



# साहित्योत्सव Festival of Letters

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## Samvatsar Lecture by Sri Pranab Mukherjee

Eminent Thinker and Former President of India



Bharat Ratna Sri Pranab Mukherjee, eminent thinker, writer, and former President of India, was expected to deliver the Samvatsar Lecture this year. But due to some unavoidable circumstances Sri Mukherjee could not make it. However, he kindly conveyed, the

lecture may be read out at Sahitya Akademi to literature lovers. Dr K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, read out the letter from Hon'ble Mukherjee's office, and requested Prof. Sanjukta Dasgupta, Convener, English Advisory Board, Sahitya Akademi, to read out the speech. The subject of the lecture was 'The Enduring Legacy of *Arthashastra*'. The lecture was read out by Prof. Sanjukta Dasgupta. It said that Kautilya's *Arthashastra* is identified as the formative ideational strategic text which is assessed to illuminate Indian strategic culture. It is an all-encompassing exposition of how the State and the ruler should be. Its importance transcends and touches all corners of Political theory, International Relations theory, and Security Intelligence and Strategic studies. Its enduring legacy traverses from the 340 to 297 BC to present 21st Century India, where contemporary students of politics, economic and foreign policy are relooking, researching and re-imagining the contribution of the written text.

Further observations in the lecture included that contemporary literature on Kautilya and *Arthashastra* has, in most cases, rather sadly, caricatured Kautilya to

the 'Chanakya Metaphor' (sic). A construct that reduces him to the 'the cunning advisor who gets things done whatever it takes'. This simplistic interpretation is most erroneous, and misleading. It does not do any justice to *Arthashastra*, which, in my opinion, is the most comprehensive, secular and seminal Indian text after the *Bhagwad Gita*. Further, it was stated that the word 'artha' has a variety of meanings, but the literal meaning of *Arthashastra*, in the way Kautilya uses it, is the interest or wealth being one of the goals of human existence. *Arthashastra* therefore is the 'science for the protection and acquisition of wealth (Arth)', which in Sanskrit means 'yogakshema'. The objective of this science is to lay bare the interplay of politics, wealth and practical expediency, of ways of acquiring and maintaining power. Accordingly the subjects covered by Kautilya in *Arthashastra* include: administration; law, order and justice; taxation, revenue and expenditure; foreign policy; and defense and war.

The lecture, published by Sahitya Akademi, was released on this occasion.

### TODAY'S EVENTS

**Face to Face**  
(Select Award Winners in  
Conversation with Eminent  
Writers/Scholars)

Rabindra Bhavan Lawns,  
10.00 a.m.

**National Seminar on Regionality,  
Environment and Literature**

Sahitya Akademi Auditorium,  
10.30 a.m.

**All India LGBTQ Poets' Meet**

Rabindra Bhavan Lawns, 2.00 p.m.

**Cultural Programme: Ensemble  
of Indian Percussion Instruments**

Rabindra Bhavan Lawns, 6.00 p.m.





## Writers' Meet

Twenty two Sahitya Akademi Award-winners participated in the Writers' Meet and shared their experiences into creative writing. Sri Madhav Kaushik, Vice President, presided over the Meet.

Ms Joyasree Goswami Mahanta, Sahitya Akademi Award-winner in Assamese, discussing his awarded book said that the character of Chanakya is one of her favourites. She further said that her book is not a piece of history but a novel based on historical data.

Prof. Chinmoy Guha, Sahitya Akademi Award-winner in Bengali, said that as a member of the academia, he has noted with horror the cracks and crevices in the system, and the growing poverty of intellect. So when he says that he reads French, he teaches English and he writes in Bengali, it is one way of showing that we need to stay close to our roots, because there is no other alternative. There is no cosmopolitanism without roots.

Sri Phukan Ch. Basumatary, Sahitya Akademi Award-winner in Bodo, said that his poetry calls for peace and harmony in the society, honest longing for love and brotherhood among the communities, sincere love and sympathy towards the poor and oppressed segments of the society.

Sri Ratilal Borisagar, Sahitya Akademi Award-winner in Gujarati, said that many a time it happens that you experience something but can't express about the experience immediately. It is quite later that the experience comes in handy, and

becomes the centre of your writing, he said further.

