



SA/PR/2019

31/1/2019

## Press Release

### National Seminar on “Gandhi in Indian Literature”

On the fourth day of the Festival of Letters, Sahitya Akademi organized a **National Seminar on “Gandhi in Indian Literature”** at Rabindra Bhavan Lawns. In the inaugural session, Dr K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, said that it is not very often that one comes across a personality like Gandhiji whose thoughts and actions guide and change the destiny of a nation of millions within a short span of time. Mr Armoogum Parsuramen, former Education Minister of Mauritius Government, former Director of UNESCO, present Chairman of International Thirukkural Foundation, stated that Gandhiji was a man of great vision, but his vision was not about an industrialized India with high technology. Sri Jayanta Mahapatra distinguished poet and writer in English, observed that Mohandas Karamchand Gandhiji has been a part of his story all along. He felt he was having a kind of quiet conversation with the deeds of this long-dead man who was dedicated to, and determined to save his country, in whatever he had been doing all his life, whether as a teacher and researcher in Physics, or as a writer of some sort. In his Keynote Address, Dr. Sudhir Chandra, eminent historian and writer in English, rued that Gandhi has become a forgotten figure so far as his ideas are concerned. We have resorted to remembering him as a great leader who showed a new way to humankind, and complement ourselves for having made Gandhi’s historic experiment possible. In his presidential address, Prof. Chandrashekhar Kambar, President, Sahitya Akademi, observed that today some might even argue that Gandhi’s ideas and his mission in life was impossible to emulate in the real world. Yet, we still feel a little nudge of conscience telling us that something is not right in this kind of easy dismissal. A book release function followed the inaugural session, in which three books were released --*Prasnottara Ratnamalika*, in Sanskrit, by Adi Sankaracharya, translated into 23 Indian languages, *All Men Are Brothers* compiled and edited by Krishna Kripalani, translated into 10 Indian languages and "Mahatma Gandhi in his Gujarati Writing" by C.N. Patel. In the first session of the Seminar, chaired by Prof. Vishwanath Prasad Tiwari, former President and Fellow of Akademi, four eminent scholars— Prof. Nand Kishore Acharya; Prof. Avadhesh Kumar Singh; Prof. Neera Chandhoke; and Dr Mini Prasad presented their papers. Prof. Nand Kishore Acharya in his paper on “Gandhi’s Economics” said that for Gandhi economic freedom was as important as political freedom. He believed in the economic freedom of the smallest unit, that is the village. Prof. Avadhesh Kumar Singh in his paper on “Gandhian Values in 21<sup>st</sup> Century” said that Gandhi valued values because they write the destiny of an individual, society and culture. Prof. Neera Chandhoke in her paper on “Swarajya in a Globalized World” said that Gandhi’s considered rejection of violence was, as a matter of course, grounded in familiarity with this particular mode of doing politics. Dr Mini Prasad in her paper on “Gandhi’s Concept of Ecology” said that Gandhi aspired for a developmental approach that would aid the permanent sustenance of Indian villages. The Second Session was devoted to ‘Gandhi and Dalit Movement’. The speakers were – Prof. Gopal and Sri Sheoraj Singh Bechain. Prof. Gopal Guru presented his paper on “Gandhi and Concept of Harijan”. He said that the term *Harijan* is not for untouchable; it is for caste Hindus, the word has since been banished for use. Sri Sheoraj Singh Bechain spoke on ‘Gandhi’s influence on Dalit Movement and Literature’. As regard the subject, he said that the people who believe that Gandhi ji used to call ‘Harijan’ to those who were discriminated and boycotted on the basis of their caste and Ambedkar and Swami Achutanand will consider it insulting, will feel awkward and contradictory. Sri Narendra Jadhav, as Chair talked about the two papers presented and gave his own views. He gave an interesting account of how Ambedkar was inducted in the Nehru’s cabinet after Indian gained its independence and also his induction in the constituent assembly that drafted the Indian constitution.

  
(K.Sreenivasarao)