

# THERE IS NOTHING CALLED NORTHEASTERN: KAMBARA

Prof Dr CHANDRASEKHARA KAMBARA (83) is a versatile academic pillar, folklorist, film director, ex-Vice Chancellor and president of the Sahitya Akademi, country's premier literary institution, the same chair once adorned by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India and globally accredited philosopher Dr Sarbapalli Radhakrishnan was recently sojourning in Agartala in connection with three days literary programme that began on 14 June with distribution of prestigious Translators prize for 2018 and to be ended on June 16 but despite hectic scheduled, this man of the letter was kind enough to share his experiences with NEC representative PRAHLAD DEBNATH.

**NEC: Why did you select Agartala to be the venue for this year's mega 3 days literary programme?**

Dr Kambara: well, Agartala is a beautiful city surrounded by lush green with a highly educated soil having 94.45% literacy rate and it is the city in India where Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore came 7 times other than his native place at the patron & behest of the royal dynasty. Moreover, it is a home for 19 tribes along with Bengali and Manipuri communities, an excellent peaceful place for the cultivation of literature, this is why the entire executive council body of the Sahitya Akademi has come down to here to visualise the gamut.

**NEC: How are you getting the response?**

Dr Kambara: It's my maiden visit here and I have reason to be very happy. The city dwellers are cooperative and friendly and responsive to get the essence of literature.

**NEC: Please tell us something how did you come to the literary world and your progression to this level and recognition**

Dr Kambara: Perhaps I was lucky to have born in a literary family of Karnataka. I started writing at my schooling time. Having completed the higher study I went to work as a Professor in the University of Chicago, then in Bangalore University and became administrator, vice chancellor and also to work at the helm of various literary institutions including Sahitya Akademi. I have been credited with 18 different academic Awards including Jnanpith, which I call it as the Nobel prize of India for literature.



**NEC: Do you google yourself even at 83?**

Dr Kambara : (Smiling) I feel always tendered and fond of reading and learning. I did write 26 plays, 13 books of poetry, 6 novels and so many research papers but I would love to be doing more if my health permits. I used to keep myself engaged in attending various literary festivals' to enrich my knowledge.

**NEC: What's your plan and priority for augmentation of literary activities in the region in particular and India as a whole?**

Dr Kambara: Well, its a very important information to be shared with. There is nothing called a "north-easterner" and the concept is purely geographical; it tends to homogenise an extremely heterogeneous cluster of people as there exists no common history and heritage of the people in North-East India and what I do

appreciate, this region is rich in culture and languages. Tripura is a nice example of multilingual character where other than the constitutionally recognised 24 languages Kokborak, Chakma and Mog community languages are getting an opportunity to flourish their literary activities with the special help of NECOL (North East Centre for Oral literature). Mr Chandrakanta Murasing, an outstanding native scholar has been actively working here since the resumption of this centre here at Nazrul Kalakshetra and anyone feels interested may contact him. Different travel grants are given to youngster writers for outstanding literature practice, Gramalok is a scheme facilitating to be in the village areas as a round up to acquire interactive knowledge while Yuba Sahitya and Navodaya (Below the age of 14 years) to encourage the new generation penholders. Besides, we also invite the talented youngsters to attend different literary events from time to time. Last year, we have organised 643 literary activities across the country indicating there was an event in every after 40 hours, including 180 book exhibitions that sold books for the worth of Rs.6.15 crores and 476 books were published means one book is coming up in 18 hours. Academy of letters, Sahitya Akademi is marching ahead to spread the spirit of nationalism with the same line of dreaming "With all, development for all".

(Mr K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi has also remained present and supplemented the statistics who deserves a big thanks)