

BEST PRACTICE-I

1. Title of the Practice

Award of the “Gangadhar National Award for Poetry” to a poet of all-India stature every year on the occasion of the foundation day of the University.

2. Objectives of the Practice

In order to fulfill its humanist objectives, Sambalpur University considers the promotion of art and culture to be just as crucial as the creation of theoretical and applied knowledge. The ultimate goal of higher education is the holistic and comprehensive development of human civilization, a goal that the University has continuously worked towards by recognizing, appreciating, and promoting the poets of different languages.

The Gangadhar National Award is given by Sambalpur University to distinguished poets of national repute for their works in Indian languages and English.

3. The Context

Sambalpur University has been highlighting the cultural ethos of western Odisha by presenting one of the greatest poets of Odisha, Swabhaba Kabi Gangadhar Meher, the cultural icon of western Odisha, at the national level in accordance with its vision and mission, which seeks to integrate the local cultural resources with the national and global systems. The "Gangadhar National Award for Poetry" is an annual homage given by the university to Indian poets of distinction as a manner of paying respect to the great poet, Swabhaba Kabi Gangadhar Meher.

The prize was established by Sambalpur University in 1991 as part of the university's celebration of the silver year of its founding. Ali Sardar Jafri was the first to get this highly sought-after award. Since then, until 2021, thirty poets writing in various Indian languages have been honoured with this award. While receiving the awards they have the opportunity to be familiar with the poetry of Gangadhar Meher in English translation, a task that has been accomplished by the English Department of the University.

4. The Practice

Uniqueness

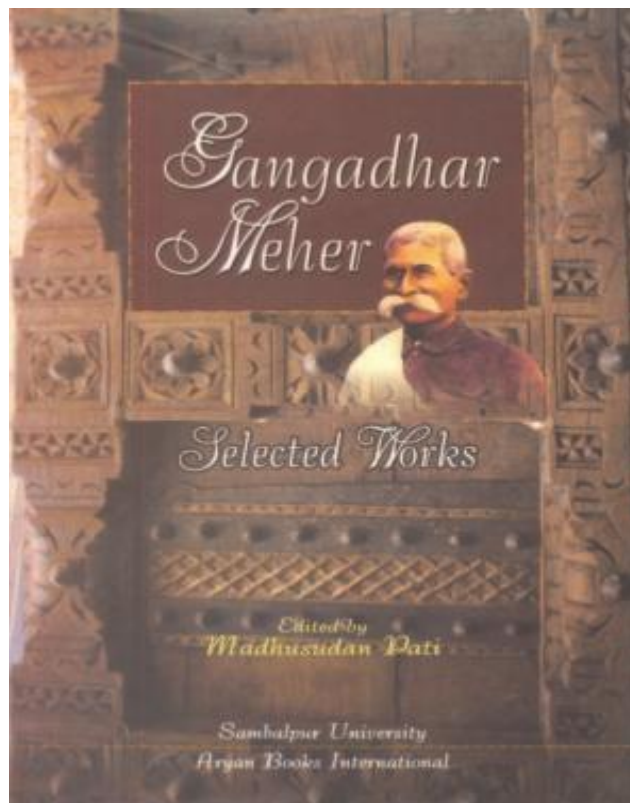
Sambalpur University claims its uniqueness as the only higher education institution in the entire nation to have established a national award for poetry the “Gangadhar Meher National Award”.

Details of Nomination and the Prize

The selection procedure for “Gangadhar National Award for Poetry” is an elaborate, rigorous, and time-taking process. It involves short-listing of names of potential awardees at various stages.

The names of the poets for the award are proposed by the Council of Jurors, which consists of the Vice Chancellor, recipients of the Central Sahitya Akademi Awards for Poetry in major Indian languages (other than Oriya), previous recipients of the Gangadhar National Award for Poetry, and twenty other members (including three reputed teachers of literature and literary critics of Odisha nominated by the Vice Chancellor). The names are processed and scrutinized through a preliminary and a final rounds of selection by a duly constituted Processing Committee, resulting in the finalization of the name of the poet carrying the highest number of nominations for the “Gangadhar National Award”.





The award carries a cash prize of Rs 1,00,000, *angavastra*, a citation, a memento, and a copy of *Gangadhar Meher: Selected Works* (An anthology of Gangadhar Meher’s Poetry in English translation).





