

# IIT-Gn festival honours translators' art

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: Everybody has heard of J K Rowling, author of the famed Harry Potter novels, but not many know of Sudhir Dixit, the writer who translated the Harry Potter series into Hindi. To honour translators like Dixit, who have taken the rich literary works of South Asia to global readership, the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar (IIT-Gn) has organized a two-day festival called 'Tarjuma,' the first of its kind in the country.

"This festival is an attempt to give translators some appreciation," said Srinivas Reddy, assistant professor at IIT-Gn and co-organizer of 'Tarjuma.' "All over the country, we have different literary fests where authors are honoured and books are launched, but there is no recognition for the translators who



(L to R) Srinivas Reddy, Lakshmi Holmstrom, Arshia Sattar and L Sivapriya

take the authors beyond borders," added Reddy.

The festival began with an inaugural speech by IIT-Gn director Dr Sudhir Jain, who talked about the ethos of the festival and mentioned the need for the world to recognize the contribution of translators.

Lakshmi Holmstrom, known for her translations of the fifth century Tamil narrative poems *Silappadikaram* and *Manimekalai*, was the chief guest on the first day and she spoke of the power of poetry to express the hardships of war.

Speaking in the panel discussion on 'Translating the Classic,' Arshia Sattar

said, "We need to translate the classics because we are still not fully familiar with the originals." Sattar is best known for her acclaimed 1996 translation of Valmiki's 'Ramayana'.

On being asked about the difference between translating a classic and a modern text, Reddy said, "Translating a classic is complicated because it has to bridge the gap of time and space to relate with today's demands."

Now, there is an increasing readership for translations. "English translations of works like *Ramayana* and *Chowringhee* are bestsellers," said L Sivapriya, managing editor of a publishing house. She added, "It is difficult to generate interest for translated classics but modern text translations get plenty of press." The two-day festival will have discussions on dalit writings and the status of women in translated classics.