



Centre for Language, Translation and Cultural Studies
School of Humanities

NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY

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8 weeks Online Short-Term Training Programme

on

Folklore Studies in the Digital Age (2nd Cycle): Report

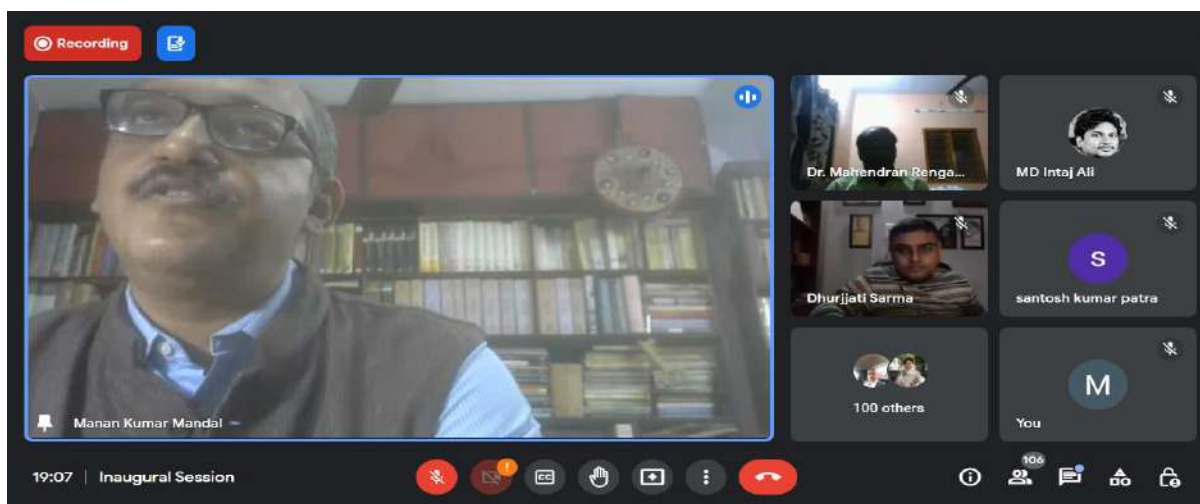
December 10, 2022 to February 12, 2023

Introduction

The Centre for Language, Translation, and Cultural Studies (CLTCS), School of Humanities, Netaji Subhas Open University, organised an online 8-week Short-Term Programme on Folklore Studies in the Digital Age held from December 10, 2022, and concluded on February 24, 2023. The course intends to introduce various methods and technological tools by providing a platform for practical training to perform archival work on folklore material on a digital platform. Since the participants included research scholars and faculty members across different streams and disciplines from all over India, the course was held via the Google Meet platform. The sessions were scheduled over the weekends for one and a half hour. Additionally, a few technical sessions were offered over the weekdays, and the medium of instruction was English. Besides, additional materials in the form of pre-recorded lectures and soft copies were provided to participants to understand the subject in a better way.

The field of folklore studies has undergone significant changes with the advent of digital technology. The traditional modes of collecting, documenting, and analyzing folklore have been replaced by new methods that incorporate digital tools and techniques. To train and equip researchers and scholars with these skills, an 8-week online short-term training program was organized on Folklore Studies in the Digital Age. The program focused on the basic idea of folklore, shifting paradigms in folklore studies, digital folkloristics, starting a project work, digitizing folklore elements, digital ethnography, selected tools for exploration, hands-on training, project work, and presentation. This report provides an overview of the program, its objectives, and outcomes.

