



Call for Papers  
Two Day National Seminar on

**Dr. Ambedkar and the Partition Conundrum: Lessons for Contemporary India**

**Organized by**

Maulana Abul Kalam Abul Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Kolkata  
&

Department of English, Assam University, Silchar

**Date:** 13-14 February, 2025

**Venue:** Assam University, Silchar

**Concept Note:**

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, one of India's most prominent intellectuals and social reformers, offers a profoundly analytical and practical viewpoint on the Partition of India. Ambedkar's analysis in his seminal book *Pakistan or the Partition of India*, published in 1945, is still applicable today for evaluating the current issues facing the Indian subcontinent as well as for comprehending the historical factors that led to the formation of Pakistan. His observations on nationalism, communalism, and the politics of identity are still relevant today, imparting valuable lessons.

Ambedkar explores the underlying reasons of Hindu-Muslim hostilities in *Pakistan or the Partition of India*, contending that communalism was ingrained in the Indian society and politics even before the issue of Partition came up. In his critical analysis of Indian nationalism, he highlights the challenges in creating a cohesive national identity within a society divided on the basis of caste, religions, and regions. Ambedkar contends that considering the stark distinctions between Muslims and Hindus, the notion of a united Indian nation is, in reality, a myth. He states, "The two communities have drifted apart and their differences have now become so acute that they have to be accepted as a reality" (Ambedkar 26).

In regard to the demand for Pakistan, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar provides a critical examination of the Muslim psyche. He notes that Muslims increasingly see themselves as a distinct country from Hindus, motivated by a sense of historical grievance and a desire for political dominance. Ambedkar notes, "The Muslims feel that they are a nation distinct from the Hindus by every vital test of a nation" (Ambedkar 36). He ascribes this way of thinking to a confluence of political aspirations and religious identity, which resulted in the call for a separate country. Ambedkar contends that in order to bolster support for Pakistan, the Muslim leadership – in particular, the Muslim League – exploited communal feelings. He warns against the long-term instability that could result from this strategy since it promotes division rather than unification.

Ambedkar offers valid arguments for Pakistan's claim but he also raises grave worries about the possible ramifications of the Partition. The Partition of India, he cautions, would worsen rather than address the fundamental problems of communalism. Ambedkar asserts that severe violence and misery will accompany the vast exodus of people that would result from Partition. He writes, "The exchange of population will bring in its train greater evil than the one it seeks to remedy" (Ambedkar 112).

Ambedkar was tragically accurate when he predicted that the Partition of India in 1947 would result in one of the worst and most widespread human displacements in recorded history. The grave scars left by the violence and enmity that surrounded Pakistan's formation still affect the India-Pakistan ties today. Ambedkar's vision highlights how difficult it may be to make political judgments involving the redrawing of national borders and how crucial it is to take into account the human cost of such decisions.

Understanding the Partition and its aftermath through Ambedkar's standpoint is not just important from a historical perspective; it also has important ramifications for modern India and the larger South Asian region. Addressing communalism and identity politics in a way that respects diversity and fosters societal cohesiveness is one of the most important lessons to come out of Ambedkar's analysis.

This national seminar aims to investigate Dr. Ambedkar's perspectives on the Partition, their historical background, and their relevance to contemporary India. The seminar will offer a forum for critical analysis and a discussion of how Ambedkar's observations might help shape policy matters in the contemporary context, strengthen ties to the country, and advance social justice.

#### **Works Cited**

Ambedkar, B. R. *Pakistan or the Partition of India*. Thackers, 1940.

#### **Sub-Themes:**

We invite papers that engage with, but are not limited to, the following sub-themes:

1. **Ambedkar's Analysis of the Partition of India:** A critical examination of his writings and speeches.
2. **Communalism and Secularism:** Relevance of Ambedkar's vision in contemporary India.
3. **Partition and its Aftermath:** Long-term socio-political effects of the Partition from Dr. Ambedkar's viewpoint.
4. **Lessons for Contemporary India:** Policy implications and the way forward.
5. **Regionalism and Identity Politics:** Ambedkar's warnings and their manifestation in modern India.
6. **Social Justice and National Unity:** Bridging Ambedkar's thoughts with current challenges.
7. **Constitutional Governance:** Ambedkar's vision and its implications for current legal and policy frameworks.
8. **Foreign Policy Implications:** Lessons from Ambedkar's thoughts on the Partition for India's relations with neighboring countries.

