



6TH PT. DEENDAYAL UPADHYAY MEMORIAL INTERNATIONAL ORATION: "INDIAN DANCE TRADITIONS AS SOFT POWER"

"True democracy is where we share our joys and sorrows and where we think collectively." -Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay

In the year 2001, UNESCO adopted the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. In December 2002, the UN General Assembly, in its resolution, declared May 21 to be the 'World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development'. And in 2015, the Second Committee of the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution on Culture and Sustainable Development, affirming culture's contribution to the three dimensions of sustainable development, acknowledging further the natural and cultural diversity of the world, and recognizing that cultures and civilizations can too, and are crucial enablers of sustainable development.

Against this backdrop, to further consolidate India's good-will across the world by adopting a more focused approach to spreading understanding about Indian culture, civilization and the people, from the year 2018, Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) is organizing "Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Memorial International Oration" to commemorate the World Culture Day on May 21 as an annual feature. The lecture has been organized on the subjects/ issues pertaining to India's cultural influence/ soft power. The first lecture was delivered by Late Smt. Sushma Swaraj, Minister of External Affairs of India (2014 – 2019). The Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Memorial International Oration has become a globally recognised forum for India to showcase her soft power to the world.

Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay, a prominent Indian philosopher, economist, and political leader, made significant contributions to the world through his visionary ideas and dedicated service. One of his key contributions is the concept of 'Integral Humanism', a socio-political ideology that emphasizes the holistic development of individuals and society. It promotes the harmony of material and spiritual progress, advocating for a balanced approach that prioritizes the well-being of all. He also emphasized socio-economic equality, village development, and environmental conservation and stressed the importance of upholding moral and cultural values as the foundation of a strong and cohesive society. He believed that a nation's cultural heritage and values are integral to its progress and identity.



This year, the 6th Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay Memorial International Oration on “Indian Dance Traditions as Soft Power’ by Hon’ble Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha, Dr. Sonal Mansingh, Chaired by President, ICCR, Dr. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe in the August presence of Dr. S B Majumdar, Chancellor, Symbiosis International (Deemed University), was organized on 21st May 2023. During her thought-provoking address she said, “Indian Dance traditions are a spiritual sojourn! Our sadhana demands devotion to take us gradually to a stage where only dance is remembered, not the dancers!” She rightly said that Indian dance has been a part of the culture for many generations. It is known to have a strong connection with spirituality, as it is believed that the movements of the body and soul can bring us closer to our higher spiritual selves. Indian classical dance is thus not only beautiful to watch but can also connect us with the divine. Furthermore, during his inaugural address President, ICCR, Dr. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe emphasized exploring the possibility of ICCR adopting the accrediting agency role under Dr. Sonal Mansingh's and other experts' guidance.

The 6th Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay Memorial International Oration was live-streamed on the official social media handles of ICCR because of which thousands of people across the world joined us virtually. The 37 Indian Cultural Centres abroad of ICCR also played a crucial role in facilitating participants to watch the live stream. Thus, it can be rightly said that with this initiative of ICCR, Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay's ideas on integral humanism, socioeconomic equality, and sustainable development continue to resonate with people worldwide, offering insights and solutions to contemporary challenges.

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