



"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.

In this regard, 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. Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) has been organizing "Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Memorial International Oration" since 2018 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). Today, 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.



This year, the 6th Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay Memorial International Oration was delivered 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) 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.

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 virtually. The 37 Indian Cultural Centres abroad of ICCR also played a crucial role in facilitating participants to watch the live stream.

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