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## PRESS RELEASE

### Dalit Chetna programme organized by Sahitya Akademi 25.10.2019

The Third Edition of Sahitya Akademi's newly-launched poetry-reading series, "Dalit Chetana", was held at 5 pm, today, with senior dalit poet Susheela Takhbore, and well-known dalit poets Anita Bharti and Arun Kumar, participating. Dr. Anamika, celebrated Hindi poet, joined in the introduction of poets, and offering concluding remarks in the end.

Ms. Susheela Takhbore made certain initial remarks before she began reading her poems, championing the cause of dalit writers, especially poets. In her first poem, "Suno Vikram," she inverted the Vikram and Vetal storyline, and appealed to them to begin a joint narrative. The other poems she read were, "Ummeed," "Jagaran ke baad," "Bhramjaal," "Yaatanao," "Hum Dalit," "Pank Mere Phatphattati Hai," "Oonchaayi se," and "Dali tChetna."

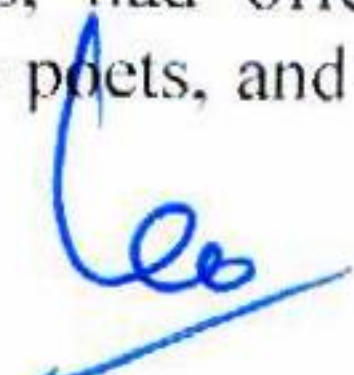
Ms. Anita Bharti portrayed the everyday life of the dalit basti at Jahangirpuri in different dimensions, in her poems, "Jahangirpuri ki auratein-I," and "Jahangirpuri ki auratein-II." She also talked about the politics of othering within the Feminist movement. The other poems she read were, "Farak" and "Bhed Drishti," dwelling on the dalit revolution and in her last poem, "Jhun jhuna," on justice.

Mr. Arun Kumar, a very strong poetic voice, was sarcastic and sharply critical about the lip-service paid to the Dalit movement. He raised meaningful, soul-searching queries through his poems. The poems he read were "Bheed," (2) "Swaanubhooti ("Sensing one's on self,")(vis-avis Sahaanubhooti or empathy), "Khamosh Kalam," "Meri Aawaaz," and "Anushaasan."

There was a lively question-answer session after the readings.

Dr. Anamika offered closing remarks at the end of the session. She dwelt mainly on the aspects of "swaanubhooti" and "sahaanubhooti." She connected "sahaanubhooti" to Gandhi ji's "Vaishnava Jan tho." She further explained the subjectivities involved in the dalit experience, quoting the example of how 'only the wearer knows where the shoe pinches.' She also said that the intermediate level is the best possible outcome, before the sublimation of all at the ultimate level. She also stressed how flights of fancy are different for a bird perched on a thorny shrub, meaning a dalit poet hemmed in by all odds, and for a bird atop a peepul tree, meaning those privileged by birth. She concluded saying that there should be a cross-ventilation of all kinds of writers. Othering can't go on as it does today. Justice and ethical behaviour should prevail.

Dr. A.J. Thomas, Guest Editor, *Indian Literature*, who conducted the proceedings, had offered preliminary remarks at the beginning and concluding remarks at the end, thanking the poets, and the audience that formed a full-house this time as well.

  
(K. Sreenivasarao)