

Newsletter

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Department of English, Modern European and other Foreign Languages
Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University
Srinagar (Garhwal) - 246 174, Uttarakhand

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Introduction

The Department of English, Modern European and Other Foreign Languages is doing its level best to meet the different requirements of the academic as well as administrative that exist in the regular mandate of the University. Despite facing the pandemic ravages consecutively for two years, the Department stood strongly to meet out the challenges for the academic benefit of the University. It was being hoped in the beginning of the new year 2022 that academic activities would come back to normal track, but unfortunately, with the advent of the third wave of Covid Omicron variant, everything got derailed again, this is what life - very unpredictable, yet it is the indomitable spirit of human beings that ultimately prevails. From the second week of January 2022 the whole teaching setup switched back to online mode, the empty deserted class rooms and the silence of the corridors presented a gloomy picture and this agony was further enhanced with the bitter cold wave blowing throughout the northern part of the country. But believing in the saying “show must go on”, along with the online classes, other co-curricular activities find their befitting execution.

The effective and highly motivational address of the Hon’ble Vice-Chancellor regarding the upcoming examination, paper-setting, evaluation and initiation of the first semester at the UG level filled the University with much needed gearing up of the morale.

Faculty members of the Department have actively participated and executed their different responsibilities with the utmost care and excellence. Some of the faculty members deployed in the legislative elections of the state successfully executed their responsibility with full devotion. Admission committee worked under able guidance of coordinator Prof. Deepak Kumar resulting in the timely initiation of the PG first semester. One of the Research Scholars made the Department proud by clearing National Eligibility Test (NET) and another scholar got Senior Research Fellowship.

The faculties, the scholars and the students are endeavouring hard to cope with the difficult situation that covid crisis created but *to find opportunity in adversity* is what human instinct teaches us and *sweet are the fruits of adversity* equally applies for the creative writers.

Faculty Highlights

Prof. Monika Gupta

Prof. Monika Gupta acted as a resource person and delivered her online expert lecture on an online Refresher Course on *Post 1950's Litreature in English: Text and Context*. She published paper entitled “*Questioning the Gender: A Discourse On Article 377*” in the Book ‘*Understanding Marginality, Cultural and Literary Perspectives*’ edited by Supriya Aggrawal, Neha Arora and Ved Prakash by Rawat Publications. She has been appointed as the Nodal Officer of the University for the execution of Skills Hubs Initiative Programme. Soon it is going to introduce short term language proficiency courses in English and German languages through its language lab.

Dr. Savita Bhandari

Dr. Savita Bhandari assisted in the P.G first semester admission committee for the timely conduction of classes. Apart from teaching and examination duty, recently joined the National Service Scheme (NSS) wing of the University as a Programme Officer.

Dr Nitesh Kumar Baunthiyal

Dr. Nitesh Kumar Baunthiyal has published a Paper entitled ‘Representation of Multiculturalism & Issues in V S Naipaul's The Middle Passage’ in the Peer Reviewed Journal, ‘Journal of Multidisciplinary Cases’. Currently he is working on a research paper in the area of Eco Feminism which he plans to get published soon.

Dr. Arushi Uniyal

Dr. Arushi Uniyal worked on the English translation of the award-winning book *Prakriti Path Ganga Path*, under the aegis of Namami Gange, Government of India. She is happy to announce that the book, titled *Experience River Ganga in Uttarakhand* in English is finally in print and will be available soon.

Mr. Dharmendra Kumar

Mr. Dharmendra Kumar is on leave as he is finalizing his research work. Prior to his leave, he was an active member of the university's CARE (Community Activities & Revival Efforts) Cell and the Institute Innovation Cell (Ministry of Education Initiative). He also took part in seminars on a variety of current and relevant themes, such as translation studies and digital humanities, and had the opportunity to hear from eminent scholars like Prof. GJV Prasad.

Ms. Muskaan Kapoor

Ms. Kapoor published a paper titled, "Women Behind the Veil: A Study of subalternity in the poems of Imtiaz Dharker" in the 8th volume, second issue of *LangLit* (An International Peer Reviewed Open Access Journal) in the month of November, 2021. Another paper titled, "Humanizing Divinity: Reverberating Mythical Past in Amish Tripathi's Shiva Trilogy" is published in the 7th volume of the Quote Unquote print journal (International Journal of Language, Humanities and Management). Apart from these academic engagements, she was busy with the invigilation duties, teaching and other works related to different committees of the university such as the IIC cell, for which she has submitted the reports of the webinars organized by IIC.

