

International Seminar on Kashmiri Language And Culture And Fifth Musical Festival

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London: A Symposium on March 24 and 25, 2001 titled International Seminar on KASHMIRI LANGUAGE AND CULTURE AND FIFTH MUSICAL FESTIVAL was held at Kashmir Bhawan, Luton, U.K.

The symposium highlighted the culture and heritage of Kashmiris and ways and means of preserving it. The symposium was the brain child of Dr. S.N.Ganju, a veteran Kashmiri leader based in U.K. 'We have to make all the efforts to preserve our language, music and cultural heritage and to achieve that, we must have a Kashmiri center in every city in the world,' Said Dr. Ganju to a very large gathering of attendees. 'We are spread out in all parts of the world and considering our small numbers, we have to make an extra effort to maintain a link and that purpose can best be served through these cultural centers.' Dr. Roop Krishen Bhat of Northern Regional Language Center, India and prominent U.S based community leader Jeevan Zutshi were in attendance besides the delegates from U.K, Mrs. Krishna Bhan, Dr. Vijay Dhar, Dr.Jeevan Raval, Mr. Bansilal Kaul, Rattan Kotwal and Dr. Shibani Durani. Also in attendance was Nirja Pandit, an eminent Kashmiri singer from India who mesmerized a large audience with old and new Kashmiri songs. The two days event was very successful and the musical extravaganza in the night of 24th provided lots of memories to the Kashmiris in Diaspora. The program began on 24th morning with a welcome note from the President of Kashmiri Association of U.K. Mrs Krishna Bhan who appreciated the vision and efforts of Dr. Ganju in setting up the Kashmir Bhawan in Luton, U.K. Dr. Jeevan Rawal chaired the first session on Kashmir culture and Heritage in which the culture, heritage and way of life of Kashmiris was discussed. It was felt by all that it is very important to preserve our language without which it is impossible to preserve our music. Jeevan Zutshi presented an article written by Prof. Braj Kachru, a prominent linguist and a professor in University of Illinois, U.S.A. about preserving culture and language. Jeevan also referred attendees to the Kashmiri Web site which was developed by Sunil Fotedar of Texas in the past six years and is an encyclopedia on Kashmir. Jeevan Zutshi also gave an overview of activities in the U.S. by Indo-Americans especially the massive effort at the time of earthquake in Gujarat. Dr. Roop Krishen Bhat said that for the survival of the community preservation of language and culture is very essential. He insisted on setting up of Kashmiri Cultural centers through out the world where there is a sizable number of Kashmiri community. The centers should have the facilities for running of language courses, library, music room and art gallery displaying Kashmiri artifacts. Kashmiri artifacts were also displayed in the newly set up Kashmir Bhawan, 33 Albion Rd., Luton Beds.LU20DS, U.K.