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All religions convey the same message: Swami Agnivesh

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Gaya: The two-day national seminar organized on 'Interreligious understanding' concluded here at the Buddhist Studies department of Magadh University (MU) on Sunday.

The seminar was jointly organised by MU and Institute of Objective Studies (IOS), Delhi. Representatives of different belief systems including Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Jainism, Sikhism and Buddhism participated in the seminar.

In his inaugural address on Saturday, well-known religious scholar Swami Agnivesh dealt with the common aspects of different religions and said all of us are children of the same God and as such any distinction on the

basis of religious belief was only man-made. The basic message of all religions was the same. "The public welfare aspect of a religion has to be appreciated," said the scholar.

Strongly questioning the tendency of parents and elders to impose their own religious views on children, Swami Agnivesh favoured opportunity for children to make their own choice about believing in one or the other system.

True religion is opposed to all kind of birth-related discrimination including gender and socio-economic status. "Stressing the need for unity among the followers of different belief systems," said Agnivesh and added, "We should strive for consensus building and peaceful coexistence of the followers of different religions."

Identifying liquor as the mother of all evils, Agnivesh had all praise for chief minister Nitish Kumar for imposing total prohibition in the state. "The good result of total prohibition will become visible in the days to come," he said.

Institute of Objective Studies director Manzoor Alam said a beginning has been made from the seat of Buddha's enlightenment and similar discourse would be organised in other universities of the country.

Delivering the valedictory address on Sunday afternoon, governor-cum-Chancellor of Universities Ram Nath Kovind appreciated MU and IOS for organising such a healthy discussion aimed at removal of misgivings and proper appreciation of different religions.