Ms. Kunzang Angmo

Ms. Kunzang Angmo recently completed a one-week Faculty Development Program titled "Research in Social Sciences: Contemporary Trends, Perspectives, and Pedagogy" from 7th to 13th February 2022, conducted by Galgotias University in collaboration with Jean Monnet Module, Jawaharlal Nehru University. She also participated in a five-day Faculty Development Programme on "Reflections on Current Trends in Language, Literature & Society" from 17th to 21st January 2022, organized by the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, National Institute of Technology Puducherry, Karaikal. Her administrative roles and responsibilities include: Member of the HNBGU Foreign Students' Office, Member of IQAC Annual Report Committee (2021-22), and Member of Dean Students' Welfare (DSW). Ms Angmo was also a member of the University Documentary Committee for the 9th Convocation Ceremony and Admission Committee MA English (2022-23).

The frame work of social, religious and cultural pattern of a particular region presents its legacy that finds its expression in the festivals, religious Yatras (*Jaats*) and in various Fairs or *Melas*. The month of January, harbinger of the internationally accepted new year also plays a crucial role in the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand as this belt gets busy with *Makar Sakranti* or *Ghughutia* festival which stands for the soon to be changed atmosphere of the region as Sun rays start falling straight to the *Makar – Rekha* or Tropic of Capricorn. This northward transit (*Uttarayani*) of the sun marks the change in season resulting in the return of the migratory birds as well as restart of the sacred ceremonies and rituals. It is also known as *Khichdi Sankrant*, people cook *Khichdi* and also give it in charity and take bath in the holy river, worshipping Lord *Surya* for the longitivity and prosperity of their family. *Poories*, *Pakodis*, *Swalas*, *Gulgulas* and sweets made of *Til* are enjoyed by the people to make the occasion more festive.

In the Kumaun region, *Uttarayani* Fair is also celebrated along with *Ghughutia* festival to welcome the migratory birds of the season by offering them sweetmeats made of wheat flour fried in *Ghee* and shaped liked drums, swords, knives, pomegranates, etc., to show their faith in their rituals and traditions.

Advent of spring season declares the end of harsh and severe winter in the Himalayan region. People welcome this transformation of nature with the celebration of *Basant Panchami*, a new role is being assumed by nature of promoting and propogating the flora and vegetation. *Burans*, *Phunyali*, *Panyan*, *Sakina*, *Tesu* decorate the nature in their full bloom.

Saraswati Pujan is another feature of this festival, Goddess *Saraswati* the Muse of knowledge is worshipped and her blessings are sought. In schools and educational institutes the cultural activities are performed to please and seek the boon of knowledge, wisdom and rationality from the Muse.

People wear yellow clothes and '*Meetha Bhaat*' (sweet rice) is the delicacy to be relished.

The colorful mood of the atmosphere gets rejuvenated with month of *Phalgun*, when Holi the festival of colors cast its magical spell on every aspect of life.

This rejoicing fervour and festival mood continues till *Baisakhi* called *Bekhuti* in the local dialect, engulfs the whole atmosphere. Then comes the time of melas or fairs that have their great significance for the natives. In ancient times due to lack of transport facilities and rough terrain of the region these melas or meeting places actually provide the locals an opportunity to meet and greet their relatives and friends with great enthusiasm. In this way from social, cultural, economic and religious point of view they provide that much needed platform for social gathering and entertainment. The family members of the married



daughters used to bring ‘*Samaun*’ (gift) and offerings for their beloved ones. They meet them in the fair and enjoy the whole day among each other’s company. Their emotions and sentiments find an outlet through the folk songs and dances that prove helpful in propagating the cultural values.

According to our ‘Hindu Calender’ its *Phooldei* the auspicious harvest festival that marks the welcome of the new year. The children scatter the flowers and its petals at the threshold of their neighbours and relatives, praying for their prosperity and good health.

Right from January to April the whole Himalayan belt is in the grip of festivity and carnival activity that further gets a religious bent with the starting of Chardham yatra or the Yatra season.

This year the state of Uttarakhand celebrated one more specific democratic mela better to call it *Loktantra Parv*, the *Vidhan Sabha Chunav*. Many young enthusiastic voters for the first time got the opportunity to cast their vote and experienced the responsibility of becoming a true democratic citizen by actively participating in the election and selection of their government. The peaceful execution of the election in Uttarakhand shows how the people of the state believe in true democratic values. Inculcation of good moral and ethical values is also the quintessential part of culture and that is reflected in the social behaviour of the residents of the region.

Nature plays a crucial role in deciding the cultural practices and traditions of a region. Seasonal cycles too have their impact on the folk culture and which is best suited for the indigenous knowledge systems of that region. Their proper preservation, celebration and propagation should be given utmost importance by the pragmatic approach of the local authorities as they are going to boost the Tourism and economy of the locals.

