



SEVEN DAY INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON



Heritage Foundation
Promoting Education Through Protecting Heritage

PROMOTING EDUCATION THROUGH PROTECTING HERITAGE

in collaboration with Heritage Foundation Pune Maharashtra
from 14th to 20th May, 2026



Venue: Conference Hall, Government College Panarsa, Mandi (H.P.)

Mode: Hybrid (Online/offline)

Convenor: (Online)

-Dr. Leena Vaidya
-Dr. Manish Sood

Convenor (Offline)

-Prof. Krishan Lal
-Prof. Anita

Patron:

Dr. Ursem Lata
Principal
Government College Panarsa District Mandi (H.P.)

Sh. Bhujang Ram Rao Bobade
Director
Heritage Foundation, Pune, Maharashtra

Organizing committee:

-Dr. Pooja Sharma
-Prof. Suresh Kumar
-Dr. Kavita Katoch
-Prof. Hira Singh
-Prof. Ratten Dev
-Prof. Vijay Singh
-Mrs. Bindu
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-Mrs. Chitarkala

Supporting Staff:

Sh. Kailash Chand
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Sh. Hira Lal
Smt. Bantu Devi

Report

Day 1

Government College Panarsa, in collaboration with the Heritage Foundation, Pune, is organizing a seven-day International Workshop titled “Promoting Education through Protecting Heritage.” Conducted in hybrid mode, the workshop has drawn participation from experts across countries including Australia, England, Bangladesh, Thailand, South Korea, and the USA. Notably, 53 students of the college along with the entire faculty are actively participating in the programme.



The keynote address by Shri Bhujang Ramarao Bhobde highlighted that heritage extends beyond monuments to include rivers, traditions, and everyday life. He emphasized the importance of applying knowledge for moral and practical development, and stressed the relevance of the Indian Knowledge System in contemporary education.

In another session, Kanchan Amte Joshi from Australia spoke on “Indian Traditional Art: Colours of Time– The Story and Preservation.” She explained how Indian folk art, from cave paintings to Madhubani and Pattachitra, is deeply rooted in storytelling, nature, and cultural practices, and continues to evolve globally.



The workshop also focused on preservation techniques, including protection of artworks from pests, sunlight, moisture, and physical damage, along with the use of modern conservation methods. Interactive activities such as report writing, storytelling sessions, and a heritage quiz have ensured enthusiastic student engagement.



The initiative aims to promote heritage as a living tradition and an essential component of value-based education.



Day 2 (Session-1)

The second day of the ongoing heritage and art education workshop featured an engaging and insightful session by Ms. Nasreen Jahan Khushi, a dedicated art educator from Bangladesh. Her session emphasized the transformative power of art in shaping communities and fostering cultural consciousness.



Ms. Khushi began by highlighting how art acts as a bridge between nature and human life, nurturing a deeper understanding of our surroundings. She reflected on how songs of freedom fighters (“Aazadi Ke Deewanon Ke Geet”) continue to inspire and transform individuals even today, underlining the enduring impact of cultural expressions.

A significant part of her lecture focused on the concept of heritage as an essential component of identity. She described heritage as a means through which individuals connect with the wider world. Encouraging interactive participation, she asked students to express a word that comes to their mind when they hear “heritage,” thereby initiating a thoughtful dialogue.



Drawing from local context, she discussed important heritage sites such as the Parashar Temple, known for its floating island and 13th-century architecture, and the Panchvaktra Temple, along with the vibrant Shivaratri festival of Mandi. Through these examples, she emphasized the importance of understanding and preserving local heritage.

Ms. Khushi also introduced her own cultural background, sharing insights about Bangladesh’s rich heritage, including Somapura Mahavihara—one of the largest ancient universities in the Indian subcontinent—



Mahasthangarh, and Cox's Bazar. She spoke about traditional practices such as handloom weaving and highlighted both tangible and intangible heritage, clearly explaining the distinction between the two.

The session further explored similarities between Indian and Bangladeshi art and culture. She discussed traditional crafts like Himachali pattu and Chamba Rumal, drawing parallels with Bangladeshi folk traditions such as Lokshi Katha. This comparative perspective enriched participants' understanding of shared cultural histories across borders.

In conclusion, Ms. Khushi touched upon Jawaharlal Nehru's idea of the "paradox of presentation," encouraging participants to reflect on how heritage is represented and perceived in contemporary times. The session was highly interactive and intellectually stimulating, reinforcing the role of art education in preserving heritage and fostering cultural awareness among students.

Day 2 (Session-2)

The second session of Day 2 was delivered by Shri Bhujangh Ramarao Bhubde on the theme "Integration and Implementation of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS)". The session offered a comprehensive exploration of India's rich intellectual and technological heritage, while critically examining the gap between knowledge and its practical application in contemporary education.

Shri Bhubde began by questioning the conventional understanding of "integration," asking whether it is limited to combining disciplines like arts and science, or whether it should extend to the deeper inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) within modern education. He elaborated on the idea of Bhartiya Gyaan (Indian knowledge), emphasizing that true knowledge leads to wisdom, truth, and ultimately self-realization— "पहले खुद को जानो."



He introduced the concept of the eighteen Vidyasthanas, highlighting the vast and diverse branches of knowledge in ancient India. Stressing that education is not merely about literacy, he remarked that mastery can be achieved even without formal schooling if one possesses passion and inner drive.

The speaker reflected on the role of teachers as nation-builders, drawing from the book "Teachers: The Torch Bearers". He emphasized the importance of self-realization among educators and referred to Mahatma Gandhi's ideas on meaningful museum practices that educate and inspire.

A major focus of the session was on the scientific and technological advancements of ancient India. Shri Bhubde cited examples such as the urban planning of Lothal and Dholavira, demonstrating sophisticated town planning and water management systems that existed over 5000 years ago. He discussed the evolution of brick-making techniques and the precision in construction methods, indicating a deep understanding of material science.

He further highlighted India's achievements in metallurgy through the example of the Iron Pillar of Delhi, which has resisted corrosion for nearly two millennia. He also referred to the advanced knowledge behind the famed Damascus blades, believed to have origins in Indian metallurgical practices.

Artistic excellence was another key theme, with references to the lost-wax casting technique, Chola bronze sculptures such as Nataraja, and ancient terracotta artifacts. He questioned why such mastery is rarely replicated today, urging participants to re-engage with traditional knowledge systems.

The session also touched upon remarkable engineering feats such as the Kallanai Dam, one of the oldest functioning water-regulation structures, and architectural marvels like Rani ki Vav. He discussed the scientific principles behind temple architecture, including the wheel of the Konark Sun Temple and the pinhole camera effect observed at the Virupaksha Temple. Shri Bhobde also explored traditional knowledge in medicine, agriculture, and environmental science, including Naadi Pariksha, ancient texts on diet and animal care, and indigenous methods of groundwater detection. He emphasized India's long-standing water culture and architectural practices related to water conservation.



Addressing historical and literary heritage, he referred to ancient manuscripts, calligraphy traditions, and institutions of learning, underscoring the diversity and depth of India's knowledge systems. He also raised a critical question: why are these rich traditions not adequately integrated into modern engineering and educational curricula?

The session concluded with a strong message on the importance of seva bhaav (spirit of service) in preserving heritage. Shri Bhobde emphasized that heritage cannot survive without collective responsibility and emotional connection. He reminded participants that history must be studied not just to remember the past, but to improve the future.

Overall, the session was intellectually stimulating and thought-provoking, urging educators and students alike to move beyond theoretical integration and work towards meaningful implementation of Indian Knowledge Systems in contemporary education.

Day 2 (Session-3)

Storytelling, Indigenous Knowledge, and Heritage Preservation

The afternoon session of the workshop was highly interactive and activity-oriented, engaging students through creative participation and experiential learning. Students were divided into groups based on their interests, including sports, cooking, reading, reel-making, and painting, which encouraged collaborative expression and peer learning.

