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Press Release

All India Tribal Writers' Meet

9-10 August 2022, Sahitya Akademi Auditorium, Kolkata

Today, on the first day of All India Tribal Writers' Meet, organized by Sahitya Akademi, on the occasion of International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples and Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav at the Sahitya Akademi Auditorium, 4, D. L. Khan Road, Kolkata 700025, Dr K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, delivered the welcome address. He welcomed all the present dignitaries. In his speech, he focused on the indigeneous knowledge systems which with the passage of time got developed. Interaction with other cultures played a vital rule in this. He also lauded the role of women in tribal societies. The introduction address was delivered by Sri Madan Mohan Soren, Convener, Santali Advisory Board, Sahitya Akademi. He informed the audience of other such multicultural meets. He also regretted the fact that despite the existence of so many indigeneous languages in India, only two have been designated as scheduled ones. He also spoke about the need of national councils for promotion of these indigeneous languages. The inauguration address was delivered by Ms Damayanti Beshra, eminent Santali writer and Padmashree awardee. In her speech, she focused on the role of women in preserving the culture and life style of the Adivasi Society. She also spoke of the high prestige of daughters in the Adivasi society. In adivasi society, housewives managed all household activities. She also spoke on the role of mothers in imparting knowledge of tradition and culture to the next generation. The inaugural session was chaired by Sri Debi Prasanna Pattanayak, eminent linguist and Padmashree awardee. He spoke on the significance of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. He threw light on the connotations of terms like primitive, tribe and indigeneous. He informed the audience of the diversity of Adivasi cultures. He also stressed on the importance of preservation, promotion, development and translation of Adivasi languages. He focused on the importance of mother-tongue based multilingual education. In the session Ms Ayung Raikhan (Tangkhul), Ms Dipali Debbarma (Kokborok) and Sri Lankeswar Kanhar (Kui) recited poems in original along with Hindi/English translations. The vote of Thanks of the inaugural session was proposed by Dr Devendra Kumar Devesh, Regional Secretary, Sahitya Akademi.

The first session of the Meet was focused on the topic "Indigenous Voices in Non-indigenous Languages". The session was chaired by eminent Marathi fiction writer Sri Laxman Gaikwad. Ms Pushpamma S, Sri Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar and Sri Walter Bhengra Tarun presented papers in the session. Ms Pushpamma S spoke on the tribal communities of Kerala as well as their rituals and cultures. She spoke about the oral traditions prevalent in tribal societies as well as their beliefs and philosophical thoughts. In his paper, Sri Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar spoke on the reasons for which he used English as his writing medium despite his original Santali language. He also spoke on his experience as he tries to express his thoughts on Santali life-style in English. Sri Walter Bhengra Tarun spoke about the tribal communities of



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Jharkhand. He informed the audience of several literary magazines which focused on tribal culture. He also spoke in details about many prominent indigeneous writers who have chosen other languages, i.e. English, Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi etc, for expressing themselves. Sri Laxman Gaikwad, while speaking from the chair, lauded the Adivasi freedom fighters who were less in discussion now-a-days. He pointed to the lack of comprehensive history books on Advasi societies in India. He informed the audience of the torture and social as well as institutional atrocities, tribal communities have to face till today. The notions of criminal tribes are still in vogue. In the second session, Ms Asinta Asur (Asuri), Ms Kumuda B. (Vagri) and Sri Badal Hembram (Santali) read out short stories in Hindi/English translations. The session was chaired by eminent Khasi writer and scholar Minimon Laloo who read out a story in original Khasi language. There stories displayed their deep attachments with nature as well as the impact of societies on these tribal communities. In the third session, noted poets like Roshan Chaudhari (Chaudhari), Paikray Champia (Ho), Kaisa Pfoze (Mao), Thowaiongya Mog (Mog), Jaysingh Santa (Kondh) and Gagarin Sabar (Saura) read out poems in Hindi/English translations. The session was chaired by eminent Chakma writer and scholar Arun Chakma.

On the next Day, the title of the fourth session was "Writings by Women in Indian Indigenous Languages". In the session, noted scholars like Pushpa Gavit, Vandana Tete, Chukey Bhutiya and Dhanya Vengachery will present papers with Ushakiran Atram in the chair.

In the fifth session, Roshan Ramdas Jambu (Korku), Lanbon Kabui (Kabui), Ananda Gopal Hansda (Mahali), Salomi Ekka (Mundari), Satyajit Toto (Toto), Shanti Moyee Chiran (Garo), Sajjad Ali Shujaat (Purgi) and Altaf Salim Tadavi (Tadavi) will read out poems in Hindi/English translations with Vasamalli K. (Toda) in the chair.

In the sixth session, papers will be present on the topic of "Preservation and Development of Indian Indigenous Languages" by noted scholars like Wichamdinbo and Jaincy John with Damayanti Beshra in the chair.

In the seventh session, noted poets like Paominson Khongsai (Khongsai), K. Lalnunzama (Mizo), Dhaniram Tisso (Karbi), Raghunath Madkani (Koya), Kamalu Muduli (Didiyi), Mohd Ali (Balti) and Rajeshwari (Hakkipikki) will read out poems in Hindi/English translations with Gosa Painter (Pawari) in the chair.

On both of the days Sahitya Akademi books will be exhibited and will be available for sale.

We request you to kindly publish the matter through your esteemed media. Also please make it convenient to attend tomorrow's programme and depute one of your media personnel to cover the above events of national importance.


(Dr Devendra Kumar Devesh)