



BOOKS LAUNCHING CEREMONY REPORT

**Hindutva The Truth Behind
&
The Tale of Maharaja Ranjeet Singh's
Education System in Punjab
Author: Professor Dr Iram khalid**

Organized by

Professor Dr. Iram khalid,

Dean Behavioural and Social Sciences, University of the Punjab

Reporter

Malika Shahzadi

Student of Department of Political Science



09th April, 2025

Books Launching Ceremony Report



“Hindutva The truth behind”

&

“The Tale of Maharaja Ranjeet Singh’s Education System in Punjab”

Author: professor Dr Iram Khalid



Book Launching Ceremony

Hindutva The truth behind

**The Tale of
Maharaja Ranjeet Singh’s
Education System in Punjab**

By Prof. Dr. Iram Khalid



Organized by

Dean Behavioural and Social Sciences, University of the Punjab, Lahore

At

Al-Razi Hall, University of the Punjab, Lahore

On

09th April, 2025

Details of Reporter:

Name: Malika Shahzadi

Affiliation: Student of BS. Political Science, University of the Punjab

E-mail Address: malikashahzadi36@gmail.com

Introduction to the ceremony

The ambiance of zeal and intellect could be felt in the crowded Grand **Al-Razi Hall, University of Punjab, Lahore**, as eminent guests gathered to attend the twin book launching event of latest scholarly works authored by **Professor Dr. Iram Khalid** on **9th April’2025** "**Hindutva: The Truth Behind**" and "**The Tale of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Education System in Punjab: A Path to Social Harmony**".

The event was attended by leaders from academia to media to international journalists and over **250 students** from the best-known universities and colleges from Lahore. The large and interested audience demonstrated the high academic and social importance of the themes covered in the new books. The event provided an important venue for scholarly interaction and cross-cultural exchange, and highlighted the significance of interfaith harmony, historical consciousness, and critical engagement with modern political ideologies.

Moderator

Prof. Dr. Rehana Saeed Hashmi

Professor at The Department of Political Science

University of the Punjab

The formal ceremony began on the dot at 10:00 am on **Wednesday, April 09, 2025**

with the efficacious moderation of **Prof. Dr. Rehana Saeed Hashmi**. Dr Hashmi, the host of the event was able to lull the audience into a quiet and attentive awe with her calm eloquent mannerism throughout the proceedings making sure that the speakers distinguished in their own right and the audience had a smooth and interesting one.

The event started with the playing of the **National Anthem** (10:00 – 10:10 AM,) The director had arranged for the anthem to be played with all due solemnity to honor our country and all those in attendance.

It was followed by **Recitation from the Holy Qur’an** (10:10 -10:20 a.m.) that set a spiritual tone to the beginning of the session.

Following the formal opening, Dr. Hashmi, in her welcoming remarks, extended a heartfelt welcome to distinguished guests, faculty members, students, and media to the enlightening intellectual event and thanked them for being the part so sought-after academic congregation. She

stressed the key need in terms of dialogue and research on South Asian history, education and changing ideological landscapes which was directly pertinent to the two books which were being launched.

As the day begins to take shape, Dr. Hashmi describes the distinct contribution to academic research that Prof. Dr. Iram Khalid’s work continues to make on:

- Hindutva and its hegemonic narratives and provide critical analysis of the history and contemporary implications of the ideology.
- Knowledge systems of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, highlighting how the inclusivity policies can become an integrated part of the social harmony and regional stability.
- They not only enrich academic conversation, but merit concerned reflection on the region’s socio-political trajectory and their relationship to present day South Asia.

She urged the audience especially the students to make the most of the intellectually provocative content that would unfold during the day. She emphasized that the participants' queries, thoughts, and discussions would enliven the evening and lead to a more profound, more substantive comprehension of the complex topics under study.

Facing us with her description of moderation and insightful introductions Prof. Dr.

Rehana Saeed Hashmi had set the scene for the day’s events letting the door open to what proved
to become a vibrant, multi-dimensioned and intellectual exchange.

