

## TWENTY THIRD INDIA CONFERENCE OF WAVES

### *Vedic Wisdom and Women : Contemporary Perspective*

The 23rd India Conference of WAVES was organized by 'Wider Association for Vedic Studies' (WAVES) in collaboration with Nari Samvaad Prakalp, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, (IGNCA), New Delhi. The three-day conference was held from 5th–7th December, 2019 at IGNCA, New Delhi. The conference was inaugurated with the 'Lighting of the Lamp' in the IGNCA Auditorium. Students of Kamala Nehru College, University of Delhi presented *Sarasvati Vandana* and *Vedic mantras* as invocation. The inaugural session started with the welcome address and introduction of the theme done by Prof. Shashi Tiwari, President, WAVES.

On this occasion, **Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi**, Member Secretary, IGNCA gave Inaugural Address. He talked about the significance of the theme of the conference and highlighted the urgent need to reconnect ourselves with the Vedic values and concepts of morality. He said that Indian knowledge systems are well recognized today for the welfare of humanity.

Chief Guest, **Prof. P. N. Shastri**, Vice-Chancellor, Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, Deemed to be University, New Delhi congratulated WAVES and IGNCA for the purposeful collaboration. He said that we can discover indirectly the prominence of women in the Vedas on the basis of certain *suktas* such as *Vāk*, *Shraddhā*, *Shrī* and *Sarasvatī*. According to Shatapatha Brāhmana, man becomes complete with his wife only – '*Yām jāyām na vindate.*' In this context, he highlighted the concept of *ardhanārīshvara*. Distinguished Guest, **Prof. B. N. Narahari Achar**, Professor Emeritus, University of Memphis, Memphis, TN, USA spoke about the western media which talks exceedingly about female problems and evils present in current times in India, and ignores India's achievements. Distinguished Guest, **Dr. Koenraad Elst**, Scholar of Asian Studies and Indology from Belgium addressed the audience saying negativity about females is not seen in the Vedas, yet some western scholars describe that in reference to ancient texts.

Keynote address was given by **Prof. K. B. Subbarayudu**, Principal, Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, Sri Raghunath Kerti Campus, Deva Prayag, Uttarakhand. He explained the connection of dialogue, debate and reasoning to understand the Vedic concepts. The purpose of Vedanta is to show unity of all. Brahman is neither man, nor women. He divided himself into dual forms for the origin of creation. In philosophical approach both *Advaita* and *Dvaita* aspects can go together. In later periods, status of women fell down due to lack of knowledge and education. Presidential address was delivered by **Prof. Bhu Dev Sharma**. The Founder President of WAVES stressed the need to free ourselves from false perceptions and unscientific traditions. Vedic seers had established notions which are universally true or symbolically scientific.

**Dr. Sushma Jatoo**, Project Director, Nari Samvaad Prakalp, Senior Faculty, Kalakosa Division, IGNCA and Convener of Conference proposed vote of thanks for all the guests and participants. During this session, the souvenir of the conference containing 108 summaries of papers and few messages was released by dignitaries. **Dr. Ranjit Behera**, Assistant Prof. of Sanskrit, University of Delhi and Secretary, WAVES moderated this session.

The conference has three parallel sessions organized at three venues in IGNCA. More than 140 delegates from different parts of country participated in this conference of WAVES, 2019. Delegates and young researchers from various universities and institutions, such as University of Delhi, Delhi; Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh; Guahati University, Assam; Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi; Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi; Maharishi Adhyatma Vishwavidyalay, Goa; Utrakhnad Sanskrit University, Utrakhnad; Shri Lal Bahadur Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, Delhi; Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, Delhi; Allahabad University, Allahabad; Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kerala; Institute of Advanced Sciences, Dartmouth, USA; Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan, Delhi; M.L.N. College,

Yamunanagar, Haryana ; P.G. college, Punjab; Nagpur University, Nagpur, Ravindra Bharti University, Kolkata etc. participated and presented their papers in the conference.

The deliberation of the three-day national conference was coherently scheduled in twelve sessions which were divided into well-designed seven academic, three plenary and two young scholars' sessions. Details of some plenary speakers and their topics are as follows:–