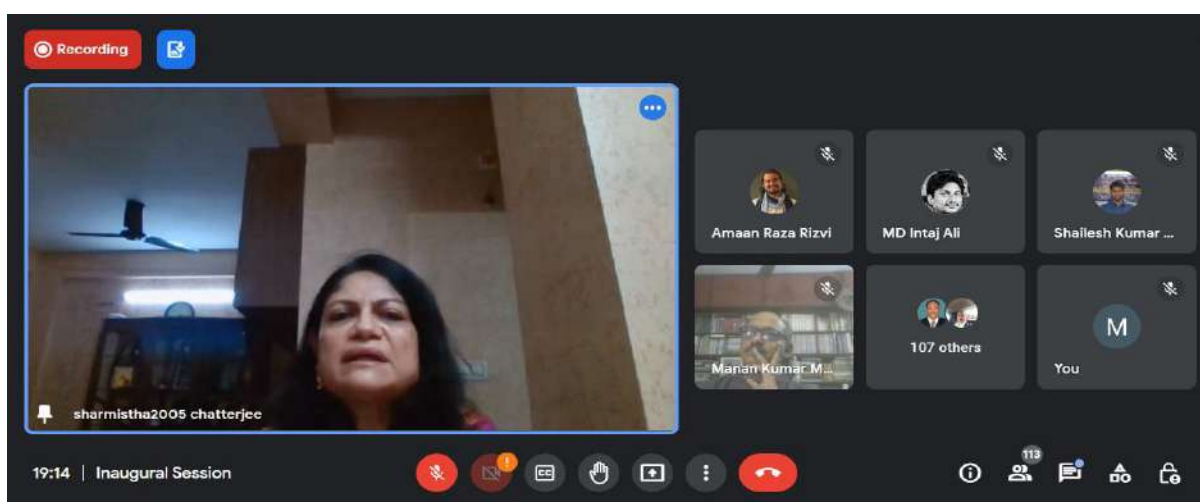
The course advisors were Professor Manan Kumar Mandal, Director, School of Humanities, NSOU, and Professor Srideep Mukherjee, Head of the Dept. of English, NSOU. Dr Md. Intaj Ali, Assistant Professor of English at Netaji Subhas Open University & Assistant Coordinator of the Centre for Language Translation & Cultural Studies (CLTCS), NSOU, coordinated the course.



Inaugural session: (10/12/2022)

An inaugural session was conducted on December 10, 2022. Professor Manan Kumar Mandal addressed the inaugural Session (Prof. in Bengali and Director, School of Humanities & coordinator -CLTCS) along with Prof. Sharmishtha Chatterjee (Prof Dept. of English Language Teaching, NSOU) by welcoming all participants, resource persons, and speakers focusing on the core objectives and the scope of such short-term programs. Dr Md. Intaj Ali, Assistant Professor of English and Assistant Coordinator (CLTCS), NSOU, addressed the course's overview. He introduced the participants to the timeline and the various dimensions expected to be covered during the two-month programmes. Satabdi Das, PhD Research Scholar, Department of English, NSOU, concluded the session with a vote of thanks.

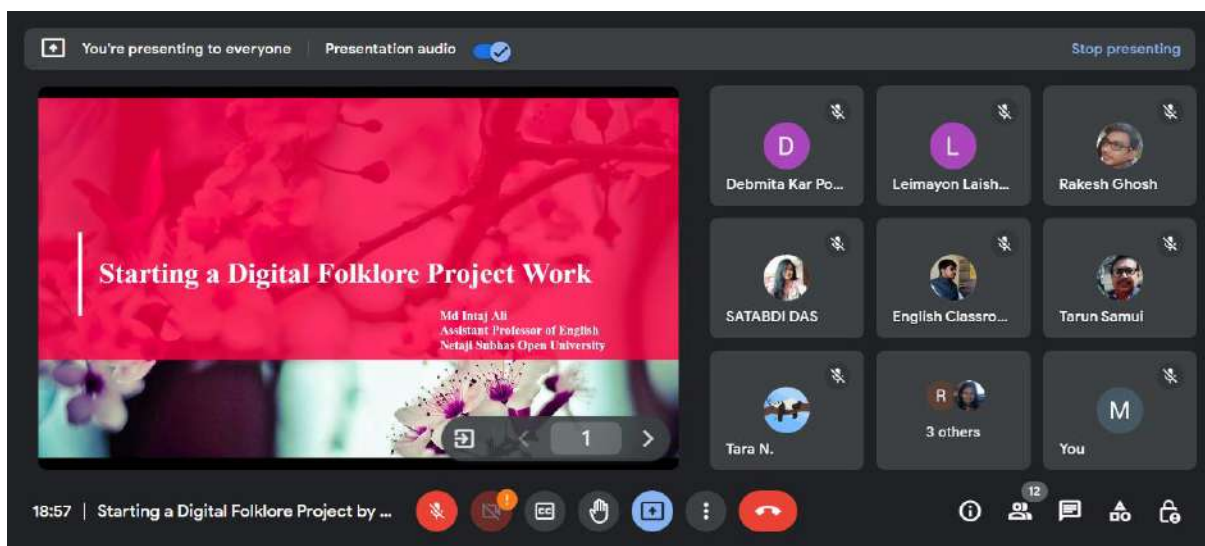
The session was concluded with a note of appreciation from all resource persons and speakers by congratulating the course coordinator Dr Md. Intaj Ali for this great initiative and future endeavours. Hence course's primary aim was to provide in-depth knowledge for scholars as well as a layman who could use the tools and methodology to study folklore.