The session began with a focus on storytelling and the idea of 'magic', exploring how traditional narratives often carry deeper meanings rooted in lived experiences and scientific reasoning. A student participant, Reena (B.A. 1st Year), narrated a compelling folk tale from Shankwah village in the Seraj region. The story revolved around a rakshas (demon) who once shared a harmonious relationship with villagers. However, human greed disrupted this balance. The narrative also highlighted the compassion of a shepherd who helped the ailing rakshas, eventually earning his goodwill and prosperity. The story reflected the moral and ecological consciousness embedded in local folklore.

Shri Bhujang Ramarao Bhobde further enriched the session by narrating a ghost story from his region and deconstructing it through a scientific lens. He emphasized the importance of questioning and understanding the rationale behind such narratives, referring to concepts discussed in "Plasma Theory" to explain seemingly

supernatural occurrences. He urged participants to move beyond passive consumption of stories and instead explore their origins and meanings.

The discussion also touched upon classical texts, including the ending of the Mahabharata, particularly the journey of Yudhishtira accompanied by a dog, encouraging participants to reflect on symbolic interpretations. In this context, reference was made to Friedrich Max Müller and his use of the term “Arya,” prompting a deeper inquiry into the origins and interpretations of cultural concepts.

Adding an element of engagement, Bhubde ji demonstrated number-based “magic tricks,” revealing the mathematical logic behind them, including techniques for summing sequences such as numbers from 1 to 100. This segment successfully illustrated how mathematics can be both intuitive and entertaining.

The session concluded with a lecture by Dr. Malay Saha from North Bengal University, who spoke extensively on the importance of preserving cultural heritage. He highlighted the role of museums in

safeguarding artefacts and emphasized the urgent need to document endangered traditions through videography. He cited the example of a traditional agricultural implement (hal), which was once symbolically associated with the birth of a girl child and gifted to her during marriage—a practice now fading and in need of preservation.

Dr. Saha also discussed innovative approaches such as heritage walks to raise awareness about traditional lifestyles, architecture, and cultural practices. He addressed challenges in manuscript preservation, particularly in regions like Darjeeling, where temperature fluctuations pose significant risks.

Emphasizing community involvement, he noted that lack of awareness is a major reason for the loss of rich cultural heritage. He advocated for training individuals in preservation techniques so they can further disseminate this knowledge. He also stressed the importance of using accessible and engaging language to connect people with heritage that might otherwise seem distant or uninteresting.

The session ended with a strong message on the collective responsibility to preserve cultural roots and traditions for future generations.

Day 3

The third day of the ongoing heritage workshop was graced by the presence of Guest of Honour, Dr. Dayanand Gautam. His address centred on the profound ideas of “हित चिंतन” and “हित साधन,” emphasizing

the transformation of thoughtful intent into meaningful action. He explained that हित चिंतन lies in bringing one’s ideas into practice at the ground level, while हित साधन involves actively working towards the welfare of society.

Dr. Gautam thoughtfully connected the concepts of spirituality (adhyatm) with heritage, highlighting that preservation is not merely physical but also mental and social. He urged participants to reflect on how much of what they see and inherit can be preserved consciously, both within themselves and in society.



He stressed the importance of safeguarding lok sahitya—including folk sayings, songs, and traditional practices—as vital components of cultural heritage. He further noted that maintaining relationships across generations is itself a form of dharohar that requires care and commitment.

In a subtle yet impactful manner, Dr. Gautam also reflected on the weakening of family systems and the increasing tendency towards superficial display, urging a shift towards more meaningful values. He concluded by encouraging everyone to preserve their mental, material, and spiritual heritage collectively.

The session offered deep insights and inspired participants to view heritage preservation as a holistic and lived responsibility.

Day 3 (Session I)

The third day of workshop featured Ms. Vaishnavi Singh, Director of the Heritage Foundation (Thailand Chapter), who delivered an insightful lecture on the topic “Know Our Heritage: Intangible Cultural Heritage of India in Southeast Asia – A Journey of Living Traditions Across Borders.”

She began by clearly distinguishing between tangible and intangible cultural heritage. While monuments and physical structures, if lost, can be reconstructed, intangible heritage—such as languages, songs, traditions, and oral practices—once lost, cannot be recreated. This highlighted the urgent need to preserve living cultural expressions.

Tracing history back over 2000 years, she explained how Indian culture travelled across Southeast Asia through ancient maritime routes. The Indian Ocean, she emphasized, functioned not as a barrier but as a bridge connecting civilizations. Through trade and cultural exchange, India’s philosophical, linguistic, and religious traditions spread organically, especially the influence of Buddhism.

Focusing on India–Thailand connections, she pointed out striking cultural similarities. Traditions such as Ganga worship, the adaptation of the Ramayana in Thai culture, and theatrical forms like Khon (masked dance drama) reflect deep cultural links. She also highlighted the significance of Sanskrit and Pali in Thai rituals and language, noting the presence of Sanskrit-derived words like raja, vidya, and chatra. The Thai royal lineage itself reflects this influence, with kings bearing the title “Rama.”



Moving to Cambodia, she discussed Angkor Wat as a powerful symbol of India’s cultural legacy abroad. Concepts such as Devaraja (God-King), Apsara dance, and depictions of the Samudra Manthan (Churning of the Ocean) illustrate the deep imprint of Indian cosmology on the Khmer Empire (802–1431 CE).

In Indonesia, particularly Bali and Java, she described how Indian traditions continue to thrive as living practices. Bali, often called a “living museum” of Indo-Javanese culture, follows Agama Hindu Dharma. Traditions like Wayang Kulit (shadow puppetry), Ramayana performances, and Mahabharata-based rituals

continue to sustain cultural memory. Even social customs, such as marriage (Pewiwahan), reflect Vedic origins like Vivah Samskara.

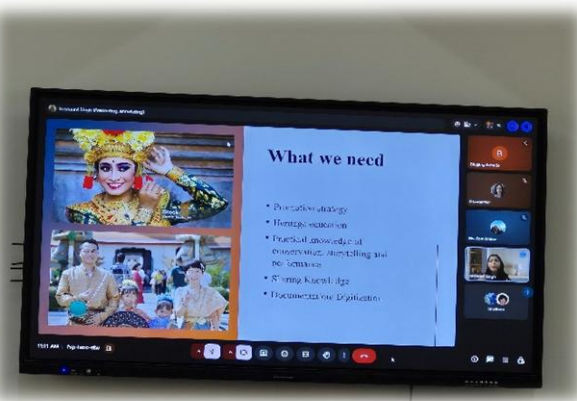
She emphasized that Indian culture was not imposed but voluntarily embraced due to its philosophical depth, tolerance, and universal outlook.

Addressing contemporary concerns, she outlined major challenges to intangible heritage, including globalization, urbanization, migration, commercialization, loss of local languages, decline of traditional occupations, and the replacement of oral traditions by social media.

To counter these threats, she suggested practical measures such as:

- Promoting heritage education
- Encouraging documentation and digitization
- Reviving storytelling and performance traditions
- Sharing knowledge across communities
- Developing effective cultural promotion strategies

She concluded by stressing that intangible heritage must not only be preserved but actively experienced and lived. The session offered a rich, comparative perspective and deepened participants' understanding of India's enduring cultural influence across Southeast Asia.



Day 3 (Session II)

Resource person: Dr. Resenmenla Longhar, Assistant Professor, Department of History, The ICFAI University, Nagaland.

Topic: “Touch, Create, Protect: Reimagining Heritage Preservation through Object-Based Learning (OBL).”

