



SA/37/PR/2018

08.03.2018

**Press Release**  
**Symposium on 'The Challenges to Women's Freedom Today & Poets' Meet'**  
**on the occasion of 'International Women's Day'**  
**8 March, 2018**

On the occasion of **International Women's Day**, **Sahitya Akademi** organized a symposium on '**The Challenges to Women's Freedom Today & Poets' Meet**'. In the inaugural session, Dr K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, welcomed the participants, dignitaries, media personalities and audience. He said, "There is a saying down south from where I hail that 'without Shakti there is no Shiva'. That religious saying can be applied to almost all of human existence. It is women who bind families, are the carriers of culture, and no nation can claim to be progressive if women are not prospering in that country." Focussing on the importance of Women's Day he further added that women are the backbone not only of families but also of the countries. One good thing about globalization is that it has resulted in increasing number of women in education and work. He also touched on the huge impact of Indian women writers in enriching literature in India. He informed about the Akademi's literary programmes in all the 24 Indian languages, including Nari Chetana, Asmita, Women Writer's Meet and Women Poet's Meet, exclusively featuring women writers in India. The inaugural address was delivered by eminent Hindi writer Dr Nasera Sharma, who emphasized on the contribution of women during the ancient period. She stressed that men and women, as the ultimate creations, are two separate identities, and one cannot exist without the other. Both should maintain their own identities, and the general tendency of women today to be like men is risky because that would not bring about the much-needed holistic balance in society. She expressed her view that though, undoubtedly, the status of women has much improved and progressed in the last couple of years, yet there still are multifaceted challenges faced by women. Mutual understanding, peaceful co-existence and developing humanitarian values can support the path for the greater good. Presenting the keynote address, noted Kannada writer and scholar, Prof. Krishna Manavalli highlighted the global perspectives of women's freedom and said that International Women's Day is relevant for the entire world; the idea of women's freedom should be beyond class, creed and religion. She emphasized on the plurality of Indian literature that includes many languages, cultures and traditions. She further highlighted that women's liberation should be addressed on a global level; not only should the challenges of elite women and those who can voice their opinions against their male counterparts be of concern, but also the plight of marginalized class of women, whose voices even their sisters placed in the higher rungs of the societal ladder cannot hear, should not be treated as peripheral, but central in our discourses. As far as the contribution of women writer is concerned, she believes that Indian writers have presented the diverse geo-cultural spaces focusing on global themes. Eminent writers—Varsha Adalja, Arupa Patangia Kalita (Assamese), Samragnee Bandopadhyay (Bengali), Kumud Sharma (Hindi), K.R. Meera, Hema Naik (Konkani), Gayatribala Panda (Odia), Pratibha (Punjabi) and Sindhu Mishra (Sindhi)—were invited to present their views during the programme. International Women's Day was followed by The Poets' Meet and eminent writers—Mamta Kalia, Dhirjyu Jyoti Basumatary (Bodo), Usha Kiran 'Kiran' (Dogri), Nitu (English), Rukhsana Jabeen (Kashmiri), Rani Jha (Maithili), Linthoi Ningthoujam (Manipuri), Sumati Lande (Marathi), Subhadra Bomzon (Nepali), Sharda Krishna (Rajasthani), Rita Trivedi (Sanskrit), Sumitra Soren (Santhali), Sakthi Jothi (Tamil), Mandarapu Hymavathi (Telugu) and Shahnaz Nabi (Urdu)—were invited to recite poems in their respective languages. Mrs Renu Mohan Bhan, Deputy Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, delivered the vote of thanks.

Sd/  
(K. Sreenivasarao)