

# Biblioclasm in South Asia - A Sociological Overview

**Sayan Sarkar**

*Library, School of Law, Brainware University, Barasat, Kolkata, West Bengal, India*

*E-mail: sarkarsayan68@gmail.com*

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## Abstract

*In the setting of South Asia, this paper tries to examine the phenomena of biblioclasm, the wilful destruction of books. This study uses a sociological lens to examine the causes, strategies, and effects of biblioclasm in the area by drawing on historical and modern viewpoints.*

*The study explores the instances of biblioclasm, offering light on the complex interaction of political, religious, and ideological elements that have motivated such activities throughout history. It begins by examining the historical setting of South Asia. It looks into the various goals of biblioclasm, such as attempts to censor knowledge, silence criticism, establish supremacy, and defend cultural or religious identities.*

**Keywords:** *Biblioclasm, Destruction of Books, Destruction of information, preservation of information, Information Censorship, Human History.*

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## Introduction

The Oxford English Dictionary defines biblioclasm as the "*Destruction of books.*" The earliest known use of the noun biblioclasm is in the 1860s. OED's earliest evidence for biblioclasm is from 1864, in the writing of T. Griffith.[1]

Biblioclasm" is a term that combines "biblio," which pertains to books or written works, and "clasm," which means to break or destroy. In essence, biblioclasm refers to the act of destroying or damaging books, often with the intention of suppressing or erasing certain ideas, knowledge, or cultural expressions contained within them.

The act of burning Holy Scriptures is often referred to as 'Biblioclasm'. The term is now used to describe the act of burning any book, but its meaning is still rooted in the act of desecrating sacred texts. It initially appeared in the mid-19th century in England. It was first used to denounce the Catholic priests who had burned Maya and Aztec manuscripts during the 16th century Spanish conquest of South America.[2]

Books have traditionally served as entryways to information, providing perceptions into many lands, cultures, and concepts. These archives of human knowledge and inventiveness, meanwhile, have not always been treasured and guarded throughout history. Biblioclasm is a terrible

period in human history where attempts to stifle thoughts fought with the power of ideas. Authoritarian regimes, religious authorities, and governments seeking to enforce a certain ideology or strengthen their hold on power have all exploited biblioclasm throughout history. [3]

South Asia has a lengthy and intricate history of biblioclasm. It is possible to get insight into the cultural, political, and religious forces at work during various eras by understanding the motivations behind book burnings, censorship, or the destruction of written materials. Biblioclasm frequently mirrors societal power relations. Researchers can examine how authoritarian regimes or ruling elites attempted to control knowledge and affect public discourse by looking at specific cases of book destruction. This can shed light on how South Asian societies deal with social control and resistance.

### **Aim of the Study**

**Understanding Biblioclasm:** The primary goal is likely to understand and analyze the concept of biblioclasm, which refers to the deliberate destruction or censorship of books and other written or printed materials.

**South Asian Context:** The study specifically concentrates on the South Asian region, indicating an interest in the sociological aspects of biblioclasm within this geographical and cultural context.

### **Scope of the Study**

**Geographical Focus:** The study is limited to South Asia, encompassing countries such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and the Maldives. Each of these countries may have unique socio-cultural factors contributing to biblioclasm.

**Sociological Perspective:** The sociological lens suggests an examination of the societal, cultural, and institutional factors that contribute to or resist biblioclasm. This might involve studying the role of religion, politics, education, and other social institutions.

**Temporal Consideration:** The scope may include a historical perspective, examining instances of biblioclasm over time and how the phenomenon has evolved within South Asia.

**Comparative Analysis:** The study may involve comparing instances of biblioclasm across different South Asian countries, identifying commonalities and differences in the sociological factors influencing such actions.

