

The Cultures of the Suburbs International Research Network Second Symposium

As a part of the collaboration between Jain University and University of Exeter, representatives from Jain University participated in a two day symposium held at Hofstra University, New York on **'Out of Control Suburbs? Comparing Representations of Order, Disorder and Sprawl'**. The symposium included about 30 papers and 2 key note addresses.

Keynote Address:

One of the two keynote addresses was delivered by Dr. Choodamani Nanadagopal, Dean - Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Jain University on 28 June 2013 titled **'Changing Dynamics of the Suburban Culture Bangalore – A Case Study'**. The one hour keynote presentation covered the history of Bangalore, the phases of development and the urban transformation and its shocking impact on the suburbs.

Defining Suburb from Asian and Indian context, the suburbs are losing their tags as 'suburbs' by overlapping with other suburbs, and also evolving into new suburbs. Bangalore suburbs are in transition and the emergence of Bengaluru as a Megacity and the role of Metro in connecting the suburbs were elaborated. Different organizations like the BDA, BBMP, BMRDA etc. were defined and their functions and scope were discussed. Socio-cultural changes with the boundaries expanding and the suburbs converting into mainstream areas with culture, art and entertainment, architecture and town planning and every aspect of the life of 'Bangalorean'. The cosmopolitan culture of the city covered the co-existence of various traditional communities, lifestyles, fairs and festivals along with the expanding IT space, malls, multiplexes, technological institutions, residential apartments and townships. The attention was also drawn to the changing economic dynamics with the growth and placement of IT/BT parks associated with the suburbs. The presentation was concluded with an objective to carry forward this initiative of suburban research and study the role of suburbs in the urban transformation, economic growth, cultural identity and the sustainable efforts of the residents. Dr. Choodamani Nandagopal also

emphasized Bangalore as a potential space for research on the changing dynamics of suburban culture.

Dr. Soumya Manjunath Chavan's paper '**The Suburban Cultural Identity in a rapidly developing City: Rajarajeshwari Nagar of Bangalore – A Case Study**' investigated the ritual culture of Rajarajeshwarinagar, a changing suburb of Bangalore and its status in the 'Karaga' festival of urban Bangalore. With a brief on the Bangalore city and its form, the paper progressed towards its development and defined a suburb in its general context. A study on Rajarajeshwarinagar and its suburban cultural identity has been supported by substantial description of its temple structure, rituals and festivals of the temple, the Rajarajeshwari Nagara and its links with the 'Karaga' of urban Bangalore. The study throws light on some important aspects of the inter-relation of the suburbs and the mainland city of Bangalore.

Meeting with the seven partners of the Leverhulme Cultures of the Suburbs International Research Network:

The seven partner Universities in this network are:

1. University of Exeter, UK
2. Hofstra University, New York, USA
3. Kingston University, UK
4. Griffith University, Australia
5. National University of Ireland, Ireland
6. University of Witwatersrand, South Africa
7. Jain University, India

Discussions on several points were held at meeting. Members laid stress on significant aspects to carry forward the research on suburban cultures:

i) A regular printed journal was proposed for the suburban research project. Two options for journal were considered: a) e-journal, b) regular printed journal. Since the regular journal was concluded to be expensive, everyone decided on an e-journal. This e-journal will be brought out on a quarterly or half-yearly basis. The journal can be edited on rotation and each issue may have a specific theme.

ii) To record the oral history of suburban culture

iii) Dr. Martin - To record the stories, drama, theatre, fiction in suburbs

iv) Dr. Jo Gill - Research on drama of the suburbs

v) Chris - Children and suburbs

vi) Dr. Choodamani Nandagopal - Artwork in relation to oral history/ stories

Project to ICSSR

The members also decided to propose projects on the study of suburban culture in their respective countries and continue the work on parallel lines. As such, Dr. Choodamani Nandagopal applied with a project proposal to Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi. The project titled '**Changing Dynamics of the Suburbs in the Process of Urban Transformation: With Reference to the changing Socio-economic Scenario of Bangalore City**' has been applied under Jain University. Dr. Soumya Manjunath Chavan, HOD, Visual Arts and Ms. Vibhavari Kumar, Rashmi Niranjana the Research Scholars, Research Department of Cultural Studies, Jain University will be assisting in carrying forward the research work.

Jain University activities associated with the University of Exeter and the suburban project:

1. Meetings in Exeter University – UK (3 to 5 December 2012)

Exeter University, UK has taken the initiative to award a fellowship to Dr. Choodamani Nandagopal as International Academic Exeter Fellow to visit the University and have personal experience of the academic expertise and potential of Exeter University in the 1 week of

December 2012. The visit of Dr. Choodamani Nandagopal assisted by Dr. Soumya Manjunath Chavan has yielded into potential possibilities of the collaboration between Exeter and Jain University.

