



NEWSLETTER

Department of English, Modern European and Other Foreign Languages

Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University

(A Central University) Srinagar (Garhwal), Uttarakhand



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Introduction

The Department of English Modern European and Other Foreign Languages, is committed with all its endeavours to accomplish academic and educational goals to nurture the students in every situation. With the advent of the festival of lights we are able to see a ray of hope to recover from an unprecedented situation of the current covid crisis. The initiation of off-line Under-graduate and Post-graduate classes will allow the eager and enthusiastic scholars to experience the long-awaited and essential atmosphere. Apart from classroom teaching, internal assessments and invigilation duties of both academic and UPSC examinations, the faculty of the department also contributes to other academic and administrative responsibilities. The MA Viva-Voce was conducted for 23 students in October, and 13 students have recently been awarded MPhil degrees. In the recent Dept. BOS Meeting, six students presented their pre-PhD submissions in various areas of research. The following pages feature the achievements of faculty and students at the department. We hope you enjoy reading the current issue of the Department's Newsletter. Stay tuned for more updates.

FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

Prof. Monika Gupta was invited as a resource person to deliver a lecture entitled ‘Quest for Space: Contemporary India and Different Sex-Identities’ on 22 Oct 2021 in ‘The Inter/ Multi-Disciplinary Refresher Course on Decolonizing the Mind: Culture, Literature and Criticism’ (21Oct-03Nov,2021) organized by the UGC-Human Resources Development Centre, Doctor Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalaya, Sagar (MP).

FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

Dr Savita Bhandari attended the International Conference on 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity: Issues and Concerns' organized on 25th Sept. 2021 by the School of Education and School of Humanities, Lovely Professional University, Punjab. She participated in the meetings related to the propagation of the Language Lab of the Department. Being a member of BOS (Board of Studies), she participated in the latest meeting held on 20.11.2021 that approved six pre- PhD. submissions on varied research topics. Also, she is a member of the admission committee of M.A. first semester of the department

FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

Dr Nitesh Kumar Baunthiyal Participated in the ‘International Conference on Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity: Issues and Concerns’ organized by the School of Education & School of Humanities, Lovely Professional University, Punjab on 25th September 2021. Also, he presented a paper entitled ‘Representation of Multiculturalism & Issues in V S Naipaul's The Middle Passage’. The paper is under reviewing process for publication in UGC care listed journals. Apart from being a member of the BA I year Admission Committee and Student Support Cell, he is a member of the admission committee of M.A. first semester of the department. Also, he has been actively contributing as a member of the Printing, Publication and Invitation (PPI) committee of the 9th Convocation of the University.

FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

Dr Arushi Uniyal, following her appointment as a Coordinator of the Language Lab, has been dedicated to designing the operationalization process of the lab starting January next year. Her proposed activities in the Language Lab are ‘Certificate courses on local and foreign languages’, ‘Workshops on language studies Research and collaboration’ Public awareness and community outreach through the newsletter and digital media communication. She has been actively contributing as a Convocation Committee Member of Printing, Publication and Invitation (PPI) for the design and publication of this year’s Convocation Souvenir. Also, she is a member of the admission committee of M.A. first semester of the department.

FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

Mr. Ashutosh Prabhakar has submitted a critical extract on the crisis in representation of Dalit Narratives in collaboration with faculties from Delhi University. The publication of the book is expected to follow up soon. He has proposed a Degree Course and a Certificate Course for the implementation under New Education Policy, 2020. Currently he is working on the upcoming webinar on 'Story Telling' tentatively to be held in Jan-Feb 2022. Apart from other academic engagements, he is also acting as Hostel Warden in SRT Campus HNBGU, Tehri Garhwal.

FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

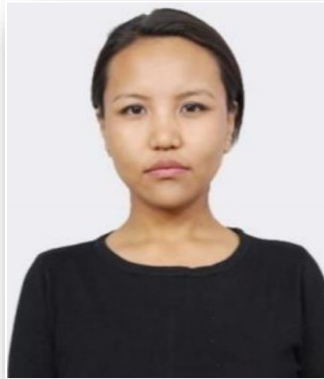
Mr Dharmendra Kumar participated in a one-week online Faculty Development Programme (FDP) on "New Vistas in English Studies" conducted by the Department of Languages, Presidency University, Bangalore from 20th to 26th September 2021. Also, he completed A Seven-Day Mentorship Programme for Faculty Development in "Critical Theories & Praxis." Organized by the Department of English, School of Languages, Literature & Society, Jaipur National University from 27th September to 5th October 2021. Apart from that, on September 29, 2021, he attended a National-Level Webinar on "Cyber Literature- The New " New Literature": Literary Remediation and Nascent Narratives" organized by the Department of Languages at Presidency University, Bangalore. He participated in the 2nd International e-Conference on "Contemporary Trends and Development in Cultural Studies and the Humanities", organized by New Literaria, An International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities in collaboration with the Department of History, Humanities, and Society at the University of Rome Tor Vergata, Italy, and Department of English, Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya, Bilaspur, India from 22nd to 24th October 2021. He also participated in a virtual International Conference on "Indigenous Resistance in the Digital Age: The Politics of Language, Media, and Culture" organized by Universita DI Napoli

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L'Orientale, Naples, Italy, from 27-29 October 2021. He also attended a Two-day virtual National Conference on " Language Teaching in the New Normal Age: New Ideas, Methodologies, and Teaching Practices," organized by the Department of Science and Humanities, KGiSL Institute of Technologies, Coimbatore. Apart from that, he also attended lecture series organized by the Department of English, Jamia Milia Islamia, New Delhi and Ministry of Education (MHRD) SPARC-Supported Distinguished Lecture Series.

FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

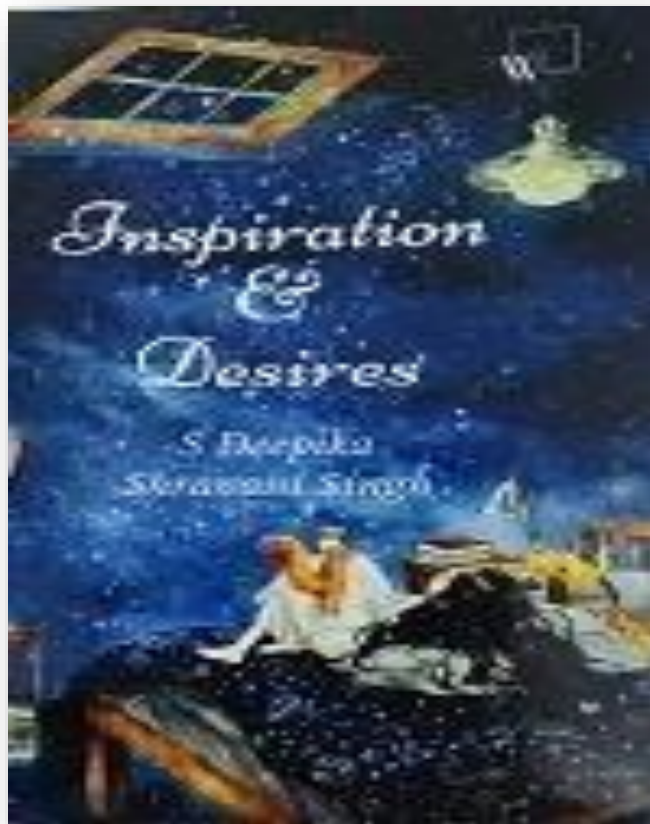
Ms Muskaan Kapoor participated in the National Webinar on “The Patriarchal Pandemic: Covid-19 and Domestic Violence on Women in Indiaa Social Anathema” organized by Women’s Cell in association with IQAC of Jangipur College, West Bengal on 5th October 2021. Also, she participated in a four day International Faculty Enrichment Programme on “New Perspectives on Enhancing English Language Teaching Skills” organised by PG and the Research Department of English, Srimad Andavan Arts and Science College, Tiruchirappalli from 6th October till 9th October 2021. Apart from the academic engagements, she is a member of the BA first semester admission committee. She has proposed a new course on Himalayan Studies (NEP &IHCUC), which is awaiting confirmation from the concerned authorities

FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

Ms Kunzang Angmo participated in AICTE Training and Learning Academy (ATAL) sponsored One Week Online Faculty Development Programme (FDP) on “Guidance, Counselling and Mentoring” from 20/09/2021 to 24/09/2021, organized by Department of English and Other European Languages, Doctor Hari Singh Gour Vishwavidyalaya (A Central University), Sagar, MP. She is an active member of the HNBGU Foreign Students’ Office and IQAC Annual Report Committee for the current year. Apart from this, she is also a member of the University Documentary Committee for the 9th Convocation Ceremony. Also, she is a member of the admission committee of M.A. first semester of the department.

SCHOLAR'S CORNER

We are delighted to share that our Student of MA III Sem,
Ms Shravani Singh is a co-author of An Anthology
"Inspiration And Desires" published in March 2021.
Currently, she is coauthoring an upcoming novel "We
Bottled It Up"



SCHOLAR'S CORNER

“Culture is the arts elevated to a set of beliefs”- Thomas Wolfe The preface to a territory is circumscribed more in its cultural boundaries than the imagined geographical boundaries it is confined within. The cultural construct of the region dictates the values, beliefs and faith of the local manoeuvre and conduct, while the festivals and rituals become a clear reflection of the construct that lies underneath. Located in the verdant valleys of the Shivalik range of Himalaya, alongside the bank of the perennial source of pristine and resourceful river Alaknanda, Srinagar Garhwal is a place of festivities and celebrations that exemplify its cultural richness and sacred historicity. The Baikunth Chaturdashi Mela and the ritual of performing ‘Khada Diya’ are something that is integral to the core of the town’s aesthetes and cultural prosperity that attracts a vast audience since the remotest traceable period of time, because of the mystique aspects and the pompous celebration of the event. Every year, a date in the later autumn, following Diwali, is fixed by the astrologers that mark the celebration of Baikunth Chaturdashi in the month of Kartik as per the Hindu calendar. On the very day, an eminent ritual is performed to bless the infertile couples with the child. The entire Kamleshwar Temple is decorated with lights and echoes the enchanting enchantments, while thousands of childless couples form a distinct part of the crowd gathered to celebrate the festival. A major portion of the crowd is dedicated to worshipping Lord Shiva by offering 365 Battis (wicks), while the others stay there the entire night to perform the ritual of ‘Khada diya’ to ask for the child from Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. The women, in particular, have to fast the entire day and stand with the -

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earthen lamp in their hands on the premises of the temple assisted by their husband or inlaws. If they exhaust in between, their husband or any relatives have to perform the standing ritual for the meanwhile. This is done for twelve hours straight, with no food, drink or water promised in between. The women have to tie a fruit inside a cloth to their midriff as a part of the ritual. It is also believed that Goddess Parvati comes in the form of an old lady, sometimes just before the daybreak, when everybody is tired and sleepy. The Goddess gives them fruit to grant their wish of the child. Hence the fruit seems to hold deep symbolism in the cultural domain here. This ceremony is an example of faith and belief that underlies the lifestyle of the natives and the followers of Hinduism. This is the belief that is groundbreaking and has produced miracles over the years, defying odds and scientific charms. The sentiments and the dedication of the disciples on the very day are a clear reflection of how the culture and religion shape something that outlives the scientific temperaments of the times creating a transparent film between the almighty and the earthly beings transcending every rational faculty which is merely based on faith. And the folks continue to perform this with the same exuberance every year because of the wishes that get granted and the devotion that reflects back. Every corner of the city is filled with lights and mirth, while the next day 'used to celebrate the inauguration of a huge fair that shows how carnivalesque the culture and the rituals can be. The fair had attracted a massive crowd of people over the years from diverse backgrounds- villages, towns and cities- to enjoy the festivity and acted as a meeting point of trade, commerce, laughter, mirth, enjoyment and lively activities. But, the recent developments in the town, with the advent of the railway projects had turned down this spirit of celebration as the ground of celebration but the ground of cataclysmic enchantments of growth and advancement. Cataclysmic' in the sense that it has destroyed the culture by weeding out an -

