



SACRALS

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Former Chairman, National Minorities Commission
Ex-Member, NHRC & Law Commission of India
Chairman, Institute of Advanced Legal Studies
Amity University

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News Editor, Indiatimes.com

Contacts

asralindia@gmail.com
phone: + 919818816567

Organization

SACRALS – the South Asia Consortium for Religion and Law Studies – was founded in January 2017 and is headquartered in Delhi. It is a non-governmental and apolitical organization of a purely academic nature.

SACRALS is registered as a Trust under the appropriate Indian laws and functions in various kinds of collaboration with select educational and philanthropic bodies in the country.

SACRALS aims at (a) pursuing and conducting studies and research and organizing academic programs in all the eight South Asian nations – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Pakistan; and (b) promoting interfaith harmony in and outside the country.

SACRALS is in the process of establishing regional chapters in various parts of the country and is interacting with similar organizations operating at international and regional levels in other parts of the world.

SACRALS has also plans to extend the sphere of its academic activities to Southeast and West Asia where it will open its offshore chapters

SACRALS membership is open to all academics and professionals working or pursuing higher-level studies in any field of learning and having proven interest in the fields of its activities. Membership rules and fee structure can be sent on request.

New Delhi Meet

SACRALS organized an international event called the New Delhi Meet on ‘Religio-Legal Parameters for Social Harmony’ on 1st to 3rd February 2018.

The Inaugural Session of the event was held at Hotel Sheraton New Delhi and attended by a large number of Indian and foreign participants. Eminent legal scholar of India Professor Upendra Baxi, former Vice-Chancellor of Delhi University and Visiting Professor of University of Warwick in UK, was the main speaker at the session which was chaired by SACRALS Founding President Professor Tahir Mahmood.

The other two eminent speakers at the session were Dr Syeda Hameed, former Member of the National Commission for Women and Planning Commission, and Professor W. Cole Durham, Founding Director of the International Centre for Law and Religion Studies at Brigham Young University, USA.

Among other prominent foreign dignitaries were Dr. Kamal Hossain of Bangladesh, Justice Mohan Pieris of Sri Lanka, Barrister Neville Rochow of Australia and Professor Jaclyn Neo of Singapore. Mr. Firoz King Husein, Ms. Donlu Thayer and Ms. Jessica Farnsworth of BYU in USA also participated in the event.



The Inaugural Session began with the Welcome Address of SACRALS Board of Trustees Chairman Dr Saif Mahmood, while all other

members of the Board and of the SACRALS Advisory Council were also present

Among the prominent attendees in the audience were Amity University’s Founder-President Dr. Ashok K. Chauhan with his wife Dr. Amita Chauhan and the Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University Professor Tariq Mansoor,



Three business sessions of the New Delhi Meet were held on 2nd February at Amity University campus, chaired by Justice Jaspal Singh, Dr. Madan Verma and Adv. Irfan Engineer. Among the speakers at these sessions were Dr. Kamal Hossain (Bangladesh), Justice Mohan Pieris (Sri Lanka), Dr. Ramesh Parajuli (Nepal), Farzana Mahmood (Bangladesh), Prof. Sivakumar (Member, Law Commission of India), Dr. Kiran Gupta (Law Faculty, Delhi University) and Dr. Manoj K. Sinha (Director, Indian Law Institute).



The entire staff of Amity University’s Institute of Advanced Legal Studies and a large number of its postgraduate students in attendance.

Professor Cole Durham of BYU in the US made the concluding remarks at the Amity sessions.



The last business session of the event took place on 3rd February at Hotel Sheraton, presided over by Mr. Firoz King Husein, at which the speakers were Professor Jaclyn Neo of Singapore and Barrister Neville Rochow of Australia.



Ms. Donlu Thayer took the chair at the last session of the event at which valedictory address for the event was given by NALSAR Vice-Chancellor Professor Faizan Mustafa.

The event ended with the concluding addresses of Professor Tahir Mahmood and Professor Cole Durham, followed by vote of thanks by SACRALS Secretary Dr. Moinuddin Ahmad.

SACRALS New Delhi Meet on “Religio-Legal Parameters for Social Harmony” was a grand success and was highly appreciated in academic circles in and outside India.

