



साहित्योत्सव Festival of Letters

28 January - 2 February 2019



भाषाएँ अनेक • देश एक

Daily News Bulletin

Sunday, 3 February, 2019

TRANSGENDER POETS' MEET



Sahitya Akademi organized a Transgender Poets' Meet at the Rabindra Bhavan Lawns on 2 February 2019.

In the inaugural session Dr. K.S. Rao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, welcomed the eminent writer, scholar and academician and first transgender member of the Sahitya Akademi Advisory Board, Dr. Manabi Bandyopadhyay, and Chairperson, Ms Debajyoti Bhattacharjee and all the other poets from Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Bihar. He further said that the Akademi is a writers' forum for writers from all parts of the country irrespective of their language, class and gender. Sahitya Akademi does not categorize writers--for us a writer is a writer. The mandate is provided to us to unite varied cultures and traditions of this diverged country. This transgender poets' meet is a part of our commitment to uphold diversity.

Dr. Manabi Bandyopadhyay in her inaugural address thanked Sahitya Akademi and Dr. K.S. Rao, for providing

this platform to the transgender poets and creating history. She took pride in introducing all the 12 poets (2 poets could not attend the program) as great poets.

Ms Debajyoti Bhattacharjee in her address from the chair offered her gratitude to Sahitya Akademi and specially to Dr. Manabi Bandyopadhyay for paving a path for all the transgenders. The poets—Ms Rani Majumdar, Ms Shivani Acharya, Ms Reshma Prasad, Ms Debdatta Biswas, Ms Ahona Chakraborty, Ms Proshputita Sugandha, Ms Bikoshita Dey, Ms Raveena Bariha and Ms Arunava Nath poured out their hearts in their poetry, and Ms Kalpana Naskar and Ms Anjali Mandal performed on the stage.

Dr. K.S. Rao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, in his vote of thanks proposed that such meets will be organised in the rest of India as well, and the next time onwards all poets will be given the same platform irrespective of their gender or community.



NATIONAL SEMINAR “GANDHI IN INDIAN LITERATURE” (Contd.)



The Seminar on “Gandhi in Indian Literature” continued for the third day on 2 February 2019 at the Akademi Auditorium in New Delhi. The seventh session on “Gandhi in Indian Poetry, Plays and Performance” was chaired by Prof. Anisur Rahman, literary critic, translator and poet. Sri K.S. Rajendran and Ms Ratnottama Sengupta presented their papers.

Prof. Anisur Rahman from the chair, presenting his paper, “Gandhi and Independence Movement Poetry” said that Gandhi has been represented variously in Indian literature. These representations historicise and contextualise him with reference to his vision of Indian society, politics, and culture, as well as his understanding of internationalism. Sri K.S. Rajendran in his paper, “Representation of Gandhi on Stage,” said that as a theatre director he had often wondered whether it would at all be possible to represent Gandhi in all his complexity on stage. There are several contradictory images of Gandhi before us. Which of the many Gandhis do we choose to represent on stage? The representation of a historical figure on stage or screen is fraught with questions of authenticity. Ms Ratnottama Sengupta in her paper, “Gandhi Through Films: One Man, So Many Portraits!” said that Gandhi did not leave a sect behind him. He did not approve of ‘Gandhism’ for he did not claim to have originated any new principle. Gandhi had said: “I have simply tried to apply in my own way the eternal truth of our daily life and problems....” Prof. Anisur Rehman concluded the session.

Influence on Gandhi

The eighth session, “Influence on Gandhi,” was chaired by Prof. Sukanta Chaudhuri, eminent writer, translator and editor. Sri Pranav Khullar and Sri Ramdas Bhatkal presented their papers. Sri Pranav Khullar in his paper “Gandhi and Louis Fischer” discussed the relationship of Gandhi and Fischer, an outstanding biographer of Gandhi, in a descriptive way. He concluded his paper saying a man like Gandhi is born once in a thousand years. A biographer like Louis Fischer is hard to come by. Sri Ramdas Bhatkal in his paper, “Gandhi

and Gokhale” said that Gandhi was critical of some aspects of Gokhale’s work. Yet, Gandhi treated him as his political mentor and Gokhale treated him like his protégé till the last. He further said that we need to trace this relationship with all its nuances. Prof. Sukanta Chaudhuri concluded the session.

Gandhi in Popular Culture

The ninth session was chaired by Sri Kamal Kishore Goenka, eminent Hindi writer and editor. Sri Bhairav Lal Das, Sri Madhukar Upadhyay and Prof. K. C. Baral readout their papers.

Sri Bhairav Lal Das in his paper, “Lok Sanskriti Mein Gandhi” said that there are a number of stories in connection with Gandhi in folk culture, in which the miraculous powers of Gandhi have been proclaimed. It has been said that people believed Gandhi’s miraculous powers make Gandhi a Mahatma. Sri Madhukar Upadhyay in his paper, “Gandhi and Children’s Literature” said that if we leave Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi and Malayalam languages, then children’s literature on Gandhi is very little. Literature, especially for children of 1-5 years’ age, should be arranged for publication as quickly as possible. Prof. K. C. Baral in his paper “Impact of Gandhi on North Eastern Culture” said that Gandhi’s 150th birth anniversary celebration provides us an opportunity to reflect on his legacy as a thinker, politician and cultural figure. Revisiting Gandhi is also a responsibility that connects to the question: have we engaged enough with his thoughts, his philosophy and his understanding of India? Sri Kamal Kishore Goenka presenting his paper, “Indian Model of Gandhi’s Journalism” from the chair, said that Gandhi’s journalism was born in his expatriate life in South Africa. Gandhi’s important works and thoughts were often initiated from South Africa. For this reason, historians believe Gandhi was made ‘Mahatma Gandhi.’

