

No. 06

वार्ता

May 2018

Department of English
MAHARAJA GANGA SINGH UNIVERSITY

BIKANER – 334004 (RAJASTHAN)



Newsletter

Editorial

Sounds bugle: Work Endures

We have all been through a lot in the past nine months and I know it has often been unsettling, to say the least. And the past few days haven't done much to calm the waters. Despite all this, let me be very clear we stand fully committed to our mission of shifting focus from the 'English' to 'Englises' and thereby expanding the frontiers of the University Departments of English by changing them into Schools of Cultures and Languages. This paradigm shift, besides thematic changes also entails pedagogic changes. As a matter of fact, thematic changes in isolation have led us to the situation of conundrum.

We have explored questions of ethics, aesthetics and responsibility and have rightly attributed the cause to the disjuncture between different understandings, domains and practices of development. Development is a ubiquitous term, which holds different meanings for different actors; it may be understood as a notion, as politics, as a critical scientific understanding and as hope. There lies a disjunction and lack of communication between these different actors – the state, the institutes of higher education, the market and the marginalised. We see this as a 'moral crisis', as a growing gap between development action and reflective understanding of development. The current practices of development and the postmodern views of development do not also involve a foundational shift. The theoretical axle of the problem is that we have lagged behind in appropriating our pedagogy to the thematic changes. By approaching theory through textual analysis and thus performing the role of an interventionist, we decided to reverse the conventional instructional model from concept-to-example-to-example to concept. This will lessen the growing gap between development action and reflective understanding of development because there lies a strong connectivity between intelligibility, comprehensibility, sensitization and development. Our students' critique of Canada's decision to make national anthem gender neutral (Canada has recently decided to amend the line of their anthem from "True patriot love in all thy songs command" to "True patriot love in all of us command.") explicates a connectivity between sensitisation and development. This sensitisation has also exploded the myth of post-truth and strengthened the significance of eternal truth by rejecting that all truths are immaterial and irrelevant.

Moreover, despite all the infrastructural lacunae such as non-availability of smart classes, hostel and mess, insurance, playground facilities and financial crunch to hold conferences and seminars, to publish journals, etc., the score of almost all the students admitted to the postgraduate programmes is not less than first division. Moreover, the students have won laurels in the other university/state/national level programmes. The teamwork at the Departmental level has ensured relentless working towards sensitizing the students and undertaking the various activities aiming at the overall development of the students. The Department has thus continued to sound the bugle work endures.

Dr. S.K. Agrawal

The Department Recalls the Glorious Moments of Nuclear Tests

The University Department of English celebrated the glorious moments of nuclear tests conducted in Pokhran Field Firing Range on May 11 and 13, 1998 on May 11, 2018 by worshipping the pots containing nuclear sand brought from Pokhran Field Firing Range. Addressing the students on this occasion, the Head of the Department Prof. S.K. Agrawal said "these moments of celebration make us proud and encourage us to think of the various ways we can contribute towards the growth of our motherland. The event such as this makes us feel that we owe a lot to our nation and therefore our primary task is to do the acts which bring glory to the nation." The Assistant Professor Ms. Santosh K. Shekhawat also expressed her ideas on the occasion. The students then took an oath to serve the nation in every condition.



IN MEMORIAM: DIGNATARIES WHO SAID THEIR LAST GOODBYE IN 2017-18

Professor M.L. Tickoo: A Famous ELT Practitioner
Derek Walcott: Noble Prize-Winning Poet and Playwright
Sri Devi: Renowned Actress
Vinod Khanna: Renowned Actor
Om Puri: Renowned Actor
Shashi Kapoor: Renowned Actor
Reema Lagoo: Renowned Actress
The Department pays heartfelt tribute to all the departed souls.

LITERARY AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES



CLASSROOM SEMINARS: Classroom seminars are conducted with a view to ensure an interface between the textbook culture and the outside world. In these seminars, the students make presentations on selected topics given to them; the students compare the text with their own world and learn to appreciate and develop a sense of literary criticism. These classroom seminars are held at regular intervals. All the faculty members also attend these seminars, listen to the presentations and render their suggestions.

STUDENTS' CLUB: The Students' Club is set up to enhance the overall learning experience of students, both inside and outside the classroom. The main aim of the Students' Club is to encourage participative learning and develop teamwork among the students. This Club has provided the students a platform to interact with each other and discuss the problems related to their course.