### **The Origin of the Problem**

In the journal article "Biblioclasm in South Asia: A Sociological Overview," the origin of the problem is explored through a comprehensive examination of sociocultural dynamics within the South Asian context. The study delves into historical, religious, and political factors that have contributed to instances of biblioclasm—deliberate acts of book destruction or censorship. By scrutinizing the intricate interplay of these elements, the article seeks to unveil the roots of biblioclasm, shedding light on the motivations and ideologies that drive such actions. This sociological overview aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the origins of biblioclasm in South Asia, offering insights that contribute to a broader comprehension of the complex interrelationships between society, culture, and the preservation of intellectual heritage.

### **Related Literature**

The phenomenon of biblioclasm, defined as the intentional destruction or censorship of books, has intrigued scholars across disciplines. Within

the South Asian context, the intersection of historical, religious, and political forces has been a focal point of investigation. Early studies, such as *Marc Drogin (Biblioclasm: The Mythical Origins, Magic Powers and Perishability of the Written Word)* and *Andrew J. McKenna (Biblioclasm: Joycing Jesus and Borges)* along with *Jakub Zbrzezny (Biblioclasm and the Scriptures: An Investigation of the Phenomena)* laid the groundwork by examining instances of book burning, emphasizing the role of political ideologies and religious tensions. But they did not focus on the aforementioned region. Their primary focus was on the aspects of religion and its relation with book destruction.[4][5][6]. Building on this foundation, recent scholars *Vishnu Kumar Gupta (BURNING LIBRARIES: A REVIEW THROUGH THE LENS OF HISTORY)* and *Sayan Sarkar (Biblioclasm: Unveiling the Dark Secrets of Book Destruction)* has delved into the sociological dimensions of biblioclasm, exploring its impact on intellectual freedom, cultural diversity, and societal dynamics and both of them tried to explore the context in the region of South Asia, but more over their texts deals with on an international context. However, a comprehensive sociological overview specific to South Asia is notably absent.[7][8]. This article aims to fill this gap by synthesizing and extending existing research, offering a nuanced understanding of the origins, patterns, and societal implications of biblioclasm in the diverse and complex South Asian landscape.

### Research Methodology

The author performed in-depth review of seven books which are known to deal with the subject of **Biblioclasm**. In this article the author followed the **Documentary Review** method of research. As it is specialized subject there are not many books. A thorough search revealed in the most authentic sources of information websites on

books (*World Cat, Open Library, Goodreads, Google Books, Z Library, Internet Archive and Project Gutenberg*) that there are only seven books on the subject written in English Language. These English language books have been reviewed to look into **Biblioclasm** and its impact on South Asia.

1. *Libricide: The Regime-Sponsored Destruction of Books and Libraries in the Twentieth Century* by Rebecca Knuth, Praeger, 2003
2. *Lost Libraries: The Destruction of Great Book Collections Since Antiquity* by J. Raven, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004
3. *Burning Books and Leveling Libraries: Extremist Violence and Cultural Destruction* by Rebecca Knuth, Praeger, 2006
4. *A Universal History Of The Destruction Of Books: From Ancient Sumer to Modern-Day Iraq* by Fernando Baez, Atlas & Co, 2008
5. *"Burning the Books: A History of the Deliberate Destruction of Knowledge"* by Richard Ovenden, Harvard University Press, 2020
6. *The Library: A Fragile History* by Andrew Pettegree & Arthur der Weduwen, Profile Books, 2020.
7. *Burning Books* by Haig Bosmajian, McFarland & Co Inc, 2012

### Findings & Discussion

*When they burn books, they will also, in the end, burn human beings"*

- Heinrich Heine, German poet, writer and literary critic[9]

By going through the aforementioned books one can explain Biblioclasm and its impact on South Asia.

### The Geographical Lens:

Peninsular India and the Indo-Gangetic Plain make up South Asia, a subregion of Asia. **Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan, Nepal,** and **Sri Lanka** are all included in this region, along with **Afghanistan** and the **Maldives**, which are frequently regarded as being a part of South Asia. The phrase is frequently used interchangeably with "**Indian subcontinent**," despite the latter term occasionally being used in a narrower manner to refer to *Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan*. [10]

### The Historical Lens:

**Afghanistan:** Biblioclasm in Afghanistan is a reflection of the country's larger problems with conflict, religious extremism, and political instability. It emphasizes how crucial it is to protect cultural heritage and the freedom to access knowledge, especially in areas where these ideals have been in danger. Despite the difficulties caused by ongoing conflicts and governmental upheavals, efforts are still being made to preserve Afghanistan's literary and historical treasures.

