

International Conference

‘Indian Literary Studies from Orality to Textuality – a Civilizational Watershed’

Concept Note:

Rgveda, the oldest literary composition of the Indo-European languages suggests that *kavya* (poetry) existed since earlier times. The word *gatha*, the word for Zoroastrian narratives is used in *Rgveda*. Valmiki of the *Ramayana* is considered to be the first exponent of the poetic form *shloka* in literature. The eminent Indian philosopher and critical theorist Dr. Sarvepelli Radhakrishnan calls the period between 600-BCE - 200 BCE as the epic period, because Indian epics the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Upanishads* in existence for millennia were codified in this period. The *Bhagvada Gita* is accepted as the representative and kernel text on Indian philosophical literature and it is one of the finest poetic expressions in Sanskrit. The period (spanning more than a millennium and a half) until the 5th century AD is the *sutra* period during which *shastraic* treatises were composed leading to the development of several schools of thought in many domains including literary criticism and interpretation.

Starting as the commentatorial interpretive assessment/ ‘criticism’ of *Vedas*, Indian literary criticism evolved by adopting and adapting the *Shastra Paddhati* evolved in the course of Vedic hermeneutics. Literary texts were processed through TEN logical, philosophical and grammatical categories, the ten instruments of exegesis, which may be classed as those pertaining to:

- A. The Interpreter’s Belief System
 1. *Sarvabhauma siddhanta* (the principle to be upheld/ideology)
- B. Verbal Testimony
 2. Sruti
 3. Darsana – smrti
 4. Itihasa – purana drshtanta
- C. General Rules of Interpretation
 5. *Sangati* (coherence)
 6. *Paribhasa nyaya*
 7. *Loka nyaya* (rules of interpretation) – (judgment from common experience)
- D. Language
 8. *Nirvacana* (etymology)
 9. *Vyakarana* (grammar)
 10. *Sabda-sakti* (lexical and propositional meaning including verbal symbolism)

Thus the critical method of analyzing texts for meaning and language was termed as *sastra* (science). Besides Panini’s *Astadhyayi*, the 11th century Kannada grammar *Shabdamanidarpanam* by Kesiraja and *Amarakosha* (lexicon) of Amarasimha are treatises on understanding the meaning and functions of language.

Natya (Drama) originally developed in India, was theorized by Bharata in his *Natyasastra* in the 2nd Century BCE with its powerful core construct of *rasa-bhava*, a principle of aesthetics that became a construct applicable to all art. Very much like Aristotle, the Indian poeticians looked upon literature as an autonomous knowledge series and argued that literature functions as a *drshtanta* for all philosophical concepts and constructs and that in fact is its true function. The source for such a role of literature can be traced to Indian philosophy in which liberation from the *karmic cycle of birth-death* and attainment of *moksha* are emphasized. Indian theory of literature enjoins the auditor to experience art to free oneself from the *trigunatamaka prakriti*, *sattva* (peace), *rajas* (energy) and *tamas* (darkness or laziness) and end in the *sthitapragya* (equipoise) state of being.

Post 16th century, because of external aggressors, India in philosophy and literary criticism lost its dynamic spirit. The Indic thought expressed through indigenous literature was subsumed or subdued by foreign tongues. However, by the turn of the 20th century, re-examination of Indian literary tradition was taken up and critical interpretation and understanding of Indian works of literature and language through western yardsticks was challenged. The multicultural Indian context of regional literatures demanded re-establishment of Indian literary traditions. Hence, the need to understand English literary studies vis-à-vis Indian literary traditions is relevant and imperative.

Therefore, in order to discuss, debate and consolidate the work being done in this direction by individuals and institutions, the International Conference on **‘Indian Literary Studies from Orality to Textuality – a Civilizational Watershed’** is proposed by the Department of English at Bhagat Phool Singh Mahila Vishwavidyalaya. The Conference with the aforementioned objective, intends to have scholarly talks and presentations on the following aspects of literature and language. The subject of the Conference becomes important as we in India are witnessing a cultural shift from Orality to textuality.

Literature

- Indian Literary Theoretical Tradition (भारतीय साहित्यिक सिद्धांत और आचार्य परंपरा)
- Indian Epics Tradition (महाकाव्य परंपरा)
- Indian Commentary Tradition (टीका परंपरा)
- Indian Interpretation and Translation Tradition (Vedic Hermeneutics) (मीमांसा एवं व्याख्या परंपरा)
- Didactic Literary Tradition (Social Discourse, Climate Literature and Spiritual Literature) (शिक्षात्मक साहित्यिक परंपरा)

Language

- Philosophy of Language (Panini, Bharthari, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Noam Chomsky)
- Indian Grammatical Tradition
- ELT in India – Tradition & Technology Interface
- English & Indian Languages Interface

Invitation:

The scholars and students from across the disciplines of literature, philosophy and linguistics are invited to contribute and share their ideas during the conference. An abstract (250 words) of the talk/presentation (20 to 30 minutes) is expected to be submitted by the due date. Since the deliberations of the conference are to be published (in a journal or book) through a publisher of established reputation, paper presentations will be by invitation. However all registered attendees are welcome to participate in the conference and contribute through discussions.

