

Our Constitution - The Cynosure of Art Lovers



Dr Usha Bande

"All art is autobiographical; the pearl is the oyster's autobiography"
-Federico Fellini,
(Writer and Film Director)

AS INDIA IS FAST EMERGING AS A GLOBAL ARTS DESTINATION AND WORLD LEADER IN PUBLIC-PARTICIPATORY ART, IT IS PERTINENT TO LOOK AT OUR CONSTITUTION WITH PRIDE AS A WONDERFULLY CONCEIVED AND BEAUTIFULLY WROUGHT PIECE OF ART

With art going global and branching into new fields like public-participatory art, public art, wall-art and digital art, the 21st century India is fast becoming a preferred art destination. It is at this point that we look at our Constitution with pride as a wonderfully conceived and beautifully wrought piece of art. Indeed, it is not only a path-finder to governance but also a living history opening up windows on our long heritage and history.

The aesthetic splendor of the Constitution can be assessed in three segments: the floral borders decorating each page, the exquisite calligraphy of the hand-written document, and the 22 sketches focusing on our bountiful culture. "Each illustration is drawn from a different epoch of Indian art ... and in each case effort has been made to find a narrative" to suit the content, opines an art critic. The paintings draw from many styles of Indian art such as Rajasthani, Pahari, Mughal, Deccani; and to explore the subtlety of our diverse traditions Nandal Bose's team of Shanti Niketan artists visited various sites like Ajanta, Amravati, Mahabalipuram and Konar.

What the Constitution represented was later picked up in 1960s by the Amar Chitra Katha comics which took up the onus to educate the children in Indian culture and history. The series on our mythological and historical heroes, great women of India, scientists and freedom fighters figured in the form of illustrated stories.

It is generally argued that we, in India, side-lined art as of secondary importance,

fit only for the well-off and the well-fed, but the vast treasures of arts emanating from our Santhals, Worlis and various other tribals easily proclaim that public art existed in our tradition since ages, much before it was made popular by the west.

To contend that art has been integral to our way of life in more ways than one, we turn to the Uthiramerur temple in Tamil Nadu where polity and art display striking fusion. The 1250-year old constitution carved on stone within the precincts of a temple in Uthiramerur can be called the active creative representation that helps the general public to understand their duties and rights in a meaningful way and develop a community bonding through the platform of art. These inscriptions record and preserve a number of historical, social and political facts of the era that palm leaves could not have preserved.

Coming to the contemporary public art, the Integrated Transit Corridor around Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, is yet another



PHOTOS: USHA BANDE

version that has captured the imagination of the nation. Inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in June 2022, the main tunnel and the five underpasses present the finest expression of "Celebration of Life through Six Seasons". Prof Him Kumar Chatterjee of Shimla who executed the project opens that these hand painted murals on the two side walls and central columns depict the literary and cultural rooting and the flora and fauna of the six seasons. As per the Prime Minister's instructions, the tunnel remains open to the public on Sundays to walk through and enjoy the wonderful visual feast of the ecological and poetic aspect of our culture. It remains closed for vehicular traffic on those days. The first mural starts with the Uttaraayan of the sun with a bird 'Samvat-sara' inside the sun. It symbolizes the six seasons in different colors as per Ritu-Sandhi concept (Ritu-Sandhi is the junction of two seasons - end of one season or Ritu and the beginning of the new). The Indian aesthetics

of Satyam-Shivam-Sundaram, runs all along. Painted in exquisite cohesion in diverse styles, these walls offer an expression of cultural nationalism.

The Constitution Park in Rajasthan inaugurated in January 2023 by President Droupadi Murmu represents "our vibrant democracy". A walk through the park is an educational experience about the writing of the Constitution, debates and discussions and the main ideals of the Constitution rendered through sculptures, images and other configurations. Such artistic representations help the public take pride in their history and broaden their mind-set.

