

## **XXI ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF RAJASTHAN ASSOCIATION FOR STUDIES IN ENGLISH**

**21ST AND 22ND DECEMBER 2024**

**Cultural Harmony and Natural Assimilation only can Ensure Lasting Peace: Padmashree  
Sitanshu Yashaschandra**

**Kapadwanj, Gujarat**

The XXI Annual Conference of Rajasthan Association for Studies in English was held on 21st and 22nd December, 2024 on the topic Cross Cultural Encounters and Assimilation: Representation of Western India in Writings in English at Kapadwanj, Gujarat. The two-day International conference was organized by Shah K.S.Arts and V.M.Parekh Commerce College, run by Kapadwanj Kelwani Mandal. The chief guest of the conference noted poet and writer winner of Sahitya academy Award Padma Shree Sitanshu Yashaschandra Mehta said that for lasting peace in the world cultural harmony and natural assimilation are necessary. He said that encounters and conflict in the name of religion and ethnic identities have always been a cause of violence. Attempts of forced assimilation are also not desirable. He described the conference of Rajasthan Association in Gujarat as an example of assimilation.



The key speaker of the conference Prof. Santosh Das, Arts & Commerce College, Savli described the conference as a novel attempt to look at western India as a cultural unit. He said that people talk of south India, north east and east India as units for cultural and academic discourse but for the first time western India has been taken up as a unit for academic discussion. Poet and activist Prof. Dr Kanjibhai Patel was the guest of honour. He raised a

number of basic questions of identity and conflicts in the name of purity of race. He said that Western India suffered attacks from Huns, Kushaans, Mughals and Europeans. Assimilation also took place. Now it is difficult to ascertain racial identity of individuals and therefore conflicts on that account are unnecessary. Prof S N Joshi memorial Lecture organized every year in memory of former president of the Association was delivered by Principal S N Iyer, Principal of Vadaj College, Ahmedabad. He talked about his own multicultural experience and described his family as an apt example of assimilation. Dr. Geraldine Sinyuye, poet and fiction writer from Cameroon, Africa joined online and spoke on colonial dominance and imposition of European culture on African people. She posed the question “which culture?” to the issue of cultural assimilation. Dr. Hemendra Singh Chandalia, Vice-President of Rajasthan Association for Studies in English, presented the concept note of the conference. He said that the role of literature is to build bridges across cultures and create harmony in a world torn in conflicts like Ukraine and Palestine. In the beginning the Principal of the college Dr. Gopal Sharma ‘Sahar’ delivered the welcome address. Dr.K.S.Kang ,general secretary of RASE presented the report of the association. The chairman of Kapadwanj Kelwani Mandal Dr. Harish H. Kundalia presided over the inaugural function. Secretary of KKM Anant Bhai Shah also graced the dais. The inaugural function was conducted by Prof. Ambarish Panda, the organizing secretary of the conference. He read out the messages received from Prof. Rajul Bhargava, President RASE and Prof. Ranjana Harish,Gujarat University, Ahmedabad. Mr. Shane Desai, faculty member, department of English offered a vote of thanks.



## Felicitations

In the inaugural session Padma Shree Sitanshu Yashaschandra Mehta, chief guest of the conference and Dr. Gopal Sharma ‘Sahar’ were felicitated by Rajasthan Association for Studies for their life time contribution to the world of literature. Shah K.S.Arts and V.M.Parekh

Commerce College and Kapadwanj Kelwani Mandal felicitated Prof. Hemendra Singh Chandalia, Vice President Rajasthan association for Studies in English for his contribution to promotion of English studies in India.

### **Releases**

In the inaugural session the souvenir of the Conference and UGC CARE listed Journal of RASE were launched by the guests. Dr Sumer Singh's book English Studies in the Contemporary Era was released. Palash Sharma's novel Coming of Age was also released. Palash Sharma is a student of third year B.A. Hons. English, M. S. University, Baroda. Similarly, Dr Hemendra Singh Chandalia's poetry collection "When the Seeds Would Sprout" was also released.