Objectives:

The primary objective of the program was to provide participants with an in-depth understanding of the shifting paradigms in folklore studies and the ways in which digital technology has influenced the field. The program aimed to equip participants with the necessary skills to digitize folklore elements, conduct digital ethnography, and use selected tools for exploration. The program also aimed to provide hands-on training and guidance for participants to start a project work on the digital folklore project. The final objective of the program was to enable participants to present their project work in a clear and compelling manner.

Program Structure:



The program was structured into eight modules, each spanning one week. The first week focused on the basic idea of folklore and provided an overview of the field. The second week discussed the shifting paradigms in folklore studies and the impact of digital technology on the field. The third week focused on digital folkloristics and explored the ways in which digital technology has transformed the collection, documentation, and analysis of folklore. The fourth week provided guidance on starting a project work and introduced participants to the digital folklore project.

The fifth week focused on digitizing folklore elements and provided hands-on training on the use of various digital tools for collecting and documenting folklore. The sixth week focused on digital ethnography and introduced participants to the concept of ethnography in the digital age. The seventh week introduced selected tools for exploration and provided hands-on training on their use. The final week focused on project work and presentation and provided guidance on how to present project work in a clear and compelling manner.

In addition to the regular lecture sessions, Dr. Md Intaj Ali organized several meet-up sessions for the participants, including sharing pre-recorded lectures for self-paced learning.

One of the highlights of the program was a special lecture by renowned resource person Indranil Mukherjee, Founder of VIBGYOR, on Archival Editing with LR, which took place on January 20th, 2023.

The program also included four movie screenings, which were followed by engaging discussions. The movies screened were "Le chant des fous" by Georges Luneau, "Sama: Muslim Mystic Music of India" directed by Shazia Khan, "Indus Blues" directed by Jawad Sharif, and "Chhou Dance of Purulia" directed by Dr. Shaktipada Kumar, Assistant Professor of English at Coochbehar Panchanan Barma University.



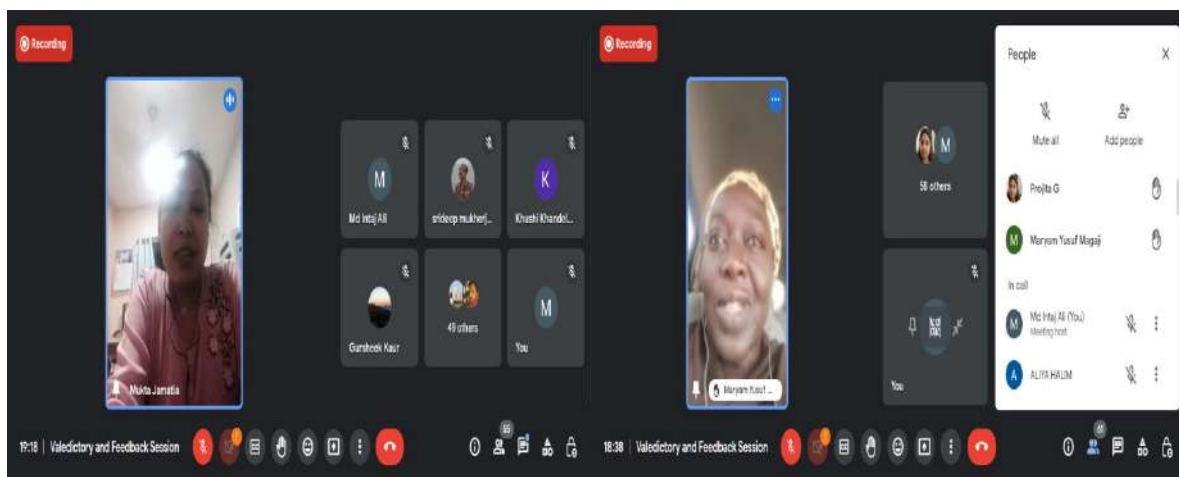
Furthermore, a session on Critical Reading and Discussion was organized, which focused on a celebrated text, "What is folklore, and why does it matter? Problem and practice" by Simon J. Bronner. Dr. Md Intaj Ali moderated the discussion and provided an open platform for participants to share their thoughts and opinions.

Overall, the 8-week online short-term training program on Folklore Studies in the Digital Age was an engaging and beautiful journey for all the participants. Dr. Md Intaj Ali's efforts to provide additional resources and opportunities for discussion enriched the learning experience and made it even more valuable.