Dr. Longhar began by critiquing the conventional approach to heritage education, stating that heritage has long remained confined to two-dimensional textbook pages. She emphasized the need to move beyond passive learning towards experiential engagement through “touch and create.” Highlighting the interconnectedness of heritage forms, she asserted that tangible heritage cannot be fully understood without engaging with its intangible dimensions.

Introducing Object-Based Learning (OBL), she explained it as a shift from passive reception to active participation, where objects are treated as primary texts. This approach allows learners to interpret, analyze, and connect with history in a more meaningful way.



She outlined why OBL is critical for heritage preservation:

- It gives voice to oral cultures
- Focuses on documenting processes, not just final products
- Preserves entire cultural ecosystems rather than isolated objects
- Helps in reverse-engineering lost or fading knowledge systems

Dr. Longhar stressed the need to “reimagine” preservation practices by comparing traditional methods with OBL. In this framework, students become active co-stewards of history, and the classroom transforms into a living archive. She Elaborating on the three pillars—Touch, Create, Protect and she also provided practical examples of these three pillars:

- **Touch:** Engaging physically with cultural objects, such as experiencing the rhythmic vibrations of a Naga log drum, to develop sensory and emotional connections.
- **Create:** Recreating cultural artifacts like Naga shawls as “living resumes,” where understanding symbols, patterns, and colors fosters deeper cultural appreciation. She emphasized that preservation requires allowing traditions to be recreated and practiced.
- **Protect:** Advocating for community-led custodianship and raising critical questions about what and whom we are protecting heritage from. This includes safeguarding oral traditions, culinary practices, and indigenous knowledge systems.

She also proposed several innovative classroom activities to integrate OBL:

- Biography of an Object: Students document the history of everyday objects, linking personal family narratives with academic study while learning museum documentation skills.
- Creating Harappan town planning models
- Developing miniature models of local museums
- Designing World War replica artifacts
- Organizing culinary exchange programs

Addressing contemporary challenges, she observed that heritage declines when younger generations lose interest, often due to traditional lecture methods that feel disconnected and uninspiring. OBL, with its hands-on and participatory approach, offers a more engaging and relevant alternative.

In conclusion, she reimagined the classroom as a “Morung”—a traditional Naga community learning space—where knowledge is lived, shared, and preserved collectively. The session was highly interactive and provided practical strategies to make heritage education dynamic, inclusive, and sustainable.

Day 3 – Afternoon Session

Resource Person: Dr. Sainath Kapade, Associate Professor at NCERT, New Delhi.

Topic: “Protecting the Heritage of Jainism”

Dr. Kapade began by emphasizing that Jain heritage extends far beyond monuments and artifacts; it encompasses a deeply rooted ethical system, philosophical thought, and cultural practices that have evolved over centuries. He highlighted the importance of preserving not just tangible heritage such as temples and manuscripts, but also intangible aspects like values, traditions, and knowledge systems.

A key component of the session was the discussion on Jain iconography. Dr. Kapade elaborated on the representation of the 24 Tirthankaras, each identified through specific symbols (lanchhanas) that aid in their recognition. He explained how these symbols are essential in distinguishing one Tirthankara from another, especially since their physical depictions are largely similar in posture and expression.

The lecture also included a comparative perspective with Gautama Buddha, pointing out notable differences in iconography. For instance, Buddha idols typically feature half-closed eyes, distinct hand gestures (mudras), and stylized ears, along with clothing that signifies renunciation.



In contrast, Jain Tirthankaras are depicted in a state of complete detachment, often unclothed (particularly in the Digambara tradition), symbolizing absolute renunciation and liberation from material attachments.

Dr. Kapade further discussed Jain manuscripts, noting that many are preserved in Prakrit script, reflecting the linguistic heritage of Jain literature. He also shed light on regional variations in Jain paintings, where differences in attire, color schemes, and artistic styles reflect local cultural influences. These paintings predominantly depict the lives and teachings of the Tirthankaras, serving as visual narratives of Jain philosophy.

The session also briefly covered the two main sects of Jainism—Digambara and Śvetāmbara—and their distinct practices, along with references to important Jain pilgrimage sites across India.



Concluding the session, Dr. Kapade stressed the urgent need for heritage preservation strategies, including conservation of temples, protection of manuscripts, documentation of art forms, and transmission of ethical teachings to future generations. He underscored that preserving Jain heritage is not merely about safeguarding the past, but about sustaining ethical values and cultural diversity in an increasingly globalized world.

The session proved to be highly informative and thought-provoking, enriching participants' understanding of India's diverse heritage traditions and the importance of preserving them in a holistic manner.

Day 4 – Field Visit (Visit to the International Roerich Memorial Trust)

The fourth day of the workshop was devoted to an immersive field visit to the International Roerich Memorial Trust, located at the Himalayan estate of the renowned artist and thinker Nicholas Roerich. Organized in collaboration with Government College Panarsa and the Heritage Foundation Society, the visit provided participants with a direct engagement with living heritage, art, and history in a natural and cultural setting.



The programme was attended by distinguished dignitaries, including Bhujang Ramarao Bobde, Dr. Ursem Lata, Dr. Rakesh Rana, and resource person Dmitry Sergeev, among others. The presence of these academicians and experts added depth and significance to

the experiential learning process.

The session at the estate began with an engaging address by Dmitry Sergeev, who introduced participants to the historical and artistic significance of the Roerich Art Gallery. He elaborated on the life, works, and philosophical vision of Nicholas Roerich, while also tracing the family lineage and contributions of his descendants in preserving this legacy. His discussion extended to the contemporary management



of the gallery, offering insights into how such heritage institutions are maintained, curated, and sustained in the present context.



The interaction was further enriched by the address of Divyani Rana, who spoke about the enduring relevance of history and cultural heritage. She emphasized how understanding the past enables individuals and communities to shape a more informed and meaningful future. Her address inspired participants to view heritage not merely as something to be preserved, but as a dynamic force that informs identity and progress.

Following this, Dr. Rakesh Rana shared his perspectives on the urgent need to revive traditional literature and linguistic heritage. He expressed concern over the gradual erosion of ancient vocabulary and indigenous expressions in the face of rapid economic development and modernization. Stressing the importance of linguistic preservation, he urged participants to actively engage in documenting and promoting regional dialects, particularly those of the Kullu region.



The visit concluded with a formal vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Ursem Lata, Principal of Government College Panarsa. In her concluding remarks, she acknowledged the contributions of all

resource persons and participants, and reiterated the institution's commitment to preserving local cultural heritage. She particularly emphasized the significance of promoting regional languages, highlighting the proposed collaboration and Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Government College Kullu, Government College Panarsa, and institutions in Haripur as a step towards revitalizing the Kullvi dialect and associated cultural expressions.



The field visit to the Roerich Estate proved to be a deeply enriching experience, blending art, history, and cultural reflection. It allowed participants to connect theoretical knowledge with lived heritage, reinforcing the importance of preservation, continuity, and active cultural engagement in contemporary times.





Day 5

The fifth day of the ongoing heritage workshop was graced by the presence of Guest of Honour, Dr. Shefali, Principal Government College Haripur and Dr. Chetan Rana, Retired Associate Professor.



This Day was conducted by INTACH resource person Purnima Dutt, Principal Director of Heritage Education and Communication Services. Her session, titled “Heritage Education and Its Importance,” offered a practical and engaging perspective on integrating heritage awareness into academic spaces.

She began by emphasizing the need to cultivate heritage consciousness among students through structured initiatives such as heritage clubs in colleges. These clubs, she explained, can serve as dynamic platforms where students actively engage with their cultural environment rather than passively learning about it. She also highlighted the importance of art galleries and museums as living classrooms that provide experiential learning opportunities.



