



# साहित्योत्सव Festival of Letters

24 - 29 February 2020

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## National Seminar on Regionality, Environment and Literature



Following the tradition of organizing a national seminar on an important theme during the Festival of Letters, the Sahitya Akademi organized a three-day national seminar on “Regionality, Environment and Literature” between 27 and 29 February 2020, at the Akademi Auditorium, New Delhi.

In the inaugural session of the seminar, Dr. K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi,

welcomed the participants and audience. He said that it is a well-known fact that Nature does inspire and influence literary productions. He further said that the Akademi felt that environment and nature are important topics in the times we are living in and writers have a very important role in enhancing awareness about the unprecedented environmental crisis that the world is facing.

In his Inaugural Address, Sri S.L. Bhyrappa, eminent Kannada writer and Fellow, Sahitya Akademi, said that it is quite common to ask “how is your prakriti?” whenever one meets a friend. Prakriti or nature also means the whole of external world including the Panchamahabhutas — Prithvi, Aap, Tejas, Vaayu and Aakaasha. Even though prakriti in itself is inanimate, it becomes active with the contact of purusha, and become animate. With this philosophy countless myths and live characters have emerged.

Sri Amit Chaudhuri, noted English author and Fellow of the

Royal Society of Literature, in the beginning of his keynote address, quoted world famous poem by D.H. Lawrence, “Peach”. Explaining the poem, he said that dominance of mankind has been invoked by the poet in this poem. He further said that this dominance always results in his will to perfection. Nature itself is not finished, it is unfinished, and is in process. It is therefore like poetic language as Mathew Arnold called it “fluid and unfixed”.

Prof. Chandrashekhara Kambar, President, Sahitya Akademi, in his presidential address, said that the vision of a uniform and unique Indian cultural tradition was the basis on which the idea of India was configured. This cultural notion of India was formed even before the country achieved independence.

Sri Madhav Kaushik, Vice President, Sahitya Akademi, concluding the inaugural session said that nature and environment are integral part of our lives from the ancient times.

The first session - Epics, Legends

### National Seminar on Regionality, Environment and Literature (contd.)

Sahitya Akademi Auditorium,  
10.00 a.m.

### Panel Discussion on Art of Translation: Cultural Responsibility

Rabindra Bhavan Lawns, 10.30 a.m.

### Panel Discussion on Media and Literature: Information and Sensibility

Rabindra Bhavan Lawns, 2.30 p.m.

### Dastangoi by Mahmood Farooqui

Rabindra Bhavan Lawns, 6.00 p.m.

### TODAY'S EVENTS





and Myths - was chaired by Prof. Vishwanath Prasad Tiwari, former President, and Fellow of Akademi, and papers were presented by four eminent scholars—Dr. Raghul V. Rajan, Asst. Professor of English in AMU Centre, Malappuram, Sri Abhai Maurya, fiction writer and scholar, Prof. Vishwanath Shinde, Chair-Professor, Mahatma Phule Research Chair at Savitribai Phule Pune University, and Prof. M.A. Alwar, acclaimed Sanskrit scholar.

Dr. Raghul Rajan in his paper on “Environmentalism in Sarpa Kavu myths of Kerala” said that sacred groves were the part of significance from the point of view of anthropology, culture, the economy, and ecology. Nowadays the groves are destroyed in the guise of development strategies.

Sri Abhai Maurya in his paper on “Nature in Epics—A Humanizing Phenomenon” said that an epic encompasses into its ambit stories of utmost importance drawn from the most ancient historical past of any people or nation.

Prof. Vishwanath Shinde in his paper on “Nature in Epics, Legends

and Myths” said that folklore is a living image of the folk conscious. Folklore is an invaluable treasure of cultural identity.

Prof. M.A. Alwar in his paper on “Vedic Solutions for Solving Problems in the Environment” said that Vedic texts can contribute in solving today's problems plaguing the environment – due to global warming, climate change.

The Second session of the seminar - “The Discourse of Nature in the Literature of the North-East: Past and Present” - was chaired by Sri Damodar Mauzo, eminent Konkani fiction writer, and Ms Mamang Dai, poet and fiction writer in English, Dr. Desmond Kharmawphlang, noted poet and folklorist and Ms Preeti Rekha Dutta, Asst. Professor, Department of Assamese in BHB College, Assam, presented their papers.

Ms Mamang Dai in her paper on - “The Discourse of Nature in the Literature of the North East” - said that a large chunk of the literature of the different communities comes to us via oral tradition. This in turn has promoted a literary scenario of

contemporary writings.

Dr. Desmond Kharmawphlang in his paper on “Folklore and Fiction: An Encounter with Khasi Ecocriticism” stressed that there is an urgent and increasing demand for an analytical approach for the investigation of literary concepts of ideas and issues in folk literature.

Ms Preeti Rekha Dutta in her paper on “Reflection on Nature in Bihu Geet: A Critical Study” analyzed that Bihu geets are the spirit and thinking of natural life, gets redirected in its real form, it is slightly a description of lifecycle's feelings.

The third session of the seminar was chaired by Prof. Gopi Chand Narang, eminent Urdu writer, scholar, critic, linguist, and Fellow of Sahitya Akademi, and Dr. Mahender Kumar Mishra, noted folklorist, Prof. Mahesh Sharma, Professor History, Panjab University presented their papers.

Dr. Mahendra Kumar Mishra in his paper on “Regionality, Environment and Literature” said that literature is of course, written and individualistic; having authorship, but oral tradition found in written form is known as folk literature.