Sri Nand Kishore Acharya, Sahitya Akademi Award-winner in Hindi, said that words are not merely a medium but are sources of experiences which we call time and ambience that in turn transform into poetry.

Smt. Vijaya, Sahitya Akademi Award-winner in Kannada, referring to her awarded book, said that the economic, social and cultural transformations that our society is undergoing at an unbelievable speed is creating inequalities between people more than ever before.

Sri Abdul Ahad Hajini, Sahitya Akademi award-winner in Kashmiri, discussing his award-winning book, said that when our writings pulsate with humane feelings, the impact is bound to resonate and echo from animals, mountains, stars, planets and the whole cosmos.

Sri Nilba A. Khandekar, Sahitya Akademi award-winner in Konkani, in his speech, said that every poet is a seeker of truth. He shared that he believes that the poetry is fuelled by our experiences and linguistic skills.

Sri Kumar Manish Arvind, Sahitya Akademi award-winner in Maithili, in his speech said that during the time the poem was taking shape in his mind he experienced a series of several emotions.

Sri V. Madhusoodanan Nair, Sahitya Akademi award-winner in Malayalam, in his speech, said that no effort is being made anywhere to harmonize the world life

Sri Beryl Thanga, Sahitya Akademi award-winner in Manipuri, in his speech said that his award-winning book depicts a pen picture of the life and cultural aspect of the people of Thanga, a peaceful island village.

Smt. Anuradha Patil, Sahitya Akademi award-winner in Marathi, in her speech said that poetry bestowed on her the faith in mankind and humanity, and this is a relentless quest for her.

Sri Solon Karthak, Sahitya Akademi award-winner in Nepali, referring to his award-winning book said that the genre of travel writing made him question the right and wrong of human history and share solidarities with people across the world.

Sri Tarun Kanti Mishra, Sahitya Akademi award-winner in Odia, said that many of his stories are tragedy of sorts. They do not have a happy ending. But he is not a pessimist. He is not a merchant of tears. Despite all tragedies in life, he firmly believes, like many writers who wrote before him, that Man will not only endure, he will prevail also. His spirit is invincible, he observed.

Sri Kirpal Kazak, Sahitya Akademi award-winner in Punjabi, said that the process of creation is not easy one.

Sri Ramswaroop Kisan, Sahitya Akademi award-winner in Rajasthani, said that it is a myth that a language is merely a medium for emotions, thought and feelings, for me the language is not a medium but is something to be achieved.





Prof. Penna Madhusudan, Sahitya Akademi award-winner in Sanskrit, in his speech said that the legacy of Sanskrit epics is very rich, and new creative work is being added every year to its grand repository by many poets across the nation.

Sri Kali Charan Hembram, Sahitya Akademi award-winner in Santali, said that the time has come for change in the Santal society, in the context of modernity, globalization and digitalization.

Sri Ishwar Moorjani, Sahitya Akademi award-winner in Sindhi, in

his speech said that though world's great literature has inspired me, but he is not swayed by it.

Sri Cho. Dharman, Sahitya Akademi award-winner in Tamil, said that he is not writing a novel nor he is producing it but he is creating the novel ounce by ounce.

Sri Bandi Narayana Swamy, Sahitya Akademi award-winner in Telugu, in his speech said that his novel depicted dark shades of history, for it speaks of the downtrodden.

Prof. Shafey Kidwai, Sahitya Akademi award-winner in Urdu,

said that it tries to locate Sir Syed in the broader literary, language and socio-cultural debate of nineteenth-century India.

Dr Shashi Throor, Sahitya Akademi award-winning writer in English, could not attend the Meet. The Award winning writer in Dogri, late Om Sharma 'Jandriari' breathed his last on 12 December 2019. His son – Sri Manoj Kumar Sharma 'Nischint' – received the Award on his father's behalf at the Award presentation Ceremony held on 25 February 2020.

