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### PRESS RELEASE

**Face to Face, Sahitya Akademi Award 2019 Winners in conversation with eminent writers/scholars**  
**National Seminar : Regionality, Environment and Literature**  
**All India LGBTQ Poets' Meet**  
**Cultural Programme : Taal Vadya Kacheri, An Ensemble of Indian Percussion Instruments, led by Peravali Jaya Bhaskar**

#### National Seminar on “Regionality, Environment and Literature”

Following the tradition of organizing a national seminar on an important theme during the Festival of Letters, the Sahitya Akademi organized a three-day national seminar on “**Regionality, Environment and Literature**” between 27 to 29 February 2020, at the Akademi Auditorium, New Delhi. In the inaugural session of the seminar, Dr. K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, welcomed the participants and audience. He said that it is a well-known fact that Nature does inspire and influence literary productions. In recent times there has been plenty of works and programmes on eco-criticism, on how environment and nature are portrayed in literary productions and analysis thereupon. In his Inaugural Address Sri S.L. Bhyrappa, eminent Kannada writer and Fellow, Sahitya Akademi, said that it is quite common to ask “how is your prakriti?” whenever one meets a friend. Prakriti or nature also means the whole of external world including the *Panchamahabhutas* like Prithvi, Aap, Tejas, Vaayu and Aakaasha. Even though prakriti in itself is inanimate, it becomes active with the contact of purusha, and become animate. Sri Amit Chaudhuri, noted English author and Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, in the beginning of his Keynote Address, quoted world famous poem by D.H. Lawrence, “Peach.” Prof. Chandrashekhar Kambar, President, Sahitya Akademi, in his Presidential address, said that the vision of a uniform and unique Indian cultural tradition was the basis on which the idea of India was configured. This cultural notion of India was formed even before the country achieved independence. Sri Madhav Kaushik, Vice President, Sahitya Akademi, concluding the inaugural session said that nature and environment are integral part of our lives from the ancient times. We never wanted to dominate nature and environment. We have always been attempting to cope with them. The first session - Epics, Legends and Myths - was chaired by Prof. Vishwanath Prasad Tiwari, former President and Fellow of Akademi, and papers were presented by four eminent scholars—Dr. Raghul V. Rajan, Asst. Professor of English in AMU Centre, Malappuram, Sri Abhai Maurya, fiction writer and scholar, Prof. Vishwanath Shinde, Chair-Professor, Mahatma Phule Research Chair at Savitribai Phule Pune University, and Prof. M.A. Alwar, acclaimed Sanskrit scholar. The Second session of the seminar - “The Discourse of Nature in the Literature of the North-East: Past and Present” - was chaired by Sri Damodar Mauzo, eminent Konkani fiction writer, and Ms Mamang Dai, poet and fiction writer in English, Dr. Desmond Kharmawphlang, noted poet and folklorist and Ms Preeti Rekha Dutta, Asst. Professor, Department of Assamese in BHB College, Assam, presented their papers. The third session of the seminar was chaired by Prof. Gopi Chand Narang, eminent Urdu writer, scholar, critic, linguist, and Fellow of Sahitya Akademi, and Dr. Mahender Kumar Mishra, noted folklorist, Prof. Mahesh Sharma, Professor History, Panjab University presented their papers.

#### All India LGBTQ Poets' Meet

Sahitya Akademi organized **All India LGBTQ Poet's Meet** at the Rabindra Bhavan Lawns on 2 February 2019. In the inaugural session Dr. K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi said that this LGBTQ poets' meet is part of that commitment to writers of India and we do not distinguish writers in any form. Sri Hoshang Merchant in his inaugural address read out some of his poems, as salutation to the fellow poets - “Light”, which he wrote when A.K. Ramanujan died on 13 July 1993, and “How to Make Pain in Poetry” and concluded his address. Sri R. Raj Rao in his keynote address showcased the sorrow, pain and grievances, the LGBTQ community faced or has been facing. He said that in everyday speech queer, gay,



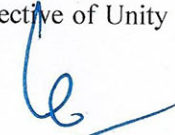
lesbian and possibly even the word homosexual is used interchangeably but for me, each of these words connote a different idea. Prof. Chandrasekhar Kambar in his Presidential Address said that Sahitya Akademi has always been in a lead role of acknowledging and upholding the rights of the individual, and the freedom of artistic expression. In initiating a substantive move to uphold the literature of the LGBTQ+, Sahitya Akademi has been continuing its own tradition of being in the vanguard of literary activities. On the occasion Sri Hoshang Merchant also released the new edition of Prof. Raja Rao's recent poetry collection *National Anthem and Other Poems*. The All India LGBTQ Poets' Meet was chaired by Vikramaditya Sahai, a researcher with the Centre for law and Policy Research, Bengaluru. Ms Aditi Angiras, poet, writer and artist, Ms Chandini, an activist and a poet, Sri Gireesh, writer, poet, artist, translator and activist, Ms Shanta Khurai, writer, artist and activist, Ms Raveena Bariha, writer, Ms Reshma Prasad, cultural transgender activist, poet and writer, Ms Abdul Rahim, classical musician, Akash (Roy) Dutta Chowdhury, western vocalist, writer, artist and activist, Toshi Pandey, Sri Vihsal Pinjani, an entrepreneur, Sri Alagu Jagan, writer, artist and a para player, and Daniel Mendonca, recited their poems.

### **Face to Face**

Sahitya Akademi organized a Face to Face programme at Rabindra Bhawan Lawns in New Delhi on February 27, 2020, with select Award winners in conversation with eminent writers in their Award winning languages. Prof. Subodh Sarkar interviewed Sri Chinmoy Guha, award-winner in Bengali. Sri Chinmoy Guha pointed out the dangers found by a writer on the crossroads of globalization. Sri Ratilal Borisagar, award-winner in Gujarati, was in conversation with Sri Harshad Trivedi. Sri Borisagar described himself as human being who has many problems in mind which he used in writing and readers enjoy this as humor. He penned the incidents which he faced in his daily life. Sri Bhanu Bharti interviewed Sri Nand Kishore Acharya, award-winner in Hindi. Answering the question of Sri Bhanu Bharati about the duration of his plays which are normally of one hour and on the other hand others' plays are of long durations. Sri R. Nandkumar interviewed Sri V. Madhsoodanan Nair, award-winner in Malayalam. While answering the question about his journey of creative writing, Sri Nair said that his poetic heart sees a child as a miniature divinity and when the child cries he sees gods crying with him. Sri Shafey Kidwai, award-winner in Urdu in conversation with Sri Sarwar-ul-Hoda, talked mainly about his Sahitya Akademi award-winning book, *Sawanah Sir Syed: EkBazdeed*, Premchand's *Kafan* and the extraordinary contribution of Sir Syed in establishing AMU.

### **Cultural Programme : Taal Vadya Kacheri**

Cultural Programme on the evening of 27 February 2020 included Taal Vadya Kacheri melodiously rendered by Sri Peravali Jaya Bhaskar, celebrated artist, and his fellow artists. Taal Vadya Kacheri was an ensemble of Indian percussion instruments. Mridangam was the lead drum. Tabla, Ghatam, Khanjira and Morsing were other accompanying instruments. The rhythmic cycles spun by each of the instruments strung together individually and collectively made colourful musical kaleidoscopic patterns. The experience of Indian percussive art was unparalleled and very intricate. Taal Vadya Kacheri was reflective of Unity in Diversity of the Indian percussion instruments.



(K. Sreenivasarao)