



UGC- Sponsored National Workshop: Inclusion of 'Culture' in Higher Education
(26th & 27th March 2014)

Venue: Committee Room, Near University Library, Sir Vitthalaldas Vidyavihar,
Juhu Campus, Juhu Tara Road, Santacruz (West), Mumbai 400 049

PANEL I: EXPRESSIVE CULTURE

Necessity of Inclusion of Expressive Culture in Higher Education

Dr. Nishigandha Wad

Expressive culture envelops dance, drama and music. It would appear that these are separate branches of specialisation. But since the time of Bharata's *Natyashastra* these are not necessarily independent areas but show a lot of connectivity. Thus a music or dance performance without actions would be a dry one and will not be able to create an ethos. Gradually these became independent areas of specialisation.

Our focus is as to whether the above areas of expressive culture could be brought in higher education. We may deal with dramatics in this presentation. Especially dramatics and music have to take into consideration voice culture and concentration while dramatics has additional aspect of dialogue. Presently, both voice culture and dialogue are considered to be important aspects of personality development. The simple exercise of reading a text can be a stepping stone for the students for proper pronunciations. The experiments like scripting and staging a show on any current issue will reduce the stage- fright in students. The technique of presenting oneself at the interview requires many such aspects. If some modules pertaining to these are inducted into higher education the students will benefit in the long run. Again, with the aspects like voice culture the employability is in the field of compeering and being RJs (Radio Jockeys).

Small courses covering the above-mentioned aspects of expressive culture will not only be found useful but also likeable to the students. Further, if expressive culture is brought in the

vocational stream a sense of dignity will be offered to the courses under it rather than a pavement treatment to them.

Dance: An Expressive Culture through Archaeological Evidences

- Dr.Priya Kulkarni-Gohad

Indian Culture is mainly depicted in various forms and arts. In early India, most of the arts were derived from Vedic influences. Later Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, and Sikh arts flourished under the patronage of kings and emperors. Emergence of Islam had its influence on Indian art and architecture. Finally the British brought their own influences and fused it with the Indian style.

Amongst various art forms Dance has been recognized as the most primitive and the most sophisticated of the arts by both art historians and anthropologists. Evidence relating to early man's involvement with movement and dance can be found in the cave paintings of the prehistoric period. Dance and painting were directly related to life function. These rock art indicate the first evidence of movement in space, whether it was in context of hunt or any other aspect of life. Such evidences are found at Hoshangabad, Panchmarhi, Singhanpur and Bhimbetka.

During the neolithic period, ceramics/potsherds act as a medium of depiction of several motifs related to dance. The emergence of the spiral or the figure of eight on the potsherds can be compared to the choreographical patterns of the tribes of Maharashtra and Gujrat.

During the Harappan culture, there are some significant examples of dance including the dancing girl, an amulet showing drum hanging from neck and the Pashupati seal. The bronze and stone figures, terracotta figurines, seals and toys of the Harappan culture indicate that dance played an important role in this culture.

The evidence of music and dance in the monuments of historic period is derived from both archaeological findings and literary references. Panini and Patanjali mention not only the actor and dancer, but also the sculptor and painter. The theory of Indian classical dance can be traced back to the Natya Shastra of Bharata Muni (400 BC). Natyashastra and Abhinaya Darpana are two surviving Sanskrit documents [1700 to 2200 years old]. The Indian classical dance forms include Bharatnatyam, Odissi, Manipuri, Kathakali, Kuchipudi, Mohiniattam, Sattriya and Kathak.

Amongst these the Kathak dance form arose from the Vaishnava devotees dancing to the episodes from Krishna's life. Originally a Northern Indian temple dance was transformed to a court dance in the Mughal era.

These dance forms are depicted in the Vedic, Mughal and Regional Indian art in the form of paintings and sculptures. Dance and sculpture developed together under the divine shade of the temples in India. Vishnu Dharmottaram, states that a student of sculpture should have knowledge of dance. The words "*Saushtava*" and "*Anga suddham*" indicate the execution of the movements of various angas or limbs of the body in a symmetrically beautiful way. The

various postures are depicted such as sama, dvibhanga, tribhanga etc. including hastas and mudras.

