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PRESS RELEASE

To commemorate the 70th anniversary of Indian Independence Sahitya Akademi organized a literary event “What Freedom Means to Me ” featuring eminent scholars from various fields at the Akademi premise in New Delhi on August, 15, 2017. Eminent scholars, Chitra Mudgal, Abhay Kumar Dubey, Anant Vijay, Asghar Wajahat, Geetanjali Shree, Keki N. Daruwala, Leeladhar Mandoli, Maalan V. Narayanan, Nalini, Prayag Shukla, Sharan Kumar Limbale and Sheroj Singh Bechain participated in the forum and shared their valuable ideas.

All the participants observed a minute’s silence as a mark of honour to Dr. Chandrakant Devtale, distinguished Hindi Poet, who passed away on 14 August, 2017. Dr. K. Sreenivasrao, Secretary Sahitya Akademi welcomed the participants and audience. He stated that the idea of freedom has been in existence for a very long time. Abhay Kumar Dubey stated that freedom means freedom of thought and one should think independently. Anant Vijay presented his views on issues related to Independence to freedom of expression and the problems related to freedom of expression have not been thoroughly studied in our political scenario. Asghar Wajahat emphasized that writers and authors should be given independence to express their ideas that they wish to express and share. Geetanjali Shree stated that the breath is the freedom and observed that freedom is our ancestral right and it can manifest in our life integrally. Changing dynamics in the contemporary scenario has created a critical situation for us to think about freedom. Keki N. Daruwala stated that according to him freedom is being born in a rational place, in a rational society. We need some sanctity and we need to be very tolerant people. There should be some rationality around us. This is very free country and a fine country. Leeladhar Mandoli emphasized on the process of learning freedom through the indigenous methods. He further expressed that there should be freedom from hunger, poverty, illiteracy and inequality. Maalan V. Narayanan observed that freedom has many faces and it means different things to different persons. According to him freedom means not forcing one to do what one does not want to do. Ms. Nalini stated that we live in the breath of freedom and we have to fight to keep the independence intact. According to Prayag Shukla, nature itself teaches the real essence of freedom and it also teaches how to be independent and threats to freedom arise due to the persons who have the power with them. Sharan Kumar Limbale stated that to live the life with an equal status is freedom. He observed that brotherhood is also another form of freedom. Sheroj Singh Bechain felt that universal freedom for all the communities is important. He observed that social condition of the marginalized groups and talked about the contribution of Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar to create a developed India. Ms. Chitra Mudgal summed up the views on freedom expressed by different speakers and presented her view that dissatisfaction about freedom has arisen in the contemporary scenario and freedom means to live in a continuous developed form of consciousness as well as to respect the thought of others. A brief interactive session followed the presentations.


(K. Sreenivasrao)