

“Shakti Parva 2020: Celebrating the Feminine Energy”

A Report*

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Every year 8th of March is celebrated as International Women’s Day all over the world. The day is also recognized by the United Nations for Women’s Rights and International Peace which marks a celebration of women’s achievements throughout history and across nations. The NariSamvaadPrakalp (NSP) of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA) joins the global community every year to celebrate the International Women’s Day by organising two-three day festival comprising thematic lectures, academic sessions, conclaves, seminars, puppet shows, workshops, exhibitions and cultural performances. Since its inception, NSP has organised several festivals titled ‘Women’s World: Choices, Challenges and future Possibilities’ in 2017, ‘Shakti Parva: Celebrating the feminine energy’ in 2018 and ‘Divya Prakriti Parva: The Divine Nature’ in 2019. Through these festivals, the contribution of women to the different fields of Indian EducationSystem, Arts, Culture, Politics, etc is highlighted and celebrated under the able guidance of Dr.Sachchidanand Joshi, Member Secretary, IGNCA and Dr. Sushma Jatoo, Project Director, NSP.

Continuing the same tradition, this year,the festival titled “Shakti Parva 2020: Celebrating the Feminine” was organized by NariSamvaadPrakalp at IGNCA beginning from 6th March 2020, on the occasion of International Women’s Day. The Parva was proposed to be organised for twenty days, which wouldstart with a four-day long workshop,in which 108 contemporary women artists, painters and sculptors would participate. The workshop was supposed to be followed byorganising an exhibition showcasing the outcome of the workshop, in the form of the creations, paintings and installations, etc. Also, the Parvawas supposed to include academic sessions, providing platforms to established and upcoming women artists and such otherwomen working in different fields andcontributing silently towardsbuilding a healthy society in particular, and a strong nation, in general.But due to the spread of Covid-19 pandemic across the nation, most of the programs and events were postponed.

However, a one-day seminar, titled, ‘Contribution of Women in Jainism’ was organised by NSP, IGNCA in collaborationwith All India Digamber Jain Heritage

Preservation Organisation (AIDJHPO) on 6th March 2020 at IGNCA premises. The seminar was inaugurated by Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi, Member- Secretary, IGNCA, along with other dignitaries namely, Dr. Seeta Bimbra, Former Vice Principal, Kamla Nehru College, Delhi University, also associated with Music programme of Gandhi Darshan Samiti, Shri Nirmal Kumar Jain Sethi, National President, AIDJHPO.

The seminar began with a Manglacharan by Pulkit Jain which was followed by a Nritya Natika- 'Bhakti ki Shakti' presented by Pulkit group, Shree Parasnath Digamber Jain Mahila Mandal. The Nritya Natika was based on the story of the impossible resolution of Lord Mahavira and a girl Chandana. The event was well appreciated by the audience.

This was followed by an elaborate lecture-presentation by well-recognised and erudite women scholars of Jain studies. The first speaker was Prof. Veenus Jain, Woman Educator, Author and Historian and the recipient of the President Award by the President of India, deliberated upon the topic of 'Charitra Nirman Mein Jain Mahilayon Ki Bhumika'. Another valued lecture by Dr. Sudha Jain, a family counsellor and lawyer by profession. She spoke on the topic titled 'Tutte Parivar Mein Jain Darshan Ki Bhumika'. This was followed by another presentation by Dr. Jyotsana Jain on the topic titled 'Rashtra Nirman Mein Mahilayon ki Bhumika' and Dr. Vibha Jain spoke on the 'Jain Darshan Mein Mahilayon ki Bhumika'. The seminar was fundamentally based on the prominence of women in Jain religion, their creative abilities and how Jain philosophy helped women to face the modern-day challenges. All the speakers delineated the importance of Jain religion in Indian culture that celebrates the woman as 'Building block of power of society'. They simultaneously spoke about the ground reality of the present society, and how women should be empowered, and how the spiritual knowledge of the Jain traditional sources should be imparted to build the human relationship in a positive manner which will help in strengthening the human bond.

A brief feedback and Q&A session were also held towards the completion of the programme wherein the audience interacted with the scholars regarding the Jain philosophy. The scholars expressed their pleasure in attending the seminar and thanked IGNCA and AIDJHPO for organising such a meaningful seminar. At the conclusion, Nirmal Kumar Jain Sethi presented Vote of Thanks to all the scholars, participants, and specially thanked Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi, Member Secretary, IGNCA for approving the program, and Dr. Sushma Jatoo, PD, NSP and her team for providing an active collaboration in organising the seminar.

**The report has been prepared under the guidance of Dr. Sushma Jatoo, PD, NSP.*