The Hindu mythology dancing Gods are depicted in paintings and sculptures. For example, Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram, Rani ki Bav etc.

Thus we have a treasure of Indian dance forms depicted in our priceless heritage. Today while studying various social sciences for higher studies if this kind of expressive culture is fused with the traditional method of teaching through innovative dance ballets based on historical and social themes. It can definitely create a different impact on the youth and will bring in a change in their outlook and approach towards culture and society.

Significance of Music in Education

Ikraam Rajasthani

Former Station Director, All India Radio

Writer, Poet, Lyricist,

Senior Fellow, Ministry of Culture Govt. of India

This whole universe came into existence with a word 'KUN' or 'OM' that was a sound from which music emerged later. Music has no language of its own, but it has an effect that creates magic. Music has been an integral part of social evolution and the progress of every civilization.

So from the very beginning of societies, music was a part of formal and non-formal education finding its ways in different formats like classical, light classical, light, folk etc.

In modern age music has undergone a transformation in its nature, and become more commercial. Film music has replaced folk or light classical or other earlier forms as the most popular and mass form of consumption.

However, effects of music on the disciplines like Mathematics, Biology, Physics, and their inter-relation is being studied and researched in contemporary societies.

The relationship of music to social sciences is the most evident. Different music forms, their evolutionary growth and development has been studied. Music reflects social realities and also provides lessons for change. This can be wonderfully seen in Sufi music. Written and composed by Sufi saints, they make numerous reflections on the then contemporary society. Qawali, as a popular form of music, also has similar features. Both tend to focus on the themes of love, social peace, brotherhood and a humane society. Sufism, thus, plays the foundational role of building a composite culture in India. It is with this view that Sufi music should be made an integral part of higher education.

What the world would be without music is improbable to imagine.

PANEL II: INTANGIBLE CULTURE

Inclusion of 'Mindfulness' Programmes in Higher Education: An Experiment

Dr. Anjali Bhelande,

Associate Professor and Head, Department of English

Ramnarain Ruia College, Mumbai

Modern Higher Education, certainly prepares students for the job-market. However, it often fails to foster Emotional and Spiritual Intelligence among learners. Hence, the Departments of English, Sanskrit, Psychology and Philosophy at Ramnarain Ruia College have established the 'Centre for Mindfulness and Well-being', focusing on the insights offered by Indian Knowledge Systems on 'Mindfulness'. These insights, valued globally, constitute an intangible yet crucial part of our culture and deserve to be an integral part of Higher Education.

PREAMBLE

At present, we live in a world of dwindling resources, tottering economies, cut-throat competition, conflict, lawlessness, violence and environmental disasters. As a result, life is a constant struggle, ridden by stress, anxiety and disharmony. Hence the need for a sound, holistic education that not only teaches professional skills but also imparts valuable life-skills, including wholesome ways of dealing with negative emotions such as anger, fear, sadness, jealousy etc. 'The Centre for Mindfulness and Well-being' attempts to address the latter need and help learners relate meaningfully to themselves as well as the world. The Centre carries out several activities, drawing on world wisdom books in general and Indian Knowledge Systems in particular. The common thread underlying these activities is 'Mindfulness' or aloof, attentive, deep awareness whereby the learner can integrate 'head, heart and hands' and experience inner harmony and positivity while facing life's challenges.

Learners are encouraged and enabled to develop qualities such as patience, trust, openness, acceptance, contentment, gratitude, gentleness, empathy, generosity, compassion etc. Several studies in India and abroad have shown the importance of developing mindfulness. The Mindfulness-based stress reduction programs of this Centre seek to enhance the learner's stress-management, hardiness and coherence, resulting in an overall feeling of wellness. Though designed primarily for the students and faculty of Ramnarain Ruia College, it is also open to the public at large. Nominal fees are charged for the Centre's various activities.

AIM

To enhance the learners' emotion management skills and to improve their interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships

OBJECTIVES

- To enable the learner to develop self-understanding (one's abilities, aspirations, attitudes)
- To enable the learner to evaluate his/her strengths and weaknesses.
- To evolve the right attitude and coping strategies
- To enhance the learner's creativity
- To conduct research in order to study the Centre's impact on learners.