Every year, during the first week of January, Sambalpur University celebrates its Foundation Day with a ceremony to present the Gangadhar National Award. The prize-giving ceremony is witnessed by a sizable crowd of faculty members, students, notable invitees, well-known writers, residents of western Odisha, and members of the media. They also hear the citation being read out when the person receives the award. The award-acceptance speech is then given by the winner.

The list of recipients since 1991 is provided below in tabular format. There is a one-year gap between the year for which the award is intended and the year in which it is presented because of the long and elaborate process of finalizing the name for the Gangadhar National Award .

THE RECIPIENTS OF THE GANGADHAR NATIONAL AWARD FOR POETRY

| Year | Name & Language | Photograph | Year | Name & Language | Photograph |
|------|---------------------------------------|---|------|------------------------------------|---|
| 1991 | Ali Sardar Jafri Urdu |  | 2007 | Sri Hara Prasad Das Odia |  |
| 1992 | Sri Nabakanta Barua Assamese |  | 2008 | A.M.K. Shahryar Urdu |  |
| 1993 | Sri Shakti Chattopadhyaya Bengali |  | 2009 | Sri Surjit Patar Punjabi |  |
| 1994 | Sri Jayanta Mahapatra English/Odia |  | 2010 | Sri Rajendra Kishore Panda Odia |  |
| 1995 | Sri Kedarnath Singh Hindi |  | 2011 | Balraj Komal Urdu |  |
| 1996 | Sri K. Ayyappa Panicker Malayalam |  | 2012 | Sri Vasdev Mohi Sindhi |  |
| 1997 | Sri Sitakanta Mohapatra Odia |  | 2013 | Sri Soubhagya Kumar Mishra Odia |  |
| 1998 | Nirupama Kaur Punjabi |  | 2014 | Dr. Subodh Sarkar Bengali |  |
| 1999 | Sri Vinda Karandikar Marathi |  | 2015 | Sri Leeladhar Jagoori Hindi |  |
| 2000 | Sri Ramakanta Rath Odia |  | 2016 | Dr. K Siva Reddy Telegu |  |

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|------|---|--|------|--|---|
| 2001 | Sri K. Satchidanandan Malayalam |  | 2017 | Dr. Chandrasekhar Kambara Kannada |  |
| 2002 | Sri Sankha Ghosh Bengali |  | 2018 | Prof. Viswanath Prasad Tiwari Hindi |  |
| 2003 | Sri Sitanshu Yashas Chandra Gujrati |  | 2019 | Mr. Sheen Kaaf Nizam Urdu |  |
| 2004 | Sri Dillip Chitre Marathi |  | 2020 | Mr. Kamal Vora Gujrati |  |
| 2005 | Sri Gulzar Urdu |  | 2021 | Sri K G Sankara Pilai Malayalam |  |
| 2006 | Sri Nilamani Phukan Assamese |  | | | |

5. Evidence of Success

As the awardees of the Gangadhar National Award come from all over the country, it has enabled Sambalpur University to establish itself in the national circles of poets, literary critics, poetry readers, and intellectuals. Similarly, Gangadhar Meher has now become a well-known name in the literary scene of India. He prominently features in the numerous catalogs and encyclopedias that highlight Indian poetry. His poetry has been translated into English and has been published in a number of English-language periodicals and anthologies. Moreover, Gangadhar Meher's poetry is taught in Visva-Bharati, Shantiniketan, and the University of Delhi's comparative Indian literature courses.

This practice has also helped in promoting and transmitting not only Odia language and literature but also the other cultural practices of the state, especially of western Odisha to the other parts of the state.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

The University has no issues when it comes to the gathering of resources for the Gangadhar National Award for Poetry. The award money, angavastra, drafting of the citation, travel, and hospitality of the Gangadhar awardee are all covered by particular budgetary provisions. The fund allotment is periodically updated to take care of the increasing expense of holding the Award Ceremony. The Prize money which was ₹

50,000/- (Rupees Fifty Thousand Only) was enhanced to ₹ 1,00,000 (Rupees One Lakh) in 2018.

The only issue the university faces is that, if the poets are elderly or disabled, they sometimes choose not to attend the award ceremony due to the university's distance from their homes. This problem to some extent has been solved in recent years because of the air connectivity of the nearest town called Jharsuguda. However, the airport does not have direct flights to most of the prominent cities of the country. In such cases, special efforts are given by the Vice Chancellor to visit the poet at his/her place of residence and give the award.