

## AIIS Senior Fellow Anne Murphy Featured in the Hindustan Times

Senior fellow Anne Murphy whose project is “Seva (Service) and the Making of Sikh Ethical Practice” gave three presentations in February, 2010: at Punjab University, Chandigarh on the “State of the field of Punjabi and Sikh Studies in North America,” at a two-day conference at Punjab University and at a Punjabi Literature Conference on “Punjabi and Punjabi Literature and their study in North America.” Reports of her activities and interviews with her have been published in local newspapers such as the Hindustan Times

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# FOR LOVE OF PUNJABI

Anne Murphy hopes the future generations of Punjabis would show a similar passion for the language

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She is a surprise package. Anne Murphy, a US citizen born to Irish parents, teaches Punjabi literature at the University of British Columbia in Canada and is currently visiting Chandigarh for her research work on religious places and objects related to the Sikh gurus.

The lady, who communicates in Punjabi with ease, hopes that the future generations of Punjabis would show a similar passion for the language and its literature.

About her fascination for the culture and history of Punjab, she narrates, “After I lost my father, my mother moved back to Ireland, and at that point of time I witnessed that the pre-British culture and language in Ireland was dying. On the contrary, I observed that India was one vibrant country where diverse cultures and native languages were still intact. So, I went on to do my Masters in Asian Language and Literature with specialisation in Hindi and Sanskrit from the University of Washington and also got a chance to visit India as a student under an academic programme.”

That was just the beginning. Anne became a regular visitor to India and went on to do her doctoral research on Sikh history. As of now, Anne is in the process of completing her book, titled *Materialising History: Representations of Sikh Past*. She adds, “The manuscript of my book is an extension of my research work. The book has taken into account the religious objects and sites associated with Sikh gurus and martyrs in rela-



Anne Murphy teaches Punjabi literature at the University of British Columbia.

tion to other forms of historical representation, and the ways in which they have been transformed at key junctures from the 18th century to 1925 in relation to changing social and political circumstances in Punjab.”

For her research work, Anne is making rounds of the Punjab Archives Department. “The toughest part is to gather the relevant information, but now things are improving. One can have access to quite a few manuscripts online,” avers Anne.

Anne is simultaneously working on another project, *Seva*. She elabo-

rates, “This project spells out the acts of service to the community from the days of Maharaja Ranjit Singh to the present-day Sikh families settled in Vancouver.”

It's not only history but also modern Punjabi literature that interest Anne. “There are so many wonderful writings and when I teach my students, they are surprised to know that so many issues have been touched upon in Punjabi literature. The youth here too should feel attached to the language. Please don't lose it!” says Anne.