Inaugural Session

Welcome Remarks

Prof, Dr. Iram Khaild

Dean, Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences

University of The Punjab

The formal part of the program was started by **Prof. Dr. Iram Khalid**, Dean, Faculty of Behavioral and Social Sciences, University of the Punjab, Lahore. She conveyed a warm-hearted welcome to the elite assembly with deep words of thanks to all worthies with expressions of profound gratefulness and humility upon the presence of the esteemed guests: the esteemed **Dr. Muhammad Ali**, Vice Chancellor, University of the Punjab **Prof. Dr. Khalid Mahmood**, Pro vice Chancellor , University of the Punjab, **Dr. Ajit Pal Singh Sandhu**, Vice President Sikh of the Sikh Heritage Education and Cultural Association America (SHECA) and **Dr. Gurindar Singh Grewal**, President, Sikh Heritage Education and Cultural Association of America and many other distinguished guests.

Finally, with passion and great clarity, Dr. Khalid presented her two thoroughly researched books. In this conversation, we begin with her plunge process into ‘**Hindutva-The Truth Behind**’, how and why she wrote this book from every aspect to understand the core of the ideology of Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) and its wider offensive and influence on India’s secular polity. She emphasized its careful tracking of the historical path of Hindutva, its consideration of contentious policies, and its detailed examination of the 2024 Indian general elections.

Dr Khalid then presented “**The Tale of Maharaja Ranjit Singh’s Education System in Punjab (A Path to Social Harmony)**” a ground-breaking work that traces early educational reforms forged by Maharaja Nankit Singh and their extraordinary impact on social harmony in 19th-century Punjab. The key stress was placed on his policies of all-encompassing rule, as well as on his revolutionary education programme that significantly contributed to gender equality where the vicinity of the town was "unheard of" in developing gender equality also in letters, a vision far beyond the time:

After Dr. Khalid's wonderful introductions, what followed were a line of memorable speeches by eminent personalities who shared their insights on the importance of the newly published books.

Keynote Speaker

Prof. Dr. Rana Eijaz Ahamd
Chairperson Department of Political Science,
University of The Punjab Lahore

After the inception of the session, the Keynote speech was given by **Prof. Dr. Rana Eijaz Ahmad**, Chairman, of Political Science, University of the Punjab, Lahore. Dr. Ahmad started his address with congratulations on the academic achievements of **Prof. Dr. Iram Khalid** and said that he feels pride in hearing about her work and the depth and relevance of her recent publications; *Hindutva: The Truth Behind* and *Punjab: The Golden Land of Five Rivers*.

Dr. Ahmad, in his address, lauded the academic rigor with which both books were written, saying that Dr. Khalid’s book is a product of detailed research and comes across as a work that bridges the gap between historical analysis and political reality. "**Hindutva: The Truth Behind** us is a welcome intervention in these times which provides important clues for unraveling the socioeconomic edifice of India and the emergence of exclusionary formations in the name of Hindutva," he added. Dr. Ahmad pointed out how the book contributes to a much-needed and timely dialogue of the future of secularism, democratic pluralism, and regional peace in South Asia.

Having a look at *Punjab; The Golden Capital of Five Rivers*, Dr. Ahmad thanked the author for its detailed history telling and profound back ground about the Punjab culture. He especially praised the spotlight on the rule of **Maharaja Ranjit Singh**, calling it as a great example of inclusive leadership and harmony among various religions and a model that can teach lessons

to today’s political leadership. Dr. Ahmad said the book has successfully shed light on some of the under-researched areas of the history of Punjab, which is why it will be a good asset for both the researchers and students of the South Asian history and politics.

In his keynote, Dr. Ahmad emphasized the importance of original and indigenous scholarship that helps to shape academic discussions, as well as public perceptions, adding that Dr. Khalid’s work represents a model of the same. He invited the academic world, especially young researchers, to consult such in depth studies, as well as to help develop a more nuanced, fact-based discussion on regional and international topics.

Dr. Ahmad ended by stressing that both the books are not just timely in the current political atmosphere, but also have scholarly potential longevity and should be read by academics, policy-makers and the general public at large.

