



Desh Bhagat University
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**NAAC
GRADE A+**
ACCREDITED UNIVERSITY

A PROUD INITIATIVE OF S. LAL SINGH MEMORIAL EDUCATIONAL TRUST



ICHR Sponsored National Seminar

Two-Day National Seminar on

CULTURE, SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION IN PUNJAB: THROUGH THE AGES

15-16th October 2026

Time: 10:00 a.m. onwards

**Venue: Mahapragya Seminar Hall
and APJ Abdul Kalam Seminar Hall**

**Sponsored by
Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR),
New Delhi**

**Organised by
FACULTY OF LIBERAL ARTS
DESH BHAGAT UNIVERSITY
Mandi Gobindgarh, Punjab**

ABOUT DBU:

Desh Bhagat University derives its foundational spirit from freedom fighter S. Lal Singh Ji, who was a devout soldier of Azad Hind Fauj (INA). He made significant contributions to India's independence. In recognition of his dedication to social service and his role in the freedom struggle, he was honoured with the "Tamra Patra" by the Government of India in 1972. In memory of his father, S. Lal Singh Ji, Dr Zora Singh (Chancellor) established Desh Bhagat University with the vision of providing excellence in higher education to both national and international students through academic innovation, professional competence, and holistic development. The university was founded with the noble mission of pursuing excellence in higher education by providing students with a distinctive blend of academic, professional and personal development. The University has the required infrastructure and learning resources like well-furnished classrooms, Smart boards, computer labs, library with reading area, departmental labs, seminar halls and auditorium etc. The campus is Wi-Fi-enabled and provides a 24/7 internet facility to students and staff members.

Every department has a well-furnished staff room for faculty members to provide an environment conducive to regular and progressive interaction among staff members which is also utilized for students' counselling, guidance and subject-specific queries. The University has excellent infrastructure like auditorium, multi-purpose halls, playgrounds for sports and other extracurricular activities including athletics, basketball, cricket, volleyball, football, hockey, tennis, badminton, yoga and meditation, cultural events etc. The University has a fully furnished auditorium with a seating capacity of 2500 people, several seminar halls with seating capacity from 100 to 500 persons and ample infrastructure to conduct all types of cultural activities. The university is running various faculties like Agriculture and Life Sciences, Allied Health Sciences, Ayurveda and Research Business, Administration and Hospitality Management, Dental Science and Hospital Design, Education, Engineering and Applied Sciences, Information Technology and Library Sciences, Legal Studies, Nursing, Pharmacy Sciences and Faculty of Liberal Arts. In the Faculty of Liberal Arts, there are Centre for Punjabi Language, Folklore and Culture, Sapta Sindhu Study Centre and Centre for South Asian Studies. The University employs highly qualified, experienced and research-oriented faculty members. Desh Bhagat University is approved by the UGC and accredited with an A+ Grade by NAAC

About the National Seminar

This seminar is conceived as an interdisciplinary inquiry into the historical, cultural and religious formations of Punjab, to critically engage with the diverse belief systems and cultural histories that have shaped the region over millennia. It seeks to trace the longue durée of Punjabi civilisation. Punjab, situated in the north-western frontier of the Indian subcontinent, has historically been known through multiple nomenclatures, each encoding a distinct civilizational imagination. It is the land of the Indus Valley Civilisation, one of the earliest urban cultures of the ancient world, which flourished along the Indus river system and its tributaries. In early Vedic memory, it was designated as Sapta Sindhu, the region of seven rivers. At the same time, later traditions referred to it as Panch Nad, the land of five rivers. In Hellenistic sources, it appears as Pentapotamia, once again foregrounding its hydro-geographical identity. In Persian and subsequent historical chronicles, the term Punjab, which literally means "the land of five waters."

Across shifting political regimes and historical epochs, the territorial boundaries of Punjab remained fluid; however, its civilizational character as a fertile contact zone of cultures persisted with remarkable continuity. The region has functioned simultaneously as a site of settlement and a corridor of migration, witnessing successive waves of tribal movement, cultural encounter and demographic transformation. It is within this dynamic historical milieu that early agrarian societies developed and where Vedic traditions are often understood to have been formulated. Over time, indigenous animistic and totemic belief systems gradually underwent processes of transformation, leading to increasingly systematised and codified religious frameworks.

From the Harappan phase of the Sindhu-Saraswati Civilisation to the medieval era, Punjab witnessed a continuous process of cultural assimilation, adaptation and synthesis shaped by changing material, social and spiritual conditions. Vedic traditions established foundational concepts of ritual, cosmology and social order, while the spread of Jainism and Buddhism introduced ethical and philosophical ideals centred on nonviolence, compassion, asceticism, and moral introspection. During the medieval period, Punjab became a significant centre of Sufi and Bhakti traditions. Saints and poet mystics such as Data Ganj Bakhsh, Bulleh Shah, Kabir, Ravidas, Namdev and Guru Nanak challenged ritualism, caste hierarchy, and sectarian divisions through their spiritual and poetic expressions. Emphasising love, devotion, equality and human unity, these traditions collectively shaped a shared moral and cultural consciousness within Punjabi society. From the conceptual horizon of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” (the world as one family) to the lived ethical maxim and the verses of Gurbani; “**Sabhe Saanjheevaal Sadaayen, Toon Kis Dissae Baahraa Jeeo**” (Everyone belongs to the common brotherhood of humanity; no one is seen as an outsider), articulated within the Bhakti-Sant traditions, which foregrounds the fundamental unity of humankind beyond caste, creed and sectarian identity.