Valedictory session

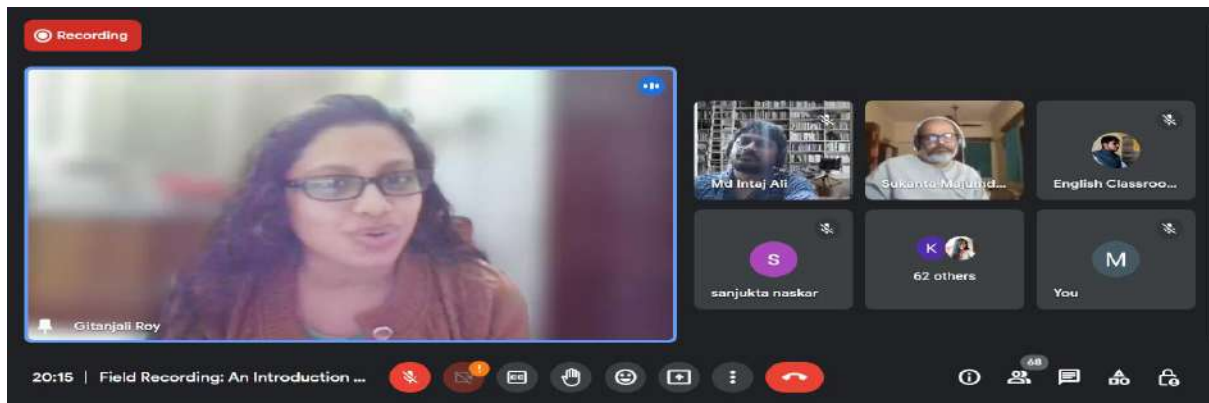


On February 12, the course was concluded, and a valedictory session was held in which Dr Md. Intaj Ali, Dr Dhurjjati Sarma, and Professor Sharmistha Chatterjee gave their valedictory notes. The general feedback was taken from participants. Subhanwita Sinha, PhD Research Scholar, Dept. of English, Netaji Subhas Open University, extended a vote of thanks. She thanked Prof. Ranjan Chakraborty, honourable Vice Chancellor of Netaji Subhas Open University, for his official and sincere support. She also extended her heartfelt thanks to Prof. Srideep Mukherjee, Head of the English Department, NSOU, for his presence and valuable suggestions and feedback.



She did not forget to thank Pabitra Naskar and Gautam Samanta, the official staff of the school, for their tiresome continuous support to make the course successful. Then, she congratulated and thanked Dr. Md. Intaj Ali, Assistant Professor in English, NSOU, and coordinator of this whole endeavour, for his tireless vigilance throughout. The honourable resource persons, namely Dhurjjati Sarma, Dr. Shaktipada Kumar, Dr. Joly Puthussery, Dr. Sangeeta Dutta, Dr. Rahi Soren, Dr. Md Kaikubad Ali, Indranil Mukherjee, Professor Sharmistha Chatterjee, Professor Sukanta Majumdar including our previous cycle speakers without whom the STC could not have been completed in any way, are being cordially thanked by the NSOU family members. And finally, she shows his gratitude to the senior respected participant-professors like Dr Arunima Das, Assistant Professor of English, Dept. of English Gargi College, University of Delhi and all the other esteemed participants, whose lively presence all through has bestowed the whole enterprise with the charm it needed. Feedback and suggestions were taken from the participants regarding the course, and with that, the 2-month-long Short Term Programme on Folklore Studies in the Digital Age was wrapped up by Dr. Md. Intaj Ali.

Feedback and Suggestions



The student appreciated the interaction and question-answer sessions, which provided exposure to different perspectives and new subjects. The student also learned how to write a research article, which was helpful for their future research. Despite having no prior experience, the student was able to write an article on the relationship between folksongs and the protest of the marginalized, with a focus on the inhabitants of Chhotonagpur and Santhal Pargana. The student was grateful for the course coordinator's patience and support in answering their queries and helping them write the article, and overall had a wonderful experience.

The participants found it fascinating to explore how mythology continues to influence popular culture in the digital age. They gained a greater appreciation for the importance of mythology in shaping cultural beliefs and worldviews, and that mythological stories are still relevant today. The rise of digital media has opened up new opportunities for mythological storytelling. The program was well-planned and balanced, with engaging sessions and comprehensive course materials. Assignments were well-designed and reinforced learning while allowing for individual exploration. Overall, the program taught the writer that myths are a rich and important part of human culture that continue to influence and shape our lives today.