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integral identity and 'Enchantment' in the anticipation of the future that is filled with opportunities, promises and connectivity with the rapidly ever-changing world. Developments and changes are necessary for the progress of civilization, but the cultural holdback, is it negotiable? Is this materialistically overloaded upgrade enough to turn a civilization more 'civil'? Isn't there any way that gives way to defining the roots and strengthening them in the future? Does 'Sustainable development' merely have to do away with political-ecological concerns and not with the Pagan aspects? The questions hover and will remain, but as Shelly says "If winter comes, can spring be far behind?". The hope for a not so 'negotiable' future lingers somewhere in the back of the mind.

Paritosh Rawat
MA English
Birla Campus

SCHOLAR'S CORNER



A Bibliophile's Voyage

"The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool." –

Shakespeare Shakespeare wouldn't have thought when writing such a powerful line in the late 16th century that in the future, it would resonate through every person in search of knowledge, (sometimes I think that everything good that can be written, that man Shakespeare already wrote it all.) But, then again I realize that human potential is limitless and the ability to learn is something so profound and ethereal. But sadly, we take this ability for granted. Many people go through their mundane lives without actually understanding the true meaning of learning, that's why I think that every person should embark once in their life on this journey for knowledge. As once Baba Ranchoddas said "Chase knowledge and success will follow wagging its tail." and seriously it resonated to me just as much as Shakespeare did. Lao Tzu once said "the journey of a thousand miles, begins with a single step" and it begins in the same way.

I would not call myself a well-read person. A few years back, I used to hate the sight of a book, the more pages the book had the more I wanted to make paper aeroplanes out of them, going through every page was like a nuisance but I would still ponderously go through pages just for the sake of studying, that was until came the turn to read English or Hindi, I loved reading stories and poems, it was like an escape from this insolent world of Math loving parents, who constantly tried to mow me over to study Maths and said that Maths is all that matters. Yeah, a newbie then, but I liked literature; I felt a queer attraction towards it.

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I loved to analyze literature, even my English teacher in school was annoyed by my constant questioning. To me, a good piece of writing was like a riddle that I needed to solve.

"Why did they use the same word again and again? Why do blood-shod means? Why does the character check his hat again and again? Why the flowers in the room are blue?"

So many kids got annoyed by my constant questioning-I remember once a student saying that the flowers are blue because the writer wanted them to be! And that's easy when you don't get literature. Writers do not waste effort on, unimportant ideas or words.

The writer would not have specified the flower's colour if he didn't want to symbolize something. Maybe the colour of flowers signify the gloomy mood of the room they are in, maybe they represent some sort of sad yet beautiful state of character. As once my English teacher said, there's no wrong interpretation of literature—only more and less persuasive ones. If you can build a strong case with facts in the text, supporting your interpretation then that's valid, even if the author never intended it. That's the cool part. You can find your meanings in the text what it represents for you. How it is relevant for you! You can think of meanings that the author never dreamed of. And that's not wrong. That's art. Good literature lets you see yourself in it, even if the author didn't. I don't get why many people don't read literature. Breaking something down, seeing all its parts and how they create a whole... now that's satisfying. My aim in writing this article was to just spark a little interest or a bit of curiosity about literature among the readers or maybe reignite the dying flame and the passion they once had for reading and appreciating literature. One of my favourite American entrepreneurs 'Walt Disney' once said "There is more treasure in books than in the entire pirate's loot on Treasure Island." and I think what he said will help you foresee the whole experience of reading too.