Keynote Speaker

Prof. Dr. Mariam Jamal

**Assistant Professor at the Centre for South Asian Studies,
University of the Punjab, Lahore**

An enlightening keynote was presented by **Dr. Mariam Jamal**, Assistant Professor, Centre for South Asian Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore, and it offered constructive impressions on the deep academic significance of **Prof. Dr. Iram Khalid’s** contributions. She praised both books for their erudition and clarity and for bringing to the fore some of the biggest questions about regional and political transformations in South Asia.

Dr Mariam, in particular, highlighted the relevance of **Hindutva: The Truth Behind** as a must read "the book that comes exactly at the time when the world is trying to make sense of the changed dynamics of India, plagued with identity struggles and intense debate over Hindutva and hues of secular philosophy. She hailed the book’s capacity to delineate the trajectory of Hindutva accurately, thereby allowing readers to comprehend its political, cultural and social implications. Dr. Mariam said this work was a significant addition to scholarship as it questions existing narratives and forces scholars to rethink the direction of Indian politics and the consequences for the wider region.

Dr. Mariam also underscored the significance of **Punjab: The Golden Land of Five Rivers**, calling it an engaging take on Punjab’s colorful past and cultural pride. Calling it beautifully capturing the spirit of Punjab as a region of diversity and determination, she said it

vividly portrays the time of **Maharaja Ranjit Singh** and its plural society. Dr. Mariam commended the book’s combination of historical tales with contemporary reflections, lessons of coexistence, leadership and cultural harmony.

In closing her remarks, Dr. Mariam asserted that both texts are important academic works that pave the way for further research and conversation. She urged students, academics and policy analysts to grapple with these books to appreciate the complex political and cultural dynamics in South Asia today.

Guest Speaker

Dr. Ajit Pal Singh Sandhu

Vice President of the Sikh Heritage, Education and Culture Organization of America



Dr. Ajit Pal Singh Sandhu, Vice President of the Sikh Heritage Education and Cultural Organization of America, which is also the **publisher of Dr. Iram Khalid’s two books launched at the event**, gave a heart touching speech which was also louder and appreciated greatly. Dr. Sandhu while telling his deep sentiments about visiting Pakistan, expressed that he felt being very at home as he considered himself an integral part of Pakistan’s cultural and historical ethos.

He emphasized the need to expose real histories since till date many are unaware of the actual stories and events that have taken place in the subcontinent. He also, with these words, he hailed the writings of **Dr Iram Khalid** and addressed them as indispensable offerings that uncover hidden histories, retrieve the forgotten stories from oblivion that he describes as forgotten palimpsest to the surface.

Dr Sandhu went on blatantly to underline the use of religion for political purposes, pointing out that the Hindutva forces have always attempted to divide the communities by claiming that “Sikhs are the brother of Hindus” and thereby trying to decouple them from

Muslims. That these misrepresentations have helped contribute to such divisions and historical misapprehensions, Fischer characterized as a shame.

"Lastly, Dr Sandhu shed light on the condition of Muslims in India today even as they remain under fear and systemic oppression. He highlighted the prevailing grim situation in Indian Occupied Kashmir and informed that the Indian Army is subjecting Kashmiri people to draconian laws and their fundamental rights and freedoms are denied.

In his closing remarks, Dr. Sandhu made a strong statement saying that everyone has a right to know the truth. He hoped scholarly works such as that of Dr. Khalid would be the main instruments in fostering historical consciousness, mutual comprehension and regional amity.

Guest Speaker

Dr. Gurinder Singh Grewal

**Founder of the Sikh Heritage, Education and Culture
Organization of America**



Recorded in these now-segregated pages of history, **Dr. Gurinder Singh Grewal**, Founder of the Sikh Heritage, Education and Cultural Organization of America, spoke passionately and identified himself as Pakistani, expressing pride in his parentage, his parents being from Pakistan. He said that he had a deep feeling for the land as a Punjabi and it is necessary to know and adopt the rich culture, language, way of living and history of Punjab.

