

**UGC Sponsored National Workshop on
“Inclusion of Culture in Higher Education”**

26th & 27th March 2014

Organised by

Department of History, S. N. D. T. Women’s University, Mumbai

Department of History, S.N.D.T. Women’s University had organised a two day national level workshop on the theme of including culture as a part of curriculum at the higher educational levels. The concept of the workshop originated from the academic exercise of incorporation of Sector Culture, in National Vocational Educational Qualification Framework (NVEQF) of the A.I.C.T.E. under the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development, of which Dr. Varsha Shirgaonkar, Head, Department of History is the Convener. The National Workshop was convened by Prof. Shirgaonkar and Mr. Gaurav Gadgil, Assistant Professor, Department of History.

The Workshop was graced by the presence of numerous luminaries in the field of history, art, literature and culture. Prominent names amongst them were of – Mr. Ikraam Rajasthani (, poet and lyricist and Former Station Director of Jaipur All India Radio), Mr. Navin Piplani (Principal Director, Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage, New Delhi), Dr. Nishigandha Wad (actress and academician), Dr. Nayana Tadvalkar (Research Fellow, Indian Numismatic, Historical and Cultural Research Foundation, Indian Institute of Research in Numismatic Studies, Nasik and Mumbai), Dr. Usha Vijailakshmi (Associate Professor and Head, Patkar Varde College, Goregaon, Mumbai), Dr. Priya Kulkarni-Gohad (Assistant Professor, Department of History, Modern College, Pune), Mr. Rahul Chemburkar (Architect and Conservationist), Dr. Anjali Bhelande (Associate Professor and Head, Department of English, Ramnarain Ruia College, Matunga, Mumbai), Ms. Sanjeevani Bhelande (poet and singer), and Mr. Anupam Sah (Chief Conservator, Chhatrapati Shivaji Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai). The workshop was inaugurated by Professor Vasudha Gokhale, Head of the Research Wing of B.N. College of Architecture (Pune).

Prof. Shirgaonkar in her address as the convener of the Workshop explained the guidelines of the NVEQF of AICTE and the necessity of including the specialisations of culture as a part of the skill-based educational programme. She informed the audience that the initiative of publishing the book of Culture Sector under NVEQF having seven specialisations was

undertaken by the Chairman, AICTE and the book was released by the HRD Minister in September 2013 at New Delhi. The National Workshop at S. N. D. T. Women's University, Dr. Shirgaonkar said further was in keeping with the scheme of U.G.C. of starting the B. Voc. Degrees thereby extending employability to the students having various skills. Prof. Gokhale, as the Chief Guest of the inaugural session, mentioned the different aspects of culture and their inter-relationship with society. While stating the educational and curricular programmes pertaining to culture and heritage abroad she stressed upon the importance of preserving tangible culture and at the same time spreading awareness in the society about its immense worth.

The talk of Mr. Ikraam Rajasthani held the audiences spell bound as he spoke on the role Sufi saints have played in shaping the cultural traditions of India, and how the philosophy of Sufis is still valid today in times of societal conflict and political crisis. He also delved upon the importance of music in day to day life, and how music provides the meaning that is found missing in contemporary social existence. This was followed by a wonderful performance of Ms. Sanjeevani Bhelade on her interpretations of the famous Bhakti saint Meera.

Mr. Navin Piplani and Mr. Anupam Sah elaborated upon the tangible cultural heritage and the ways to increase awareness about its preservation. Mr. Piplani was of the strong opinion that cultural studies should be made a part of the educational curriculum from the school level itself in order to acquaint the young minds to the importance of the cultural legacy that they have inherited from their fore-fathers. Anupam Sah explained the need as to how the resources would be tapped for the preservation and conservation of culture and the traditional knowledge could be revived. Dr. Usha Vijailakshmi and Dr. Nayana Tadvalkar also reiterated it and opined that thereby sensitivity would be created among the students for various facets of culture. Dr. Nishigandaha Wad pointed out that some components of expressive culture are necessary for over-all personality development. Mr. Rahul Chemburkar stressed the need of incorporating local history modules in curriculum so that the motivation for cultural awareness is right from neighbouring surroundings. Dr. Anjali Bhelade highlighted the legacy of Indian culture towards the practices of concentration that would be termed as Yoga and pointed out that it is this mysterious power that attracts the Western world to India. This heritage, she said, must be carried forward since it is the effective tool to world peace.

Mr. Gaurav Gadgil, Ms. Namrata Ganneri and Ms. Laxmi Rane were the Discussant Participants for the three sessions who initiated the discussions in the respective sessions. In the session on Policy Implication many participants shared their ideas while emphasising upon the inclusion of culture in the curriculum right from the school days. The participants made valuable suggestions as to how the prevailing educational programmes also could be moulded to envelop the aspects of culture.

Mr. Sameer Wankhede (Additional Superintendent of Police, National Investigation Agency, Maharashtra State) was the Chief Guest of the Valedictory Session. He spoke of his experiences of dealing with artefacts smuggling cartels and utter negligence towards the valuation of the antiques and coins. He expressed the urgent need to create consciousness towards preservation of culture by bringing it in the educational programmes so that the young minds will be sensitised towards the multi-dimensional culture. Prof. Vandana Chakrabarty, Hon. Pro Vice Chancellor of the University presided over the session and made valuable remarks on the success of the workshop and expressed the desire of taking this initiative forward by starting a new programme on cultural studies under the auspices of the S.N.D.T. Women's University.