



# 2016 साहित्योत्सव Festival of Letters

15-20 February 2016

## SAHITYA AKADEMI *Newsletter*

Daily News Bulletin

Saturday, 20 February 2016

### Symposium on Unwritten Languages



The second edition of the symposium on Unwritten Languages of India was organized on the Day 5 of the Festival of Letters 2016 at Rabindra Bhawan Lawns in New Delhi.

In the inaugural session, Dr K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, welcomed the participants and audience and spoke about the discussion of the first edition and hoped this year too symposium would be successful. He urged the experts to speed up the process of preserving and propagating more and more unwritten languages since the number of unwritten languages are vanishing fast and thick. He thanked Dr Debi Prasanna Pattanayak and Dr Mahendra Kumar Mishra for participating in the symposium.



Dr Debi Prasanna Pattanayak, distinguished scholar and linguist and who was the Chief Guest of the Symposium, talked about the distinction between the written and unwritten languages and observed that with the advent of the printing press the hegemony of the written word gained supremacy and pushed the indigenous languages were pushed to the background. With this, the unwritten literature got relegated to folk literature and anthropology became a handmade of colonialism. Written literature became a mark of culture. Dr Pattanayak also talked about the historical process by which the supremacy of written languages was established slowly and surely. He observed that what is not being documented and researched is the decimation of written languages and spread of illiteracy due to colonial domination. Telephone, Radio, Television, Computer, Mobile, Android Technology made writing superfluous. First casualty was letter writing and second was reading books. He stated that though technologies provide facilities to reach small languages and small communities using them, they also exerted pressure for getting rid of multiple channels for creation and transmission of knowledge and go in for simple solutions of dominant mono-lingualism. Communities are being redefined as cyber-entities. Dr



#### Today's Programme

Seminar on Translational Consciousness and Literary Traditions in India

National Seminar on Gandhi, Ambedkar, Nehru : Continuities • Spin-a-Tale : Children Activities

Pattanayak informed the audience that India is at the top of the list of endangered languages. He concluded saying that before our very nose written languages are slipping into unwritten spoken languages and are dying out with the last speaker of the language but our sophisticated technologies are not able to save them.

In his keynote address, Dr Mahendra Kumar Mishra, eminent scholar and folklorist, talked about beauty of Indian literary tradition is unwritten and oral. British education system corrupted the oral traditions with the force of written literature by the state. He quoted Gopabandhu “the literate people of this country may be head but larger masses of the country is the soul.” The unwritten languages were historically silenced due to the dominance of power with writing system during the past centuries. Dr Mishra also stated that the oral literary traditions like myths, epics and tales are necessary to understand the history of time and conditions of people and also that inspite of multilingual situation oral tradition of India fosters unity of thought and knowledge representing a common paradigm in Indian literature. He also warned that 21st century will witness a rapid decline of linguistic diversities. He lamented that majority of people are unaware neither of the fact that so many languages are vanishing nor do they have any idea what it means to lose a language and that loss of language would mean loss of thought and knowledge.

In his presidential address, Dr Vishwanath Prasad Tiwari, President, Sahitya Akademi, stated that oldest literature in the world is Rg Ved and it is shruti – that which is heard. When the same is committed to memory is called Smrti and it is this process of committing to memory and creating a written literature that Max Muller. It is through unwritten language and oral tradition that vast amount of literature that was disseminated from one generation to another generation for thousands of years. Dr Chandrashekar Kambar, Vice President, Sahitya Akademi, talked about the role of folklore and folksongs in the preservation and propagation of knowledge and culture from one generation to another. He informed the audience that majority of languages are unwritten and we should learn to look after the literature contained in the majority of literature and our ignorance and arrogance should not prove too devastating for humanity itself.

In the first session, devoted to ‘Challenges of Scripting the Unwritten Languages’ and chaired by Dr Awadesh Kumar Mishra, three noted scholars, Sri B. Ramakrishna Reddy, Sri Pramod Pandey and Sri Ganesh Murmu, presented their papers focusing on different kinds of challenges that they face while trying to evolve suitable scripts of spoken dialects but unwritten in nature. In the second session devoted to ‘Unwritten Literature / Oral Tradition’ and chaired by Sri Bhagwan Das Patel, four noted scholars, Kikeri Narayan, Indranil Acharya, Basant Nirgune and Nila Shah, presented their papers on the history of oral traditions, orality of cultures, relevance of oral traditions in the modern and contribution of oral traditions in the nourishment of culture and literature etc. The programme was coordinated by Dr Devendra Devesh, Officer-on-Special Duty, Sahitya Akademi.