Besides, art fairs and festivals like Kochi Biennale in Kerala, Serendipity Art Festival in Goa and Art Fair in New Delhi are getting overwhelming response from the public. "Art world is an eco-system in itself," say the organizers of these festivals which they term as symbiotic cultural activities that need public participation and encouragement.

If we take Federico Fellini's beautiful line: "all art is autobiographical," as our base line, then the Constitution of India, with its 22 illustrations can be called the autobiography of our rich culture. Depiction of Indian mythology, history, culture and geography decorating each chapter has been done with great relish and deep thought. The visual journey of the nation starts from nature/geography of the country -- the Himalayas, the

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desert and the ocean.

The cultural journey begins with Harappan seal of the Bull to the independence in 1947 interspersed with portrayal of the forested hermitages of the rishis, scenes from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, great moments from Medieval history and modern period. Scientists and humanists value art for its communicative nature through aesthetic merit. Art has the capacity to increase one's self-knowledge and encourage personal growth; it has the ability to challenge our schemas and pre-conceived notions and to look beyond the mundane to the higher aspects of survival.

IN BRIEF

Adding colours to dreams

"A Dream is Born," a solo painting exhibition by Tvesha Singh, a self-taught artist specialising in oils, acrylics, and watercolours, was organised at the prestigious Alankar Art Gallery, Jawahar Kala Kendra, Jaipur, from January 19th to 23rd, 2023, and included a collection of over 150 paintings on canvas and paper. This was her second solo exhibition. She describes it as "colourful afterimages of places she has visited" as well as an expression of her inner lived experiences. For Tvesha, being in nature is an emotionally charged and spiritual experience. Tvesha Singh's abstract landscapes form a stepping stone for the viewer to go on an imaginative journey. According to Tvesha, the beauty of non-representational art is that the viewer is free to form their own interpretations. Tvesha completed her graduation and post-graduation degrees in English literature from Lady Shri Ram College for Women and Hansraj College at the University of Delhi. "As the daughter of an army officer, I had a mostly nomadic childhood, which gave me the chance to appreciate and deeply connect with the different landscapes of India." "Those vivid impressions from my early years have had a lasting effect on my art practice," she shares. Tvesha's debut solo exhibition, "Abstract Landscapes: An Ode to Nature," was well-received at the Open Palm Court Gallery, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, in September 2022. It was attended



by senior army officers, ambassadors, journalists, art lovers, and collectors.

SJVN CMD meets Himachal CM

Nand Lal Sharma, CMD, SJVN met Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu in Shimla on January 21. Sharma apprised the chief minister about the portfolio of the company and gave a detailed presentation on operational and financial performance, various projects being implemented in Himachal Pradesh, other states of India and in neighbouring country Nepal, CAPEX achievement and future investment plan of SJVN. Sharma informed that the flagship power stations 1500 MW NJHPS & 412 MW Rampur HPS, both located in Himachal Pradesh, are setting new records in energy generation. Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu expressed satisfaction that SJVN's power stations have achieved and maintained plant availability factor of more than 100%. The CMP appreciated the contribution of SJVN in the development of Himachal Pradesh. He also assured to extend all support by Government of Himachal Pradesh in early execution and commissioning of the SJVN's projects in the state.



Webinar on Prakram Diwas

On the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, Department of Defence and Strategic Studies, HPU Shimla in association with NSS Open Unit, UT Chandigarh, marked Prakram Diwas in a virtual mode with distinguished guests. The session was joined by keynote speaker Col. Amit Vig, Editor to Gyan Chakra Journal, Chandigarh and Maj. General Amarjit Singh, Director, Gyan Chakra Think Tank, Chandimandir. Col. Vig in his detailed analysis highlighted the significance of Azad Hind Fauj and its formation. His session covered the history of INA and briefed how INA created fear among colonial mindset to end the freedom struggle of India. General Amarjit shared his thoughts on the life sketch of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and mentioned his tendency to take freedom at his own irrespective of Quit India Movement demand. He also laid down emphasis on the spirit of nationalism. As many as 50+ students and NSS volunteers joined the session. In the question and answer session, students of defence studies raised questions on the role of Japan and INA. In the end, Ritika Verma, unit coordinator proposed vote of thanks in which she thanked the panellists for sparing their invaluable time and well researched insights of Azad Hind Fauj while highlighting the importance of unity and integrity among member participants. Prof. Harish Thakur, chairman, Department of Defence and Strategic Studies, HPU Shimla, congratulated faculty members Asstt. Prof. Binesh Bhatia and Dr Ashok Kumar for hosting this meaningful session.

