, and social teachings of the Mahima Cult can guide the development of policies that promote a healthier, more equitable, and morally responsible society. By gaining a deeper understanding of the Mahima Cult's core values—such as non-violence, simplicity, inclusivity, and the prioritization of spiritual well-being—policymakers can formulate strategies that foster a compassionate and cohesive social order.

### Themes and Discussion Areas:

#### 1. Ethical Foundations for Social Policies:

The Mahima Cult advocates for virtues such as love, compassion, and tranquility, all of which are essential in building ethical societies. Discussions will focus on how these virtues can be integrated into policymaking to promote mental and moral health, while cultivating a culture of empathy, respect, and kindness among citizens.

#### 2. Social Structure and Inclusivity:

The cult's emphasis on simplicity and rejection of harmful practices can inspire policies that promote equality, reduce social stratification, and eliminate discrimination. Through the teachings of Bhima Bhoi and Mahima Gosain, the seminar will examine the role of spirituality in fostering inclusive communities that support individuals of all backgrounds, regardless of caste, creed, or social status.

#### 3. Spiritual Guidance and Mental Health:

The Mahima Cult underscores the importance of spiritual guidance, particularly through practices like Brahma Darshana and Trividha Sarana. This seminar will explore how policymakers can use these principles to shape policies that prioritize spiritual well-being and mental health, aiming to create a balanced society where both physical and spiritual needs are nurtured.

#### 4. Grassroots Movements and Social Change:

The Mahima Cult spread rapidly across Odisha and beyond, particularly reaching marginalized communities. This seminar will analyze the success of the cult as a grassroots movement, offering valuable insights into how such movements can influence social change and contribute to the

development of policies that resonate with the general population.

#### **5. Simplicity in Religious Practice and Policy Accessibility:**

The Mahima Cult's straightforward, non-ritualistic approach to religious practice, which was highly accessible to ordinary people, offers an important model for policy design. Discussions will explore how policies can be made more inclusive, simple, and accessible, eliminating unnecessary complexities and rituals that may alienate certain segments of society.

#### **Subthemes:**

- **Sub-Theme 1:** The historical context of Mahima Dharma as a social and religious movement
- **Sub-Theme 2:** Mahima Dharma as a socio-religious system aimed at altering fundamental ideals.
- **Sub-Theme 3:** The growth of education in Odisha throughout the 19th century.

#### **About Gangadhar University and Sambalpur**

The institute was upgraded from a college to a university in 2015. Sambalpur City, located on the banks of the Mahanadi River in the western part of Odisha, was founded in the 16th century by the Chouhan ruler. Today, it is a thriving municipal corporation and an emerging education hub, home to four universities, an Indian Institute of Management (IIM), the oldest engineering college in Odisha, and a medical college. Located just 9 km from Sambalpur, the Hirakud Dam, the longest earthen dam in the world, is a stunning site offering opportunities for water sports. Sambalpur is renowned for the goddess Samaleswari and its globally recognized warp and weft Bandha textiles.

#### **About the Department:**

The Dept. of History came into existence in 1944 catering to the academic needs of the U.G. and P.G. students of this region in particular and of Odisha in general. After the transformation of G.M. College into G. M. University in 2015, the Department also got its new identity as School of History and presently offers U.G., P.G. and Ph.D courses with 48, 78, and 16 seats respectively. The Department is endowed with outstanding faculty members, committed to innovative pedagogic practices and with cutting-edge research interests in History. According to the Objective of the University much emphasis is given on local history, culture, art, architecture, tradition, customs, economic activities, beliefs, technologies and resources in the course content. In the process of teaching ancient Indian coins and inscriptions, emphasis is placed on the allusions to various tribal clans and organizations. Fieldwork and Practical's are an essential component of the Postgraduate Curriculum. Students receive field training while pursuing their education. For a deeper comprehension of ancient civilization, students are introduced to all the theoretical and practical facets of comparing data from ethnography and archaeology, including the use of ethnographic analogies and archaeological ethnography. School of History carried out Archaeological Excavation in Barapali Asurgarh, District Baragarh (Odisha) during the Field Season 2021–22. The School of History has organized several awareness programs to promote the preservation of local heritage and culture. In a bid to inspire both students and the local community, the department has established a museum that houses a rich collection of prehistoric tools, protohistoric artifacts, early historical material culture, and medieval antiquities.

