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**Symposium on Concept of Cleanliness in Ancient Texts**  
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**PRESS RELEASE**

As part of the ongoing Swachhata Pakhwada, Sahitya Akademi organized a Symposium on *Concept of Cleanliness in Ancient Texts* in its 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Auditorium. Eminent scholars—Baldeo Bhai Sharma, Kapil Kapoor, Balbir Singh Seechewal, Farida Khanam, Veer Sagar Jain, Vijay Kumar and Niranjana Dev Bhardwaj—representing different religions, talked about the concept of cleanliness in ancient texts.

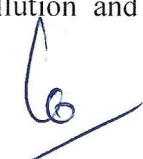
While welcoming the invited speakers and the audience, Dr K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, said that cleanliness, holiness and purity are attained gradually, one by one. Cleanliness is an important part of life – it is the first necessity of a civilized person. We should be pure and transparent in all aspects of our life. He also felicitated all the speakers with angavastram and presented them with a packet of books.

Sri Baldeo Bhai Sharma, in his inaugural speech, said that cleanliness is a subject of paramount importance. It is a matter of biggest concern before today's world. He said that Stephen Hawking, the famous scientist who passed away recently, expressed serious concern over ever-increasing pollution in the world and feared that the whole mankind would extinct in the coming hundred years. This is a man-made disaster. We have defaced the relations between man and nature. He elaborately talked about man's cleanliness in conduct, wish to do good to others, respect for values and harmony with nature. Balbir Singh Seechewal, who is known for cleanliness of rivers, said that cleanliness is a subject not limited to a place, a state or a country but the whole world. He further said that what we have read in ancient texts about cleanliness is not being practised in today's life. Ms Fareeda Khanam talked about cleanliness with references to the Prophet's sayings. She said that God is pure and loves purity in one's deeds and heart. She said that there are many references of practising cleanliness in the Holy Quran. She stressed the need of clean water and its preservation.

Veer Sagar Jain, who is an expert in Jain literature, said that great importance is given to non-violence in Jain religion. They believe that the earth, water, air and trees are also living creatures and whosoever harm them would be committing a sin. Sri Vijay Kumar, an expert in Buddha and Jain literature, presented a written paper on "Pracheen Baudhh Granthon Mein Swachhata".

Prof. Kapil Kapoor while delivering his Presidential address expressed his concern and said that the ever-expanding urbanization is constantly contributing in increasing pollution and dirty environment.

Sri Kumar Anupam, Editor, Sahitya Akademi conducted the programme.

  
(K. Sreenivasarao)