LITERARY FORUM: The Literary Forum organizes literary, dramatic, creative and other cultural events in the Department at regular intervals. The Forum conducts Classroom Seminars at weekends under the guidance of the Head of the Department and the convenor. Every year the Literary Forum organises literary work under which the events such as Literary Quiz, Poetry Recital Sessions, Poster Making Competition are organised. The following cultural and literary events were celebrated/organized in the academic session 2017-18 :

1. **ABHINANDAN:** Abhinandan (Freshers' party) was hosted by the students of M.A. (Sem III) to accord a warm welcome to the students of M.A. (Sem I). The senior students welcomed the junior students by applying 'Tilak' on their foreheads. The party started with lightening of the lamp by the Head, Department of English and thereafter, the newcomers introduced themselves and the senior students organised a number of interesting games for the newcomers. At the end, the newcomers thanked their seniors for organising this wonderful event.

2. **GURUPURNIMA:** Students of the Department celebrated Gurupurnima on 10th July (9th July being a holiday) by lighting a lamp before goddess Saraswati. The students presented flowers to teachers as a token of their love, respect and gratitude. The teachers blessed the students and thanked them for their love and respect shown to them.



3. PLANTATION

The trees are God's great alphabet:
With them He writes in shining green
Across the world His thoughts serene

- Leonora Speyer

The Department resounded with the feelings as expressed by Leonora Speyer as students and faculty members planted Khejri and Neem trees on 14th July 2017 on the University Campus. The students took an oath to take care of the trees planted by them and water them regularly.



4. TEACHERS' DAY: On 5th September Teachers' Day was celebrated in the Department with great enthusiasm and fervour. Several games were organized for teachers. Students welcomed the teachers with flowers and presented them gifts as a token of love and admiration for them. The students expressed gratitude and respect for their teachers. This memorable and joyful event overwhelmed the teachers.



5. GANDHI JAYANTI: Students and faculty members of the Department celebrated the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri on 2nd October. The students narrated the tales highlighting nationalistic ideas and deeds of the two heroes of the nation, and both the teachers and the students paid floral tribute to the national icons.



6. CHILDREN'S DAY: "The children of today will make the India of tomorrow," said Jawaharlal Nehru. Sharing this spirit, students and teachers of the Department celebrated the birth anniversary of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru on 14th November. It was celebrated with the aim to increase awareness of the rights and education of children. The students recited poems and performed a skit.



7. NATIONAL YOUTH DAY: Swami Vivekananda's 155th birth anniversary was celebrated with great fervour and enthusiasm. Speaking on the occasion, the Head of the Department of English, Prof. S.K. Agrawal said, "We could not learn a lesson even from the son of the soil Swami Vivekananda who learnt English and used it to project India and Indianness to the outside world." Further, he added, "the purpose of teaching English in the Post Independence India cannot be to project the western cultural ethos; rather our aim should be to tell the people about Indian cultural ethos so that the world may know our rich and glorious cultural heritage." He exhorted the students to be the ambassadors of Indian cultural ethos. Ms Santosh K. Shekhawat said, "The British did everything so that we throw ourselves into the river Lethe; however it could not happen. There is something unique in us that even the strong invaders could not mitigate our power; the power of our culture that never allowed us to weaken. Vivekananda asked us to recognize this power." The Faculty Members Dr. Seema Sharma and Dr. Pragti Sobti also expressed their views on this occasion. Since the theme for this year's youth day was *Sankalp Se Siddhi*, every student took a vow to make a person literate on this occasion. The celebration began by offering flowers to the picture of Swami Vivekananda and ended with a vote of thanks presented by the Convenor of Literary Forum Dr. Pragti Sobti.



8. VASANT PANCHAMI: Life becomes a festival when gaiety and culture blend together. Vasant Panchami delivers the message of both. Festivals enhance creativity, give massive euphoric moments, and connect us to the culture. Hence, the celebration on 22nd January was to seek the blessings of the Goddess of Learning and Wisdom, Mother Saraswati.



9. SAROJINI NAIDU'S JAYANTI: Sarojini Naidu's birth anniversary was celebrated on 13th February as Women Empowerment Day. The whole Department looked in the reverse role- the female students engaged classes and the lady teachers monitored both the administrative and academic activities of the Department. Briefing over the significance of such activity, the Head of the Department spoke to the press thus "One learns not by preaching but by practising and doing. Even otherwise a woman empowered Department, we want that women in society should also get their dues". Some of the girls recited their self-composed poems related to the theme of women empowerment on this day.