Bridging gender gap for better opportunities

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THERE IS A NEED TO CREATE AND PROMOTE MORE WOMEN ROLE MODELS TO USHER IN REAL CHANGE TOWARD GENDER BALANCE

Dr. Santosh Dhar

It is widely recognised that women's participation in all levels of management, and in most industries, has substantially increased over the last generation. The attraction, retention and advancement of women in the advanced technology sectors stood in sharp contrast to such progress, and was evident across countries. The role expectations of individuals based on biological sex lead to myths about women's lack of aptitude for the technical trades and stereotypes that discourage girls from engaging in technology, engineering and computer sciences. This was indicated in the under-representation of women in engineering and computer sciences and over-representation in arts and health sciences. It was believed that girls prefer the curriculum that focuses on communication and human interaction to physical science and technology. An ideal woman's image was one who does it all - a hard working professional, a nurturing mother, a caring daughter and daughter-in-law and a supporting wife. Trying to live up to this image with not enough women role models who have done things differently lead to women feeling overwhelmed without much support.

As the country liberalized and joined the world economy in the early 1990s, the IT industry expanded dramatically. The new economy brought about changes in society. More and more women began joining the workforce. In addition, computer science became a respectable job for women in that decade. Initially women from larger cities and premier engineering Institutions only populated the IT firms, but over the years, women from smaller cities and less known engineering schools too joined the workforce. Further automation made playing field, wherein all men and women have equal opportunities to contribute to, and benefit from, the new more technology-enabled world. Once a male-dominated sector in India, a career in the IT industry has become the most

sought-after option for women. In fact, the number of women enrolling in B-Tech courses across various tech institutes has doubled. According to the ministry of education, entries went up from eight per cent to 19.72 per cent between 2016 and 2021. Additionally, there are more Indian female graduates in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) at tertiary level than in developed nations like the US, UK, Germany and France. Yet there are fewer women tech leaders, role models, and tech startups run by women today.

In India, Tech Sector employs more women than any other private sector. According to Nasscom, the Industry's trade association, women are increasingly entering tech roles. 36% of the five million employees in the tech industry are women but, gender based discrimination remains. However, while many women are employed in the sector as a whole, they are disproportionately employed in routine tasks such as data entry and generalist roles like sales, public or customer relations and 'outbound' activities rather than in analytical and managerial roles like market development and planning. They are less represented in senior roles. Only 7% of them hold executive level positions. They are at the most clustered within particular specialist tasks like writers or graphic designers. Women have the skillset to excel in tech roles yet gender imbalance emerges as the topmost challenge for women in tech. Notably, the challenge of lack of equity in opportunities is more starkly resonant among those who have been in their careers longer. According to a report, 47% cite lack of equity in opportunities as the biggest challenge women face in pursuing a tech-related career (Skillsoft Women in Tech Report 2022). Even in non-tech companies today, there are different standards set for them over the men in their field, while women tech professionals continue to encounter inequity compared to their male peers on multiple levels.

Organizations are making learning and development (L&D) a priority. They launch training programmes for its workforce. It is known that an organization with a gender-diverse workforce with greater representation of women in any industry positively contributes to its bottom line. As more organizations recognize the merit of hiring and developing women leaders, the percentage will grow. It all boils down to organizations and leadership ensuring that women in tech are recognized, trained, supported, and given opportunities to grow in their career to bridge the gender gap and create a genuinely inclusive industry. Women are eager to learn and grow so much that they prefer training opportunities to a big paycheck. According to a survey, 52% of women working in core tech companies ranked professional development as one of the top five incentives from their organizations compared to 42% per cent of non-tech companies. It shows that there is a need for L&D leaders to revisit their plans and tailor them to meet the needs of women tech professionals.