Prof. Mahesh Sharma in his paper on “Representation of Environment in the Folklore of Western-Himayalan Shepherds” said that the Gaddi shepherds of Bharmour in the district of Chamba, Himachal Pradesh, are perhaps one of the most written about transhuman pastoral communities in South-Asia.



## Face to Face

Sahitya Akademi organized a Face to Face programme at Rabindra Bhawan Lawns in New Delhi on February 27, 2020, with select Award winners in conversation with eminent writers in their Award winning languages.

Prof. Subodh Sarkar interviewed Sri Chinmoy Guha, award-winner in Bengali. Sri Chinmoy Guha pointed out the dangers found by a writer on the crossroads of globalization. He emphasized that we must have our roots firmly entrenched in our soil. Prof. Sarkar agreed saying that element of one's roots is literature; the need is to construct an overhauled discourse out of the consciousness which is an extension of an individual out of the universe.

Sri Ratilal Borisagar, award-winner in Gujarati, was in conversation with Sri Harshad Trivedi. The conversation mainly focused on the writing experiences of Sri Ratilal Borisagar. Sri Borisagar described himself as human being who has many problems in mind which he used in writing and readers enjoy this as humor. He penned the incidents which he faced in his daily life.

Sri Bhanu Bharati interviewed Sri Nand Kishore Acharya, award-winner in Hindi. Answering the question of



Sri Bhanu Bharati about the duration of his plays which are normally of one hour and on the other hand others' plays are of long durations. Sri Acharya said, when his motive is fulfilled within one hour so why to take more time. I used to say about topic or theme in minimum word to audience / readers in very clear manner, he added. He also told that he always concentrates on his present context or genre so he is able to write meaningful and less word presentation.

Sri R. Nandkumar interviewed Sri V. Madhsoodanan Nair, award-winner in Malayalam. While answering the question about his journey of creative writing, Sri Nair said that his poetic heart sees a child as a miniature divinity and when the child cries he sees gods crying with him. Talking about the rhythmic form of his poetry, he said that music is nature's primary language, for him poetry flies with the wings of music. He concluded answer reciting a poem from his collection *Naranathu Bhranthan*.

Sri Shafey Kidwai, award-winner in Urdu in conversation with Sri Sarwar-ul-Hoda, talked mainly about his Sahitya Akademi award-winning book, *Sawanah Sir Syed: Ek Bazdeed*, and the extraordinary contribution of Sir Syed in establishing AMU.

## All India LGBTQ Poets' Meet

Sahitya Akademi organized All India LGBTQ Poet's Meet at the Rabindra Bhawan Lawns on 27 February 2020.

In the inaugural session Dr. K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, welcoming Prof. Chandrasekhar Kambar, President, Sahitya Akademi, Sri Hoshang Merchant, eminent poet in English and a prominent voice of gay liberation in India, Prof. R. Raj Rao, writer, poet and teacher of literature and "one of India's leading gay-rights activists, said that this LGBTQ poets' meet is part of that commitment to writers of India





and we do not distinguish writers in any form. If one were to see, LGBTQ community has been producing wonderful literature over the year.

Sri Hoshang Merchant in his inaugural address read out some of his poems, as salutation to the fellow poets - "Light", which he wrote when A.K. Ramanujan died on 13 July 1993, and "How to Make Pain in Poetry" and concluded his address.

Sri R. Raj Rao in his keynote address showcased the sorrow, pain and grievances, the LGBTQ community faced or has been facing. He said that in everyday speech queer, gay, lesbian and possibly even the word homosexual is used interchangeably but for me, each of these words connote a different idea.

Prof. Chandrasekhar Kambar in his Presidential Address said that Sahitya Akademi has always been in a lead role of acknowledging and upholding the rights of the individual, and the freedom of artistic expression. In initiating a substantive move to uphold the literature of the LGBTQ+, Sahitya Akademi has been continuing its

own tradition of being in the vanguard of literary activities.

On the occasion Sri Hoshang Merchant also released the new edition of Prof. Raja Rao's recent poetry collection National Anthem and Other Poems.

The All India LGBTQ Poets' Meet was chaired by Vikramaditya Sahai, a researcher with the Centre for law and Policy Research, Bengaluru.

Ms Aditi Angiras, poet, writer and artist, Ms Chandini, an activist and a poet, Sri Gireesh, writer, poet, artist, translator and activist, Ms Shanta Khurai, writer, artist and activist, Ms Raveena Bariha, writer, Ms Reshma Prasad, cultural transgender activist, poet and writer, Ms Abdul Rahim, classical musician, Akash (Roy) Dutta Chowdhury, western vocalist, writer, artist and activist, Toshi Pandey, Sri Vihsal Pinjani, an entrepreneur, Sri Alagu Jagan, writer, artist and a parai player, and Daniel Mendonca, recited their poems.

## Cultural Programme: Ensemble of Indian Percussion Instruments

Cultural Programme on the evening of 27 February 2020 included Taal Vadya Kacheri melodiously rendered by Sri Peravali Jaya Bhaskar, celebrated artist, and his fellow artists.

Taal Vadya Kacheri was an ensemble of Indian percussion instruments. Mridangam was the lead drum. Tabla, Ghatam, Khanjira and Morsing were other accompanying instruments. The rhythmic cycles spun by each of the instruments strung together individually and collectively made colourful musical kaleidoscopic patterns. The experience of Indian percussive art was unparalleled and very intricate. Taal Vadya Kacheri was reflective of unity in diversity of the Indian percussion instruments.



## Programmes of Festival of Letters 2020

DATE	TIME	EVENT	VENUE
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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