10. DROPPING THE INK: We, at the University Department of English, organize events to find out whether our students are getting equipped for the roles they are expected to perform and deliver the goods when they go out to serve the society. We spend a few days to record what our students have learned and accomplished. Indirectly, these events prepare them to achieve their career goals, and reflect on the values they would create. These events provide unique insight, not to mention valuable connections and perhaps even opportunities for shadowing. As a creative artist, the students decide to take up a role, look to the glorious past and then prepare themselves to perform the would be role. A literary week was organised from 19-24th February 2018. The following events were took place:

➤ **ESSAY WRITING COMPETITION:** The theme of the essay competition was "Clean India, Green India." The students showed great enthusiasm in participating in this competition. Karan Singh (Semester-II), Gitanjali Solanki (Semester-IV) and Bhumika Maini (Semester-II) bagged the prizes.



➤ **POETRY RECITATION COMPETITION:** Poetry recitation session aimed at awakening the musical spirit of the students. The students were encouraged to recite their self-composed poems both in Hindi & English. The prize winners were Gitanjali Solanki (Semester-IV), Sfurti Verma (Semester-II), Prafull Hatila and Suniti Yadav (Semester-IV).



➤ **POSTER COMPETITION:** For this event, a stanza/paragraph of a genre of the prescribed text/s was considered a theme and students were asked to design posters on the thus identified theme/s. The prize winners were Gitanjali Solanki (Sem-IV), Neha Rajpurohit, Poonam and Rahul Verma (Sem-II).



➤ **STORY WRITING COMPETITION:** The theme of the story writing competition was 'Eternal Life Values' The students showed great enthusiasm and took part in it in large number. This event gave them an opportunity to show their creative talent. The prizes were grabbed by Surbhi Vyas, Suniti Yadav & Gitanjali Solanki of Sem-IV, and Aditi Vyas & Bhumika Maini of Sem-II.



- **LITERARY QUIZ:** The Literary Quiz was organized in three rounds. The students of M.A. Semester II & IV were divided into four groups in such a way so that an equivalence from IQ point of view be established. Each round contained 10 questions. The winner group included the students Shiv Dayal, Kirti Tanwar, Indra Singh (Sem-II) and Gitanjali Solanki (Sem-IV).



11. CHARLIE CHAPLIN'S 129 BIRTHDAY CELEBRATED: The Department celebrated Chaplin's 129 Birthday on 16th April and recollected his three touching statements –

1. Nothing is permanent in this world, not even our troubles.
2. I like walking in the rain because nobody can see my tears.
3. The most wasted day in life is the day on which we have not laughed.

On the occasion, the students and the faculty members narrated ways to keep oneself happy. The poetic expressions were made on the occasion –

Life is to enjoy with
Whatever you have with
You
Keep!
If you feel stressed,
Give yourself a break.
Enjoy some
Icecream/Chocolates
Candy/Cake.....
Why ?
Stressed
Backwards spelling is
Desserts !

Dr. Seema Sharma

One Good friend
is equal to one
Good medicine ,..... !
Likewise
One good
Group is equal to one
Full medical store!!
Sunlight
Rest
Exercise
Diet
Self confidence
Friends
Maintain them
In all
Stages of life and
Enjoy healthy life!

Dr. Pragti Sobti

If you see the Moon....
You see the Beauty of
God!
And
If you see the Mirror,
You see the
Best
Creation of God
So,
Believe in yourself
We are all tourists and
God is our Travel Agent
Who has already fixed
All our routes
Reservation
And Destinations
So.....
Trust him and
Enjoy the Trip called Life. ...!!

Ms. Santosh K. Shekhawat

12. RUKSAT: The students of M.A. Semester - II bade farewell to the outgoing batch of M.A. Semester IV and M.Phil. scholars. The juniors expressed their reverence to their seniors by reading out titles representing their attributes. These titles were so striking, appealing and sentimental that everyone present was surprised at the hidden talent of the students. The students also gave literary and cultural performances. The outgoing batch expressed their appreciation and gratitude to the teachers by offering them an enveloped title which the teacher himself/herself was supposed to read. Speaking on the occasion Prof. S.K. Agrawal asked the outgoing batch to be the ambassadors of the Department. All the Faculty Members were present on the occasion.



