



University of Mumbai

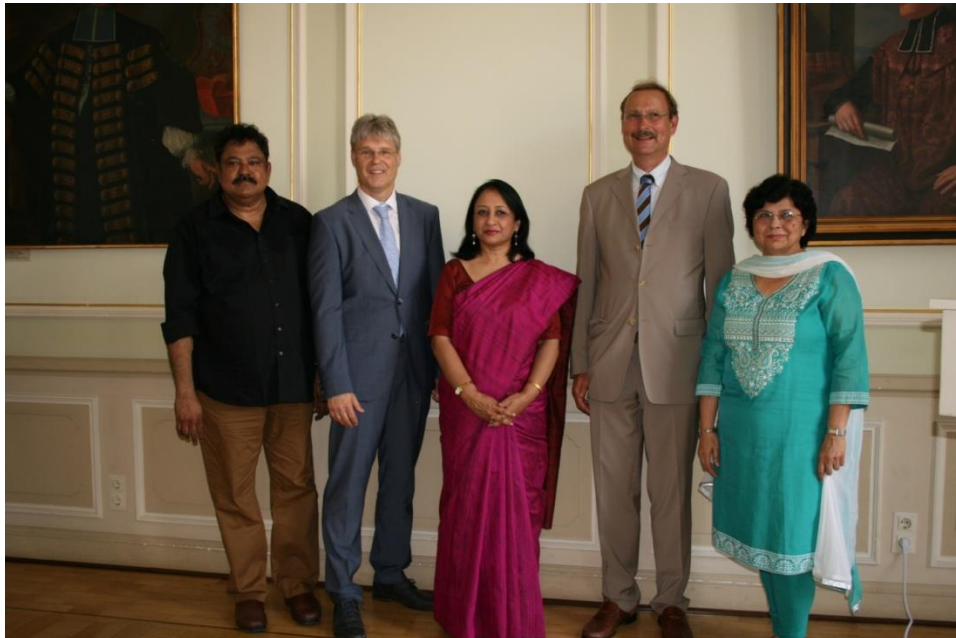


**Report on the Study India Day Programme and the Launch of CoHaB IDC's
First Volume in the Diaspora Studies Series
University of Muenster, Germany**

25th July 2018

CoHaB IDC, University of Mumbai's partner university, the WW University, Muenster, Germany had organized its annual Study Day programme on 25th July 2018 at the Festival Hall next to the Muenster University's historic main building, which was originally the castle of the Prince Bishops of Muenster.

Her Excellency, Mrs. Mukta Dutta Tomar, the Ambassador of India, was the Chief Guest at the function. The University of Muenster's Vice Rector (Pro-Vice Chancellor), Professor Dr. Michael Quante, welcomed Her Excellency and spoke about the close ties between Mumbai and Muenster Universities. He also stressed on how Muenster was keen on continuing ties with Mumbai and the extension of the Memorandum of Understanding between the two universities signed 10 years back has been renewed by them and is being sent to Mumbai for the signature of the Mumbai University's Vice Chancellor.



L to R: Professor Dr. Sridhar Rajeswaran, Professor Dr. Michael Quante, Her Excellency Mukta Dutta Tomar, Professor Dr. Klaus Stierstorfer, Professor Dr. Nilufer E. Bharucha

Dr. Marlena Tronicke, Assistant Professor at the Muenster University and coordinator of the Study India Certificate Course introduced it to the audience. This certificate course is an introductory and interdisciplinary course offered to students of the Muenster University and open to students from other universities in the North Rhine-Westphalia state.

Professor Dr. Klaus Stierstorfer, the Vice Dean of the Philology Faculty, Chair of British and Postcolonial Studies at Muenster University and the overall coordinator and initiator of the CoHaB programme, introduced the Indian Ambassador and then spoke on the theme of the day's function. He explained how it is focused on the historic Silk Roads and Sea Routes, in the context of India's contemporary concerns with staking a claim to this history and that of the Indian Ocean. He said that two keynote speeches would be delivered by the guest professors from Mumbai, Professor Nilufer E. Bharucha, Director Diasporic Constructions of Home and Belonging Indian Diaspora Centre, University of Mumbai and Professor Sridhar Rajeswaran, Director, Centre of Advanced Studies in India and Guest Professor in Humanities at the Centre for Excellence in Basic Sciences, University of Mumbai. There would also be a panel discussion on China and India's roles in the old and new silk roads and sea routes.

