

## WAVES 23<sup>rd</sup> India Conference 2019

on

### “Vedic Wisdom and Women: Contemporary Perspective”

A report

The Nari Samvaad Prakalp (NSP) of the IGNCA organised a three days conference on the theme- “Vedic Wisdom and Women: Contemporary Perspective” in collaboration with Wider Association for Vedic Studies (WAVES) from 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2019 at IGNCA. The conference was fundamentally based on the prominence of ancient glory and creative abilities of Indian women, along with deliberations on the modern-day challenges. The conference thus attempted to unfold tough dilemmas of life through Vedic Wisdom using the medium of academic sessions, discussions, lectures and presentations, etc., with equal participation not only of the internationally recognised erudite speakers but also of many young scholars from all across India.

The Conference was inaugurated by Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi, Member- Secretary, IGNCA, along with other dignitaries by lighting the inaugural lamp. In his speech, Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi spoke about the rich Vedic and classical textual traditions of India, and how women commanded high respect those days, and participated equally in both intellectual as well as social life. He deliberated on the issue of women's safety in the contemporary society and also raised some pertinent questions regarding the uncivilised attitude that has degraded the society at large. He requested the young participating scholars to research the wisdom traditions of India in order to change the prevailing societal condition of India.

Among the other dignitaries present were Prof. Shashi Tiwari, President, WAVES; Convener of the Conference; Prof. P. N. Shastri, VC, Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, New Delhi; Prof. B.N.Narahari Achar, Professor Emeritus, USA; Dr. Koenraad Elst, author and scholar of Asian Studies, Belgium; Prof. K.B. Subbarayudu, Principal, RSS, Uttarakhand; Prof. Bhu Dev Sharma, Founder President, WAVES-USA and Dr. Sushma Jatoo, Co-Convener of the conference.

The conference had three parallel sessions organized at three different venues of IGNCA. More than 140 delegates came from different parts of the world along with several Pan-Indian universities and Institutions, like, Dr. Madhu Sharma, Duke University, USA; Dr. Bhakti Niskama Shanta, General Secretary, Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Institute, Bengaluru ;Prof. Shashibala, Dean, etc. to name a few.

About 108 presentations and research papers in three languages, i.e., English, Hindi and Sanskrit on the above mentioned theme along with Power point presentations were made by both senior and young scholars during these three days of conference. Some of the presentations made in the conference were, 'Vedic Representation of Modern Mind'; 'Democracy in India, Vedic Political Thought and Female Participation'; 'Vṛṣākapi sūkta (RV X.86): Indrāṇi, her role as Rṣikā, Wife and a Mother'; 'Sarasvati Devi and the Relation between the River, Knowledge and the Goddess'; 'In Vaiṣṇava Conception the Ultimate Spiritual Goal is to get engaged in the Service of the Highest, Negative (Feminine) Potency'; 'Why Goddess Triplets, in the Vedas Just Like Elsewhere?'; 'Being Woman: The Honour and Challenges faced by her (Vedic Era to Present Times)'; 'The Women Representation in Kutiyattam'; 'Gayatri Mantra- The Feminine Shakti'; 'Divine Manifestations of Shakti Tattva'; 'Devi Draupadi: The Exemplar of eternal Vedic Liberalism and Gender Parity'; and many more. Each paper was followed by lively discussions and important inputs and pertinent questions were raised regarding the comprehension of Vedic traditions and women's condition prevalent throughout India.

The first day evening saw performances of Indian classical dances on related themes of the conference by young artists, like, Bharatnatyam, based on Devi-stuti by Ms. Sanskriti Choudhary; Odishi, based on Dashavatara by Ms. Chanchal and Kathak by Dr. Supriya Sanju.

The special prize constituted by Prof. Madan L. Goel, Prof. Emeritus, USA for outstanding research papers for young scholars titled 'Late Mrs. Sulochana M. Goel Memorial Award-2019' along with two encouragement prizes were given to five young paper presentators.

The three days conference came to a close with a Valedictory session on the evening of 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2019 in which Prof. Ramesh C. Bharadwaj, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest while Prof. Madan L. Goel, was the distinguished guest of the session. All the speakers delineated upon the importance of Indian culture that celebrates the woman as Divine power. They simultaneously spoke about the ground reality of the present day, and how women should be empowered, and how the spiritual knowledge of the traditional sources should be imparted all across the society and in the present day Education-system. Two books titled '*पांचाली स्वयंवर से चीरहरण तक*' authored by Prof. Lallan Prasad and '*वेदों में वायुयान-जलयान तथा युद्ध व शस्त्रास्त्र विद्या*', authored by Dr. Ganesh Dutt Sharma were also released in the Valedictory session. The Presidential Address by Prof. Bhaskarnath Bhattacharyya, Director,

School of Vedic Studies, Rabindra Bharti University, Kolkata, was the highlight of the session.

The conference aimed to understand the ancient intellectual traditions for the proper growth of present society and human relationship. A brief feedback session was also held wherein the scholars expressed their pleasure in attending the conference and thanked IGNCA and WAVES for organising such a thematic and fruitful conference. At the conclusion, Prof. Shashi Tiwari presented Vote of Thanks to all the participants, and specially thanked IGNCA authorities for collaborating for the conference.