

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR- 54143

Date: 01/10/2025

Title: Synthesis and Evolution: Cultural Syncretism and the Historical Formation of the Contemporary Hindu Spiritual landscape

Recommendation:

Accept

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		√		
Techno. Quality			√	
Clarity			√	
Significance			√	

Reviewer Name: Dr Abdul Haseeb Mir

Date: 01/10/2025

Reviewer's Comment

The article "Synthesis and Evolution: Cultural Syncretism and the Historical Formation of the Contemporary Hindu Spiritual Landscape" offers a valuable and original contribution to the study of Hinduism. It effectively demonstrates how cultural syncretism has shaped the evolution of Hindu traditions by integrating tribal, animistic, Buddhist, Jain, and Brahmanical elements.

Detailed Review Report

The article "*Synthesis and Evolution: Cultural Syncretism and the Historical Formation of the Contemporary Hindu Spiritual Landscape*" presents a rich and ambitious exploration of the processes of cultural syncretism that shaped the evolution of Hindu religious traditions. It argues that the Hindu spiritual landscape is not a monolithic construct but rather the outcome of centuries of interaction, assimilation, and adaptation between Brahmanical, non-Brahmanical, tribal, animistic, Buddhist, and Jain traditions. By situating Hinduism within this broad historical and anthropological framework, the study underscores the fluidity of Indian religiosity and its resilience in absorbing diverse influences.

A central strength of the article lies in its historical and ethnographic depth. It draws upon archaeological findings, textual references, and sociological theories to trace continuities from prehistoric animistic cults and fertility worship to the structured temple-centered worship that defines much of contemporary Hindu practice. The discussion of Harappan cultural continuities, the assimilation of Dravidian traditions, and the gradual Brahmanisation of local cults is particularly insightful. By highlighting how early ecological

International Journal of Advanced Research

Publisher's Name: Jana Publication and Research LLP

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and nature-based practices transformed into institutionalized forms of worship, the article effectively demonstrates the dynamic nature of syncretism.

The paper also succeeds in showing the theoretical utility of syncretism as both a concept and a process. It places syncretism alongside related frameworks such as Sanskritization, hybridity, and cultural assimilation, while also pointing out its limitations. The emphasis on the ongoing, unfinished nature of syncretism in India is well made, showing that the contemporary Hindu spiritual landscape remains a living, evolving tradition.

However, certain aspects of the paper could be strengthened. The prose is often dense and repetitive, which makes it difficult for non-specialist readers to follow the argument. A clearer structure with sharper subheadings and more concise presentation would improve readability. While the paper engages with classical scholarship, it would benefit from greater dialogue with recent academic debates in religious studies and anthropology, especially contemporary discussions of pluralism, identity politics, and globalization's impact on Hindu practices. In addition, while South Indian traditions are given detailed treatment, the northern and northeastern contexts receive less attention, which narrows the scope of the argument.

Stylistically, the article is well referenced and demonstrates a solid command of the sources, but the conclusion could be more assertive. Instead of reiterating the narrative, it should highlight the broader implications of syncretism for understanding Indian secularism, cultural resilience, and the politics of religious identity today.

Final Recommendation

This article makes a valuable and original contribution to the study of Hinduism by foregrounding cultural syncretism as the central process in the formation of the Hindu spiritual landscape. With minor revisions—particularly simplifying the structure, improving readability, and engaging with more recent scholarship—the paper deserves to be accepted for publication.