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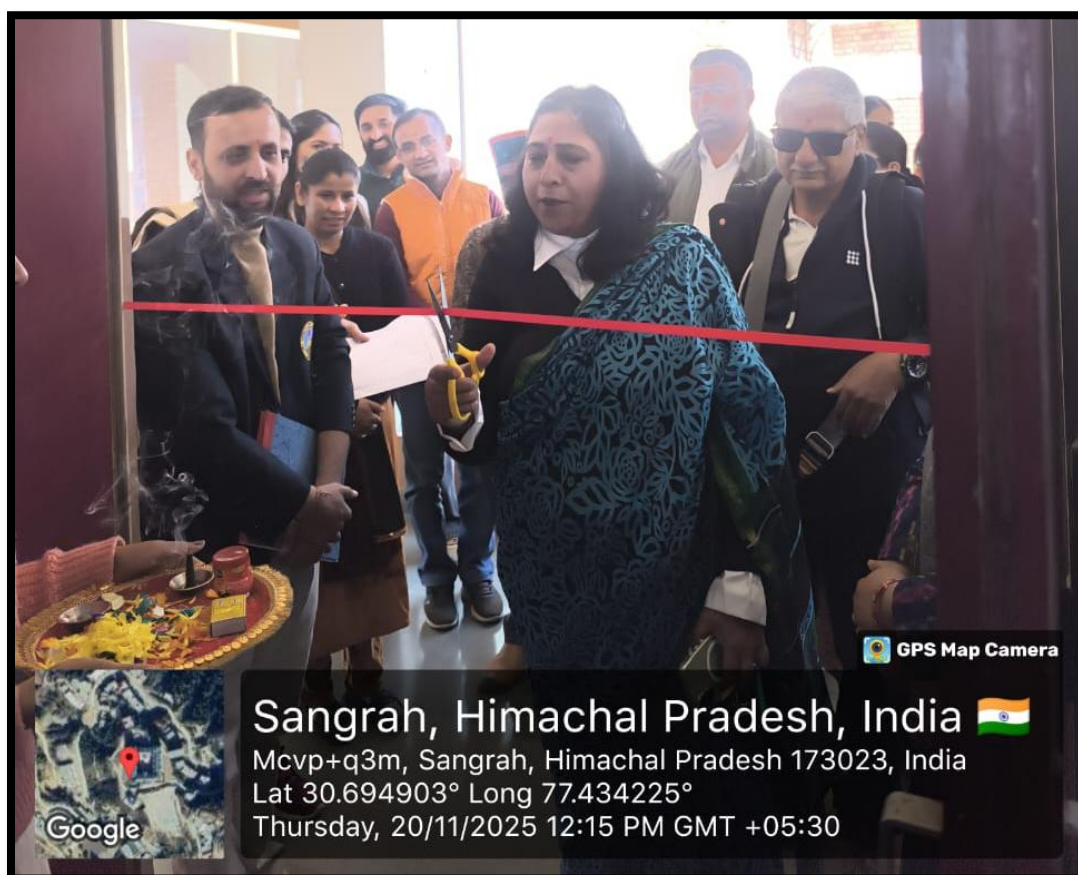
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Exhibition of Cultural Heritage: Ancient Artifacts & Folk Instruments of Sangrah Region
Organized by Shaheed Bhagat Singh NSS Unit, Government College Sangrah

20–21 November 2025



Overview

Shaheed Bhagat Singh NSS Unit, Government College Sangrah, organized a two-day **Exhibition of Cultural Heritage: Ancient Artifacts and Folk Instruments of the Sangrah Region** from 20th to 21st November 2025 under the esteemed patronage of **Principal Dr. Meenu Bhaskar**. The programme was coordinated by **Mr. Sandeep Kumar**, NSS Programme Officer and IQAC Coordinator, whose administrative supervision ensured the systematic planning, documentation, and execution of the event. The exhibition aimed to preserve, display, and promote the centuries-old cultural essence of the Sangrah region, including its archaeological artifacts, traditional tools, domestic items, ritual objects, and indigenous folk musical instruments. This initiative sought to



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create heritage awareness among students and the community while strengthening the institution's commitment toward cultural conservation. The exhibition brought together locally sourced artifacts—stone tools, hand-crafted utensils, ritualistic objects, agricultural instruments, and folk musical instruments such as *nagada*, *shehnai*, *karnal*, *basuri*, and *khadtaal*. These materials, many of which belong to pre-industrial rural Himachal, offered students a rare opportunity to understand the historical continuity and socio-cultural evolution of the region.



Exhibition Layout & Display Curation

The exhibition hall was aesthetically curated to reflect an authentic traditional Himachali ambience. The artifacts were displayed theme-wise—ancient household articles, religious objects, agricultural tools, weaving instruments, war-era metallic items, early-period pottery, and traditional musical instruments. Informational placards explained the *approximate age, region of origin, cultural use, historical relevance, and materials used* in each object. A special section was devoted to “Folk Instruments of



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Upper Sirmour,” showcasing instruments used in marriages, fairs, local deities’ rituals, and seasonal festivals.