The seminar will bring together:

- **Academics and Scholars:** Experts in history, political science, sociology, literature and law.
- **Policymakers:** Government officials, policy analysts, and legislators.
- **Students:** Research scholars and students from various universities and colleges.
- **Civil Society Representatives:** NGOs and social activists.

### **About MAKAIAS:**

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS), Kolkata (An autonomous body under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India) is a centre for research and learning with focus on social cultural, economic and political / administrative developments in Asia from the middle of the 19th Century onwards with special emphasis on their links with India, and on the life and works of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. The Institute now looks forward to widening its area of study to the Northeast region of India, Southeast Asia and China.

### **About the Department of English, Assam University, Silchar:**

The Department of English at Assam University, Silchar, has been a leading centre for literary studies in Northeast India. Established in 1994, the Department has consistently nurtured scholarly inquiry and critical thought in English literature, language, and cultural studies. With a dedicated faculty, renowned for their academic contributions, and a vibrant research community, the Department offers postgraduate and doctoral programs that encourage students to explore the intersections of literature with history, society, and politics. The Department's commitment to fostering intellectual dialogue is reflected in its regular organization of seminars, workshops, and conferences on diverse themes. These events not only enrich the academic environment of the university but also contribute to broader societal debates.

The upcoming national seminar on “Dr. Ambedkar and the Partition Conundrum: Lessons for Contemporary India” is a continuation of this tradition, aiming to provide a platform for scholars, researchers, and students to engage with one of the most significant figures in Indian history and his enduring relevance in contemporary discourse.

### **Abstract Submission:**

- Interested participants are requested to submit an abstract of 300-350 words.
- The abstract should clearly outline the research question, methodology, and expected outcomes.
- Abstracts should be accompanied by brief bio-notes of the authors.

### **Full Paper Submission:**

- Upon acceptance of the abstract, participants will be invited to submit a full paper (not exceeding 5000 words).
- The paper should follow the MLA 9<sup>th</sup> edition style sheet for citations and references.
- All submissions should be made in Word format (.doc or .docx).

### **Important Dates:**

- **Abstract Submission Deadline:** January 31, 2025
- **Notification of Acceptance:** February 5, 2025
- **Full Paper Submission Deadline:** February 10, 2025

**Submission Email:** [seminarenglishaus@gmail.com](mailto:seminarenglishaus@gmail.com)

**Registration Details:****• Registration Fee:**

- Faculty: Rs. 1000/
- Research Scholars/Students: Rs. 500/

The registration fee includes seminar kit, refreshments, and certificate of participation.

**Travel and Accommodation:**

Accommodation and local transport facilities from the Hotels/ Guest Houses to the Seminar venue will be provided to all the participants and 3-tier AC train fares will be reimbursed to some selected outstation participants. However, this would not apply to Tatkal/ Premium Tatkal bookings.

**How to Reach Assam University, Silchar:****By Air:**

The nearest airport is Silchar Airport (Kumbhirgram), located about 40 kilometers from the University. Regular flights connect Silchar with major cities like Kolkata, Delhi, Bengaluru, Imphal and Guwahati. From the airport, one can hire a taxi or use public transport to reach the University.

**By Rail:**

Silchar Railway Station is well-connected with major cities of the country. The University is approximately 20 kilometers from the railway station, and taxis and auto-rickshaws are readily available.

**By Road:**

Silchar is connected by road to Guwahati, Agartala, Aizwal and other nearby towns. State-run and private buses operate regular services to Silchar. Assam University is located about 20 kilometers from the city center, and local transport is available to reach the campus.

**Contact Information:**

For any queries related to the seminar, please contact:

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We look forward to receiving communication from interested participants with regard to their participation in what promises to be an enriching and thought-provoking seminar.