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PRESS RELEASE

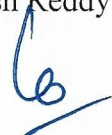
Fourth Day of the Festival of Letters, 15.2.2018

Sahitya Akademi organized a national seminar on **'70 Years of Indian Independence: Literary Portrayals'** at Rabindra Bhavan Lawns. In the inaugural session, Dr K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, welcomed the participants, dignitaries, media personalities and audience. He spoke about the role of literature in Indian independence and how different emerging trends, genres and traditions were portrayed over seven subsequent decades were portrayed in Indian literature. He also touched upon the question of different perceptions of freedom and unveiled the theme of the Seminar. Dr Manoj Das, eminent Odia Writer and Fellow, Sahitya Akademi, inaugurated the seminar. In his inaugural address, he recalled the day India became independent and detailed the series of events leading up to and after independence with all colour, vigour, chaos, violence and peace. Dr Chandrashekar Kambar, President, Sahitya Akademi, expressed his concern over the way Kannada literature and traditions are being affected by emerging trends. In his keynote address, Prof Harish Trivedi, eminent writer and scholar, said that history is just another narrative that suffers from selectivity and subjectivity. In his concluding remarks, Sri Madhav Kaushik, Vice President, Sahitya Akademi, remarked that India might have been a slave of the colonial rule, but literature was never a slave, in fact it liberated the country from slavery. The sessions were chaired by Professor K. Enoch and Dr Raghuveer Chaudhari and eminent scholars like Prof. Sharan Kumar Limbale and Prof. Sheoraj Singh Bechain, Prof Shafey Kidwai and Sri Maalan presented their papers.

The **'Yuva Sahiti: The New Harvest'** programme was organized at Rabindra Bhavan Lawns on February 15, 2018. Young writers from all over India representing 22 Indian languages participated in the daylong event. In the inaugural session, Dr K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, welcomed the participants, dignitaries and audience. He spoke about the value of youth to any nation, the importance of contributions of young people and various schemes and initiatives of the Akademi meant exclusively for young writers. Prof Indra Nath Choudhuri, eminent scholar and critic and former Secretary of Sahitya Akademi, inaugurated the meet. In his speech he stated that young writers promptly and with commitment voice their generation and if they attempt to know their inner being their creative expression will become more significant. To support his statement he referred to the Upanishads saying that they have the same thing to tell: 'Know thyself'. At the end of the first session, the following young poets recited their poems—Sri Himalaya Jana (Bengali), Sri Roshan Bral 'Roshan' (Dogri), Sri Mihir Chitre (English), Sri Chandresh Makwana (Gujarati), Sri Prem Shankar Shukla (Hindi), Sri Lone Imtiyaz (Kashmiri), Sri D. Anil Kumar (Malayalam), Sri Ravi Korde (Marathi), Sri Pali Khadim (Punjabi) and Sri Wasif Yaar (Urdu). In the first session devoted to 'Writing: Passion or Profession?' five noted scholars, Ratnottama Das Bikram (Assamese), Vitasta Raina (English), Achyutanand Mishra (Hindi), Anushree Rathore (Rajasthani) and Vempalli Gangadhar (Telugu), presented their papers. In her speech Smt. Gokhale said that the concept of writing is changing, finding new forms and technologies and she believed that in the future the new narratives will be told by Artificial Intelligence.

Ratnottama Das Bikram, in her speech, commented that profession gives you money but passion gives you life. According to Achyutanand Mishra, this question, whether writing is a passion or a profession has been asked throughout history and it is not an objective question. Anushree Rathore began her speech with the question, "What is writing? And what does it entail?" Vempalli Gangadhar commented in his speech that literature has the ability to create and change history. In the second session devoted to short story readings and chaired by Smt. Paramaita Satpathy, five noted fiction writers, Sri Himalaya Jana (Bengali), Ms Upasana (Hindi), Sri Shridhar Banvasi G.C. (Kannada), Ms Sumita Prabhu (Konkani), Ms Debapriya Priyadarshi Chakra (Odia), read out their stories. Smt. Paramita Satpathy said that we have inheritable tradition of listening to stories because stories tour us to the imaginary world. In the third session devoted to poetry reading and chaired by Sri Ashtbhujia Shukla, eight noted poets, Sri Dhiraj Basumatary (Bodo), Sri K. Raja Anjana (English), Sri Umesh Paswan (Maithili), Sri Karna Biraha (Nepali), Sri Gulab Ladhani (Sindhi), Sri Yuvaraj Bhattarai (Sanskrit), Sri Birsant Hansdah (Santali) and Sri J. Tamil Selvan (Tamil), recited their compositions.

On the evening, Sahitya Akademi organized a Kavi Sammelan programme at the Rabindra Bhavan Lawns featuring poetry recitations by twelve noted poets. Sri Sheen Kaaf Nizam, eminent Urdu poet, chaired the Sammelan. The twelve poets who recited their compositions were: Sri Alok Shrivastava, Sri Ashok Chakradhar, Sri Buddhinath Mishra, Sri Chandra Bhan Khayal, Sri Kunwar Bechain, Sri Laxmi Shankar Vajpai, Ms Madhu Mohini Upadhyay, Sri Maheswar Tiwari, Sri Mansoor Usmani, Ms Mumtaz Munnawar, and Sri Rajesh Reddy.


(K. Sreenivasarao)