Disagreement, Dr. Grewal said, is not a roadblock, but an opportunity to engage, learn and make progress. He passionately appealed to the gathering to bridge divides, cultivate a spirit of love, and foster understanding for each other among all communities and cultures.

Praising the University of the Punjab as an excellent place for cultural exchange and language learning, Dr Grewal urged students to participate fully in tackling the social issues, to be part of the global links and to contribute to a more peaceful and inclusive society.

He ended by reminding students that the quest for knowledge didn't stop with their diploma. Lifelong learning is indispensable for the growth of the individual, the fulfillment of mankind and society.

Guest Speaker

Brig(R) Farooq Hamid
Brigadier R Defence Analyst

Farooq Hameed (Brigadier R) a well-known Defence Analyst presented a befitting, thoughtful and appreciative speech. He praised **Prof. Dr. Iram Khalid’s** scholarship work, saying it is national in nature and its recognition should be universal.

He also appreciated the University of the Punjab for playing an unfailing part in promotion of national integrity as well as academic excellence in the country. "The central idea of these books was the danger of **Hindutva** as an aggressive, violent ideology which endangers the secular foundations of the rights and freedoms of the minorities in India.

He added that this was one of the most effective methods to bring to limelight such radical ideologies and to spread the values of veracity, consciousness and social unison and thanked the efforts made in such studies by Dr. Khalid.

Keynote Speaker

Prof, Dr. Farhan Navid Yousaf

Founder Director Institute of Social & Cultural Studies

University of The Punjab

Prof. Dr. Farhan Navid Yousaf, Director Institute of Social & Cultural Studies

University of the Punjab, Lahore, read a substantial and academically a complex paper. He also drew a fascinating sociological picture, skillfully situating Dr. Khalid’s output in the broader world of academe.

Prof. Yousaf underscored the need for such books informing that these will prove invaluable for modern research in the disciplines of social, culture and political studies. He pointed out that the books, besides contributing to academic debate, also provide informed views to decipher the intricacies of complex social systems and power relations in South Asian society.

In his address, he urged scholars and students of ICSSR to critically produce, and engage with, literature that questions prevalent narratives and furthers a more nuanced, inclusive view of what animates regional proliferation.

The formal addresses concluded with esteemed remarks from the event's dignitaries:

Guest of Honor

Prof, Dr. Khaild Mahmood
Pro Vice Chancellor
University of The Punjab

Prof. Dr. Khalid Mahmood, Pro-Vice Chancellor, University of the Punjab, Lahore, gave a thoughtful & inspiring speech. What one should really focus on, he said, is not Hindu majority, or minority of other denominations **"but the recurrence with which such narrow-mindedness is prevailing and getting rooted among the people."** There might be extremists everywhere, what’s worryingly different now is the increasing normalization of Hindutva in present-day India,” Prof Mahmood notes. “They were on the Hindutva track vis a vis no Muslims should live in India, convert or get out with the support of RSS and Shiv Sena, he ramped up the narrative to an extent that has never been seen before.

Looking at history, he said that while Muslims and Hindus have lived side by side under Muslim rule for centuries, never before has there been so much mutual bitterness. But the current revival of religious extremism, he cautioned, insures that India’s social and political decay will continue unabated. He categorically said that the foundation of Hindu nationalism was not tenable as a basis for political rule and emphasized the importance of the role of educators and academicians as harbingers of the world conscience to stop the spread of such pernicious ideas.

Prof. Mahmood concluded on a positive note, citing history again and pointing out that Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who ruled for 40 years, set up 18 girls’ school in Lahore alone in the 19th century, which showed a progressive and inclusive mindset and a key challenge for present leaders.

Chief Guest

Prof, Dr. Muhammad Ali
Vice Chancellor
University of The Punjab

Dr. Muhammad Ali, Vice Chancellor University of the Punjab, Lahore, made a forward-looking statement. He started by emphasizing the message of **Baba Guru Nanak**, and cited his unwavering quest throughout his life for peace, brotherhood and respect among all in the area. Referring to the ideology of **Hindutva**, Dr Ali was of the opinion that it is natural and appreciable to love one’s religion, but this Hindutva is not about religious pride; it is about exclusion, about being in power. With the political rise of the BJP, which has actively pushed this politics of division, the ugly visage of Hindutva has come to the fore, he said.