The course on digital mythology to be positive, enriching, and well-designed. The course provided a comprehensive overview of key concepts and their relevance in contemporary society, with informative and engaging course materials and a knowledgeable and responsive instructor. The course structure allowed for individual exploration and engagement while providing a clear learning path. The individual would highly recommend the course to others interested in digital mythology.

Besides these, we have received many recommendations. They are as follows:

Number of Discussion session should be increased.

The student found the duration of the digital folklore course to be appropriate, and appreciated the clear learning objectives and manageable units. The course materials were informative and easily accessible, and the instructor was knowledgeable and supportive. The digital platform was user-friendly and allowed for easy interaction with other students. Overall, the student had a positive and productive learning experience.

For online mode of conducting such programs ecosystem needs to be up to certain standard so as to cut the loss of time and improve the quality of communication.

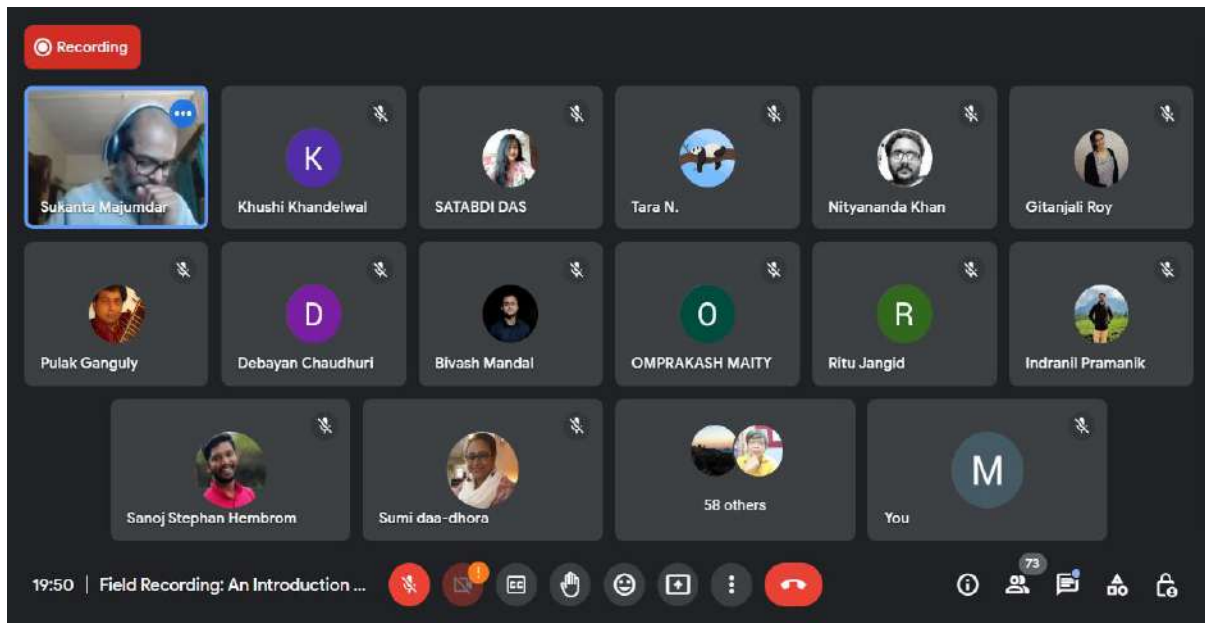
The course would've been more interesting if it covered a wide range of folk cultures of India. But it is understandable given the duration of the course. I learnt a lot from this course. If there will be arrange field work it must be so helpful to me.

Outcome:

The program was successful in achieving its objectives. Participants gained an in-depth understanding of the shifting paradigms in folklore studies and the impact of digital technology on the field. They were able to digitize folklore elements, conduct digital ethnography, and use selected tools for exploration. Participants were able to start a project work on the digital folklore project and present their work in a clear and compelling manner.

Conclusion:

The 8-week online short-term training program on Folklore Studies in the Digital Age was successful in providing participants with an understanding of the impact of digital technology on the field of folklore studies. The program equipped participants with the necessary skills to digitize folklore elements, conduct digital ethnography, and use selected tools for exploration. The program also provided guidance and hands-on training for participants to start a project work on the digital folklore project and present their work in a clear and compelling manner. The program was an excellent opportunity for researchers and scholars to gain new insights and develop new skills in the field of folklore studies.



A special thanks to Dr Kalapi Sen and Md Sujauddin Shaikh for their support and coordination during the sessions of the course.

Md. Ali

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Date: 16/04/2023