ACTIVITIES

- * Conducting workshops on Yoga [including the study of Patanjali's 'Yoga Sutras'], Energizing Breathing Exercises Meditation etc.
- * Organizing inspiring Talks by Experts on Mindfulness and the management of negative emotions such as anger, fear, etc.
- * Individual and group counselling
- * Practice of therapies such as Biblio-therapy, Music therapy, Dance therapy, Theatre/role play, Laughter therapy, Nature trails, etc. [for stress management].
- * Research and Publication, based on the aforementioned therapies.
- * Visits to NGOs that are doing meaningful work for disadvantaged groups [to teach the importance of empathy / joy of giving].

Promoting Intangible Cultural Heritage for Educational and Community Development with special focus on Rangoli art

Nayana Tadvalkar
Research Fellow, INHCRF, Mumbai

The term 'cultural heritage' has changed content considerably in recent decades, partially owing to the instruments developed by UNESCO. Cultural heritage does not end at monuments and collections of objects. It also includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional arts and crafts.

Although they are the indispensable component of heritage resources, intangible treasures are neglected and, in comparison with the tangible resources, have been denied due attention up until recently. Even though they are known as the softest heritage and have the power to transfer the past to the present, it was only in 2003 that UNESCO adopted the Convention for the protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

While fragile, intangible cultural heritage is an important factor in maintaining cultural diversity in the face of growing globalization. The importance of intangible cultural heritage is not the cultural manifestation itself but rather the wealth of knowledge and skills that is transmitted through it from one generation to the next. This knowledge and skills and concepts if promoted through Cultural Studies in school and university curricula would not only aid its preservation as a living form but also enhance the quality of education. Its inclusion in the formal education system in an integrated manner would capture the spirit of the context within which they emerged.

In today's times it becomes necessary to go beyond the process of documentation and preservation and evolve possible methods to develop long term sustainable strategies where in the cultural resources will serve as a means of development.

The ephemeral floor art or the art of rangoli as it is known in India, is one such intangible culture which is widely practiced in various parts of the country. It is an invaluable part of our traditional knowledge heritage. This folk art practiced mainly by the women of the country since ancient times, has varied meanings attached to it. Besides being a symbol of auspiciousness, the rangoli diagrams also serve as magic diagrams for rituals, to ward off evil, to invoke the deity, to fulfill the wishes when taking a vow (*vrata*), for meditative purposes, to create a sacred space within the confines of home and many more. The geometry of *rangoli* besides its close relation to mathematics and science is also closely linked with the arts like architecture, crafts, and dance.

The present paper intends to put forth an exemplary method to study the various aspect of the art of rangoli as one of the intangible cultural heritages.

Prof. H.L. GUPTA MEMORIAL LECTURE

Inclusion of a Music based Presentation of Indian Saint Poet Meerabai's Mystical Songs in Higher Education

Sanjeevani Bhelande

Poet and Singer

16 th century Indian saint-poet Meerabai is known to most Indians as an icon wearing a white sari with an *ektara* in her hand. Meerabai is a very important part of Indian culture as she can be an inspirational figure for the modern Indian renaissance. Meera as the '*mukt*' soul, passionate lover poet and the detached mystic makes her a dynamic symbol for today's youth.

To make Meera more relevant to the contemporary learner it would be innovative to present her in a bilingual, musical form. My book and accompanying music album MEERA &ME is an attempt in this direction. I have translated Meerabai's poem into English and have recorded her songs in a bilingual music CD. I performed the songs from this album in over 45 cities in the United States last year to an overwhelming response especially from the second generation Indians settled abroad. Within India too I have received a similar feedback to this unique work.