Dr Ali insisted that politics must always be based on ideology, public welfare, and serving humanity and never on hate or religious bigotry. The Sikh community is "**dearer to us than ourselves**," he said in loving words about this community and its high status in Pakistan. He also lauded the educational ideals of **Maharaja Ranjit Singh** to create an inclusive society through education especially for women.

In his concluding remarks, Dr. Muhammad Ali thanked **Prof. Dr. Iram Khalid** for her academic contributions, partner organizations and government for cooperating to make the book a success as well as the students and people interested in Comparative Religious Studies, Peace Building and Interfaith Harmony for critical implication.

Following the insightful speeches and engaging presentations, the books *Hindutva: The Truth Behind* and *The Tale of Maharaja Ranjeet Singh’s Education System in Punjab* were graciously presented as gifts to the distinguished speakers and honored guests. This thoughtful gesture symbolized appreciation for their valuable participation and encouraged further reflection on the critical themes explored in the books. After the speech presentations a tea break take place, in which all the guests have an opportunity to refresh themselves and have an informal chat together. This lull created a space for the cultivation of collegiality and reflection already underway as attendees started to talk, sharing their ideas and impressions with each other, and reaping the fruits of the intellectual discourse thus far.

Attendees: A Diverse and Engaged Audience

The audience that gathered to celebrate the publication of **Dr. Iram Khalid’s** books was an extraordinary mix that spoke volumes about the reach of, and engagement with the work, that is showcased in them.

THE ACADEME: There were lots of academics and scholars from all different disciplines who were looking for challenging ideas to engage with from the author. Their involvement underscored the scholarly import of Dr. Khalid’s work.

Media and Punditry: The event hosted both local and national media, indicative of the increasing public’s demand for discussion on the topics addressed by our books.

International Media: With a topic that is both touchy and highly relevant to the global audience, members of the foreign press were present as well, clearly indication international interests in India’s complex socio-political future indicators.

Students: The most encouraging aspect of the event was, no doubt, the overwhelming presence of 250 plus students from Lahore’s best educational institutions. Their participation showcased the young generation's interest in critical and historical as well as political discourse. Some of the universities and colleges that took part in the challenge included:

- University of the Punjab
- Government College University

- Minhaj University
- Lahore College for Women University
- Kinnaird College
- Forman Christian College
- Government College Township
- Fatima Jinnah College
- Islamia College
- And many others.

This was a diverse crowd, from seasoned academics and media types to inquiring students and it was conducive to lively, intellectual exchange. The vibrant paper presentation session by all the audience added value to the conversation and highlighted the similarity of relevance of Dr Khalid’s work both nationally and internationally.

Its Impact: Sparking Dialogue and Critical Thinking

The release of the books *Hindutva: The Truth Behind* and *Punjab: History and Culture* had a lasting effect, not just on the audience, but across the length and the breadth of the academia, media and students. The conference itself was a launchpad for discussion and intellectual probing and proved how relevant the work of **Dr. Iram Khalid** is for contemporary thinking.

Key Impacts:

- **Enriching Academic Discourse:**

The launch plunged the academia into a vigorous debate about the essence of religious nationalism, secularism, minority rights and historical revisionism. The range of academic presence made for a nuanced and all-inclusive sharing of points of view there were deepening analysis of the works that were discussed.

- **Broadening Public Awareness:**

And huge media attention – both national and international – meant the core messages of these books were broadcast to an even broader demographic. It helped raise public consciousness about the complex socio-political issues in South Asia, and promoted discussion in an open and informed manner in mainstream communities.

- **Inspiring Youth Engagement:**

And one of the most fantastic results was the response from the student body. More than 250 young students from Lahore’s reputed colleges and universities participated in the event and many of them said they developed fresh interest in history, politics and interfaith relations. The kick-off, had opened the curiosity of the youth and placed them inside the line up in challenging the future in academia and the social involvement.

