

International Conference

"India and Russia: Cross-Cultural Synergies"

February 22 - 23, 2018,
New Delhi, India

An International Conference titled "**India and Russia: Cross-Cultural Synergies**" was organised on February 22 - 23, 2018 to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of India's first Department of the Russian language at the University of Delhi (now the Department of Slavic and Finno-Ugrian studies), and to mark 70 years of diplomatic relations between India and Russia. The conference was supported by the University of Delhi ; the Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR); the Embassy of the Russian Federation in India and the Russian Center for Science and Culture, New Delhi. The conference attracted renowned scholars and practicing scientists and teachers from different cities of Russia such as Moscow, St. Petersburg, Volgograd, Kazan, Ivanov, Murmansk, and Yekaterinburg, as well as from other countries - Georgia, Turkey and Sri Lanka. The discussions in which the international and national delegates participated centered round issues of the mutual influence of the two cultures in literature, philosophy, linguistics, journalism, education, music, painting and cinema. At the inauguration of the conference the Head of the Department of Slavonic and Finno-Ugrian Studies, Dr. Neelakshi Suryanarayan, described the significance of the event and listed out the goals and objectives of the conference. The Special Invitees who graced the Conference and addressed the participants included the Vice Chancellor of the University of Delhi, Professor Yogesh Tiagi ; the Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the Russian Federation in India, Mr. N.R. Kudashev; the Director of the Russian Center of Science and Culture Mr. F.A. Rozovsky. The Dean of the Philology, Faculty of the Russian People's Friendship University, Mr.V.V. Barabash also gave valuable comments to the audience and explained the importance of and need for more exchange programmes amongst universities and academics for 'cross the border' learning. The key note address was delivered by the former Education secretary, cultural historian and writer Ms. Achala Moulik, Laureate of the Pushkin Medal – the state award of the Russian Federation for meritorious contribution in the field of culture, liberal arts and literature. Her speech stressed the meaningful role of Russian literature and writers in preserving the social consciousness and imparting moral values. All the speakers stressed the special relationship between India and Russia in the past and the need to strengthen cooperation between Indian and Russian scholars to take it to a newer and higher level.

The inauguration of the conference was marked by a felicitation ceremony at which the retired professors and teachers of the Department were honoured by the Vice Chancellor Prof. Yogesh Tyagi with presentation of shawls. Prof. A.K. Maurya, Prof. S.K. Vij, Prof. Nagpal, Dr. Indu Lekha received commendation for their role in strengthening the Department. The staff Dr. A. K. Bhasin, Mr. J.S. Bhateja, Mr. S.S. Solanki, Ms. Manju Bhasin, Ms Anita, who have provided considerable support to the Department were also honored in recognition of their effort.

Among the plenary speakers were Professor Kalpana Sahni (Center for Russian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University); Dr. E. Yu. Vanina (Center for Indian Studies, the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences); Professor T.A. Gogoladze (State Pedagogical University of Gori, Georgia); Dr S.I. Ryzhakova (Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology named after N.N. Miklukho-Maklai, Russian Academy of Sciences) and Dr. E.Yu. Borzov (Ivanovo State Textile Academy). The paper reading sessions were divided into several parallel sessions and about 70 participants

presented their papers. Special attention was paid to interdisciplinary research, as well as the teaching of Russian language and literature in India and the teaching of Hindi in Russia. In addition to well-known scholars and teachers in their respective fields, the conference was attended by many young graduate students and scholars, for whom it was a unique opportunity to enrich themselves with useful knowledge and gain new experience.

Representatives of the Russian publishing houses 'Russian language Courses' and 'Zlatoust' organized an exhibition cum sale of books and textbooks on the Russian language and culture, during the conference which attracted the attention of the participants and students. Another counter exhibited books and journals with publications of the teachers of the Russian section of the Department of Slavonic and Finno-Ugrian Studies as well as Post-graduate, M Phil and Ph D dissertations.

This significant occasion - the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the Russian language Department at the University of Delhi and the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Russia served as an impetus for the publishing house Goyal Publishers & Distributors, which specializes in publishing textbooks of foreign languages, including Russian, to announce a scholarship for a young Indian teacher of Russian language to go to Russia to pursue an advanced course in teacher training. When summing up the proceedings of the conference, several participants commended the scholarly exchanges at the conference and the excellent cultural fare that followed. Bharata Natyam dancer Padmasri Gita Chandran with her Natya Vriksha ensemble enthralled the foreign delegates with classical numbers as well as dances set to the music of the famous Russian composer P.I Tchaikovsky.

The next day on 23rd February, at the Russian Center for Science and Culture the delegates were treated to another breathtaking musical program – a piano recital by a Professor at the Peoples' Friendship University, Dr. G.N. Trofimova also Honored Worker of Culture of the Russian Federation and songs by poet-songwriter Dr. Mikhail Zagot, literary translator, Associate Professor of Moscow State Linguistic University. The Conference concluded with a gala banquet for all the participants hosted by the Ambassador of the Russian Federation Mr. N. R. Kudashev. The conference veritably demonstrated the special nature of relations between the two countries, which are distinguished by warm, mutual understanding, and would certainly encourage further academic and cultural cooperation.



Dr. Neelakshi Suryanarayan
Director, International Conference