A key focus of the session was on activity-based learning approaches. She encouraged organizing heritage and nature walks, which allow students to directly connect with local history, ecology, and traditions. Another innovative suggestion was the creation of interactive heritage-based games, such as quizzes designed by students themselves. These methods, she noted, make learning enjoyable while deepening understanding.

Further, she discussed the importance of educational visits to archaeological sites, where students can observe, document, and interpret historical evidence firsthand. She strongly advocated for interdisciplinary projects,

where heritage becomes a connecting thread across subjects—linking history with literature, science with conservation, and art with cultural expression.

An important practical component of the session included an activity-based module on museum engagement, particularly focusing on the documentation of artefacts displayed in the museum established at Government College Panarsa. Participants were guided on how to systematically record details of artefacts, including their origin, material, historical context, and cultural significance. This exercise highlighted the role of documentation in preserving and interpreting heritage. Towards the conclusion, Purnima Dutt inspired participants with the idea of becoming “Warriors of Heritage,” individuals committed to safeguarding cultural legacy. She stressed that heritage acts as a thread that binds the nation together, transcending regional and social differences.

The session concluded with a collective pledge: “Clean, Preserve, and Change.”

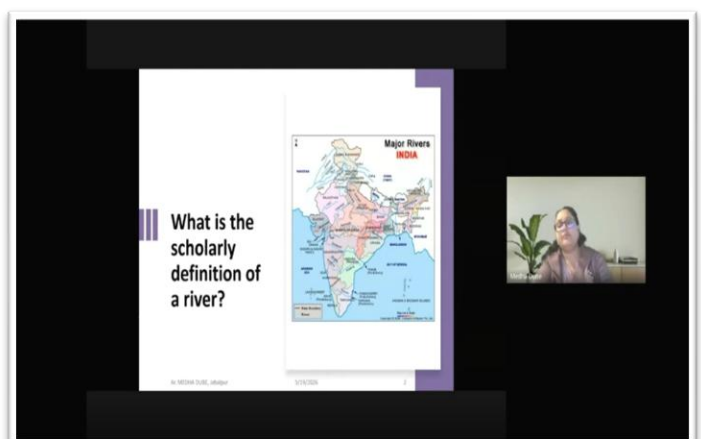
This pledge encapsulated the responsibility of individuals not only to protect heritage but also to actively contribute towards its sustainable future. Overall, the session was insightful, participatory, and deeply motivating, equipping participants with both conceptual understanding and practical tools to integrate heritage education into academic and community life.



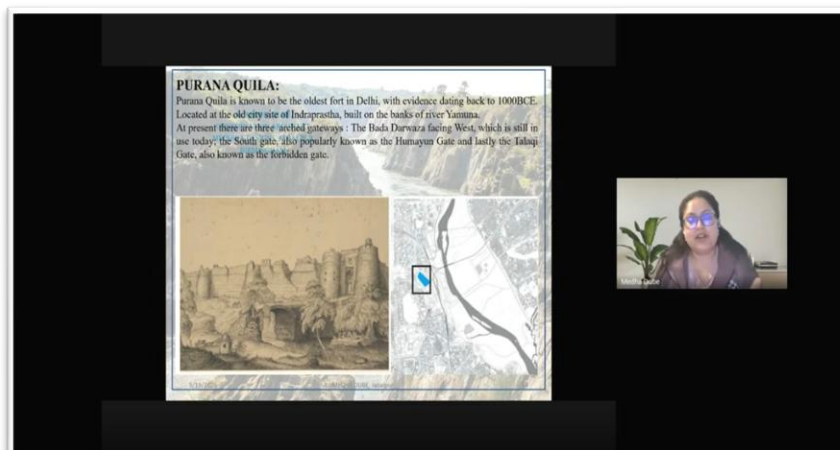
Day 6 – Morning Session

The morning session of Day 6 was conducted by Dr Medha Dube, a noted conservation architect, who delivered an engaging lecture on the topic “River Valley Culture of India.” The session offered a multidisciplinary perspective, connecting geography, ecology, history, and cultural traditions.

Dr. Dube began by addressing the fundamental question: Why is river valley culture significant? She emphasized that rivers have always been the lifelines of human civilization, shaping settlement



patterns, economic activities, and cultural practices. Moving beyond the conventional study of “dates and dynasties,” she urged participants to understand history through the lens of geography and ecology, highlighting how natural features influence the rise and evolution of civilizations.



She introduced the scholarly understanding of a river and discussed the distribution of water on Earth, along with various natural water sources. She noted that most ancient civilizations developed around rivers due to the availability of water, fertile land, and transportation routes. In earlier times, rulers even constructed temples to honour rivers, reflecting their sacred and cultural significance.

A critical observation made during the session was the shift in traditional practices—for instance, the replacement of eco-friendly earthen diyas with plastic alternatives. Dr. Dube stressed that traditions cannot be sustained meaningfully without understanding the ecological context in which they originated.

The Ganga and Its Cultural Landscape

Discussing the Ganga, she described it as sacred in Hinduism and deeply intertwined with India’s identity. She explained its geographical course and its role in groundwater recharge. The ancient site of Sringerapur was highlighted as an outstanding example of nearly 2000-year-old hydraulic engineering, where interconnected tanks were used for water purification. She also referred to Chunar Fort, known in Hindi literature as a tilismi kila, and noted the extensive use of sandstone in fort construction. Quoting Mark Twain, she described Varanasi as “older than history, older than tradition.” At the same time, she raised concerns about the deteriorating condition of the Ganga, affected by industrial waste and pollution. Importantly, she pointed out that the ghats were originally designed for both humans and animals, reflecting an inclusive ecological vision.



Confluences and Sacred Geography

The discussion moved to Devprayag, the confluence of the Bhagirathi River and Alaknanda River, where the Ganga formally begins. She also mentioned Rishikesh, often called the yoga capital, and Haridwar, known for the Kumbh Mela.

The Yamuna and Cultural Narratives

The Yamuna River was discussed as another major river, currently in the news due to its polluted state. Dr. Dube highlighted its mythological associations with Krishna, including stories like the victory over Kaliya Nag and the Rasa Leela. Historical sites such as Purana Qila and cities like Agra were noted as being situated along its banks.

The Narmada: Geological and Cultural Significance

Turning to the Narmada River, she described it as one of the oldest rivers, believed to have existed when India and Africa were part of a single landmass. Flowing westward across central India, the Narmada is unique for the tradition of circumambulation (parikrama) along its entire length of over 1300 km. She also referenced the Narmada Purana, emphasizing its spiritual significance.

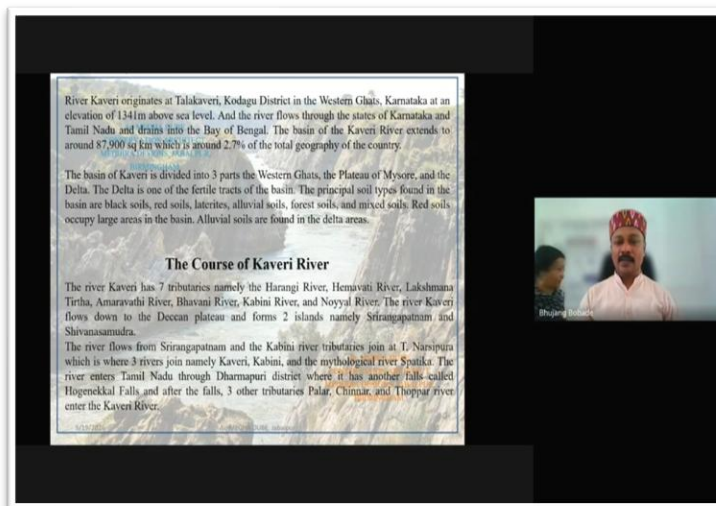
The site of Rahioli was mentioned as an important dinosaur fossil site, adding a prehistoric dimension to the river's cultural landscape.