Today, women are entering tech sector in high numbers. The Indian IT advocates gender inclusivity as it makes sense as at the bottom of pyramid; the industry needs hands whether male or female it does not make difference

Today, women are entering tech in high numbers. The Indian IT advocates gender inclusivity as it makes sense as at the bottom of pyramid; the industry needs hands whether male or female it does not make difference. Women enter in large numbers, but a glass ceiling remains, with a "leaky pipeline" occurring as they go up the organizational hierarchy, and leave after five-odd years. One reason for this is the struggle of balancing a career and a family, the responsibility for which still rests largely on women. There is a trade-off about their respective roles within the family where in women tend to invest in household roles while men invest time in the paid workforce. Role investment is manifest in childbearing decisions, time allocations to commercial tasks, concerns about work/life balance and perceptions about demands on time. Role investment is one explanation why women, in general, less likely participate in business ownership. Compared to men, women in technology sectors are significantly less likely to be married and to have children while being more likely to work part-time; to consider family in career decisions; and to have flexibility in their jobs. The low number of women in upper management positions, coupled with the fact that the few available senior female managers and executives in the advanced technology sectors imply that women are less likely to find female, and in particular senior level, mentors. There is a need to create and promote more women role models to usher in real change toward gender balance. Women need to break the glass ceiling. Coping with aging populations, the artificial intelligence, robotics, and other advanced technologies will be there to complement and boost productivity of workers. Indian IT sector presents an optimistic picture of gender inclusivity and changing landscape of work as the current century further unfolds.

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Himachal leading...

Contd. from page 1

Policy on Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) came into being in the year 2013 to protect and manage natural resources for sustained production of ecosystem services; address the impacts of climate change; and provide additional incentives to the communities for conserving ecosystems. Taking into account the hilly terrain and ecological and environmental problems of the state, the legislation of Himachal Pradesh enacted the Mineral Policy 2013 for regulating the mines and minerals in the state.

Himachal, known for its rich natural legacy, is amongst the top tourist destinations in the country, both for national as well as international visitors. The state along with the promotion of the tourism sector is also concerned with environmental degradation. The Ecotourism Policy, 2017 has been framed to preserve and protect the natural and cultural heritage of the state, enhance the livelihood of locals, generate resources for sustainable development, and promote appreciation for the heritage through authentic ecotourism initiatives. The state evolved Transport Policy with conveyance playing a key role in balanced development by improving the ability and efficiency of accessing and distributing goods, services, and productive capacity with livelihood opportunities.

To handle the ecological issues linked with farming, the state has evolved an Organic Farming Policy that works on the vision of "Organic Himachal Pradesh" and gives recognition and reassurance to the organic sector in the state, besides creating an investment environment for organic agro-tourism to develop an important sector for self-employment and value-added activities.

The Horticulture Department in the state has executed the World Bank-funded Himachal Pradesh Horticulture Development Project, which has supported marginal farmers and agro-entrepreneurs to increase the productivity, quality, and market access of selected horticulture commodities.

Himachal Pradesh is the first state in the country to enact the H.P. Non-Biodegradable Garbage [Control] Act 1995 and Rules 1996 for dealing with solid waste management and the menace of recycled plastic carry bags. Legislation has evolved with the development of the energy sector: The Directorate of Energy is providing a conducive policy framework and directions to promote, develop, and optimally harness the huge hydro potential of the state and facilitate the programmes and policies meant for energy conservation. Hydropower Policy 2006 is working for the development of Himachal Pradesh as a "Hydro Power State." Likewise, the H.P. Solar Power Policy, 2016, is contributing to the national objective of increasing the share of renewable energy in total energy consumption in accordance with climate and environmental concerns.

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