Gandhi and Bhakti Literature

The tenth session on “Contemporary Literary Discourses on Gandhi” which was chaired by Prof. Indra Nath Choudhri,





former Secretary of Sahitya Akademi and eminent scholar. Sri Shahid Jamal and Dr. Varsha Das presented their papers.

Sri Shahid Jamal in his paper, "Mahatma Gandhi and Democratic Values" said that Mohan Das Karamchand Gandhi stands tall among the global figures of the modern era. He held no office, pursued no career, accumulated no wealth and desired no fame. Yet, millions of people in India and around the world are captivated by his life and his achievements. Dr. Varsha Das in her paper, "Gandhiji and Empowerment" said that Gandhiji altered the course of history, not only in India but it

impacted the whole world. He manifested and utilized his own inner potentials, and empowered hundreds and thousands of fellow human beings to do the same. Prof. Indra Nath Choudhuri from the Chair said how Mohandas was transformed into a Mahatma. The journey was not easy. Gandhi had to sacrifice a lot, suffered humiliation and continued his struggle through satyagrah and ahimsa till the country got independence. He concluded the session saying that it is difficult to discard Gandhi and that his principles will always be relevant for generations to come.

PANEL DISCUSSION : PUBLISHING IN INDIA



Sahitya Akademi organized a Panel Discussion on "Publishing in India: Panel Discussion" at the Rabindra Bhavan Lawns on 2 February 2019.

In the inaugural session Dr. K.S. Rao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, welcomed Sri Sugata Ghosh, Director, Global Academic Publishing, Oxford University Press, panel discussants and the present fellow writers and publishers. Dr. Rao in his speech expressed his concern that this is the third consecutive occasion when the Akademi is organizing such a discussion on publishing in India yet, despite all our efforts, through advertisement or social media, the expected response from the publishers and the printers is not reflected. He appealed to the printing and publishing sector for their increased participation in such programmes so that their concerns would reach the government agencies.

In his keynote address, Sugata Ghosh said that the publishing industry is one in which growth is at the same level for the last three years. This is the time to write the history of print. There was a time when it was predicted that the publishing world would be shut down by digitization. That

printed books would be dead. But we have survived and the growth is phenomenal. Even the mid-stream and the small book stall survived because the seller knew what they were selling and how the reading preferences were changing. He further added that digitization matters as it is taking over the world by its charm. Sri Ramesh Kumar Mittal as moderator of the panel discussion said that publishing creates employments and raises revenues. It is a dynamic and diverse industry because it not only includes commercial publishers but institutions, universities and government houses. Indian publishing industry has been growing substantially in academic and literary fields. Our books are well-received all over the world. Publishing in Indian languages is in the sixth place and in English publishing, India holds the second position--both globally. Sahitya Akademi, National Book Trust, Publication Division and some state-level institutions also are contributing significantly to this field. Sri Ashok Maheshwari said that Indian publishers should be publishing all the Indian books in their languages as these are not just regional languages but are Indian languages. Books are being published in 16 major Indian languages. Sri Bhaskar Dutta Baruah said that digitization is the biggest challenge for the publishing industry. Though the regional language publishers are from an unorganized sector, but still they are closer to the local readers. Sri Balendu Sharma Dadhich said that for the advancement of the publishing industry, technology plays a very important role. He further said that technology should not be taken as a threat; rather, we should try to find out opportunities with the help of technology. Dr. Ram Kumar Mukhopadhyay, quoting Charles Dickens, said that in the advancement of civilization printers and publishers play a significant role. A question-answer session followed.





SPIN-A-TALE A PROGRAMME FOR CHILDREN



A programme for children, 'Spin-a-Tale,' was also organized at Rabindra Bhawan Lawns in which more than 300 students including specially abled children from various schools, such as DPS International, Pathways School, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Mehta Vidyalaya, Modern School, Vasant Vihar and The Indian School participated. Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, welcomed Sri Rajnikant Shukla, eminent Hindi children's poet, story-writer and playwright, and Dr. Divik Ramesh, the recipient of Sahitya Akademi's Bal Sahitya Puraskar. Both Sri Shukla and Dr Ramesh interacted with the children. A short story/poetry competition was held in which a large number of students participated and won prizes. The topic for the competition was devoted to Mahatma Gandhi and his thoughts. Some Children also spoke about Gandhiji and read their own poems on him. Ms. Zaibunnisa 'Haya', a famous children's writer and freelance broadcaster in All India Radio, read out an interesting story to the gathered students. A workshop on cartoon-making was also coordinated by cartoonist Sri Uday Shankar.

