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**Symposium on 'Books that changed my life', on the occasion of  
'World Book Day, 23.4.2018**

**PRESS-RELEASE**

On the occasion of the World Book Day, Sahitya Akademi organized a Symposium on **Books that Changed My Life** in its Auditorium in which eight eminent personalities from different fields shared their experiences related to books. Dr. K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, felicitated all the speakers with ang-vastram and book packets at the beginning of the programme. In his welcome speech, he said that books are the best friends of man and teach them to understand life and how to live it. In fact, books are our true guide. The speakers on this occasion included Desh Deepak, eminent Physician, Jatin Das, eminent Painter & Sculptor; Manohar Batham, Former Additional Director General, BSF; Rajendra Dhorapkar, eminent Cartoonist; Rajendra Nath, eminent Theatre Artist, Sayeed Ansari, eminent News Anchor, Sonal Mansingh, eminent Classical Dancer and Ms. Sujata Prasad, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India. Most of the speakers began with the books and magazines they had read and also discussed the books which inspired them in their early childhood. Such books included the Mahabharata, Mahatma Gandhi's Autobiography, Stories of Premchand and the like.

First of all, Dr Desh Deepak said that the first book which influenced him was based on Russian Folk Tales. Sri Jatin Das shared a couple of anecdotes how he and his poet friends like Dilip Chitre, Nissim Ezekiel, Arun Kolatkar used to read and recite poems in their houses or places of small gatherings.

Sri Manohar Batham while narrating his experience said that if he could take the name of one book that has immensely inspired him, it would be Earnest Hemingway's *The Old Man and Sea* which always guided him to deal with difficult situations. Sri Rajendra Dhorapkar said that there is a big list of books he had read, but discussed a recent book that inspired him, which was David Shepherd's biography. Sri Sayeed Ansari, well-known News Anchor, while sharing his experience said that reading of books never goes waste and the knowledge and experience we gain from them always prove useful. Sri Rajendra Nath referred to many books and said that books do influence us, but that we realize their influence after a long time.

Ms. Sujata Prasad recalled her early days and said that reading of books was a part of her daily routine. While referring to several Indian and foreign writers, she said that among Hindi authors, Premchand, Muktibodh and Nirmal Verma impressed her a lot.

Ms. Sonal Mansingh said that she was greatly impressed by the Mahabharata and its effect could be seen on her dance presentations. She also shared her interesting experience how a good book had saved her from some possible ugly situation. She also acknowledged the influence of saint poet Kabir, Mira, Jaidev, etc. and said that books are her friends. Dr Devendra Kumar Devesh, Officer on Special Duty, Sahitya Akademi, conducted the programme.

  
(K. Sreenivasarao)