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संस्कृति मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार की स्वायत्तशासी संस्था
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PRESS RELEASE
Symposium on Books that Shape our World


Sahitya Akademi organized a symposium on Books that Shape our World on the occasion of World Book Day on 23 April 2019 in which eminent personalities from various fields participated. At the outset, Dr. K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, welcomed all the guest speakers with a packet of Akademi publications. In his welcome address, he stressed on the need to read and immerse into the world of books that not only imparts vast knowledge to the reader, but also takes him/her to other regions of the earth without even physically visiting them, and above all, makes us better human beings.

Sri K.K. Srivastava (Additional Deputy Comptroller & Auditor General, CAG), the first speaker of the symposium, talked about Sigmund Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* and how the observations mentioned in the book can be observed in one's everyday life. He went on to talk in detail about the latent and manifest aspects of dreams and the roles of Id, Ego and Superego. Sri M.K. Raina (eminent theatre personality), though stressed the fact that he is through and through a theatre person, his speech on the occasion betrayed his love for literature and his excellence in the field of theatre because of it. He talked about several books he read and re-read during his student life, the book on Abraham Lincoln, the abridged version of Gandhi's works and how he juxtaposed Premchand's *Kafan* with *Kafan-Chor*, a Kashmiri story, and transformed it into a unique play.

Sri Pranav Khullar (Joint Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India) said that studying literature has made him more humane. While he mentioned that Mahabharata and other scriptures have had a great impact on us, his speech mainly concentrated on the influence *Autobiography of a Yogi* and how impacted great minds like Steve Jobs and Pt. Ravi Shankar. Sri S. Venkat Narayan (eminent journalist), besides speaking about the relevance of our scriptures, brought to everyone's notice the kind of influence J.K. Rowling has on a certain generation throughout the globe. He observed that one needs a certain kind of mastery to influence a certain age group the way Rowling has been doing for all these years.

The next speaker, Smt. Satwant Atwal Trivedi (Joint Secretary, NATGRID, Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India), mesmerized the audience with her rhetoric on the quotations and life lessons one gains from even books meant for kids, like Winnie the Pooh or Enid Blyton's works—the simplicity in such books instills a sense of tranquil and ideal examples in the reader's mind that stay with her/him for life. She also talked about the Vedas and Adi Granth, how they are, in reality, the most scientific and secular bodies of research.

Ms Sharon Lowen (eminent Odissi, Chhau and Manipuri Dancer) talked about her love with literature and the favorable circumstances under which she familiarized herself with several great literary works. She spoke about *Charlotte's Web* and *The Tempest*. She believed that *The Tempest* could very easily be the first Shakespeare starter, after which one can go on to read the other works of the master playwright. The last speaker, Ms Sujata Chaudhry (Retired General Manager, Indian Post), elaborated the concept of Dharma, as described in the Ramayana. She dwelt on the three questions of Dharma that one needs to and can learn from the Ramayana, which are "what is the source of Dharma", "what is Dharma" and "why to follow Dharma". The symposium ended with a vote of thanks from Dr. K. Sreenivasarao who thanked the speakers for their interesting insights and the audience.


(K. Sreenivasarao)



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