Relevance of Meerabai to contemporary learners:

AS A LIBERATED WOMAN: Meerabai was an unconventional, spirited woman who defied patriarchy and its four-fold strategy of surveillance, subordination, exploitation and

oppression. The most significant factor of her defiance was that it was non-violent, with '*prem bhaav*'(love) and in '*sahaj bhaav*'(conflict-free)

AS A MYSTIC: Meerabai's mystical poetry transcends genders and points to her 'soul' identity. She once told a Hindu priest who refused to meet women, that the only man in the world was God himself and that we are all His followers. She was like a cloud floating over human noise and grime. Meera's equanimity can inspire every learner to wade through challenging situations in life. She was immersed in her inner song with her *magan bhaav*. '*karna fakiri phir kya dilgiri sadaa magan main rehna ji.*'

AS A POET/MUSICIAN: Meera's songs are sung throughout the country today 500 years after her death. Her poems have a universality and timelessness that transcend cultural and temporal limits. She is loved for the sheer sing-ability and delicate filigree of sound. Meera represents Indian culture through her music and feminine surrender (*samarpann*).

The values of courage, compassion, detachment, celebration of Nature and peace can be instilled better in learners through an aesthetic mode like music. I have recorded an album of these songs in a unique format fusing the Rajasthan words with the English lyrics, drums with the *duff*, guitar with the *Sitar* etc.

This and my book of English translations of Meera's poems can be used as an effective tool for imbining culture in contemporary learners.

PANEL III: TANGIBLE CULTURE

'Tangible Culture'

Navin Piplani

Conservation Architect

Principal Director, INTACH Heritage Academy, New Delhi

It is crucial to include 'Culture' in a formal education curriculum at various levels and forms–

1. Children must be encouraged to experience historic environs by engaging them in outdoor play activities, cultural events, picnics and elective subjects involving drawing or painting of cultural sites.
2. School teachers should be given specialised training in order to make them aware of the issues involved in the appreciation and preservation of heritage.
3. The curricula should include subjects on cultural heritage that highlight the multifaceted relationship between cultural resources and society, reinforcing their inseparable bond.
4. The institutes, colleges and universities for the education of professions related to heritage conservation and management should encourage inter-disciplinary interaction on shared issues and common concerns and inculcate a holistic understanding of heritage with reference to social, cultural and economic aspects of the society.
5. The education of conservation professionals must include short training periods when students work with master craftspeople in their own learning environment or at building/conservation sites.
6. In order to respond sensitively and constructively to India's unique conservation challenges, conservation professionals must be trained to appreciate and integrate both traditional and modern principles in their work.
7. In addition to history and theory of conservation, which will principally include the Western perspective, and a thorough understanding of UNESCO, ICOMOS and other recognised international conventions, recommendations, Charters and guidelines, the specialized education and training of conservation professionals must build upon traditional indigenous principles and practices of building and conservation.

Educational Programmes to Create Awareness on Tangible Cultural Resources: A Study Based on Mumbai's Needs

Dr. Usha R Vijailakshmi

Patkar-Varde College, Mumbai

Some of the myriad explanations of culture are that "It is the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behaviour that depends upon the capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations". "It is the customary beliefs, social forms and material traits of a racial religious or social group." Tangible culture covers all of the second aspect of the abovementioned explanation. Every generation has the responsibility to transmit various aspects of culture to succeeding ones as it is one of the best stabilizing factors of any society. Transmission of tangible culture is a collective effort of the society and of the state, and it requires much more planned and organized efforts than perhaps transmission of knowledge on intangible culture.

The city of Mumbai offers a very large scope to the students to understand their history and culture and also to earn a living by becoming a custodian of local heritage. Tangible culture not only includes signature spots such as Kanheri, Mahakali, Mantapeswar and Elephanta caves, and the Colonial architecture of South Mumbai, but also the less conspicuous ones existing in every area in various degrees and stages of encroachment, neglect and destruction. Every community that settled in the city at some point in time felt the necessity to construct an edifice where they could congregate on a regular basis. It was both their cultural and social identity. When new communities migrated to these areas the importance of older structures waned and the settlers encroached these structures in various ways. Encroachment of public spaces and historical monuments is an ongoing process in an ever expanding city and it creates invisible social fault lines and the resultant societal conflict. Educating young people on various aspects of cultural heritage and employing them local custodians will give a voice to the local society and pave way for a planned development of the areas. Culturally sensitive young people are one of the missing components that is required for the smooth transition of any society from one age to another and this effort to sensitize them in cultural heritage will fill that gap.