### **Plenary Sessions**

Two plenary sessions were organized in the conference. The first plenary lecture was delivered by Dr. Khushwant Singh Kang, former Principal of Maharana Pratap Post Graduate College, Chittorgarh, Rajasthan. He delivered his lecture on the topic "Diverse Facets of Life projected in Anita Desai's works The Village by the Sea and Cry the Peacock". This plenary session was chaired by Prof. H.S.Chandalia. The second plenary was presented by Dr.K.Kannan Prasad of Loyola College, Chennai. He delivered his plenary lecture on "How Controversial can a Fiction be to Become Popular? An Anatomy of 'Contro-Pop Fiction'". This session was chaired by Prof. K.S. Kang.

### **Technical Sessions**

There were twelve technical sessions in which a total of eighty-six papers were presented. Of these four papers were presented online.

The sessions were chaired by Dr Shibani Banerjee, Dr J K Singh, Dr Sumer Singh, Dr Anant Dadheech, Dr Hitesh Bhatt, Dr Gopal Krishna Sukhwal, Prof Kundan Mali, Dr Khushpal Garg,

Prof Renuka Varma, Dr Manoj Kumar, Dr Kuldeep Singh Jadeja, and Prof. Sunil shah respectively. Dr. Prasad Dagwale, Dr Narendra Singh, Dr. Gautam Sharma, Dr Priyanka M.G., Dr Shankarlal Dholi, Dr Kaushal Kishore Sharma, Dr Chirag Adatiya etc. co-chaired the sessions. A very encouraging feature of technical sessions was that a good number of undergraduate students also presented research papers.

There were very interesting and thought-provoking deliberations in all these sessions of the conference centering around the theme of the conference. Some of them are “Reconstruction of Western India in the works of Colonel James Tod”, “A Comparative Study of Vedic and Bhil Society”, Caste and Patriarchy :Dalit Identity and Rejection of Bramhinal Traditions in the works of Kusum Meghwal, Revival of Gandhi in 21st Century :A case study of Lage Raho Munna Bhai”, “A cinematic Adaptation of the movie The Sabarmati Report etc.

### **RASE’s Students Initiative Programme Launched**

Rajasthan Association for Studies in English launched a new initiative in the XXI conference. The general secretary of the Association Prof. K.S.Kang announced that a new chapter named Students Initiative Programme will be added in which students from I year B.A. to research scholars will be able to register for a one time membership fee of Rs. 500. They will remain members till they are students. Separate activities will be started for students. A committee headed by Dr. Gautam Sharma was formed to steer this programme. Other members of the committee include Dr. Narendra Pal Singh Panwar, Paresh Thakor, Shane Desai, Dipika Patel, Krunal Parmar, Satish Jhala, Ketan Parmar, Jiyanshi Desai, Shrashti Patel and Palash Sharma.

### **Creative Writing Session and Cultural Evening**

A creative writing session and cultural evening was organized in the evening of 21st December. Principal Dr. Gopal Sharma ‘Sahar’, Dr. Gautam Sharma, Dr. Hitendra Joshi, Dr. Hemendra Chandalia and Dr. Pramila Singhvi read out their self-composed poems. This was followed by a colourful programme of dance and singing in which the students of the college and a few delegates presented their performances. This entertaining programme was convened by Dr. Gautam Sharma.



## Valedictory Session

The two-day conference ended with a valedictory session. Principal Dr.Sam Kunniparampil was the Chief Guest of the Valedictory function. The session was chaired by Dr Harish Bhai Kundalia, the President of Kapadwanj Kelavani Mandal. Mr. Rasik Bhai Patel, Vice President of the Mandal also graced the dais. Dr. Parul Popat, Head of the Department of English, Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidya Nagar was the guest of honour. Prof. S.K. Singh, Associate Dean O. P. Jindal University, Raigadh, Chattishgarh addressed the conference online. Dr Hemendra Singh Chandalia, Vice-President of Rajasthan Association for Studies in English delivered the valedictory address. The report of the conference was presented by the organizing secretary of the conference Prof. Ambarish Panda. Principal of the college Dr. Gopal Sharma ‘Sahar’ welcomed the guests. Shane Desai, faculty member of the department of English offered the vote of thanks. Dr. Suman Shelly from Sambalpur,Odisha and Dr. Subhash Nagarkar from Goa narrated their experiences of the conference. This session was convened by Dr. Gautam Sharma.