Important Dates:

- Submission of Abstract : February 15, 2023
- Intimation of Acceptance : February 18, 2023
- Submission of Full Paper : March 15, 2023
- Conference Dates : March 27, 28 & 29, 2023

Email ID for sharing abstracts, full papers and general enquiry: icdoebpsmv2023@gmail.com

Conference Venue:

The Department of English, Teaching Block –I, University Campus at Khanpur Kalan

Conference Fee:

- For Teachers: Rs. 1,000/-
- For Students: Rs. 500/-

Conference Organizing Committee:

- Patron-in-Chief Prof. Sudesh, Vice Chancellor, BPSMV
- Preceptor cum Mentor Prof. Kapil Kapoor, Indologist & formerly Rector, JNU, Delhi
- Patron Dr. Neelam Malik, Registrar, BPSMV
- Advisors Prof. Amrita, Dean, Faculty of Arts & Languages, BPSMV
Prof. Ashok Verma, Director, IQAC, BPSMV
- Director Prof. Ravi Bhushan, Chairperson, DOE, BPSMV
- Convener Dr. Geeta Phogat, DOE, BPSMV
- Secretary Dr. Shalini, DOE, BPSMV
- Coordinators Dr. Ajeet Singh, Ms. Babita, Dr. Pallavi, Dr. Sukriti

About the Department:

Established in the year 2007, the Department of English is one of the first University Teaching Departments (UTDs) of Bhagat Phool Singh Mahila Vishwavidyalaya created to offer qualitative and affordable programmes in English Studies. Driven by Indian grammarian and philosopher Bhartrhari's (570AD) statement (we take cognizance of the world through words), the department of English endeavors to evolve and strengthen the aesthetic, literary and linguistic understanding of life through literature and language. The key objective is to enable the enrolled students and scholars to become critical thinkers, proficient users of English language rooted in native culture and literary traditions. Qualitative, socially relevant, academically challenging and culturally appropriate research with determined outcome is promoted by the Department of English in areas like British Poetry, Indian Poetics, Comparative Literature, ELT, Stylistics, Pragmatics, Semiotics, Metaphor, Translation Studies & Indian Literature in Translation, Marginal Writings, Oral Literature, Cognitive Semantics, Drama, Women Studies, Folk Literature, Indian Writings in English, Diaspora Writings, Performance Studies, Contemporary World Theatre, Cultural Studies, Critical & Literary Theories and Indian Writing in English and Fiction etc.

Brief introduction of the University:

Since Vedic period, education has empowered women in several ways. One such seminal and historical step in this direction was establishment of the Girls' Gurukul by Bhagat Phool Singh Ji in 1936 at village Khanpur Kalan in Sonapat district of Haryana State. The noble work initiated by Bhagat Phool Singh Ji was continued by his daughter Padamshree Subhahshini Devi Ji benefitting thousands of rural women. The erstwhile Gurukul was turned into a State University in August 2006 exclusively for women named after Bhagat Phool Singh Ji as Bhagat Phool Singh Mahila Vishwavidyalaya (BPSMV). The University has the distinction of being North India's the first State Women University spread over pollution free 400 acres of campus. Also the university is unique in the sense that it functions on the model of 'society-university interface', juxtaposition of tradition and modernity and having its genesis in the philanthropic tradition. The Girls' Gurukul started with just three girls has come to be today's BPSMV with approximately 7000 girls on its rolls enrolled in approximately 100 academic programmes administered through its 18 University Teaching Departments, 02 Constituent Institutions, 05 Special Centers, 02 Regional Centers and 06 affiliated Government Women Colleges. The University has turned out to be a sought after destination by women for getting modern education grounded in Indian tradition and universal human values.



Department of English Bhagat Phool Singh Mahila Vishwavidyalaya

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(A State University Established by an Act of Haryana Legislature & Recognised by UGC under Sections 2(f) and 12B of the UGC Act, 1956)

Visit us at : www.bpsmv.ac.in | E-mail : chairpersonenglish@bpswomenuniversity.ac.in



Bhagat Phool Singh ji
(1885-1942)