Other Riverine Heritage Sites

Dr. Dube also touched upon how films have contributed to bringing lesser-known heritage sites into public awareness. She discussed the Undavalli Caves and Amaravati, an important center of Mahayana Buddhism and a site rich in cultural history.

The Godavari Basin

Finally, she spoke about the Godavari River, the second-longest river in India after the Ganga. Originating from Trimbakeshwar, it forms one of the largest river basins in the Indian subcontinent, surpassed only by the Ganga and Indus systems.



Conclusion

The session concluded with a strong message: heritage cannot be understood in isolation from nature. Rivers are not merely physical entities but living cultural systems that sustain biodiversity, traditions, and human life. Dr. Dube encouraged participants to adopt an ecologically informed approach to heritage preservation, reminding them that respecting rivers is essential to preserving both culture and the environment.

Overall, the lecture was deeply insightful, blending history, mythology, environmental awareness, and cultural studies into a holistic understanding of India's river valley heritage.

Day 6 – Morning Session II

The second session of Day 6 was conducted by Prof. Shrish Mishr, a retired professor and filmmaker from Chhattisgarh, who has been honoured with the President's Award (1981) for his contributions to film. His lecture on "Heritage, Museum and Film Making" brought together cultural theory, field examples, and practical visual storytelling techniques.

Understanding Heritage

Prof. Mishr began by defining heritage (धरोहर / विरासत / थाती) as the valuable legacy inherited from our ancestors, including culture, traditions, and natural resources. He elaborated on the distinction between tangible (मूर्त) and intangible (अमूर्त) cultural heritage, emphasizing that both are equally significant for preserving identity.



He further discussed natural heritage, explaining it as landscapes and geological formations of scientific and cultural importance. He cited examples such as the Aravalli Range, recognized as a geo-scientific heritage site, and the Western

Ghats, listed by UNESCO in 2012. He also referred to geomorphological heritage sites like St. Mary's Islands and the geological formations of the Naga Hills Ophiolite.

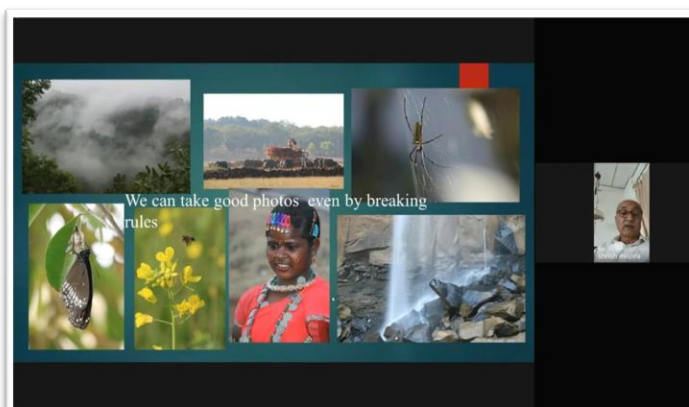
Importance of Heritage

He highlighted the significance of heritage in terms of:

- Preservation of ancient knowledge systems
- Formation of cultural identity
- Promotion of tourism and economy
- Heritage of Chhattisgarh

Drawing from his own work, Prof. Mishr presented rich examples from Chhattisgarh:

- The Tala Rudra Shiva sculpture, an extraordinary representation of Lord Shiva, known for its intricate iconography and composite imagery.
- The Baiga Tribe, particularly their tradition of godna (tattooing), which reflects identity, spirituality, and social belonging.
- The renowned wall art of Sonabai Rajawar, whose clay relief work has gained international recognition for its vibrant and organic forms.
- The Ghughua Fossil National Park (Gondwana Marine Fossil Park), which preserves prehistoric plant fossils.
- The Ramgarh Caves, significant for their historical and cultural associations.
- The artistic traditions of Bastar, including metal (bell metal), woodcraft, and sculpture, as well as the famous Bastar Dussehra, a unique festival that continues for nearly 75 days.



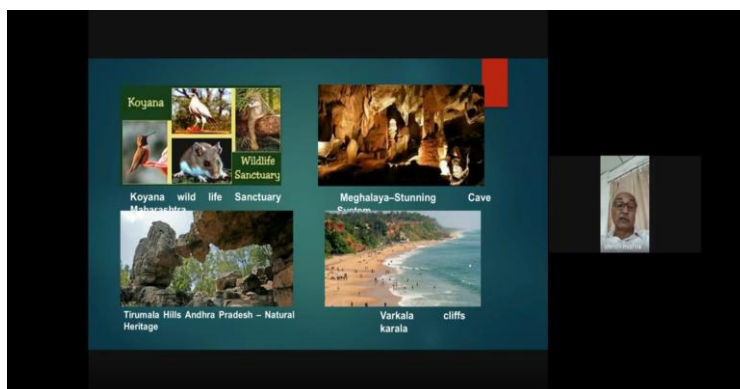
Museums: Purpose and Types

He then explained the concept of a museum as an institution that collects, preserves, and exhibits objects of cultural, historical, scientific, or artistic value. The objectives include education, preservation, and interpretation.

Different types of museums were discussed, including:

- Art and cultural museums
- Historical museums
- Natural history museums
- Science museums
- Archaeological museums

He also highlighted the presence of both indoor and outdoor museums in Chhattisgarh, which help in presenting heritage in diverse formats.



Film as a Medium of Heritage Education

Prof. Mishr defined film as a powerful medium of storytelling and education. He explained various types of films and emphasized their role in:

- Enhancing experiential learning
- Documenting and preserving heritage (अभिलेखन)
- Making artefacts relevant to contemporary audiences

He stressed that films themselves become heritage over time.

The relationship between museums and films was explored in depth—films can bring museum objects to life, while museums provide authentic content for filmmaking. He cited examples of historical and heritage-based cinema such as *Mughal-e-Azam*, *Mohenjo Daro*, and *Tanhaji*, which contribute to popularizing history and culture.

Visual Documentation and Photography

A particularly engaging part of the session focused on photography and visual documentation. Prof. Mishr encouraged participants to shift their focus from casual selfies to meaningful documentation of heritage sites. He emphasized that “हर हाथ में कैमरा” (a camera in every hand) can become a tool for preservation if used thoughtfully.

He also shared key guidelines for effective photography, including:

- Rule of thirds
- Filling the frame
- Use of leading lines
- Framing techniques
- Rule of odds
- Use of negative space
- Capturing during the golden hour
- Maintaining proper colour temperature
- Positioning the sun correctly (keeping it behind the subject)

Conclusion

The session concluded with a strong appeal to the younger generation to become active custodians of heritage. Prof. Mishr emphasized that preservation begins at the individual level—within one’s own home and community. By using tools like photography and film responsibly, individuals can contribute meaningfully to the documentation, preservation, and dissemination of cultural heritage.

Overall, the lecture was insightful and practical, effectively bridging traditional knowledge with modern media tools, and inspiring participants to engage creatively with heritage conservation.

Day 6 – Afternoon Session-I

The afternoon session of Day 6 was conducted as a practical, hands-on workshop by Bhujang Ramarao Bobde. This session focused on imparting basic conservation techniques and offered participants direct experience in handling and preserving historical objects.



Practical Conservation of Artefacts

The session began with a demonstration on the restoration of ancient coins using simple, accessible materials such as salt, lemon, and a soft eraser. Participants learned how mild natural substances can help remove surface corrosion without damaging the original structure of the coin when used

carefully. This activity highlighted the importance of gentle and non-invasive cleaning methods in conservation.



Restoration of Palm Leaf Manuscripts

A major highlight of the session was the preservation of palm leaf manuscripts, an important part of India's documentary heritage. The resource person explained that even the distinct smell of manuscripts can provide clues about their age and preservation conditions.