*The Nasir-i Khusraw Foundation Incident:* The Nasir-i Khusraw Foundation was founded in Kabul, Afghanistan in 1987 as a result of the joint efforts of numerous academic and civil society organizations, eminent professors, and Ismaili community members. This location featured a library, a museum, and publishing facilities for books and videos. The library was a wonder because of its sizable collection of 50,000 books in Arabic, English, and Pashto that were available to all students and researchers. Additionally, its collection of Persian works was unmatched, and it contained a very rare manuscript of Firdawsi's epic masterwork *The Book of Kings* (Shhnma) from the 12th century. The first Aga Khan's seals, as well as writings by

Hasan-i Sabbah and Nasir-i Khusraw, were kept in the library's Ismaili collection. The library collection was moved to the valley of Kayan after the Soviet forces left Afghanistan in the late 1980s and the Taliban forces became more powerful. The Taliban gunmen, however, plundered the media, the museum, the video facilities, and the library on August 12, 1998, burning some volumes and tossing others into a nearby river. Not one book was spared, not even the Quran, which dates back a thousand years.[11]

*Taliban Rule (1996–2001):* There were numerous reports of biblioclasm in Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001, in particular. Following a rigorous interpretation of Islamic law, the Taliban adopted a policy of burning books and destroying cultural items. They deliberately targeted publications, pieces of art, and sculptures that they deemed to be idolatrous or un-Islamic. As a result, priceless historical and cultural records were lost. For example, **Pol-i-Khomri Public Library** was burned down by the Taliban militia in 1998. It held approx.. 55,000 books and old manuscripts, most of them are now lost. [12]

**Bangladesh:** Biblioclasm has occurred at various points in Bangladesh's history. This practice is often driven by political, religious, or ideological motivations.

*1971 Bangladesh Liberation War:* There were biblioclasm incidents during the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War, which resulted in the nation's independence from Pakistan. Libraries, archives, and other cultural institutions were destroyed as a result of the fighting, which resulted in the loss of priceless books, manuscripts, and historical documents.[13]

*Religious Biblioclasm:* After rampaging through the entire pilgrimage complex to ensure an Islamic takeover over a Hindu right to a temple

property, local influential perpetrators and land speculators supported by ruling parties burned at least ten copies of the Sreemad Bhagbad Gita with many religious books in front of locals on Tuesday, April 2, 2011, at around 10:00 am. The remnants of Srivas Swami's magnificent library structure, which housed a good collection of Hindu ancient literature and scriptures that attracted learned scholars from all across eastern India, were effectively destroyed by fanatical Mohammedans. It is thought that Srivas Swami invented a local printing press and block print technique here to reproduce ancient Sanskrit texts.[14]

**Bhutan:** Bhutan is not well known for its biblioclasm. The preservation of its cultural and religious legacy is highly valued in Bhutan, a tiny Himalayan nation with a distinctive cultural past and steadfast Buddhist beliefs. Bhutan's approach to preserving and promoting its cultural and religious legacy can be summed up by these actions. Bhutan has laws in place to protect its religious and cultural heritage. These laws aid in preserving and respecting religious and cultural customs. Although Bhutan places a high priority on protecting its cultural and religious history, it's crucial to remember that no civilization is completely immune to problems with cultural change and preservation.

**India:** India has had numerous instances of biblioclasm throughout its history, which were frequently motivated by political, religious, or ideological reasons. The country has faced too many of this atrocity whether is in the era of Undivided India or present day India. Here are a number of instances of biblioclasm in India throughout history.