Students observed rare pieces like *traditional churners (mathani)*, wooden grain-storages, copper pots, stone grinders, early-era ploughs, handcrafted jewelry molds, and temple bells believed to be several decades to centuries old. The exhibition’s academic purpose was strengthened by live demonstrations of selected instruments, where local artists explained how the sounds of traditional



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instruments differ from modern musical tones and why they carry cultural significance for community identity.



Heritage Significance & Historical Interpretation



The exhibition's third thematic segment highlighted the **historical significance of Sangrah's ancient material culture**, enabling students to understand the lived experiences of earlier generations. The artifacts revealed how rural Himalayan society harmonized with nature, using materials like wood, stone, copper, and wool. Agricultural tools displayed the ingenious methods adopted for terrace farming, shifting cultivation, and seasonal crop cycles in the pre-mechanized era. The pottery items indicated early household

dynamics, food storage traditions, and community interactions centered around local fairs and temples. Many ritualistic objects—such as *brass lamps*, *incense holders*, *conch shells*, and *prayer*



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bells—showed the region's deep connection with spirituality, local deities, and folk traditions. Likewise, the folk instruments depicted the emotional landscape of Sangrah's social life—from the celebratory beats of *dhol-damau* to the melancholic tunes of *basuri*. For many students, these artifacts were not merely display items but the materialized memory of their ancestors' lifestyles, which offered an educational, emotional, and cultural bridge connecting the past with the present.

Participation & Community Involvement



The heritage exhibition witnessed broad community engagement, turning the college campus into a vibrant cultural hub for two days. Students and faculty of Government College Sangrah participated enthusiastically, along with visitors from **GSSS Ladhiana**, **GSSS Sangrah**, and nearby villages. Local residents, elderly community members, artisans, folk musicians, and heritage enthusiasts visited the exhibition in large numbers, expressing delight that the college had taken the initiative to preserve and display valuable local history. Senior villagers specifically appreciated the students' curiosity and narrated oral histories behind many of the objects, enriching the academic value of the exhibition. The event fostered strong college-community collaboration, inspiring students to document cultural resources, record local histories, and recognize the importance of safeguarding tangible and intangible heritage for future generations.



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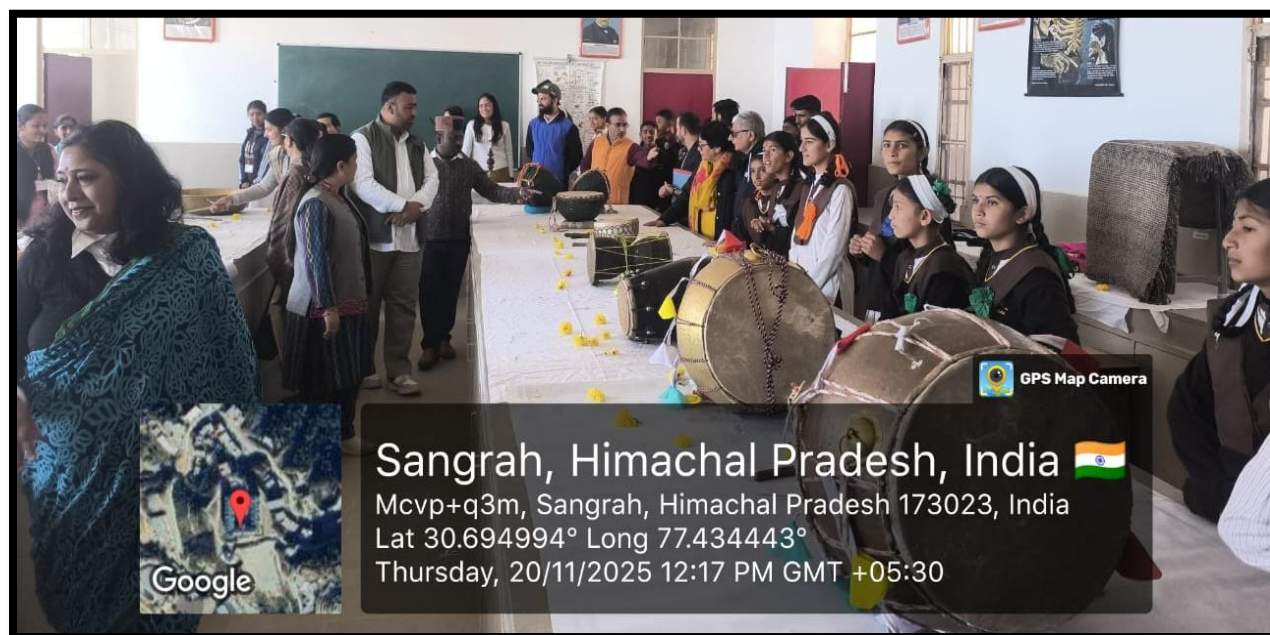