## Panel Discussion on Present Scenario of Playwriting

The Festival of Letters 2020 also included a Panel discussion on 'Present Scenario of Playwriting' at Rabindra Bhavan Lawns on 26 February 2020. Dr. K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi welcomed the august gathering. Sri Arjundev Charan, eminent Rajasthani poet, critic, playwright, theatre director and translator, in his Inaugural Address said that in Indian tradition reading and even hearing of Vedas was prohibited for a particular section of people. Then the Deities requested Brahmaji to create a fifth Veda, so that by people from all walks of life can hear and become part of it. On the request of Indra and other deities, then Brahmaji created the fifth Veda taking "Pathya" from *Rigveda*, "Gaan" from *Samaveda*, "Abhinaya" from *Yejurveda* and "Rasa" from *Atharvaveda*, and thus the fifth Veda came into existence as *Natyaveda*. Brahmaji said that I will create Veda along with history: a genre that would be a torch bearer of all future deeds of mankind. A play needs to be rewritten for staging only then it becomes part of the present, he said. Dr. Chandrashekhar Kambar, President, Sahitya Akademi, said that he loves theatre most amongst all other forms. Further he observed that any work of art presented with a new ambience, it becomes a part of the present times.

Dr Krishna Manavalli, noted critic, translator and educationist, chaired the session on the Panel discussion. From the chair while talking about the present scenario of playwriting she said that we will discuss about the rift between author and director. She further said that because of



this rift the playwriting has taken back stage and this rift is affecting the present scenario of playwriting badly. There is a gap between the vision of writer, playwright and director. Sri Athokpam Kholchandra Singh, noted Manipuri director, playwright and editor, Sri Saponjyoti Thakur, noted playwright, story-writer and columnist, Sri Shafaat Khan, noted playwright, director, film writer, theater activist and educationist and Sri Suman Kumar, noted actor, director, trainer, playwright and director, discussed the possibilities to bridge the gap between the vision of writer, playwright and director actively.





## All India Tribal Writers' Conference (contd.)



The fifth session of the All India Tribal Writers' Conference - "Tribal Sensibilities and Mythology" – was chaired by Prof. Molly Kaushal, noted scholar. The session began with Sri G. Krishna's, a Banjara poet, paper. He discussed the history of Lambadi (which is also known as Banjara) tribes and its myths in the modern perspective. He concluded his paper saying that the cultural affluence of a country lays in the progress of its tribal languages."

The second speaker was Smt. Vidya Kamat, noted researcher. She discussed the ecology of tribes and their religions and pointed out as to how tribal myths are connected to the modern times.

The third speaker was Dr. V.R. Ralte, a Mizo writer and translator. His paper was devoted to tribal sensibilities and myths in India. Dr. Ralte said that the lives of India can be understood well by getting to know about the tribal lifestyles. He further discussed the

problems of Mizo tribes, and myths carried on in their society in the modern scenario.

Dr. Devendra Kumar Devesh, Regional Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, coordinated the programme, and Prof. Molly Kaushal concluded the session.

The sixth session of the All India Tribal Writers' Conference was meant for readings of tribal songs and poems. Sri Janesh Ayan, who writes both in Chakma and Bengali, chaired the session. S. Lhingneithiem Haokip (Kuki), M. Paominlal Haokip (Thadou-Kuki), Hangmiji Honseh (Karabi) and Satyajit Toto (Toto) read out their poetry. Sri Janesh Ayan concluded the session.

The seventh session of the Conference also included readings of tribal songs and poems. Sri Sampat Thankar, authority on Warli traditions, songs and rituals, chaired the session. Gourprava Singh (Mundari), Kumuda B. (Pardivagri), recited their poetry.

Programmes of Festival of Letters 2020

DATE	TIME	EVENT	VENUE
28 February 2020	10.00 a.m.	National Seminar on Regionality, Environment and Literature (cont...)	Sahitya Akademi Auditorium
28 February 2020	10.30 a.m.	Panel Discussion on Art of Translation: Cultural Responsibility	Rabindra Bhavan Lawns
28 February 2020	2.30 p.m.	Panel Discussion on Media and Literature: Information and Sensibility	Rabindra Bhavan Lawns
28 February 2020	6.00 p.m.	Dastangoi by Mahmood Farooqui	Rabindra Bhavan Lawns
29 February 2020	10.00 a.m.	National Seminar on Regionality, Environment and Literature (cont...)	Sahitya Akademi Auditorium
29 February 2020	10.00 a.m.	Spin-a-Tale (Programme for Children)	Rabindra Bhavan Lawns
29 February 2020	10.00 a.m.	Panel Discussion on Publishing in India	Rabindra Bhavan Lawns
29 February 2020	10.30 a.m.	New Harvest (All India Young Writers' Meet)	Rabindra Bhavan Lawns



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