



TRIBAL WRITERS' MEET

TODAY'S EVENTS

**NATIONAL SEMINAR ON FOLKLORE:
Tellings and Retellings (contd.)**
Sahitya Akademi Auditorium, 10.00 a.m.

**NATIONAL SEMINAR ON
TRANSLATION AS RETELLING**
Rabindra Bhavan Lawns, 10.00 a.m.

**SYMPOSIUM ON
UNWRITTEN LANGUAGES OF INDIA**
Rabindra Bhavan Lawns, 11.00 a.m.

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.



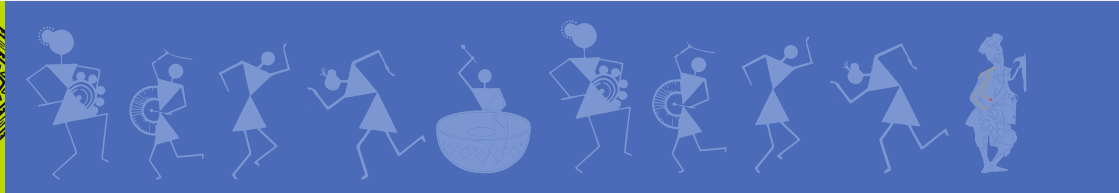
In the first session, Dr K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, welcomed the participants and audience and spoke briefly about the importance and relevance of tribal literature as repositories of indigenous knowledge systems and also outlined Sahitya Akademi's initiatives in this regard. Dr Anvita 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 the 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 Smt. Ramnika Gupta, 17 poets representing diverse tribal languages, Samuel Birija (Asur), Asim Ray (Chakma), Fameline K. Marak (Garo), Jaan Mohd. Hakim (Gojri), Jaminikant Tiriya (Ho), Sadhu Charan Deogam (Ho), Wansalan E. Dhar (Khasi), Vandana Tete (Kharia), Francisca Kujur (Kurux), Shanti Khalkho (Kurux), Nirad Chandra Kanhar (Kui), Thupstan Norbo (Ladakhi), Vidyeeswar Dhaley (Missing), Joachim Topno (Mundari), Santosh Picha Pawara (Pawari), Gagrın Sabar (Saora) and Vasamalli (Toda), recited their compositions. Smt. Ramnika Gupta lauded the efforts of Sahitya Akademi in preserving and promoting tribal languages.





NATIONAL SEMINAR ON FOLKLORE: TELLINGS AND RETELLINGS (contd.)

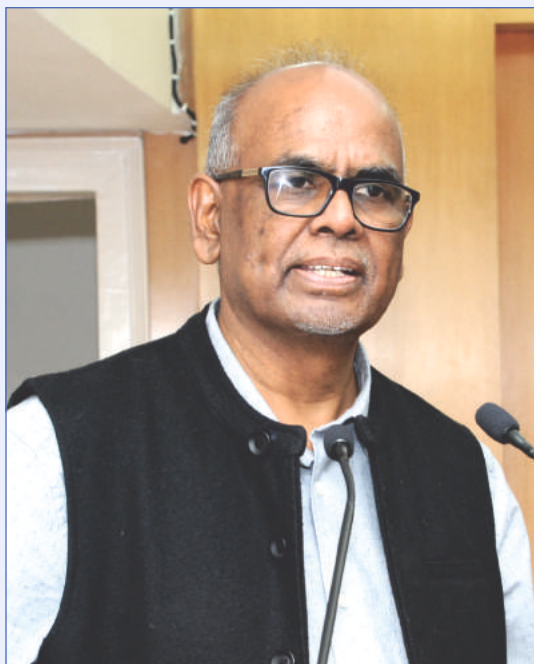
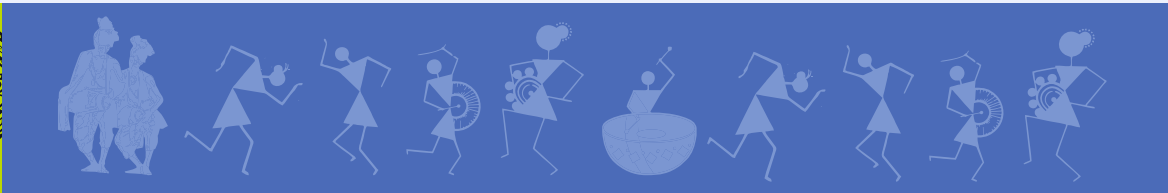
In the third session of the seminar which was first for the day, devoted to 'Folklore and Religious Practices' and chaired Prof Jancy James, three noted scholars, Sri Manjit Mahanta, Prof. T. Dharmaraj and Dr. Balvant Jani, presented their papers. Prof. Jancy James initiated the proceedings by observing that the folk tellings and retellings are both challenges and complementary discourses to the classical text, especially the epics. She stated that the Tellings and Retellings of myths and legends are universal, and constitute the cultural wealth of all nations in the world. They have become related to religion and worship mostly in South Asia where multi Gods and their worship prevail much more than in a monotheistic society. In his paper on 'Some Aspects of Folk Belief and Religion Practice among the Traditional Oraon Society: A Case Study,' Sri Manjit Mahanta spoke about how beliefs and religious practices play a major role in understanding the latent cultural values from the 'emic' point of view and to some extent such an understanding plays a significant role in implementing many developmental projects. In his paper 'Performing the Book: Orality of Letters in Tamil Society,' Dr T. Dharmaraj highlighted the extraordinary character exhibited by Tamil orality while encountering the technology of writing for the first time and said that he documented a folk religious practice called "Performing the Book" in Tamil Nadu in which elders of an agrarian society cultivated a methodology to exploit the literal device of knowledge, the book. Rather than simply started worshipping the new technology, there the 'book' as sacred, this agrarian mass entertains an indigenous way of celebrating the meaning blossomed from that. In his paper 'Folk knowledge and Folk Religious Activities,' Dr Balwant Jani said that the practice of folk knowledge and folk literature is possible only on the basis of folk religion-folk culture.