2. The MoU Ceremony (18 March 2013)

A MoU has been signed by Dr. Chenraj Roychand, President, Jain University Trust and Prof. Sir Steve Smith, Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive, University of Exeter was signed on 18 March 2013 at the CMS campus of Jain University, Bangalore. The MoU has been signed between the two universities on mutually consented academic matters, proposals and initiatives.

3. International Symposium on Suburban Culture of Bangalore (1 April 2013)

Research Department of Cultural Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Jain University organised "Symposium on Changing Suburban Culture of Bangalore" on 1st April 2013 in collaboration with University of Exeter, UK. The symposium took place in the Conference Hall, J C Road Campus, Jain University from 2 PM to 5 PM. Presided by Mr. K R Ramakrishna, Commissioner, Ministry of Culture, Government of Karnataka, the key speakers for the symposium were Dr. Choodamani Nandagopal, Prof. and Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Jain University and Dr. Jo Gill from University of Exeter, Principal Investigator on the Leverhulme Trust-funded "Cultures of the Suburbs International Research Network". The three paper presentations in the symposium focused on issues and questions surrounding the suburban growth in and around the city of Bangalore.

4. Meeting on a proposed Material Culture workshop – NIAS, Bangalore (5 April 2013)

Prof Choodamani Nandagopal and Dr. Soumya Manjunath Chavan had a meeting with Dr. Gillian Juleff, Senior Lecturer and Internationalisation Officer in Archaeology and Dr. Sharada Srinivasan, Professor of Archaeology, NIAS and Vivienne Fernandoe on a proposed workshop on material culture. Students of Cultural Studies, Jain University, ASI department and other universities will be the participants of the programme. Key speakers will be drawn from resource persons from University of Exeter, Jain University, ASI and NIAS. A three day workshop will be organized at the global campus, Jain University as a residential programme where the participants will have a good deal of time for interactions with experts. A delegation fees will be charged for all the participants and Jain University will host the event. European Union and

Archeological Survey of India will be approached for funding and travel expenses for the experts.

5. Grand Challenges Week (2- 10 June 2013)

The Grand Challenges week was hosted by the Jain University for the students of the University of Exeter, UK from 2-9 June 2013 at the Global campus, engaging them in an interdisciplinary learning through yoga, academic lectures, workshops, field trips and cultural shows and events. The week long programme began every day with the traditional yoga practice sessions followed by lectures. The lectures were taken by specialized scholars supported with visuals and practical demonstrations. They will elaborate on topics like Indian culture, aesthetics, psychology, cinema, art and architecture. Field trips to places like Shantidhama, a village tour, Janapada Loka and places of interest of the British Legacy in Bangalore and Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath had been arranged for the students. A one day trip was organised to visit the heritage city Mysore.

6. 2013 Symposium at Hofstra University, Hempstead, New York

The Symposium was aimed to discuss the nature and representation of suburbs, suburban life and sprawl whether local, regional or global. The symposium was a part of the Leverhulme Cultures of the Suburbs International Research Network with seven partner countries. Jain University is the seventh partner of this network and the sole university representing India.

Dr. Choodamani Nandagopal, Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences had been invited as a key note speaker in the symposium. Dr. Soumya Manjunath Chavan also presented a paper in the symposium. Both the presentations were much appreciated by the members of the symposium and were asked to carry ahead the research on the same. Issues and approaches related to suburban studies were discussed and decisions were taken on significant points. Members put forth their suggestions on various aspects of suburban cultures and proposed innovative ways of approach and methodologies to the study.

7. Two student scholarship for Summer School in Exeter University, UK

University of Exeter has offered two students scholarships for Jain University students to attend their summer school programme in July 2013. Under the scholarship, Minnu Kejriwal and Akila Lakshmikanth, PhD scholars in Cultural Studies, Jain University have been selected to attend the summer school programme in July 2013. After attending the programme, they will further coordinate and communicate with the upcoming programme in Jain University.

8. Upcoming symposium for 19, 20 and 21 June 2014

The next symposium with the concerned members has been fixed on 19, 20 and 21 June 2014 in Exeter University, UK.

Jill Sullaivan' s letter of partnership

Conference proposal for February 2014

Urban Transformation and Changing Suburbs of Bangalore

The Research Department of Cultural Studies invites academics, architects, artists and thinkers to an international and interdisciplinary conference that explores the changing and re-emerging concern of suburban cultural diversity. A two day conference will focus on the growing diversity of the suburbs across the world and rising questions on the diversities of the suburban history and the changing suburbs present and their relevance to the culture and life of the people. The conference invites National and International registrations.



Dr. Choodamani Nandagopal, Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Jain University delivering key note address at the Hofstra symposium



Jain University delegates with other academicians



Dr. Soumya Manjunath Chavan, HOD - Visual Arts Department, Jain University presenting the paper



Academics present during the symposium