



साहित्य अकादेमी
Sahitya Akademi

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PRESS RELEASE

National Seminar on Folklore: Tellings and Retellings
February 24-26, 2017

Continuing with the tradition of having a national seminar on an important theme during the **Festival of Letters**, the Sahitya Akademi is organizing a three-day national seminar on **Folklore: Tellings and Retellings** between February 24 and February 26, 2017 at the Sahitya Akademi auditorium in New Delhi. Many eminent scholars and writers from across India are participating in the seminar.

On the first day of the seminar, Dr K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, welcomed the participants and audience and spoke at length about the importance and relevance of folklore in preserving cultural traditions of a society, their function as bridges between the past and present, their uniqueness, the role of folktales, folksongs and folk art forms as recorders of history, the ways and means to preserve folklore and folk art from becoming extinct and performing folklore. In his Presidential address, Dr Vishwanath Prasad Tiwari, President, Sahitya Akademi, talked about the presence of folklore in all the regions and languages of India and informed that most of the earlier work on Indian folklore was done by the foreigners. He also said that globalization and its impact have created disconnect with the folk literature, India is a oral tradition based country and stated that even Buddha imparted his teachings through folktales. In his inaugural address, Prof Manoj Das, eminent writer and Fellow, Sahitya Akademi, stated that while folklore occupied the largest are of literature, it is very difficult to separate folktales from myths and legends. He said that the Epics were adopted into local traditions, folktales and folksongs were incorporated into those epics thus elevating their status and that is how indigenous knowledge systems were formed, but in the rapidly changing world this ancient tree of knowledge is fast disappearing. Folktales are to be told and re-told and he appealed to all the writers to preserve the folklore and folk art forms immediately before it is too late. Prof Tabish Khair, eminent English writer was the guest of honor and in his speech stated that the stories are the most common, most pervasive and the oldest way of expressing human thought and humans could be the only animals that can think in stories. He stated that retellings of folklore is very essential and as pointed by A.K. Ramanujan, the Epics of our country have been told and retold and will continue to be retold. In his keynote address, Prof Jawaharlal Handoo, eminent folklorist, talked about folklore, orality and discourse of power and pain. He stated that the orality of folklore is its strength and not its weakness as is assumed commonly and oral traditions of the country have ensured successful survival of indigenous knowledge systems through thousands of years but the essence of folklore is the discourse on pain. In his concluding remarks, Dr Chandrashekar Kambar, Vice President, Sahitya Akademi, said that the folk tradition is facing a crisis, which has threatened its continuity. The crisis is not due to industrialization or the growth mass media. The folk-tradition can face all these hostile conditions and survive. But, the crisis is in another form, that of self-consciousness.

Sd/-
(K. Sreenivasarao)
Secretary