#### **Arriving at Sambalpur**

Sambalpur is connected with the major Railway networks of the country. Sambalpur is connected with other parts of India by railways and by road. Jharsuguda is a major Railway junction, 50 km away from Sambalpur, and is connected well with the Tier I cities of India. The nearest airport is at Jharsuguda which is connected with major metros of India. If you are interested to come via the state capital i.e. Bhubaneswar, there are train services throughout the day from Bhubaneswar Railway Station to Sambalpur or Jharsuguda.

#### **Must-Visit Destinations in Sambalpur**

If you're seeking a meaningful and enriching experience, Sambalpur offers a variety of incredible places to explore. Some of the top attractions include Samaleswari Temple, Budharaja Hill, the Wild Animal Conservation Centre, Regional Art Gallery, Ghanteswari Temple, Hirakud Dam, and the iconic Huma

Leaning Temple. Each location provides a unique glimpse into the culture, nature, and heritage of this fascinating region.

### **Weather**

The weather of Sambalpur in January will be pleasant with minimum temperature in the night around 14° C and maximum day time temperature around 27° C. You can equip yourself with warm clothing accordingly.

### **Accommodation:**

We are committed to providing our delegates with a memorable experience by offering accommodation on our campus. Accommodation in GM University Hostels will be on a shared basis, with common washrooms and toilets. Delegates staying in university hostels are advised to bring their own bed sheets, mosquito repellent, and other personal necessities. Delegates traveling with their families are kindly requested to make their own accommodation arrangements.

**Registration fee:** Kindly send your registration fees Rs. 700 (Rs. 500 for students) along with the filled in registration form, your complete research paper/abstract and your itinerary (with clear mention of your arrival and leaving time and date) by or before 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025 positively so that we can assure your accommodation and include presentation of your research paper in the academic programme. Please send your filled in registration forms to Dr Atula Kumar Pradhan, convener of the seminar. Registration forms have been given at the end of this circular. Limited sharing accommodation will be arranged for the registered delegates from whom we will receive the request on or before 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025. After 19<sup>th</sup> March 2025, the delegates have to make their own arrangement for stay.

Kindly credit the registration fee in the bank account as per the details given below.

**Name of the Beneficiary** : CONFERENCE CONVENER

**Bank** : Union Bank of India

**Branch** : Budharaja, Sambalpur

**SB Account No** : 145022010001339

**IFSC Code** : ubin0914509

**QR Scanner for Payment** : 

(Please share the remittance PDF/Screen shot on the given WhatsApp no: 9754875987)

CONFERENCE CONVENER GM UNIVERSITY

QR59754875987-1238@atulasbankofindia



Yours sincerely,

**Dr. Atula Kumar Pradhan**  
Convener

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Co - Convener

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# Indian Council of Historical Research



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**School of History, Gangadhar Meher University, Amruta Vihar, Sambalpur**

**March 22-23 (Saturday-Sunday), 2025**

To,

**Dr Atula Kumar Pradhan**

**Head & Convener**

**Dr. Santosh Kumar Mallik**

**Co - Convener**

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Surname... .. : ..First name(s)... ..Title... ..

Sex -----Age .....

Address -----

-----Post Code -----

Email:----- Contact No.-----

Title of the Paper -----

Details of the delegate fee (Pl attach remittance receipt).....

Date and time of Arrival:

Name and No. of Train/Flight:

Date and Time of Departure:

Signature with Date