Let us hope that the darkness and dejected mood of Pandemic times is soon to be replaced by the colourful optimism of the Spring that rings in our ears the magical immortal lines of Shelley “*if winter comes can Spring be far behind*”.

Dr. Savita Bhandari



Student's Column

This issue of Newsletter tries to give a glimpse of our talented students. Their positivity enhanced with the advent of Spring, creates its charm and gets reflected in their creative efforts beaming with the same fervor.

Poem, *Blue Sky* by Angel Choudhry of M.A. first semester explores the memories of childhood, dreams, desires and aspirations of a young mind that has been fascinated by the different shades of seasons and is quite optimistic regarding the upcoming future.

Blue Sky

After months of cold and rain
I saw the blue sunny sky of spring
Thousands of memories
Seems to rush towards me
Of a childhood, simple and dreamy


I am on my way home on the school bus
The sun is shining over the mountain peaks
But is hiding behind the trees
playing peek a boo with me
And I heard a tale from the spring breeze

I am by the river flowing south
She is dancing with the sun
Following her own tunes
And there I heard it again
A tale of the incoming years

I am lying on the grass,
watching the clouds pass by
in the shades of pink, orange and gold
Dreaming about the future
Maybe far from this town

Now I am here, inside this room
Saw the blue sky through the window
Should have listened to the breeze
But the sun is still outside
With a promise of spring

Angel Chaudhary



Neetika Rautela from M.A. first semester tries to relocate herself with her roots, nativity, childhood and the beauty of nature with its flora and fauna in a very mesmerizing Epistle genre.

Letter to Dalya

Dalya,

My lady Love,

I have been meaning to write to you for a long time but you see I was always caught up with stuff and had no time to sit back in peace and write to you. It is peaceful at the moment. I am just back from my morning stroll and thinking of you.

Time flew with you as though it had wings, it is true, I saw it flying when we were together. I don't remember admiring any woman as much as I admire you in this life. Perhaps, no one ever I know lives with as open heart as you do. This excites my soul. How I wish to grow up to be a strong woman like you are and have no fears. In the hope of writing all the lovely words of the world to you I start by first thanking you "Dalya", my fave flower.

Thinking of you makes me want to be an art like you are, so full of life, so full of spirit and colours.

The day I dropped you at the Kuching airport, I remember how unpleasant it felt to spend the days that followed. Having that one month in each other's care was such a bliss. I am finally in India to settle back in the outskirts of Dehradun, my favourite city so far. I hope you are fully recovered from covid, back in Santa Fe and at ease in your sweet home.

We are already into the new season and I hope this spring brings us flowers for we have walked enough through the thorns of Covid. It was such a shame to have been living inside our heads for two years now.

But there is good news.

Spring is springing, life is full of colours and so is my heart like these vibrant flowers blooming all over the place, especially gorgeous bougainvillea vine flaunting, bottlebrush showcasing their spicy red flowers. I tell you, these big Sal trees are defoliating space for new leaves to sprout, confusing me with autumn. The view of Silver Oaks with silvery white leaves is picturesque.

I am at my uncle's these days in Jaiharikhal, it's a small settle-

ment about 5 kilometres from Lansdowne, the place we planned to go to when you were here but rather explored Nainital. To me it was always about the direction that made the difference, to the mountains or from.

While travelling, I saw through the window a wild plant whose leaf I used to caress my cheek with as a little girl, has a velvet-like soft texture, a shade of gourd green and white. It is a dessert to my soul to see the yellow, purple and blue wild flowers by the side of the road, rhododendrons beaming red as I passed through the Lansdowne jungle, tiny pine cones are full of pollen, having yellow dust on the buds, banjoak plenty with fresh acorns, wild daisies blushing in the warm Sun.

Mountains are all that I ever long for.

If I had nothing to do,

I would watch then for hours, intimately,

Sip tea

And write poetry.

This trip reminds me of one of my visits to my grandparents' that by good chance took place in spring. I vividly remember my grandma telling me about a festival called "Phool dei". I wasn't much surprised by the rituals until she instructed me not to pluck flowers in the season of Fagun and Chiatra (Spring). Why? I asked her.

Because honey bees sit on them, she said to me. By sitting on the flowers she meant the nectar. It was a piece of information that gave me an understanding of life itself. How breaking one thing can break the big chain. Later in life I learned how bees suck the nectar, travel to distant places, dwell into those abandoned flowers nurtured by the wild and make sweet honey.

