

## Concept note

### NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON JAGANNATH CHETANA (CONSCIOUSNESS) IN THE ART AND CULTURE OF INDIA AND ITS NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

28<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2015

at

Rastriya Sanskrit Sansthan, Sada Shiva Campus, Puri, Odisha.

Puri is the holy land of Lord Jagannath. The word “Jagannath” is the combination of two words: *Jagat* means world and *Nath* means lord. Thus meaning of Jagannath is the lord of universe.

The place of lord Jagannath has been reflected in *Puranas*, and other classical Indian literatures. It is mentioned as Bhaumakshetra, Caritrapura, Dasavataarakshetra, Dibyakshetra, Jagannathkshetra, Jagannath Puri, Neelachala, Neeladri, Nilagiri, Nilakandara, Purusottamadhama, Purusottamakshetra, Purusottama Puri, Srikshetra and Shankhakshetra. "Puri" is a Sanskrit word means 'town', or 'city' and is cognate with the Greek word *polis*. It seems possible that Puri is a shortened name for Jagannath Puri or Purusottama Puri. In some records pertaining to the British rule, the word 'Jagannath' was used for Puri. It is the only shrine in India where Lord Jagannath is known by various names of Hindu gods and goddesses such as Radha, Lakshmi, Durga, Sati, Parvati, and Shakti abodes with Krishna.

Sri Jagannath is believed to be a *Dham* of *Kalyuga* and has remained centre of civilizations since time immemorial. Jagannath consciousness is not a separate philosophy but it is a consciousness towards the Philosophy of lord Krishna whose anthromorphization has been made into lord Vishnu as well as Narain too. Culturally, the temple of lord Jagannath at Puri holds a unique

place in eastern as well as other parts of India. It is because lord Jagannath has been considered parallel to Shiva and to the Viswanath temple of Varanasi.

The rituals that are connected with the worship of Jagannath veritably reflect an amalgam of Brahmanic, Sakta, Buddhistic as well as Jaina and other religious practices. Four wheels of Jagannath represent unity, freedom, knowledge, Power and virtue. Shri Aurobindo opines that “the Chariot of Jagannath is not a society but a commune; it is not a loose knit human collectivity or crowd but a free indestructible union, a divine commune evolved in joy by the power of harmonising knowledge of self and god”.

The Lord Jagannath and his philosophy have deep imprint on other cultures of the world. One of the significant manifestations of Jagannath is human culture. Jagannath-consciousness is so all pervading that it has the capacity to provide nurture to all levels of human existence—rich or poor, learned or ignorant, sinner or virtuous, male or female, well bred or ill bred, foreigner or a native. Thus, besides Hindus, Jains, Budhists, Christians, Sikhs and other minor religious groups by different means have justified their association.

Jagannath consciousness has been presented in visual art, painting, architecture, sculpture, performing and in other different art forms like dance, music, specialization in food habits, uniqueness in dress material, varied and colourful celebration of festivals too.

Jagannath consciousness is not only well known in India but it is also prevalent in India’s neighbours in Asia as well as South East Asia. Say for Himalayan country in Nepal. It appears that Jagannath concept was introduced in Nepal during Malla period in the beginning of 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D. and later it popularised as Nath cult as it symbolised love to all, truth as well as tolerance. Jagannath consciousness, because of its quality of tolerance, equality and love

to all, it has pervaded to other neighbouring countries of India. Sanskrit language has been a main source of transmission. The present Conference will discuss various aspects of Jagannath consciousness in art, culture and literature under the following broader themes:

1. TRACING HISTORY OF JAGANNATH;
2. LEGENDS OF JAGANNATH IN INDIA AND ITS NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES;
3. RELIGIOUS PRACTICES RELATING TO JAGANNATH;
4. PHILOSOPHICAL INTERPRETATION OF JAGANNATH CONSCIOUSNESS;
5. JAGANNATH CONSCIOUSNESS IN SANSKRIT LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE;
6. PRESENTATION OF JAGANNATH IN ART, ARTITECTURE AND OTHER ART FORMS;
7. DIFUSION OF JAGANNATH CONSCIOUSNESS IN OTHER RELIGIOUS PRACTICES;
8. JAGANNATH CONSCIOUSNESS AS VEHICLE OF WORLD PEACE.