1. **Dr. Bhakti Niskama Shanta**, General Secretary, Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Institute, Bengaluru- *In Vaiṣṇava Conception the Ultimate Spiritual Goal is to get engaged in the Service of the Highest, Negative (Feminine) Potency*
2. **Prof. Madan L. Goel**, Prof. Emeritus, Pol. Science, University of West Florida, USA - *Democracy in India, Vedic Political Thought and Female Participation*
3. **Prof. B. N. Narahari Achar**, Prof. Emeritus, University of Memphis, Memphis, USA - *Vṛṣākapi sūkta (RV X.86): Indrāṇi, her role as Rṣikā, Wife and a Mother*
4. **Ms. Neera Misra**, Founder Trustee, & Chair-person, Draupadi Dream Trust, Delhi - *Devi Draupadi: The Exemplar of eternal Vedic Liberalism and Gender Parity*
5. **Dr. Sushma Jatoo**, Project Director, Nari Samvaad Prakalp, IGNC- *The Sacred River Vitasta- An Embodiment of Goddess Uma*
6. **Dr. Madhu Sharma**, Duke University, Chapelin, North Carolina, USA- *Gayatri Mantra- The Feminine Shakti*
7. **Prof. Shashibala**, Dean, Centre of Indology, Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan, New Delhi- *Divine Manifestations of Shakti Tattva*

A cultural program was organised on the evening of second day where **Ms. Sanskriti Choudhary** performed *Bharatnatyam (Devi-stuti)*; **Ms. Chanchal** performed *Odishi (Dashavatara)*; and **Dr. Supriya Sanju** presented *Suddha Kathak*. This program was very colourful and refreshing for the delegates.

Closing ceremony on the third day begun with the invocation done by students of DU under the chairmanship of **Prof. Bhaskarnath Bhattacharyya**, Director, Vedic Studies, Rabindra Bharti University, Kolkata and Vice-President, WAVES. **Dr. Sushma Jatoo**, Project Director of NSP and Co-Convener of the conference welcomed guests and talked about some aspects of the main theme.

Chief Guest, **Prof. Ramesh C. Bharadwaj**, HoD Sanskrit, University of Delhi and Director, Gandhi Bhawan, University of Delhi condemned western scholarship which intentionally establishes false notions to create confusion about sanctity of Indology. He inspired researchers for original thinking and innovative approach. Distinguished Guest, **Prof. Madan L. Goel** praised diversity in India as beauty of Indian culture. He emphasised that there are many points for the appreciation of Hindu Religion, and that is the reason scholars of other countries are attracted towards this. Guest of Honour, **Brig. J.S. Rajpurohit, Ph.D.**, Group Commander, NCC Group talked about great Indian strength which only needs right target to achieve success.

**Prof. B.N. Narahari Achar** from University of Memphis, USA in his valedictory address praised the mixing of young and older scholars in the audience as beneficial for all. He said that here role of women is examined from various angles and in our ancient texts they are considered the source of all powers.

Release of two books was a special program done in the closing session which showed the creativity and originality of WAVES's two members, Prof. Lallan Prasad and Dr.Ganesh Dutt Sharma respectively. पाञ्चाली स्वयंवर से चीरहरण तक is authored by Prof. Lallan Prasad. वेदों में वायुयान-जलयान तथा युद्ध व शस्त्रास्त्र विद्या is authored by Dr.Ganesh Dutt Sharma.

This year, 'Svargiya Mrs. Sulochana M. Goel Memorial Award-2019' for outstanding papers presented by young scholars were given by **Prof. Madan L. Goel** in memory of his wife. Prize-announcement program was conducted by Dr. Sushma Choudhary of KNC, DU. Committee of Judges

consists of Dr. Meera Dwivedi, Faculty, Sanskrit, Delhi University; Dr. Devendra Prasad Mishra, Faculty, LBSRSV, Delhi , and Dr. Pratibha Shukla, Faculty, Uttarakhand Sanskrit University, Haridwar. All were present on the stage to explain the details of presentations of young scholars, and to declare the final results .

On the basis of selection, awards were given to five young scholars:

- ❖ 1st Prize – Dr Harikrishna Sharma K.N., Kalady, Kerala (Rs.4000)
- ❖ 2nd Prize –Mr. Kaustubh Gaurh and Mr. Abhishek Parashar, DU, Delhi (Rs.3000)
- ❖ 3rd Prize— Ms.Priyanka Rastogi, Vanasthali Vidyapeeth, Rajasthan (Rs.2000)
- ❖ Encouragement Prize – Ms. Pragya Ghosh, DU, Delhi (Rs.500)
- ❖ Encouragement Prize – Ms.Madhusmita Deka, LBSRSV, Delhi (Rs.500)

In presidential remarks Dr. Bhattacharyya talked about the importance of Vedic Culture in India and abroad. Vedic knowledge is respected by all and everywhere. This session was coordinated by Dr. Aparna (Dhir) Khandelwal, Secretary, WAVES. On behalf of WAVES, Prof. Shashi Tiwari, President, WAVES proposed a vote of thanks to all guests, delegates, and participants of conference, members of WAVES, and especially to the authorities of IGNC A for their support to this big academic event. The conference concluded with the recitation of *Shanti Mantra*.

-Shashi Tiwari, President, WAVES

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