In the fourth session devoted to 'Folklore and the Art of Storytelling' and chaired by Prof Malashri Lal, three noted scholars, Ms. Tanashree Redij, Dr. P. Raja and Ms. Fatima Siddiqui, presented their papers. Prof Malashri Lal highlighted the difference between archived folklore and living practices of folklore, recalled her experiences in Chamba tribal communities and said that the oral traditions are remembered only by the older generation while the younger people were passing on to a flattened out narrative through television and other social media. In her paper 'Understanding Gauri Vow,' Ms. Tanashree Redij spoke about the practice of taking a vow and narrated the story of Gauri vow and presented an analytical representation focusing on the stories of Gauri vow with respect to their social and regional variations along with their local inputs. She said that these stories are devotionally narrated and heard during the vow and

they help one to understand the relation between ritualistic practices of vow given in the scriptures and the present day practices. Dr. P. Raja in his paper said, storytelling in India is serious business. He said that a reading of the story collections of the world will reveal the fact that stories were told, entertainment apart, for a wide variety of reasons. In her paper 'Labyrinth of Folk Memories: Syncretism of the Indian and Iranian in Dastan-e-Amir Hamza,' spoke about how storytelling is the world's oldest form of literary communication and Folklores - be they folktales, myths, religious stories, epics, ballads, fables or legends, together account for the majority of the stories told in public and private spaces. She said oral traditions are common to all societies but the Eastern world has had a special



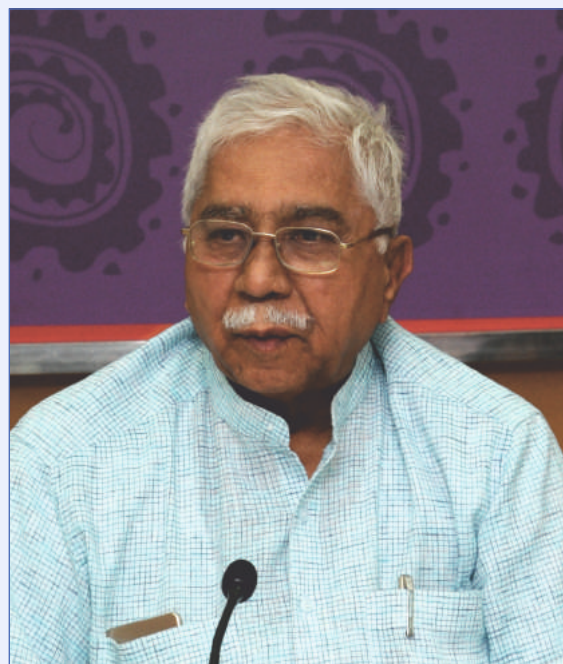


relationship with the oral storytelling art. She focused her paper on epics such as Dastan-e-Amir Hamza, Shahnama, Qissa Chaar Darvesh etc. which were extremely popular in Persia and India. She mentioned that the professional story tellers or Dastangohs narrated these stories at the royal courts and local bazaars as a way to pass time, earn livelihood and also possibly live on court patronage.

