

'We explore the identity crisis the Indo-Canadian community faces'

Nilufer Bharucha, honorary coordinator of the Indo-Canadian Studies Centre, says exploring works by Indo-Canadians indicates that influence of the family unit is stronger among the diaspora

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The Indo-Canadian Studies Centre, set up three months ago at the Mumbai

University, is a resource hub for students who want to explore cultural avenues about the Indo-Canadian community. It focuses on studying cinema and literature generated by the Indian diaspora in Canada. The centre is open to all students, and will also allow non-students to access material for research, if they are deemed interested enough.

Why was the centre set up?

The Indo-Canadian community has been generating a lot of worthy art that gives insight into cultural identity, because they are looking at India from the outside. The centre is sponsored by the British Columbia province in Canada, through the University of Fraser. They have given us a total of Canadian \$110 000 (approximately ₹50 lakh) for it.

What do you aim to study?

We share a common heritage, and their work delves into identity confusion, and the difference between the 'old' and 'new' homelands. We had a lecture on the identity and cultural politics of the Indo-Canadian diaspora in British Columbia last week, which



The centre will host an intern from Ryerson University, Canada over the summer. Below: Nilufer Bharucha.



spoke about the importance and influence the extended family unit still holds among the community there, which in some ways is more extreme than it is back in India. This touse is interesting.

In the future, we would like to expand our study to economics, sociology and other aspects of the community, too.

What kinds of events have you had so far?

"In addition to the lecture on cultural politics last week, we've had seminars to dis-

cuss filmmakers like Deepa Mehta, with screenings of her work. We have also studied the writings of authors like MG Vassanji, Uma Parmeswaran and Rohinton Mistry, among others."

Any upcoming events?

We will be hosting an intern from Ryerson University in Canada at the centre, who is coming here to research the community.

We want to start sending our students on research to Canada in the near future, too, but that will take time.

GET INVOLVED

If you want to research the Indo-Canadian community, or attend events at the centre, email indocanadiansc@gmail.com. For further details and upcoming events, visit the website <http://www.mu.ac.in/others/icsc/>.

