

‘Nari aur Veda-Adhyayan’

A Report

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IGNCA has been organizing seminars, lectures and conferences under Nari Samvaad Prakalp from time to time to address different aspects which attempt to explore the contribution of women in the fields of academics, arts, culture and other important fields. A lecture titled ‘Nari aur Veda-Adhyayan’ (Women and Vedic Society) was organized on 8th April, 2019 by NSP, IGNCA . The speaker was Ms. Ananda Himani who is a Sanskrit enthusiast, hailing from Gothenburg, Sweden. She works as a medical nurse practitioner in emergency care in Sweden and has a keen interest in Sanskrit language, Indian arts along with Yoga. The lecture presentation was chaired by Prof. Shashi Tiwari who is the Recipient of ‘Certificate of Honour’ (*Rashtrapati-Samman*) in Sanskrit from the President of India and formerly Professor of Sanskrit, Maitreyi College, University of Delhi. Dr. Sushma Jatoo, Project Director, NSP, IGNCA, welcomed the speaker, chairperson and the audience in the beginning, and further spoke about the aims & objectives of NSP along with introducing the topic of the lecture. The lecture presentation was aimed at discussing the role and status of women from ancient times, Her status in modern Indian society along with her right to education, equal rights in society, Her safety etc. The lecture also intended to give an awareness and insight into the problems faced by women from generation together, and whether the scenario has changed over the years.

Ms. Ananda Himani began her presentation by an invocation to the Gurus. She emphasized that the Rig Vedic Women/seers enjoyed high status in Indian society and their contribution to Vedas is of high standard. The women in India were provided with the opportunity to attain high intellectual and spiritual education. There was no sati system or early marriage in ancient Indian society. Ms. Himani referred to several texts, e.g., Shatapatha Brahmanam, Harita Dharma-Sutra, Mahabharata, Brhaddevata, etc. to supplement her views. She further mentioned that the women started getting discriminated due to the invasions faced by Indian society over a period of time. Child marriage, widow burning, the purdah and polygamy further worsened the women's

position in society in later years. She further mentioned the names of Adi Shankaracharya, Madhavacharya etc. as such progressive Indian Gurus who encouraged Women's participation in society and in the fields of Education. Ms. Himani, told that the efforts put in by Swami Vivekanand , Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Mahamana Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, etc. regarding the participation of women in studying the Vedas and performing the Yajna are commendable. She further mentioned that these social reformers exalted the position of women in Indian society. She requested the audience to allow their daughters to grow properly, study and explore the different areas of Education in the whole world.

The lecture helped in educating audience about the participation of women in social, religious, economic and household matters in the ancient times. The lecture presentation was very well attended. Dignitaries from Swedish Embassy, New Delhi were also present during the deliberations. A lively and interactive Q&A session followed the lecture. The chairperson also showered much light to the topic along with the speaker. Concluding the event, Dr. Sushma Jatoo, Project Director, NSP, proposed the vote of thanks to all.

The proceedings of the lecture presentation were conducted by Ms. Arushi Kapoor, Project Assistant. NSP.