Participants were guided through a step-by-step restoration process:

- First, dust was carefully removed using a soft, dry brush.
- Then, a mixture of lemongrass oil and eucalyptus oil (in equal proportions) was prepared.
- Using another soft brush, the mixture was gently applied on both sides of the manuscript to condition and preserve the material.



This demonstration emphasized the need for precision, patience, and sensitivity while dealing with fragile historical documents.



Learning Through Observation

The resource person also displayed rare and old manuscripts, explaining their historical context, material composition, and preservation challenges. This direct interaction with original artefacts made the learning experience both engaging and memorable.

Scientific Aspects of Preservation

An interesting insight shared during the session was that processes like rusting can help in estimating the age of certain objects, offering a basic understanding of how scientific observation contributes to dating artefacts.



Conclusion

The session proved to be highly enriching, as it moved beyond theory to provide hands-on exposure to conservation practices. Participants gained practical skills and a deeper appreciation for the delicate process of preserving heritage materials. The workshop reinforced the idea that heritage conservation is not only the responsibility of experts but can also be supported through informed and careful individual efforts.

Day 6 – Afternoon Session II

The second session of the afternoon on Day 6 was delivered by Dr Pragya Shrivastava from Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya, Haridwar. Her lecture, titled “Education through Heritage: Inspirational Stories,” presented a deeply reflective and culturally rich understanding of heritage as a living and evolving concept.

Expanding the Meaning of Heritage

Dr. Shrivastava began by redefining heritage beyond monuments and historical sites. She emphasized that heritage resides equally in stories, traditional recipes, festivals, rituals, and everyday practices. According to her, these intangible aspects form the emotional and cultural core of society, often overlooked in formal education.

Unity in Diversity through Festivals and Food

A major focus of the session was the diversity of Indian festivals and culinary traditions. She explained how the same festival is celebrated differently across regions, with variations in food, rituals, and customs, yet reflecting a shared cultural essence. This diversity, she noted, represents the true spirit of India—unity in diversity.

She illustrated this idea by referring to traditions across the country—ranging from regional cuisines and festive practices to distinct cultural expressions. Examples included Nalanda University, Chhath Puja, Banarasi Silk, folk dances like Ghoomar, desert and hill architecture, and crafts such as the Kullu Shawl. These examples highlighted the vast cultural spectrum that constitutes Indian heritage.

Shared Cultural Values

She also spoke about institutions and practices that symbolize collective cultural values, such as the Golden Temple and its langar system, which embodies equality, service, and community bonding. Through such examples, she emphasized that heritage is not only about the past but also about values practiced in the present.

What We Gain from Heritage?

Dr. Shrivastava outlined the key contributions of heritage to individual and collective life:

- A strong sense of identity
- Feeling of belongingness
- Access to ancient knowledge and wisdom
- Development of creative and cultural skills

She highlighted that engaging with heritage helps individuals understand their roots while also fostering respect for diversity.

Heritage as Value System

In her concluding remarks, she stressed that preserving moral values and family traditions is an essential part of heritage conservation. Heritage, she argued, is sustained not only through monuments but through everyday actions, relationships, and cultural continuity within families and communities.

Conclusion

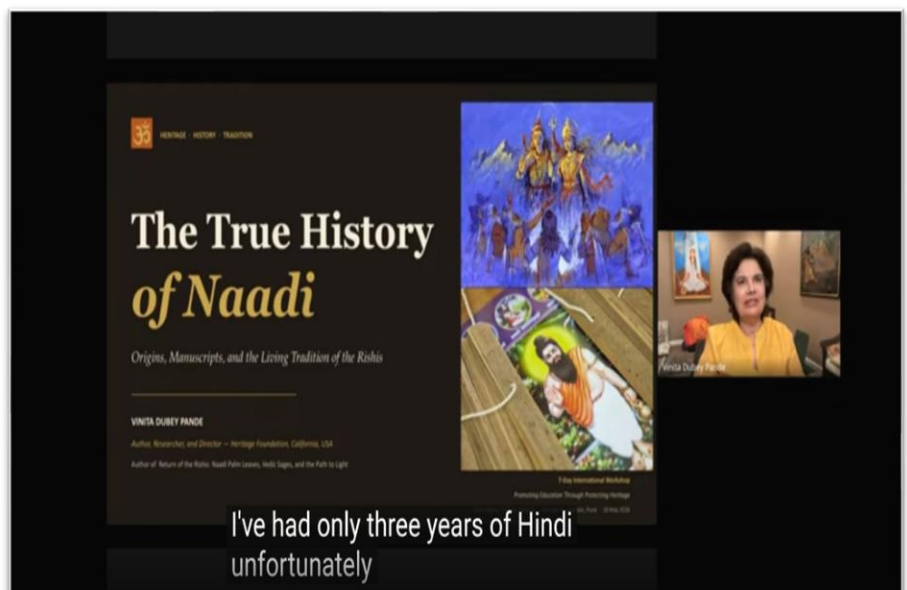
The session was insightful and inspiring, encouraging participants to view heritage as a living, inclusive, and value-based system. By linking education with cultural narratives and lived experiences, Dr. Shrivastava reinforced the idea that heritage can be a powerful tool for holistic learning and personal growth.

Day 7

The seventh day of the International Workshop on Cultural Heritage and Indian Knowledge Systems commenced with an insightful morning session by Vineeta Dube Pande, Director of the Heritage Foundation, California Chapter. Her lecture, titled “The True History of Naadi: Origin, Manuscripts and its Living Tradition of the Rishis,” explored the spiritual, historical, and manuscript traditions associated with the ancient Naadi system of India.

The speaker began by explaining the concept of Naadi and its significance within the Indian spiritual framework. She described Naadi palm leaves as ancient manuscripts inscribed primarily in Tamil and Sanskrit, believed to contain the past, present, and future details of specific individuals. Unlike conventional Vedic astrology, which relies upon the preparation of a birth chart, Naadi readings are identified through thumb impressions — the right thumb for men and the left thumb for women.

Emphasizing that Naadi is not merely a predictive practice, she explained that it functions as a compassionate spiritual tradition aimed at providing relief from suffering through karmic diagnosis, calibrated remedies, and spiritual guidance. According to her, the Naadi tradition was developed to support individuals in understanding their karmic journey and attaining inner balance.

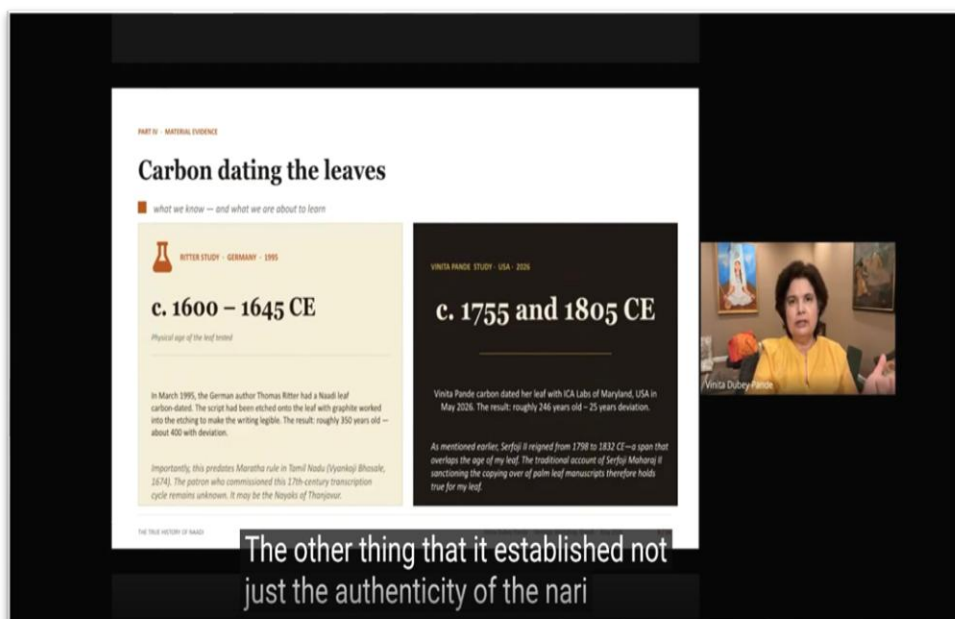


The lecture also traced the mythical and spiritual origins of Naadi traditions to the Dvapara Yuga, before the onset of Kali Yuga in 3102 BCE. Reference was made to sacred conversations between Lord Shiva and देवी Parvati, which are believed to form the basis of these revelations. She remarked that the Naadis are also regarded as shastras preserved through a continuous living tradition.