RESEARCH CORNER

MEN MORE LONELY !

Men are more lonely than their counterparts. The gender expectations have made man more lonely than women. The world is in the middle of a loneliness epidemic and men somehow end up lonelier than women. Studies have shown that men form close bonds with their spouses at the expense of other social connections. Unlike women, who make efforts to replace lost women friends, men go on losing male connections over their lifetime missing out on the inoculating effects of social ties that increases happiness and helps cope with trauma. This is the result of a pilot study on Gender Expectations conducted by Prof. S.K. Agrawal.

Prof. Agrawal says, “It’s not that boys and men don’t want intimate connection with their peers, but ideas of masculinity come in the way. To show vulnerability and seek support is not manly, so they avoid making overtures of friendship. Nobody, I observed, frowns at women hugging and holding hands but among men it raises doubts of homosexuality. So men pay the “masculinity tax” of gender expectations.

It wasn’t so until the 19th century, the study revealed. Before men and women started socialising freely, there was no stigma attached to bromances. Men turned to men for emotional sustenance. All male societies such as professional guilds and work places, religious orders, universities and colleges, service clubs, sports teams and the military fostered adoring friendships, particularly among younger and unmarried men, but as the social spheres of men and women began to overlap, love based marriage and the nuclear family displaced male friendships and male societies of the centre of culture and society. The need, therefore, is that men’s loneliness be also made a part of Gender Studies. We also need to get rid of this modern squeamishness about male friendship so that masses of men do not walk into old age lonely, sick and depressed.

GIRISH KUMAR BECOMES THE MAIDEN DOCTORATE AWARDEE

Girish Kumar became the maiden recipient of the Degree of Doctorate of the University Department of English after his Viva Voce was successfully conducted on 9th April, 2018. He is the first candidate to be awarded the Doctorate Degree since the University Department of English came into being in 2011. He carried out his research work under the supervision of Prof. S.K. Agrawal. The title of his Ph.D. Thesis is “A Critical Appraisal of the General (Compulsory) English Syllabus of the Undergraduate Level in the Universities of Rajasthan.”

Dharmesh K. Mehta was the another candidate who was awarded the Degree of Doctorate on the title “An Exposition of the Influence of Vedic Philosophy on Walt Whitman’s Poetry”, under the supervision of the Head of the Department Prof. S.K. Agrawal.

Vasant K. Joshi has submitted his thesis entitled “Nation Dialectics and Jayanta Mahapatra : A Critical Assessment” also under the supervision of Prof. S.K. Agrawal. The Department congratulates the two awardees and wishes good luck to Vasant K. Joshi whose viva-voce is pending.

Our Toppers Master of Arts



Bhavya Pahuja



Ritu Soni



Chandani Bharwani

LET ME SPEAK.....

It was a pleasure seeing the Department growing under an able leadership; the syllabi fulfil the purpose of teaching English in the Post - Independence India. The Department is a torch-bearer for the other University Departments. Congratulations !

Prof. Rajul Bhargava (University of Rajasthan, Jaipur)

The Department of English has grown considerably enough within a limited time span. The young, dynamic and energetic teaching staff always prompt to fulfil the stated objective to enhance teaching and research impressed me most. My Good Wishes !

Prof. Sunita Siroha (Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra)

STUDENTS' EXPRESSIONS (OUTGOING BATCH)

I CAN ALSO SAY...

And in the years after in tears and laughter,

I will always remember my days spent here.

Gitanjali Solanki

I learnt problem-solving skills at the Department.

Surbhi Vyas

Our teachers rightly recognised our potential and encouraged us to grow.

Sumiti Yadav

What impressed me most was the regularity in the conduction of classes and their dedication to teaching profession.

Prafull Hatila

The classroom seminars helped me considerably in developing my confidence level, and provided me a platform to explore my hidden potential.

Karan Singh

To.....

.....

.....

From: University Department of English, Vashistha Bhawan (Academic Block-II)

Maharaja Ganga Singh University, NH-15, Jaisalmer Road, Bikaner - 334004

EDITORIAL BOARD

Dr. S.K. Agrawal, Chief Editor

Ms. Santosh K. Shekhawat, Executive Editor

Dr. Seema Sharma & Dr. Pragti Sobti, Editorial Members

Rajesh Kumar, Designer