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PRESS RELEASE

**Samvatsar Lecture by Sri Pranab Mukherjee
Writers' Meet under Sahitya Akademi Award Ceremony, 2019
Panel Discussion on Present Scenario of Playwriting
All India Tribal Writers' Conference**

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. The subject of the lecture was "The Enduring Legacy of *Arthashastra*". The lecture was read out by Prof. Sanjukta Dasgupta. In his lecture he 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.

Sri Mukherjee further observed that However, contemporary literature on Kautilya and Arthashastra has, in most cases, rather sadly, caricatured Kautilya to the 'Chanakya Metaphor.' 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 Bhagwat Gita. He stated further 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 Samvatsra lecture, published by Sahitya Akademi was released on this occasion.

Writers' Meet under Sahitya Akademi Award Ceremony, 2019

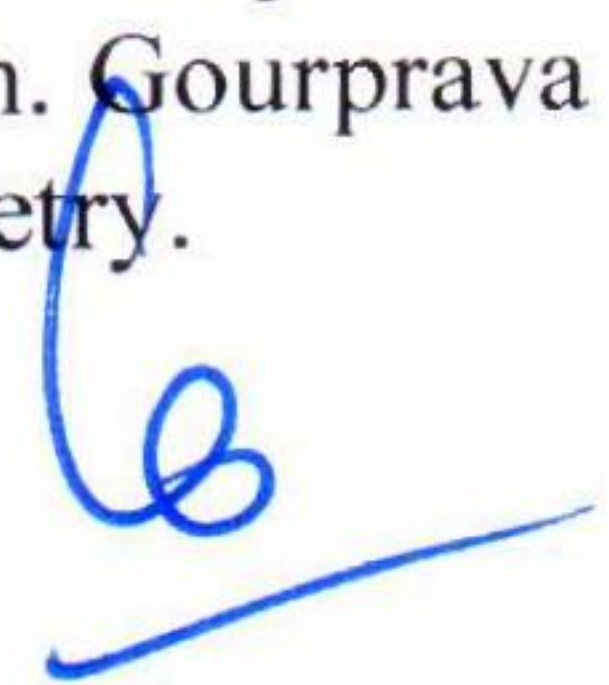
Twenty two Sahitya Akademi Award-winners participated in the Writers' Meet and shared their experiences into creative writing. Sri Madhav Kaushik, Vice President, presided over the Meet. Ms Joyasree Goswami Mahanta, Sahitya Akademi Award-winner in Assamese, discussing his awarded book said that the character of Chanakya is one of her favorites. 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 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.

Panel Discussion on Present Scenario of Playwriting

The Festival of Letters 2020 also included a Panel discussion on 'Present Scenario of Playwriting' at Rabindra Bhawan Lawns on 26 February 2020. Dr. K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi welcomed the august gathering and said that 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. 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 gap between the vision of writer, playwright and director" actively.

All India Tribal Writers' Conference

The fifth session of the All India Tribal Women 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. 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. Devendra Kumar Devesh, Regional Secretary, Sahitya Akademi Kolkata, 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), Prawesh Tamang (Tamang) recited their poetry.



(K.Sreenivasarao)