- **Gaining International Recognition:**

The attendance of foreign media and organizations was indicative of the global significance of the research of Dr. Khalid. Critical studies of the books, exposing the reality of Hindutva, minority rights, and the political history of South Asia, had reverberations far outside the country, in an international dialogue of human rights, religious freedom, and regional security.

- **Promoting Peace and Social Harmony:**

“By remembering the secular governance of personalities such as Maharaja Ranjit Singh and denouncing divisive ideologies, the event encouraged the principals of tolerance, coexistence and respect for one another,” he added. It underlined the power of learning from the past in creating bridges between communities, rather than walls of bigotry.

The twin book ceremony was a level higher than the officialdom of a ceremony. It proved to be a thought-provoking intellectual meet-up that did more than just honor scholarly work -- it served to underscore the relevance of historical awareness and critical perspective to the pressing concerns of our contemporary moment.

A Shared Meal: Concluding the Day

After the more formal part of the proceedings had ended the dignitaries were invited to enjoy a splendid supper which formed a link between the formal part of the ceremony and the more friendly and convivial character of the evening. The social meal was a good opportunity for further networking, in depth discussions, as well as for more academic and social contacts.

It was a place where good conversations unfolded in an easy manner. Students, scholars, and much of the ELI membership had animated conversations that thought through what they had heard and discussed ways in which they might work together in the future. A lot of students flocked to Prof. Dr. Iram Khalid and other speakers, expressing eager desire for more information and curiosity over the challenging subjects discussed in the books.

The light jingling of glass, murmurs of good conversation and comfortable laughter capped the perfect day. It was not just a book launch, it was a declaration of the value of intellectual curiosity, critical inquiry and the power of scholarship to uplift.

Towards the end of the evening there was no doubt about the impact of the published work of **Prof. Dr. Iram Khalid**. The volumes will become standard reference works in the disciplines of political science, history, and religious studies, and the launch will be an event that is remembered as a major event in Lahore’s rich intellectual and cultural life.

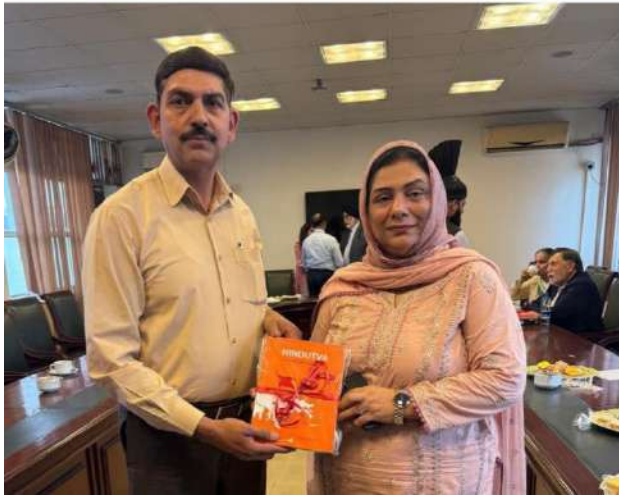
Memorable Moments Capture



BOOK LOUNCHING CEREMONY “HINDUTVA THE TRUTH BEHIND” & “THE TALE OF MAHARAJA RANJEET SINGH’S EDUCATION SYSTEM IN PUNJAB”



BOOK LOUNCHING CEREMONY “HINDUTVA THE TRUTH BEHIND” & “THE TALE OF MAHARAJA RANJEET SINGH’S EDUCATION SYSTEM IN PUNJAB”



BOOK LOUNCHING CEREMONY “HINDUTVA THE TRUTH BEHIND” & “THE TALE OF MAHARAJA RANJEET SINGH’S EDUCATION SYSTEM IN PUNJAB”



BOOK LOUNCHING CEREMONY “HINDUTVA THE TRUTH BEHIND” & “THE TALE OF MAHARAJA RANJEET SINGH’S EDUCATION SYSTEM IN PUNJAB”

