



साहित्य अकादेमी  
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**PRESS RELEASE**

**“One of the oldest languages of Indian sub-continent and a language with very few speakers meet in Sahitya Akademi’s Tribal Writers’ Meet”**

## Tribal Writers’ Meet

February 25, 2017, New Delhi

It was a conglomeration of languages – from the most ancient (Asur) and a language with very few speakers (Toda), from the Northern frontiers (Gojri and Ladakhi) to the language echoing in the hills of Meghalaya in North-East (Khasi) at the Tribal Writers’ and Poets’ Meet organized by Sahitya Akademi as part of its Festival of Letters in New Delhi on February 25, 2017.

In the first session, Dr K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, welcomed the participants and audience and spoke briefly about the importance and relevance of tribal literature as repositories of indigenous knowledge systems and also outlined Sahitya Akademi’s initiatives in this regard. Dr Anvita Abbi, Director, Center for Tribal and Oral Literature, Sahitya Akademi, spoke about how creation myths connect human beings to Nature and that creation myths are the running traditions among all the tribal communities linking the past to present. Sri Ashwini Kumar Pankaj, eminent tribal scholar and editor of Akhra, said that the creation myths across the tribal settlements are similar in that they describe man and Nature, the genesis of cosmos and Homo sapiens. He said Creation myths are the stories of tribes over a period of thousands of years and the basis for these myths can be found in modern science and from tribal literature one can know about many things such as the decline and extinction of Indus civilization. Tribal literatures are the seeds from which many a literature is born and it is amazing that tribal literature is still alive and among all literature, it is in tribal literature can one find comprehensive treatment of creation.

In the inaugural session, five noted tribal scholars, Remis Kandulana, Gloria Soreng, Saran Oraon, Dobro Buruili and Sundar Manjo Hembram, recited the creation myths. Remis Kandulana recited Munda creation myths and folksongs. Gloria Soreng said our creation myths link us directly with Nature and recited Kharia creation myth. Saran Oraon presented the genesis of human beings through Kurux creation myth. Dobro Buruili recited Ho creation myth and Sundar Manjo Hembram recited Santali creation myth in Santali and Hindi and stated that Santal tribes are maintaining till today the ancient tribal customs and rituals.

The second session chaired by eminent Tribal scholar and writer Prof Ramnika Gupta, 17 poets representing diverse tribal languages, Samuel Birija (Asur), Asim Ray (Chakma), Faneline K. Marak (Garo), Jaan Mohd. Hakim (Gojri), Jaminikant Tiriya (Ho), Sadhu Charan Deogam (Ho), Wansalan E. Dhar (Khasi), Vandana Tete (Kharia), Francisca Kujur (Oraon), Shanti Khalkho (Kurux), Nirad Chandra Kanhar (Kui), Thupstan Norbo (Ladakhi), Vidyeeswar Dhaley (Missing), Joachim Topno (Mundari), Santosh Picha Pawara (Pawari), Gagrin Sabar (Saora) and Vasamalli (Toda), recited their compositions. Prof Ramnika Gupta lauded the efforts of Sahitya Akademi in preserving and promoting tribal languages.

Sd/-  
(K. Sreenivasaro)  
Secretary