Anirudh Naudiyal
BA II Sem
Birla Campus

FACULTY'S CORNER



Igaas: The Festival of Lights (Boodhi Diwali)

The colorful rainbow of our Indian cultural spectrum reflects its beauty that unites us among diverse cultural patterns. Every region has its specific traditions, religious rituals, myths, and festivals. When all these are roped in one Indian cultural tradition and heritage, it emerges out as the true Indian identity with the tinge of cultural diversity. Festivals and the festive fervor not only add the kaleidoscopic dimension but also fill the atmosphere with much-required rejuvenation and celebration. Throughout the year this festivity finds its place as an indicator of change and the advent of a new season.

Diwali, one of the famous Indian festivals of lights is celebrated with much enthusiasm in all parts of the country. In the hilly region of Uttarakhand, it acquires a new incarnation as Igaas-Bagwal or Buddhi Diwali (Elder Diwali). As the name suggests, it occurs on the eleventh day of Diwali. The story goes like this that the news of Lord Rama's returning to his beloved Ayodhya reached late in the Garhwal region so the inhabitants of this region decided to celebrate it almost like Diwali; incorporating with their native sensibility; decorating their houses with earthen lamps or diyas, enjoying sweets and their native delicacies with Dal-Pakodies, Puries, Swalas and Bhari-Roties. The main attraction of igaas-Bagwal is the 'Bhela-Khelna,'. People gather in a place and display Bhellas, the ropes made of dried pine are lit and swung all around. Traditional dance and singing is performed along with the displaying of Bhellas, thus giving the festival a complete meaning of rejoicing and welcoming -

- the advent of winter with warmth. It also symbolizes the victory of lights over darkness as well as triumph of truth over evil and thus the true meaning of Igass-Bagwal is achieved. The second anecdote or the story of Igass-Bagwal is related to the great warrior of the 17th century of Garhwal, Madho Singh Bhandari. Once he was entangled with the Tibet war so badly that he could not reach his native place for Diwali. Probably he was taken as dead so the people didn't celebrate Diwali, but when the news of his victory and being safe reached Garhwal, with the permission of the then king it was declared that on the day of Ekadashi, Diwali would be celebrated. Since then, Igaas-Bagwal is continuously being celebrated and eventually it has become a folk festival or Lok-Parva of Garhwal.

The festival also stands for the preservation of our natural resources and their entities. For two days from morning till afternoon, the cattle herd is worshipped; their feet are washed, their forehead is decorated with tilak and garlands, horns are massaged with mustard oil. After prayer, they are properly fed. They are offered food in a very well decorated Thalis with Baadi-Pindu (Buckwheat-doughnuts). It represents indigenous ritual-rites of Garhwal incorporating with the great sense of Indian customs and philosophy of treating cattle with empathy and kindness.

Our cultural beliefs are not only to be taken as a means of recreation rather they have more to teach us. We should treat them as the cultural assets that are to give us a more scientific and rational way of promoting our environmental consciousness. To create awareness for the preservation of our natural resources, animals, cattle and above all of our indigenous culture is important. When our young generation is quite aware of the 'Halloween' and 'Thanksgiving' traditions of the West, why not we should also talk about our native and regional cultural legacy? Along with celebration, the determination of becoming vocal for the local and bringing it into the global eyes should be our aim, only then the true meaning of Igaas- Bagwal, the Lok-Parva of light can be fulfilled.

Dr. Savita Bhandari

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- On-going M.A First Year Admissions 2021
- Offline Classes of B.A Ist Semester to start from 3 Dec 2021.
- Language Lab Initiation from Jan 2022

Stay Tuned for more Departmental Updates!