A detailed explanation was provided regarding the transmission and preservation of the palm leaves over centuries. The speaker outlined the stages of original inscription, transcription cycles, and the continuity of hereditary custodianship that enabled these manuscripts to survive. She noted that many ancient shastras in North India were destroyed during invasions, whereas several manuscript traditions survived in South India.

Particular emphasis was laid on the need for scientific validation of these manuscripts through carbon dating. She referred to the work of German researcher Thomas Ritter, who reportedly conducted carbon dating on a Naadi inscription in 1995. Sharing her own experience, she stated that one of her Naadi leaves was carbon dated at ICA Laboratories, Maryland, USA, in May 2025, with results suggesting an age of approximately 246 years, with a deviation margin of twenty-five years. According to her, such studies contribute towards establishing the authenticity and continuity of Naadi manuscript traditions.

The resource person also highlighted the existence of ancient palm-leaf bundles preserved in the Tanjavur Palace and discussed the important role of the Valluvar families, especially the Valluvar astrologers of Vaitheeswaran Koil, who have traditionally served as custodians and interpreters of these manuscripts. She explained that these collections often move from one family generation to another, thereby sustaining the living heritage.



Discussing the linguistic and script traditions of the manuscripts, she noted that many Naadi leaves are written in the extinct Vatteluttu script, used between the 4th and 9th centuries CE and regarded as a descendant of Tamil-Brahmi. She further referred to contemporary scholarly arguments connecting the origins of Brahmi script to the Indus tradition, thereby extending the historical discourse surrounding these manuscripts.

The lecture also introduced participants to various types of Naadis and the sages traditionally associated with their composition. Reference was made to northern Samhita traditions such as the Bhrigu Samhita, Budha Samhita, Ravan Samhita, and Surya Samhita, generally preserved in Sanskrit on palm leaves or copper plates. The speaker clarified that while the term “Naadi” in South India signifies “in search of,” the term “Samhita” in North India refers to a collection of knowledge.

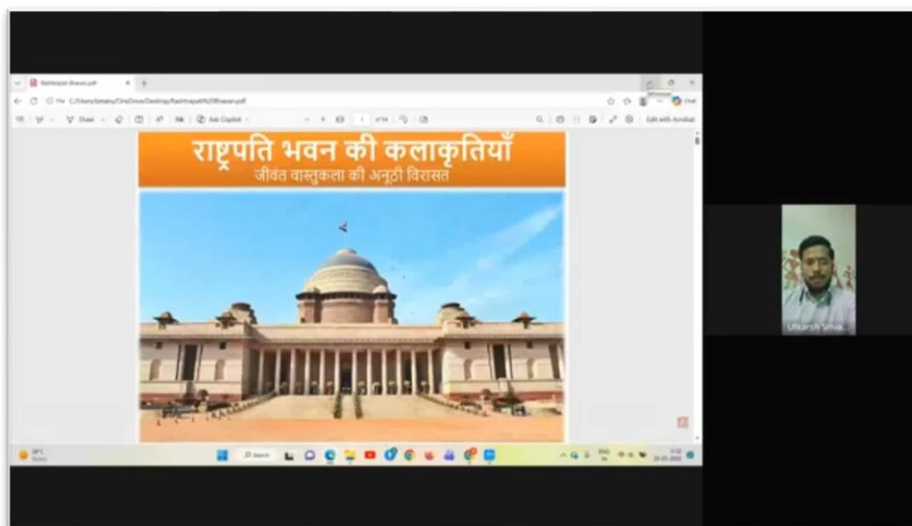
Towards the conclusion, she elaborated upon the twelve foundational Kandams that structure Naadi readings and reflected upon the fragile condition of this manuscript heritage. She observed that many of the presently surviving palm leaves are over three hundred and fifty years old and expressed concern that no major transcription efforts onto fresh palm leaves are currently being undertaken.

The session provided participants with a rare insight into the intersection of spirituality, manuscript culture, astrology, linguistic heritage, and oral traditions. It encouraged deeper reflection on the preservation of

ancient knowledge systems and highlighted the urgent need for documentation, conservation, and scholarly engagement with India's rich manuscript heritage.

Day 7: Morning Session II

The second morning session on Day 7 of the International Workshop on Cultural Heritage and Indian Knowledge Systems was conducted by Utkarsh Shrivastava. The session, titled “राष्ट्रपति भवन की कलाकृतियाँ, जीवंत वास्तुकला की अनूठी विरासत”, provided participants with a comprehensive understanding of the architectural grandeur, artistic heritage, historical significance, and museum culture of Rashtrapati Bhavan.



जीवंत वास्तुकला की अनूठी विरासत”, provided participants with a comprehensive understanding of the architectural grandeur, artistic heritage, historical significance, and museum culture of Rashtrapati Bhavan.

The speaker began by tracing the historical evolution of Delhi, explaining how the city has transformed through different historical periods. He referred to the ancient city of Indraprastha mentioned in the

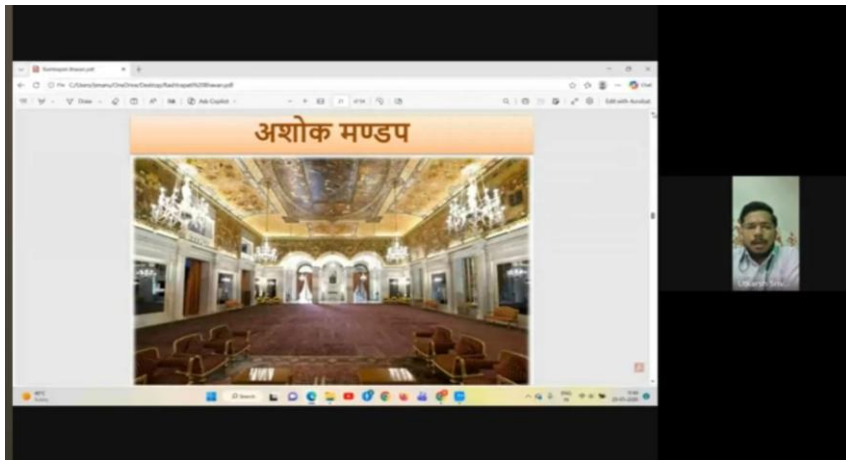
Mahabharata, followed by the Mughal capital Shahjahanabad established by Emperor Shah Jahan, eventually leading to the formation of modern Delhi. Through this historical journey, he emphasized Delhi's role as a centre of political power, cultural continuity, and civilizational heritage.

Referring to the historic Delhi Durbar held on 12 December 1911 in Burari, he explained how the British government decided to shift the capital from Kolkata to Delhi for administrative and political control. Following this decision, the construction of Rashtrapati Bhavan, originally known as the Viceroy's House, commenced in 1912 and continued until 1929.