Emperor Ashoka of the Mauryan Empire (3rd century BCE): Emperor Ashoka first practiced biblioclasm by mandating the destruction of Buddhist writings and monasteries. The

biblioclasm of Emperor Ashoka was a part of a greater effort to strengthen his realm and establish his hegemony. After seeing the carnage his military expeditions had left behind, he converted to Buddhism and gave up violence, but before that, he had suppressed other religious sects and ordered the burning of their sacred writings and monastic monasteries. This period of biblioclasm was very brief under Ashoka's rule because he later adopted Buddhism and turned into its sponsor. The Kalinga Rock Edicts and the famed Ashoka Pillars, which emphasized the virtues of nonviolence, religious tolerance, and social welfare, are two examples of Buddhist teachings he inscribed on pillars and rocks around his empire. He is well known for this practice.[15]

Iconoclasm under Islamic Rule: Iconoclasm and biblioclasm occurred occasionally in India during the Islamic era, particularly during the medieval era. William Johnston claims that the Buddhist religion, which the Muslims viewed as idolatrous, was persecuted as part of the Muslim invasion of the Indian subcontinent. Buddhist literature were destroyed by Muslim forces in the Gangetic plains throughout the 12th and 13th centuries, along with hundreds of Buddhist monasteries and shrines, as well as monks and nuns. Some Muslim kings, like Aurangzeb, commanded the defilement of sacred scriptures and images as well as the destruction of Hindu temples.[16]

Goa Inquisition (16th–18th centuries): The Portuguese colonial authorities in Goa started the Inquisition during the 16th century, which resulted in the suppression and destruction of Hindu and Buddhist texts, temples, and religious artifacts as well as the coercive conversion of some Goan Hindus to Christianity[17].

At Udayamperoor (referred to as Diamper in non-vernacular literature), Aleixo de Menezes, Latin

Catholic Archbishop of Goa, called the Synod of Diamper on June 20, 1599. This diocesan synod or council sought to impose on the ancient Saint Thomas Christians of the Malabar Coast (modern Kerala state, India) the full doctrines and practices of 16th century European Catholic Christianity, which was at the time engaged in a titanic struggle with the tide of European Protestantism. These practices, customs, and doctrines were the result of centuries of living their own Christian lives in an Indian environment. The Synod of Diamper, which varied greatly from other Christian bodies in many ways, among other things, condemned as heretical a number of religious and other writings that were popular among Saint Thomas Christians. These were all supposed to be given to the church and burned. [17][18][19]

*Sikh Reference Library (Amritsar, 1984):* During the 1984 Operation Blue Star, Indian troops plundered and burned the Sikh Reference Library in Amritsar, which contained a collection of rare books, periodicals, manuscripts, and other literary works pertaining to Sikhism and India. The lost literature hasn't been found yet, therefore it's assumed that it's gone forever. Before it was destroyed, the library housed a sizable collection of roughly 20,000 literary works, including 11,107 books, 2,500 manuscripts, newspaper archival materials, historical letters, documents/files, and others. The majority of the literature was written in the Punjabi language and focused on Sikhism, but there was also writing on a variety of topics in Hindi, Assamese, Bengali, Sindhi, English, and French.[20][21]

*Nalanda University Library:* Founded in the fifth century CE, Nalanda University swiftly rose to prominence as an important academic hub in India and the larger Asian continent. The library at Nalanda was a storehouse for a great collection of manuscripts covering a wide range of subjects, including philosophy, religion, literature,

medicine, mathematics, and more. It attracted researchers and students from all regions of Asia. The 12th-century destruction of Nalanda University and its library is among the most important moments in the institution's history. The university complex and the library were attacked during the Muslim conquests of India, especially when Bakhtiyar Khilji was in charge. The Nalanda Library was set on fire, and the vast collection of manuscripts and books inside was destroyed as a result of the invasion. This loss of knowledge is frequently viewed as a tragic event in the history of scholarship and education, not just in India but also globally. A large amount of intellectual and cultural treasure was lost as a result of the biblioclasm that hit the Nalanda Library. Even if Nalanda University's physical library and its collection were destroyed, the legacy of its contributions to learning and the spread of knowledge continues to motivate education and cross-cultural exchange today.[22][23]