If you have a pair of eyes that can see beyond and a heart to feel the sweet scent, it will leave you in awestruck wonder, that is the thing with Spring. I at times wonder how fascinating it is to understand the magical ways of nature, ways of God.

Sometimes I look at the sky,

Sometimes I stare at the flowers,

as if they will answer all the questions I am carrying in my eyes. They don't last long - within days they wither. Leaving my questions to me. I think life will happen, I must let it grow through me.

Waking at dawn is a privilege, of having the sacred hour of silence to yourself, bliss of having colours of dawn, chirping of birds and I enjoy watching dawn break into the day and rising of the Sun.

I slipped into my sneakers at 6.15 to be on the unmetalled road that led me to where it had to take me, I had let it take me.

Sky was the colour of orange in the east. There was hardly anyone on the road nor the sight of

the Sun. Some trees didn't have the occupancy for more birds; sparrows, parrots, mayna, koyal, magpie and many species were all over, chirping, enjoying, fluttering their wings in mirth for the arrival of the mighty Sun, light, beginning of the day.

There were a handful of locals on the cricket field. I was the lone stroller. A woman briskly measured the field, two young boys lazily walked, a woman sat in the middle of the field in sukhasan, either meditating or practising yoga. On the way I saw a few old houses with chimneys perching on their heads, black with smoke. The old styled architecture with gable roof, chimney, verandah, open washing, toilets in one corner of the house gives the area an iconic image. Jaiharikhal has marks of colonisation, it still smells British in ways locals do not really see but outsiders scan through their lenses zooming in every bit of it. I would halt time and again to simply look at everything as far as I could see, listening to birds, and the silence of the morning. Walking is good for health but walking alone is good for the soul.

I walked past a half alive banj oak tree, once used to be green and silver with leaves that are now nearly dead. It looked arty.

It doesn't make sense to me how I precisely remember certain instances from my childhood, but I do.

I knew I was trespassing but I couldn't be bothered. I walked further through the plains, mud, stones, potholes, concrete, in the premises of a government college that has become private now. What a sight, a construction site. It is now a private property and the owners are working towards the development of the area. They plan on building a world-class residential school for the betterment-of children.

Locals are too lazy and too proud to work as labourers in construction sites. Thanks to people from other states of the country, having built their temporary brick huts around the campus, they are earning their livelihood.

A perfectly square park in the middle is there as it used to be, I touched the first cypress, there still stands 6 cypresses, they are old now, much older than I am. I thanked them for having me hidden in their breast whenever I needed to feel safe.

I saw a lone cuckoo hopped, took small flights landing sooner than expected, just to change places, certainly, was cautious and aware of my presence. I walked further through the corridors of the old college building and saw a young monkey looking down at me from the Deodar above, I had nothing to be afraid of. I had nothing. I stepped down only to be surrounded with memories of my childhood, not one but hundreds, whispering to me all at once. I didn't shoo them away, I had let them whisper.

Words can never end, so my darling,

Taste some spring through my words.

Happy Spring.

Oh, dear Spring,
The longing has come to an end,
Wood is burnt,
And remains are nothing but ashes,
Cold, dead,
See, I've come carrying warmth in my arms,
To hold you,
To kiss you with my tender lips.

Oh, dear Spring
The wait is finally over,
Snow, melted,
The Sun is shining red and bright,
See I've come carrying hope in my eyes,
To feel you,
To touch you with the sweetness of my skin.
Love and hugs,

Neetika!

So is the poem
Spring penned by
Shravani Singh of
M.A. third semester
that welcomes the
refreshing impact of
spring on nature and
its entities.

Spring

Falling leaves of tall trees
Weakened shoot with bent limbs
Covered with lifeless faded brown leaves is our Earth
Urging to undergo the process of rebirth
Everything fades away after a particular session
The season of winter is a slow progression
Beauty does not die just underlying in covers
And thus, trees look great with beautiful flowers
They gradually blossoms, comes to life
Thus slowing the process when the time arrives
Life will take new turns
Same as nature takes new forms
Spring is knocking on the door
Dullness has finally left the shore
With new life into the world
And a lesson well taught
Our mother is cheering up with freshness
Trees are dancing with the joy of happiness
Yes, Spring is heading to the peak
Birds all chirping, squirrels squeak.

Shravani Singh

Hindi and Sanskrit languages should be given equal importance to promote inter-disciplinary interest of the students. Keeping in mind this perspective the following write-up by Kiran Purohit of B.A. third semester, the youngest contributor, is the translation of the original text written in Hindi. She shows her interest in the Indian mythological stories and their social interpretations. She presents Basant as a season of love and the aptness of calling it as the Rituraj or the King of seasons.