The colonial encounter and the traumatic rupture of the Partition of 1947 profoundly disrupted the social and demographic fabric of Punjab, producing large-scale displacement, violence and reconfiguration of identities. Nevertheless, despite these historical ruptures, Punjab's civilizational continuity has demonstrated significant resilience. In the post-independence period, its composite heritage persists through linguistic traditions, ritual practices, festivals, performing arts and everyday cultural life, thereby sustaining a *longue durée* of cultural memory and continuity within historical change.

Main Theme of the National Seminar

Culture, Spirituality and Religions in Punjab – Through the Ages'

Sub-Themes of the National Seminar

- Punjab as a Cradle of Early Civilisations: Sindhu-Saraswati and Vedic Legacies.
- Jainism and Buddhism: Philosophical Contributions to Punjabi Society.
- Cults of Punjab: Siddh, Nath and Jogis
- Bhakti Movement and Sufi Spiritual Traditions: Ideology, Growth and Impacts on the Society of Punjab.
- Guru Nanak Dev Ji: Religious transformation and emergence of Sikhism.
- The Sikh Movement: After Nanak Dev Ji: Sikh Gurus and Religious Reforms and Social Transformation.
- Guru Gobind Singh Ji: Creation of the Khalsa and contribution to Sikh Faith and Society
- Guru Gobind Singh Ji: Sri Guru Granth Sahib and the legacy of spiritual and socio-cultural transformation.
- Spirituality and Punjabi Culture: Folk Beliefs and Folklore of Punjab.
- Composite Culture and Inter-Religious Harmony in Punjab.
- Socio-Cultural movements in Punjab: Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj, Singh Sabha and Ahmadiyya.
- Religious Sects: Nimrla and Uddasi Sampardya, Kabir Panthi, Ravidsh Panth, Ad Dharam, Valmki Panth, Namdhari, Nirankari, Radha Swami and Saccha Soda.
- Colonial Impact, Partition and Cultural Trauma.
- Continuity and Change in Modern Punjabi Life.
- Globalisation, Migration and the Future of Punjab's Spiritual Heritage.
- Any other sub-themes related to the main theme.

Key Objectives

- Through this national seminar, it will be made to examine the historical evolution of culture, spirituality and religious traditions in Punjab from ancient times to the modern period will be examined, highlighting continuity and change across different ages.
- There will be a humble attempt to analyse the interrelationship between culture, spirituality and religion in Punjab, and how this interaction shaped social values, ethical systems, and collective identities.

- This Seminar will also explore the contributions of major religious movements, saints, gurus, and spiritual traditions of Punjab—including Sikh, Hindu, Sufi, Bhakti and folk traditions—to the region's composite culture.
- This Seminar will also focus on the foundation, philosophy and teaching of Sikhism. The growth of Sikhism, the institution of the Khalsa and the cultural ethos of Sikhism will also be discussed in detail.
- Through this seminar, we will study the role of literature, art, music, rituals and oral traditions in expressing and transmitting spiritual and religious ideas in Punjabi society through the ages.
- Another humble attempt will be to assess the impact of historical processes such as colonialism, reform movements and modernity on religious practices, spiritual thought, and cultural expressions in Punjab.
- This will also encourage interdisciplinary scholarly dialogue among historians, sociologists, theologians and cultural scholars on Punjab's pluralistic spiritual heritage and its contemporary relevance.

Executive Committee

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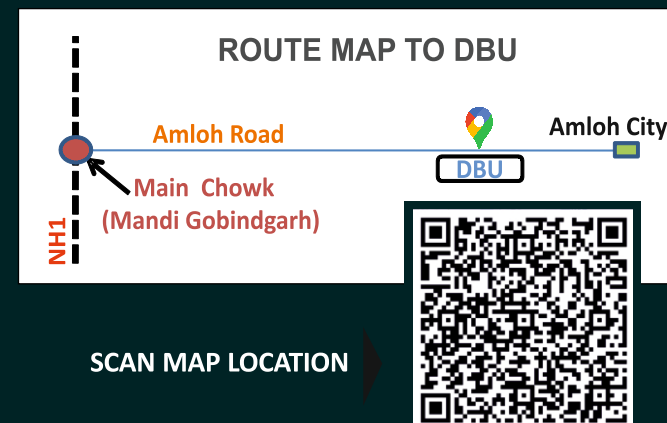
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Call for Papers

Research papers are invited for the Two-Day National Seminar on 'Culture, Spirituality and Religions in Punjab – Through the Ages'

- Papers may be written in English, Hindi or Punjabi.
- English papers must be typed in Times New Roman, 12-point font, with 1.5-line spacing.
- Hindi papers must be typed in Unicode (Mangal font preferred), font size 14 with 1.5 line spacing.
- Punjabi papers must be typed in Unicode (Raavi font preferred), font size 14 with 1.5 line spacing.
- All submissions must follow the APA 7th edition referencing style for Social Sciences and the MLA 9th Edition style for English Literature and be sent in MS Word format
- Abstract should be 300 words with 5 keywords. Plagiarism less than (AI) 10%.
- The last date for submission of abstracts is Oct. 5th, 2026 and for full papers Oct. 12th, 2026
- Papers should be submitted via Email nationalseminarichr@deshbhagatuniversity.in
- Selected papers will undergo review by the Seminar Review Committee and will be published in the seminar proceedings with an ISBN Number.

ROAD MAP



SCAN MAP LOCATION