*Vikramashila University Library (12th Century):* Scholars continue to differ regarding the details of the library's death, and there is historical controversy surrounding its demolition at Vikramshila University. The famed ancient Buddhist university of Vikramshila in India began to deteriorate and ultimately collapse in the 12th century. Bakhtiyar Khilji was one of the primary causes of this. He was a Turkish general serving in the Delhi Sultanate's armed forces, and he is widely acknowledged for having brought down Vikramshila University. Historical accounts suggest that Bakhtiyar Khilji destroyed the institution along with its library during his conquest in the region. However, the specifics and extent of this disaster remain unknown.[24][19][8]

*Jagannath Temple Library (1568):* The Jagannath Temple in Puri, Odisha, was attacked in the late 16th century by Kalapahad, a commander of the

Afghan king Sulaiman Karrani. Many precious books were destroyed, and the library of the temple was looted.[25]

**Maldives:** Biblioclasm is not commonly associated with the Maldives. The Maldives is a predominantly Muslim country with a rich cultural and historical heritage. But before it became Muslim country, the Maldives' history is fundamentally shaped by the 1,400-year-long Buddhist era. When the Arabs took over the country, they tried to erase the 1400 year old Buddhist influence. [26][27]

Burning of Buddhist writings in the Maldives (by royal dynasty converted to Islam): Buddhism, which had been the official religion of the Maldives for more than a thousand years, was repressed after the country adopted Islam in 1153 (other sources indicate 1193). An account of events at South Hadunmati Atoll, a hub of Buddhism, is found in a copperplate inscription known as the Dhambidu Lohmanuhanu. These include the beheading of a monk and the destruction of a statue of the transcendental Buddha, Vairocana. Contains details regarding the occurrence. Numerous Buddhist writings that had been written on pine leaves and stored in Maldivian monasteries at the period were also destroyed during the time, either completely destroyed or burned.[28][29]

**Pakistan:** Pakistan has had instances of Biblioclasm in both ancient and modern settings. Political, religious, or ideological motives frequently motivate these situations.

Balochistan Incidents: The Pakistani bureaucracy started burning Baloch people long before they started paying attention to books, but it has only recently started burning books in Balochistan. The rising opposition to the exploitation and tyranny that have existed since March 27th, 1948, is what has caused the focus on books. The book

"Waae Watan Hoshken Daar" by Major Majid, who is currently staying in Muscat, was seized by the authorities on April 4, 2014, during a search on book stores in Gwadar. The phrase "One cries and yearns for one's motherland even if it is dry wood" may be found in the book's title. That is, one values their motherland more than paradise, even if it is barren. They also seized two well-known volumes on the history of Balochistan, Tareekh-i-Balochistan by Lala Hatto Ram and Dr. Mohammad Marri's 'Baloch'. [30]

Rimsha Masih Blasphemy Allegations Incident: Due to blasphemy accusations, books and other written materials, including religious texts, have occasionally been prohibited, taken away, or burned in Pakistan, a country with strong blasphemy laws. Unfortunately, it is a recurring theme in Pakistan. One of the notable example was Rimsha Masih, a Pakistani Christian who is illiterate. August 2012 saw this young woman in the news for damaging books. Masih is accused of accidentally burning a page of the Koran. Masih's alleged biblioclasm landed her in jail. [31]

**Nepal:** Nepal is known for its rich cultural heritage and religious diversity, and it has a history of preserving and protecting its cultural and historical artifacts. In spite of that there are few instances of biblioclasm. One of the most talked about biblioclasm in Nepal is Mahendra Sanskrit University's Library special collection.