It was decided that in the coming years SACRALS will organize similar events in

various regions of India and also in other countries of South Asia

Sideline G20 Meeting

After the close of SACRALS New Delhi Meet a gathering of select scholars was arranged at Hotel Sheraton to explain the aims, objects and programs of the G20 Interfaith Forum which has been holding meetings on the eve of G20 Summits in various countries. Professor Cole Durham, who has been the moving spirit behind these events, and Professor Tahir Mahmood who has been on their organizing committee addressed the gathering.

Mumbai & Pune Meets

SACRALS Founding President Professor Tahir Mahmood planned follow up meets, after the New Delhi Meet, in the Western Indian cities of Mumbai and Pune. He and Professor Cole Durham of the US flew to Mumbai on 5 February where the next day a meeting of local scholars was held at Hotel Marriott in Juhu.

Among those who attended and spoke at the Mumbai Meet were Professor Rashmi Oza (Bombay University Law Department), Adv. Irfan Engineer (Director, Centre for Study of Secularism and Society), Ms. Flavia Agnes (Advocate and women’s rights activist), Advocates Akhtar Sayeed & Nilofer Akhtar (senior Bombay High Court lawyers) and Syed Khurshid Hussain (corporate executive and social activist). All the participants spoke on religion-state relations in the Indian context and offered full cooperation in SACRALS activities.

On 7 February Professors Tahir Mahmood and Cole Durham drove from Mumbai to Pune where a grand reception was held for them at the Law College Azam Campus founded by eminent Indian educationist Mr. P.A. Inamdar. He and Begum Abeda Inamdar hailed the SACRALS initiatives and offered full cooperation in its activities. Law College Principal Dr. Rasheed Shaikh organized a gathering of faculty

members and students which was addressed by Professors Tahir Mahmood and Cole Durham. In another program held at a prominent Church of Pune both of them spoke, respectively, on the global and national issues of religious freedom.

SACRALS Membership

Eminent lawyer and former Additional Solicitor General of India Mr. Amarjeet Singh Chandhiok and Advocate Ms. Masooda Jan of the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir have been enrolled as life member of SACRALS.

Planned SACRALS events

SACRALS will hold its next annual conference in Nepal or Sri Lanka. Expression of interest to host the same have been invited from prominent academic institutions in the two countries. A couple of national-level events are also slated to be held by the year end in South or West India for which consultations are in progress.

Jamia Millia Conference

SACRALS institutional partner Interfaith Foundation India collaborated with the Nelson Mandela Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution of the Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, for organizing a National Conference on “Religious Identity, Pluralism and Peaceful Coexistence in India” on 15 February 2008.

Dr. Madan Verma, President of the Foundation, chaired the first session of the conference on ‘Philosophy of Religion and Peace’ at which the main speakers were former Union Minister Arif Mohammad Khan and Secretary-General of the All India Christian Council Mr. John Dayal.

SACRALS Founding President Professor Tahir Mahmood chaired the second session devoted to constitutional and legal perspectives on the conference theme. The main speakers at this session were JNU Professor Zoya Hasan, former member of the National Commission for Minorities, and former Principal of Delhi’s famous Lady Sri Ram Girls College Dr.

Meenakshi Gopinath. The last part of the conference was a students’ symposium at which some research scholars and other senior students exchanged views on the conference theme.

Jordan Conference

On 23-24 April 2018 the First Annual Middle East Conference on “Rule of Law and Religion” is being organized at the University of Jordan in the capital city of Amman. Sponsored by the International Center for Law and Religion Studies at Brigham Young University in the US and the Jordan University Law faculty, the conference will deliberate on the its theme in the context of “Amman Message in a Changing World” [Tolerance & Unity Message 2004].

SACRALS Founding President Professor Tahir Mahmood has been invited to the conference and is planning to speak there on “Indo-Jordanian Constitutional Perspective on the Amman Message.”

Other Foreign Events

The International Consortium for Law and Religion Studies will hold its next conference on “Living Together in Diversity: Strategies from Law and Religion” in the Brazilian capital city of Rio de Janeiro on 12-14 September 2018.

The G20 Interfaith Forum will hold its next conference in Buenos Aires, capital of Argentina in South America on 26-28 September 2018 on “Building Consensus for Fair and Sustainable Development : Religious Contributions for a Dignified Future.”.

The International Center for Law and Religion Studies at the Brigham University in USA will celebrate its 25th anniversary in October 2018. A Symposium on Law and Religion will be held on the occasion in two consecutive sessions at BYU in Provo city and Washington DC.

Scholars interested in attending any of these events may write to SACRALS office for further information and rules of participation.