"The celebration of the victory of love on earth is ___ 'spring' "

In the literature from Kalidas to Kumar Vishwas today, spring has been the most favorite subject of all. "Poetry begins with love and spring is the festival of victory of love on earth."

Spring is always treated 'as a weapon of Cupid', 'as a friend of Cupid' and quite often 'as the son of Kamadeva', but spring is the external form of love and internally it promotes physical passion and love. That is why the spring season is called the king of the seasons, promoting and germinating seeds of love everywhere. In the Srimad Bhagwat Geeta, Lord Krishna himself says about his glories that - "I am the best spring season among you."

"Tunam Kusumakar"

Spring is the festival of victory of love. How? There are many proofs of this fact: Spring is the season of ornamentation, living beings keep themselves decorating when they are in a cheerful mood. They celebrate their happiness by singing and dancing. Seeing the clouds, the peacock dances, spreading its wings and trying to give happiness to the peahen. On the occasion of this union, when two lovers are happy then their happiness gets reflected through their adorned attire. In the same way, when the inanimate nature experiences festivities by imbibing love with its conscious qualities, this adornment is visible in every particle of it. This ornamentation of nature is done by the spring.

The effect of spring is everywhere. The beginning of spring is considered to be Vasant Panchami, which is celebrated on the fifth day of Magha month of Hindi. The Hindu New Year begins with the spring season and the Hindu year ends in the spring. In these months of February-March and April, the spring season extends. At this time it is neither too cold nor too hot. Out of the six seasons this one is considered to be the most special.

It is believed that at the time of creation, there was no elegance and arts in the creation, due to which the creator felt some incompleteness and with his tenacity, he revealed his power to Saraswati, who is the goddess of arts. As soon as Saraswati, the goddess of elegance and arts appeared, beauty and happiness spread throughout the universe, its nature is spring.

It is also known from Indian traditions and culture that Adishakti had appeared in the form of Mother Sati on the earth to get Lord Shankar, who could not meet Shiva in that form and after burning herself in the fire pit, she is born in the same world. Appeared in the form of Parvati on the Himalayas to remove Shiva's wrath for welfare. After the hard penance of this goddess Parvati, her union with Lord Shiva became possible and her love and devotion won over Lord Shiva's hard renunciation. The festival of this Mahamilan is celebrated on Mahashivratri in the month of Falgun. On this day Adishakti Mata Parvati and Lord Shiva were married

on the Himalayas. As if in the joy of the union of Shiva and Shakti, the earth seems to sing and welcomes spring.

In the spring there are the voices of the victory of love, as well as the joy of the victory of pure devotion. When Hiranyakashipu and Holika burnt a selfless devotee like Prahlad with the fire of atrocities, then by the grace of God, Holika got burnt and Prahlad remains safe. Holi is the victory of Prahlad's devotion, whose gaiety speaks on everyone's head.

This proved that the earth celebrates the victory of love-bhakti in the form of the festival of spring. At this time its form is amazing and indescribable.

Mahakavi Kalidas also expresses the effect of the lavishness and intoxication of spring in *Ritusanhar* in such a way that the readers feel themselves intoxicated by the aroma of the mangoes _____

Drumah sapushpaah salilam sapdamam striyah sakamaah pawanah fragrance.

Sukha: Pradosha Divasach Ramya: All dear! Charutan spring ..

___ trees are full of flowers, the trunks are full of lotuses. Women by lust and by the fragrance of the wind. It is a pleasant evening and a very beautiful day, dear! Everything is so beautiful this spring. Where else can there be a more vivid description of spring?

Maghpanchami is celebrated in the spring. The joy of Mahashivratri and the hysteria of Holikotsav is there, that's why the Sarvangasundari Vasundhara, adorned with a singer, gets busy celebrating the victory of love-bhakti at this time and with the verses of Kalidasa, we wish that everyone gets happiness in this spring.

Amri Mangalmanjari Varshara: Satkinshukam Yadhnur.

Jya yasyalikulam Kalankhitam Chhatram Sitanshuh Sitam.

Mattebho Malayanih Parbhruta Yadvannidno Lokjit.

So ayam he vitritritu vinaturbhadram vasantanvitah.

Manjari whose arrows, Tesu flowers whose bow, A row of whirlpools, Whose bow string, Spring wind whose elephant, The spotless moon whose umbrella and The cuckoo who sings songs of fame like a captive, May such cupid be auspicious to all . Whose friend is Rituraj Vasant.

With greetings of spring festival

Good luck!

Kiran Purohit *Himputri*

Announcement

Soon the Department is going to organize the Pre Phd interviews for the qualified candidates. Thereafter the Pre Phd classes will be initiated.