## National Seminar on GANDHI, AMBEDKAR, NEHRU Continuities and Discontinuities

Day 2



The National Seminar on Gandhi, Ambedkar, Nehru: Continuities and Discontinuities continued for the second day at the Sahitya Akademi auditorium in New Delhi on February 19, 2016.

The third session of the seminar and first session of the day was devoted to 'Freedom of Expression' and was chaired by eminent Kannada writer, Prof S.L. Bhyrappa. Two noted scholars, Sri Sudhish Pachauri and Prof Makarand Paranjape, presented their papers focusing on 'Jantantra Mein Lekhak aur Lekhak ka Jantantra' and 'India's Intolerance Battle' respectively. Sri Sudhish Pachauri talked about the freedom and various perspectives from the point of view of writers. He said there are various levels of freedom such as freedom from the state, freedom from the social shackles etc. He highlighted how Mahatma Gandhi found his own way to freedom personally. Writers should reflect upon their position and role in the state and act accordingly. Prof Makarand Paranjape began by posing a question to the audience 'Is intolerance the other side of tolerance or is it the opposite of tolerance?' He gave the example of intolerance in India with the incidents involved with Sri S.L. Bhyrappa's work, who was in the Chair. He said that Sri Bhyrappa was also the victim of such intolerance in Karnataka. But instead of choosing to shouting slogans or be a part of any anti-national movement he chose to write a novel and he has shown how writers should fight intolerance. Prof Bhyrappa spoke extensively about caste and communal politics which is creating divisions among the citizens of the country. He said it is pitiable that governments in the country followed the same divide and rule policy of the Britishers.

The fourth session was devoted to 'Women and Equality' and was chaired by Dr Rukmini Bhaya Nair. Three noted women writers Ms. S. Faustina Bama, Ms. Urmila Pawar and Ms. Rakshanda Jalil presented their papers about women and equality with reference to Gandhi, Nehru and Ambedkar. Faustina Bama said that equality means equal freedom, rights and respect for women at home, in the streets, in the market places, in the work places, in the schools and universities and in places of worship. In other words, besides equal economic and political rights, we seek particularly equal social and cultural space. For all this to happen, we need not only changes in law but also in our mind sets, attitudes and cultural practices. She concluded her paper with the words of Baba Saheb Ambedkar said Equality "for ours is a battle not for wealth or for power. It is battle for freedom. It is the battle of reclamation of human personality." Urmila Pawar highlighted the similarities in the views of Gandhi, Nehru and Ambedkar about women. Rakshanda Jalil delineated the influence of Gandhian and Nehruvian ideas of women on theatre and film industry. A lively question-answer session followed the presentations.





The fifth session was devoted to 'Caste and Equality' and was chaired by Prof K. Satchidanandan. Three noted scholars Prof K. Enoch, Sri Ramdas Bhatkal and Sri Rajkishore presented their papers focusing on Caste & Equality and Gandhi, Nehru and Ambedkar. In his speech, Prof K. Satchidanandan delivered a lecture on the necessity of bringing back the philosophies of Nehru and Ambedkar on the face of increasing caste violence and communal disharmony that the country is witnessing. Prof Enoch focused on the evolution of caste and how it degrades other social institutions over a period of time. Sri Ramdas Bhatkal focused on the similarities and dissimilarities, continuities and discontinuities in the perceptions about Gandhi by Nehru and Ambedkar. His paper took Gandhian thought as focal point and looked at the continuities and discontinuities. Sri Rajkishore highlighted the plight of dalits and backward class people in India and observed that in this context the thoughts and philosophies of Ambedkar and Nehru are relevant today.

The sixth and last session of the day was devoted to 'Language Question' and was chaired by Dr Bhalachandra Nemade. Two noted scholars Sri Prithvi Datta Chandra Shobhi and Sri Soyam Lokendrajit Singh presented their papers focusing on 'Three Dimensions of Language Question' and 'Language, Communication and Domination' respectively.

## Cultural Programme

In the evening a performance of Othello, a Shakespearean tragedy in Kathakali adaptation was performed by The International Centre for Kathakali, New Delhi (ICK).



People can view the live webcast of Sahitya Akademi's Festival of Letters by visiting [http://sahitya-akademi.gov.in/sahitya-akademi/festival/webcast\\_2016.jsp](http://sahitya-akademi.gov.in/sahitya-akademi/festival/webcast_2016.jsp)

**Book Exhibition : 10 am to 7 pm daily at Rabindra Bhavan Lawns**



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