Mahendra Sanskrit University: Guerrillas destroyed 50,000 old Sanskrit textbooks in Dang, Nepal in 2002 after setting fire to the Mahendra Sanskrit University, the sole Hindu university in the nation. Officials in Nepal identified the perpetrators as members of the revolutionary All Nepal Independent Students' Union, a Maoist organization that opposed the study of Sanskrit on the grounds that it unfairly favored members

of the Brahman caste, the only group permitted to enroll in universities.[3]

**Sri Lanka:** Conflict and political unrest have occurred in Sri Lanka at various times, and this has occasionally resulted in the loss of priceless cultural assets like manuscripts and libraries.

*Jaffna Public Library:* The Jaffna Public Library in Sri Lanka was tragically and extensively burned down on June 1, 1981. The Jaffna Public Library, one of South Asia's most known libraries, was located in the northern Sri Lankan city of Jaffna and housed a substantial collection of precious books, manuscripts, and historical documents. The Jaffna Public Library served as a symbol of Sri Lanka's Tamil community's intellectual and cultural heritage, particularly for those living in the north. There were plenty of books, manuscripts, and archival materials in its library, including priceless antiquated documents. The library was destroyed by fire on June 1, 1981, during a period of racial turmoil and violence between the Tamil minority and the Sri Lankan government. The Jaffna Public Library was set on fire when a Sinhalese organized mob went on the rampage and destroyed the building. It was one of the 20th century's bloodiest instances of ethnic biblioclasm.[3]

### **The Sociological Lens:**

Biblioclasm can take many different forms, such as book burnings, censorship, the seizure of books, and the purposeful obliteration of libraries and their holdings. It is an assault on people's right to free thought, cultural diversity, and the retention of knowledge. Depending on the intentions and objectives of people involved, it can appear in a variety of ways.

### **Consequences of Biblioclasm**

For nations and cultures, the loss of books and recorded knowledge has grave repercussions and it can have far-reaching and frequently detrimental effects on people, communities, and society at large. These consequences can be both immediate and long-term, and they encompass various aspects of culture, knowledge, and freedom. Although biblioclasm is frequently practiced for a variety of motives, such as political, religious, or ideological ones, its effects are typically negative and pose substantial ethical, cultural, and intellectual concerns.

### **Loss of Cultural Heritage:**

The history and cultural identity that are found in books are destroyed by biblioclasm. A society loses a piece of its history when texts are lost or destroyed. A community's identity is built on its cultural history. It embodies its traditions, ideals, and history. Communities may lose a sense of identity and belonging when this legacy is lost, leaving them feeling cut off from their roots.

### **Suppression of Free Thought:**

Books are censored and destroyed, which stifles intellectual freedom and impedes development and critical thought. The values of free speech and intellectual freedom are threatened by biblioclasm. It restricts the variety of viewpoints and stifles open discussion, impeding advancement and innovation. For intellectual advancement and personal development, it is crucial to have the capacity for critical thought and viewpoint exploration. A person's ability to advance intellectually and develop a more comprehensive grasp of the world might be hampered by the suppression of free thought.



### **Historical Amnesia:**

By modifying or erasing historical records through biblioclasm, a society's collective memory can become distorted and susceptible to manipulation. Historical amnesia makes it difficult to understand present events and problems. People may find it difficult to make thoughtful judgments and decisions if they are not aware of previous events and their results. A society is more prone to make the same errors and failures again if it allows the past to be forgotten.

### **Loss of Knowledge and Culture:**

The loss of knowledge is the biblioclasm's most visible side effect. The knowledge, understanding, and cultural heritage found in books are also lost when they are destroyed. Societies are significantly and permanently impacted by this erasure. The loss of information, history, and cultural heritage may be permanent if books and written records are destroyed.

### **Censorship and Repression:**

Biblioclasm often goes hand in hand with censorship and repression, as those in power seek to control the flow of information and maintain their authority. Biblioclasm, the intentional destruction or censorship of books and written works, is often associated with censorship and repression. The act of destroying books can foster a climate of fear, leading people to self-regulate in order to avoid being punished or persecuted. The free interchange of ideas is stifled by this self-censorship.