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Role of NSS Volunteers

The exhibition's success relied heavily on the disciplined and well-coordinated efforts of the **NSS volunteers**, who demonstrated exemplary commitment to heritage preservation and event management. Volunteers curated displays, arranged artifacts with utmost care, prepared descriptive labels, and ensured the safety of delicate objects. They guided visitors through thematic sections, explained the cultural contexts behind artifacts, and facilitated interactions between students and local artisans. They managed registration desks, maintained visitor logs, supervised crowd movement, coordinated seating, and ensured that all administrative procedures—from documentation to photography—were handled professionally. NSS volunteers also helped transport heritage objects from local homes to the college, assisted in installation and post-event restoration, and monitored the exhibition hall throughout the two days. Their leadership, teamwork, and adherence to the NSS motto—"Not Me, But You"—were evident in every aspect of the programme.

Folk Musicians & Cultural Demonstrations



Local folk musicians were invited to demonstrate the functioning of traditional instruments such as *nagada*, *karnal*, *ranasingha*, *dhol-damau*, *basuri*, and *shehnai*. Their demonstrations illustrated the relationship between sound and ritual, the use of instruments during weddings, harvest festivals, *devta yatra*, and traditional dance forms like *nati*. Musicians also explained how rhythms regulate social gatherings, communicate messages, and accompany religious ceremonies in old Himachali society. Students observed the intricate craftsmanship involved in making these instruments, from the curing of wood and leather to the metal-casting techniques of wind instruments. These



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demonstrations added a dynamic, living dimension to the exhibition and allowed students to appreciate how music functions not merely as entertainment but as a cultural identity of the region.

Interviews & Local Knowledge Transfer

Throughout the exhibition, elder community members shared oral histories, stories of ancient fairs, village rituals, and the evolution of farming practices over decades. These firsthand narratives provided students with anthropological insights about the Sangrah region's cultural ecology. Teachers from GSSS Ladhiana and Sangrah praised the event for encouraging intergenerational knowledge transfer and helping younger generations reconnect with their roots. One of the teachers, Mr. Vikram, described the exhibition as a "living classroom" where students could directly interact with history rather than reading it only from textbooks. Local artisans expressed their pride that the college acknowledged their craft and traditional skills, which often go undocumented in mainstream academic spaces.

Remarks by Principal & IQAC Coordinator

Principal **Dr. Meenu Bhaskar** appreciated the exhibition for being academically rich, culturally sensitive, and socially inclusive. She emphasized that preserving cultural heritage is an institutional responsibility and that such exhibitions promote holistic learning by connecting theoretical knowledge with real historical artifacts. She congratulated the NSS unit for organizing an event that contributes directly to IQAC standards of cultural enrichment, community engagement, and value-based education. IQAC Coordinator **Mr. Sandeep Kumar** remarked that the exhibition will be documented as one of the best practices of the college, as it improves heritage consciousness, fosters interdisciplinary learning, and stimulates research interest in local history and ethnography. He reaffirmed the institution's commitment to organizing similar activities that strengthen academic excellence and cultural awareness.

Interviews & Local Knowledge Transfer

A special acknowledgment is owed to **Shri Ramanand Ji**, a respected local inhabitant of **Village Dhamas, Sangrah, District Sirmour**, whose invaluable contribution added tremendous academic and cultural depth to this heritage exhibition. Shri Ramanand Ji generously provided several **ancient and medieval artifacts**, carefully preserved by his family for generations, to be displayed for educational purposes. These included traditional copper vessels, ritual objects belonging to village deity worship, wooden agricultural tools from the early 20th century, hand-crafted domestic items, and certain metal artifacts believed to date back several decades, representing the social and cultural life of the region's pre-modern rural households. His contribution ensured that students could witness authentic heritage pieces that are rarely accessible outside private family collections.



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During his interaction with students and faculty, **Shri Ramanand Ji remarked** that *“heritage does not survive in museums alone; it survives when the younger generation values it, studies it, and carries it forward.”* He expressed happiness that Government College Sangrah took the initiative to showcase the cultural wealth of the region and stated that such exhibitions help revive pride in local history. He appreciated the curiosity and respect shown by NSS volunteers and students toward the artifacts and encouraged them to document local traditions, stories, and material culture before they disappear. Shri Ramanand Ji further added that it was a matter of pride for him that objects preserved by his forefathers were now contributing to the education and cultural awareness of hundreds of young learners. His heartfelt support and cultural sensitivity made him one of the most significant contributors to the success of this

Sandeep Kumar
IQAC Coordinator
NSS Program Officer

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