The speaker shared detailed facts about the construction process of the monumental building. Spread across approximately 330 acres of land in the Raisina Hills area, Rashtrapati Bhavan stands as one of the largest residences of any head of state in the world. Around 3000 labourers and numerous Indian artisans and craftsmen contributed to its construction. Nearly three million cubic feet of stone were used in the building process. The main building itself occupies nearly five acres and consists of around 340 rooms, while the famous Amrit Udyan covers nearly fifteen acres of land. A significant portion of the session focused on the unique architectural features of Rashtrapati Bhavan. The resource person explained that the central dome of the building was inspired by the Great Stupa of Sanchi and symbolizes the fusion of Indian and European architectural traditions. He highlighted that the Indian tricolour atop the dome signifies the presence of the President of India in the city and serves as an important constitutional symbol.



Participants were introduced to the various pillars and structural elements within the complex. The building contains twenty Tuscan pillars and approximately 227 pillars in total, along with thirty-two grand staircases. The speaker also referred to the Ashoka Stambh derived from the Sarnath Lion Capital, emphasizing its importance as a national symbol of India.



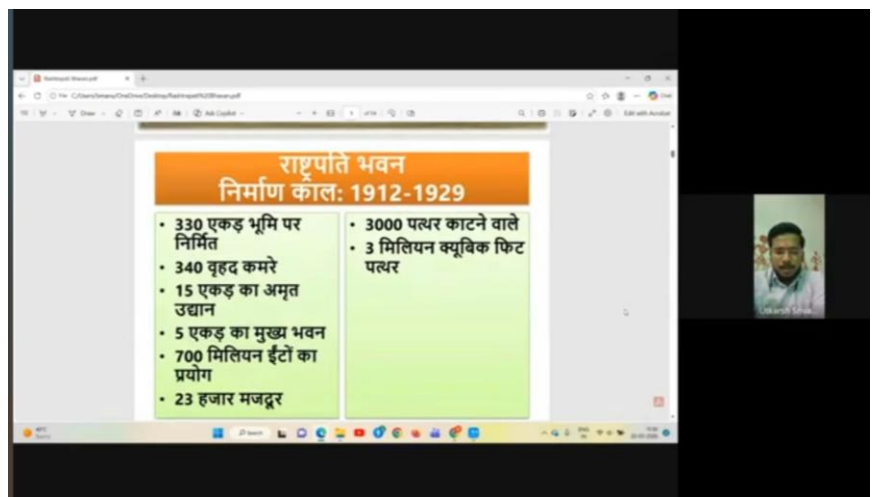
The lecture further explored the significance of the Jaipur Column, which stands approximately 145 feet or 45 metres high before the main building. The column features a lotus motif symbolizing spirituality, along with a star and glass ornamentation. He also mentioned that a map of the then Delhi was incorporated into its design, reflecting the historical planning of the imperial capital.

Students were also introduced to important artefacts and sculptures preserved within Rashtrapati Bhavan. The Rampurva Bull Capital was discussed as an important Mauryan-era artistic symbol. In the Ganatantra Mandap, participants learned about a fifth-century Buddha statue that reflects India's rich Buddhist heritage. Another significant artefact discussed was the Sahastrabahu Avalokiteshvara Buddha statue, gifted by the Government of Vietnam in 1962, symbolizing India's cultural and diplomatic ties with other nations.

The speaker highlighted several ceremonial and historical spaces within the complex, including the Ashok Mandap. He explained that the ceiling painting in one of the halls creates a visual illusion, appearing to look back at the viewer from any corner of the room. Such artistic techniques, according to him, reflect the sophistication of architectural and artistic planning within the building.

The Toran Dwar inspired by the Barabar caves was also discussed for its connection with ancient Indian rock-cut architecture. Participants were further introduced to the historic Victoria Coach and several artefacts related to the Partition of Bengal, which preserve important memories associated with India's freedom struggle and colonial history.

One of the most significant historical references made during the session was to the Charkha Flag Hoisting of 1929 during the Lahore Session of the Indian National Congress, where the demand for Poorna Swaraj was formally raised. The artefacts associated with this event were presented as symbols of India's nationalist movement and collective struggle for independence.



The speaker also pointed out the fascinating architectural alignment between India Gate and the Rashtrapati Bhavan complex, explaining that the top of India Gate and the base of the President's chair are positioned at the same height, reflecting the precision and symbolism embedded within the planning of New Delhi.

The session concluded with an engaging virtual tour of Rashtrapati Bhavan, during which participants were virtually guided through the halls, museums, ceremonial spaces, gardens, and galleries of the complex. The detailed presentation and visual exploration were highly appreciated by all the students and faculty members,

as they provided a rare opportunity to closely observe the artistic, historical, and architectural heritage of one of India's most iconic institutions.

The lecture successfully deepened participants' understanding of India's architectural heritage, museum culture, historical memory, and the importance of preserving national monuments as living institutions of cultural identity.

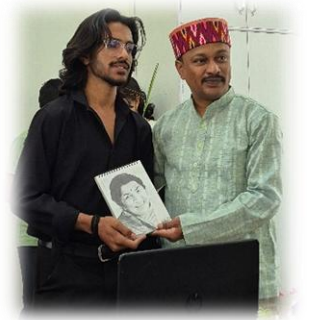
Valedictory Session and Certificate Distribution Ceremony

The seven-day International Workshop on Cultural Heritage and Indian Knowledge Systems concluded with a valedictory session marked by certificate distribution, appreciation of student participation, and recognition of outstanding performance throughout the workshop. The concluding function celebrated not only academic engagement but also the creativity, enthusiasm, and active involvement demonstrated by participants during the various sessions and activities conducted over the seven days.



discussions, field visits, creative activities, and report writing assignments conducted throughout the workshop. The organisers also announced the names of students who secured top positions based on their detailed report writing, participation in activities, and overall engagement during the workshop.

Sneha Rana secured the first position and was awarded a cash prize of ₹3000 for her outstanding performance and consistent participation. The second position was jointly secured by two students, Kanika Thakur and Divya Chauhan, each receiving a cash prize of ₹2000. The third position was jointly secured by three students, including Sher Singh, Mannat Chaudhry and Shreya Thakur, who received cash prizes of ₹1000 each. The cash prizes were generously sponsored by Heritage Foundation Pune as a gesture of encouragement towards young learners actively engaging with heritage education and cultural preservation.





On this occasion, Bhujang Ramarao Bobde addressed the gathering and shared his experiences and reflections from the workshop. He spoke about the enthusiasm and curiosity displayed by students throughout the programme and expressed satisfaction over the meaningful interaction between scholars, resource

persons, and participants. He emphasized the importance of connecting younger generations with India's cultural roots and preserving traditional knowledge systems through educational initiatives.

The formal vote of thanks was delivered by Dr Ursem Lata, who highlighted the significance and impact of the workshop on the students' intellectual and personal development. She remarked that the workshop had not only expanded students' understanding of cultural heritage and Indian knowledge systems but had also contributed positively to their personalities by encouraging confidence, creativity, observation, and critical thinking.

Dr. Ursem Lata particularly appreciated the students who actively participated in various creative and academic activities and carefully documented their learning experiences through detailed reports. She noted that the workshop helped bring forward many hidden creative talents among students, including writing, artistic expression, storytelling, documentation, and presentation skills.

In her concluding remarks, she reflected upon India's rich cultural heritage and emphasized the relevance of the ancient Indian philosophy of "*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*" — the idea that the entire world is one family. She connected this philosophy with the spirit of the workshop, which brought together scholars, educators, students, and heritage practitioners from diverse backgrounds in a shared effort to understand, preserve, and celebrate cultural traditions and collective human heritage.

The valedictory ceremony concluded on a note of gratitude, inspiration, and renewed commitment towards heritage preservation and cultural awareness. The seven-day workshop left participants with valuable academic insights, creative experiences, and a deeper appreciation for India's rich civilizational legacy and living traditions.

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