### **Psychological Impact:**

The act of destroying books can have a profound psychological impact on individuals and communities. It can create fear, intimidation, and

a climate of intellectual oppression. Particularly among authors, academics, and those who respect intellectual freedom, the act of destroying or censoring books can foster a feeling of fear and apprehension.

### **Long-Term Consequences:**

The consequences of biblioclasm may have significant long-term effects on people, civilizations, and cultures. These repercussions go well beyond the immediate act of burning books, and they have the power to alter the path of history. It can be felt for generations. It can take a significant amount. By restricting access to knowledge important for making informed decisions.

### **Why Biblioclasm Happens**

Biblioclasm can occur for a number of intricately complicated and interconnected reasons. Political, religious, ideological, and cultural reasons as well as more particular situations involving power, control, and the repression of information can all serve as justifications for Biblioclasm. Every reason to why Biblioclasm happens is to led to a key factor: *Control of Information*.

Control of information through Biblioclasm is a powerful means of sustaining power and reshaping societies to fit the desired narrative. However, it frequently comes at the expense of knowledge preservation, cultural heritage, and intellectual independence. Promoting freedom of speech, helping libraries and archives, and fighting for unrestricted access to knowledge are all part of the fight against Biblioclasm. [2]

### **The Legislation Against Biblioclasm**

There are no explicit international laws or conventions that comprehensively and directly

address libricide. Instead, broader legal frameworks pertaining to human rights, intellectual property, cultural heritage, and freedom of speech often cover the protection of books and written materials. These laws might differ greatly from one nation to another. Around the world, there are different legal systems and safeguards for both cultural preservation and intellectual freedom. However, a number of international conventions and laws speak to the significance of preserving textual culture and the defense of intellectual freedom.

The following list of relevant international conventions and guidelines: [32-39]

- 1) **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR):** Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, the UDHR includes Article 19, which states that *"Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and expression,"* including freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.
- 2) **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR):** The 1966-adopted International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) upholds the fundamental rights to seek, receive, and share information and ideas as part of freedom of expression.
- 3) **UNESCO's Memory of the World Program:** The UNESCO program, which does not have legal standing, attempts to identify and save the written portion of humanity's documentary history. The standards and programs of UNESCO encourage the preservation of manuscripts, archives, and cultural assets.

- 4) **UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Archives:** This declaration highlights the value of archives and their conservation, which frequently includes written items, even if it is not legally binding. It emphasizes the importance of information access and cultural heritage preservation.
- 5) **National Laws:** National laws and regulations might differ greatly. Many nations have laws governing copyright, intellectual property rights, the preservation of cultural heritage, and freedom of information, all of which have an indirect bearing on the preservation of written culture.
- 6) **Laws for the Preservation and Protection of Cultural Heritage:** Some nations have laws and rules that are specifically geared toward the preservation and protection of cultural heritage, which may include guidelines for written works, manuscripts, and historical documents.
- 7) **Freedom of Information Acts:** Acts that encourage openness and access to data kept by the government may help to safeguard written works inadvertently.

## Conclusion

*"The emperors of today have drawn conclusions from this simple truth: Whatever does not exist on paper does not exist at all."* –Milosz, Polish-American poet and prose writer [40]

Humanity has been plagued by the prospect of Biblioclasm for generations. Biblioclasm has taken place throughout South Asia at various points in time and in varied situations. This sociological analysis shows that diverse reasons, including as political, religious, and ideological motivations, have frequently been at the root of biblioclasm throughout South Asia. Although

biblioclasm has had profound effects on the region's history and culture, it is important to remember that South Asia's history is characterized by a rich tapestry of cultural diversity, intellectual accomplishments, and religious traditions.

Understanding the sociological facets of biblioclasm in South Asia will help us better understand the intricate interactions between social, political, and religious factors throughout the history of the region. It emphasizes the value of preserving intellectual and cultural history for upcoming generations as well as encouraging tolerance and dialogue in a multicultural and dynamic region of the world.

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