Professor Stierstorfer also stressed on the Memorandum of Understanding between Mumbai and Muenster Universities and informed Her Excellency the Ambassador of how due to other very pressing engagements, the Mumbai University Vice Chancellor, Professor Pednekar, had not been able to accept his invitation to be guest of honour on this occasion, but he had sent his best wishes for the function and the ongoing success of the collaboration between Mumbai and Muenster.

Her Excellency Mrs. Datta-Tomar then delivered her address and spoke about how important globalization of education is today. She said that she was happy to learn that more and more Indian students were now making Germany their destination for Graduate Studies and Research. She engaged the students at the function in a dialogue and discussion on higher education and their understanding and knowledge of India.



Students from Muenster University listening to the Indian Ambassador

Professor Stierstorfer then requested Her Excellency to launch the first volume of the Diaspora Studies series published by the CoHaB IDC, University of Mumbai. Professor Nilufer Bharucha explained how the CoHaB IDC is in the second phase of the CoHaB project and is now a research centre that organizes lecture series, seminars and conferences at which national and international experts speak about diverse aspects of the Indian Diaspora – literary, cinematic, social, economic and historical. The centre also provides print and cinematic resources for those who wish to do their research on the Indian Diaspora at the centre. The Diaspora Studies Series has a prestigious list of scholars from diverse fields on its International Advisory Board and the first volume entitled *Beyond Borders and Boundaries: Diasporic Images and Re-presentations in Literature and Cinema*, edited by Nilufer E. Bharucha, Sridhar Rajeswaran and Klaus Stierstorfer and published by the University of Mumbai, is focused on going beyond traditional national borders into transnational spaces. The contributors are from different fields of diaspora studies and come from different countries too.

The book was then launched by Her Excellency Mrs. Dutta-Tomar, who spoke about the importance of such interdisciplinary and international publication initiatives.



The book launch

The first keynote speech was given by Professor Bharucha on “Caravans and Dhows: The Indian Silk Roads and Sea Routes”. Her speech provided an overview of India’s position on the ancient silk roads and how strategic it was for India to stake her claim to the New Silk Road that is currently being projected by China as a Chinese monopoly. As for the sea routes, here again the silk roads of the past were incomplete without the sea routes and maritime trade which was carried on by dhows from Indian ports on the Eastern and Western coasts of India to Africa, Arabia, Persia as well as to the South Eastern countries. Professor Bharucha stressed how not just trade but culture, languages, art and Buddhism were also carried to distant lands by caravans and dhows.

The second keynote by Professor Sridhar Rajeswaran was on the subject of “Transporting Commerce and Culture from South India across the Seas: The Indian Diaspora in South Eastern Asia”. Professor Sridhar emphasized the immense importance South Indian dynasties such as that of the Cholas in the maritime trade carried on between South Asian states by Indian and Chinese ships. The naval supremacy of the Cholas lasted from before the Christian era and carried on into the second Christian millennium, till the arrival of the European traders and colonizers. Evidence of the Indian presence in these spaces is available in archeological monuments in India, in Cambodia, Indonesia and other South Eastern countries. The spread of Hinduism and then Buddhism was a part of these sea routes.

The two keynotes were followed by a panel discussion on China and India: Old and New Silk Roads and the Indian Ocean. The discussion was coordinated by Professor Stierstorfer and the discussants were Professor Dr. Reinhard Emmerich, Institute of Sinology and Modern East Asian Studies, University of Muenster, Professor Dr. Perry Schmidt-Leukel, Professor of Religious Studies and Intercultural Theology, University of Münster, and Director of the Institute for Religious Studies, Professor Nilufer Bharucha and Professor Sridhar Rajeswaran. Professor Emmerich gave a historical overview on the ancient Chinese initiatives regarding the Silk Roads. Professor Schmidt-Leukel spoke about the spread of religions especially Buddhism along the Silk Roads.



The Panel Discussion

L-R: Professors Rajeswaran, Bharucha, Stierstorfer, Emmrich and Schmidt-Leukel

The Study India Day was attended by academics, students of the Study India Certificate programme and of the block seminars on Diasporic British Literature and Cinema, conducted by Professors Bharucha and Rajeswaran.

The programme ended with a reception at which Indian food was served and enjoyed by the guests and the students.