In the fifth session devoted to ‘The Relevance of Folklore in 21st Century’ and chaired by Prof Avadhesh Kumar Singh, three eminent scholars, Sri Arabinda Patnaik, Dr. Raghavan Payyanad and Prof. H. C. Boralingaiah, presented their papers. Prof Avadhesh Kumar Singh expressed his appreciation for Sahitya Akademi’s endeavors to bring in folklore in the centre of discussion. According to him folklore is a rich reservoir of human knowledge. He further said that in the 21st century it has become even more important because ICT and fast modes of transport have integrated the world and this has lead to a confluence of folklores of the whole world, paving way for their comparative study and learning from each other. Sri Arabinda Patnaik

presented his paper on Fasts and Festivals in Odisha: Khudurkuni Osa. He said that the religious fasts and festivals are popular in the tradition of India. In the fasts, rituals tales and in the festivals, festive-songs are common. Folklore is thus a part of these religious observances. Dr. Raghavan Payyanad presented his paper on Relevance of Folklore in 21st Century. He said that till the middle of the 19th century Popular Antiquities was the term used by scholars and collectors to refer the area of their work what we refer to day as Folklore. He said that the process of communication and transmission is not only telling and retelling but, seeing and imitating also. Prof. H. C. Boralingaiah presented his paper on Cultural History and Folk Performances with reference to Karnataka. Compared to the other South Indian states, the folk arts of Karnataka are not only greater in number but are also richer in diversity. And the reasons for this are not difficult to fathom; its cultural tradition and geographical location. Born responding to a variety of causes in different historical contexts and taking unique shapes and forms in different geographical locations, these folk arts continue to reflect the concerns, hopes and even the life worlds of its people.

In the sixth session devoted to ‘Performing Folklore’ and chaired by Dr. Chandrashekhar Kambar, two eminent scholars, Sri H. Nani Kumar Singha and Sri Jetho Lalwani, presented their papers. Prof. H. Nani Kumar Singha presented his paper on Folklore traits in the Manipuri Vaishnavite ritual practices. He mentioned that folklore is a discipline within the paradigm of Cultural Studies. Oral narratives, oral poetry, folk speech, physical folk life or material culture, social folk customs and performing folk arts, etc. are the different genres of folklore in which each folk member of a folk group has as its constituents since quite early times. Sri Jetho Lalwani who has done his research work on Sindhi Folk Songs of Bani-Kutchh, presented his paper on “Sindhi Bhagat : Prastuti Ke Pariprekshya Mein”. In his paper, he elaborately mentioned about the two kinds of performing arts, one that includes Padas, Bhajan and kirtan and the other rasas, lecture, artistic and poetical folk tales. ‘We also call them prose based and poetry based literature’, he said.



SPIN-A-TALE : CHILDREN ACTIVITIES

Sahitya Akademi organized a 'Spin-a-Tale', a children's programme featuring magic show, dramatized story reading and Story and Poetry writing competition for children at the Rabindra Bhavan Lawns on February 25, 2017. A large number of children from various Delhi schools participated in the event.

The programme was formally inaugurated by Ms. Rashmi Narzary, eminent children's writer and winner of Sahitya Akademi Bal Sahitya Puraskar. Dr K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, welcomed Ms. Narzary and spoke briefly about the importance of children and the necessity to inculcate good reading habits among children. He highlighted the importance of books and the habit of reading in the development of children's personality and contrasted the role played by gadgets and technology with that of books in a child's development. In her inaugural speech, Ms. Narzary talked about the value of reading and writing and urged the children to read more and write more. She briefly narrated the core of her Bal Sahitya Puraskar winning book which is a story of how a poor tribal overcame poverty and all odds in life to become a civil servant and the value of hard work. She reiterated the benefits of hard work, knowledge, understanding, intelligence and concentration. She told the children where and when we are writing is not relevant or important and how and what we are writing are essential and one should keep writing to not only become good writers but also good human beings. Prof B. Kamesh performed a magic show and also taught few tricks to the children. Sansaptak, a theatre group, performed a dramatized story reading conceptualized by Tarit Mitra and directed by Anjan Basu. The stories which were staged revolved around social and environmental issues. There was also a story and poetry writing competition for children.

Junior Level		
Prize	Name	School and Class
1st Prize	Shamia	S.K.V. Dayanand / VI Std
2nd Prize	Priyanshu Mehra	Bal Bhavan Public Sr Sec School / VIII Std
3rd Prize	Jaya Prabha	Sonodaya Kanya Vidyalaya / VI Std
Consolation Prize	Yashvi Sharma	St Secilyas Public School / IV Std
Consolation Prize	Abeer Abbas	St. Thomas School / III Std

Senior Level		
Prize	Name	School and Class
1st Prize	Ashmita Baburaj	New Green Public School / VIII Std
2nd Prize	Angelina Pasha	R.K. Puram DPS School / VIII Std
3rd Prize	Vrinda Kaushik	Noida Amity International School / X Std
Consolation Prize	Navya Maink	Shresht Vihar DAV Public School / X Std
Consolation Prize	Gaurav Pati	Vasant Kunj DPS School / X Std



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SANTALI DANCE BY BADOLI SANTALI CULTURAL TEAM

