

In Search of The Past: King Amanullah and Nation-Building In Afghanistan

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Abstract:

This paper is an attempt to examine the developments and changes that occurred just after the independence of Afghanistan in 1919. Major shifts could be noted in Afghanistan's political and cultural scenario during this period. King Amanullah was the head of this newly independent nation. This paper particularly focuses on the fundamental changes brought by King Amanullah which helped Afghanistan in its process of Nation-building. It discusses about the various steps taken under Amanullah's regime, in order to develop the National consciousness among the people of the country. This paper also tries to evaluate the contributions of Amanullah made in the fields of Knowledge creation and knowledge dissemination, reforms in Education system, Archaeology and foreign policy which raised Afghan people's consciousness about their shared heritage and culture.

Keywords:

Nation-building, Shared Heritage, National consciousness

The assassination of King Habibullah (Amanullah's father) was an expression of the tussle going on between the reformists-modernist and conservative-traditionalist forces of Afghanistan that played an important role throughout the modern history of this Nation. Amanullah (1919-1929) was also part of this tussle and represented the reformist-modernist force of Afghanistan. Amanullah was committed towards the Nation-building of this newly formed Nation-state and created its domestic and external policies according to this. The major reforms undertaken by Amanullah were mainly in the fields of Education, Archaeology and foreign policy of Afghanistan (Gregorian 1969:227).

When Amanullah came to power in 1919, he understood the need and importance of a cultural narrative of its past and heritage in the context of Nation building of Afghanistan. He had chosen a

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