

“Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: Family System and Role of a Mother”, 2019

A report

-- Dr. Sushma Jatoo

The Nari Samvaad Prakalp (NSP) of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA) organised a two day International conference titled **“Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: Family System and the Role of the Mother”** in collaboration with Foundation for Holistic Development in Academic Field (FHDAF), Bhartiya Shikshan Mandal (BSM) and Vishwagram on 15th-16th November, 2019 at IGNCA Auditorium. The conference aimed at having presentations and discussions on the aspects of motherly approach and family systems across the world. Delegates from countries situated on silk route and Europe, i.e., India, Bulgaria, Iran, Georgia, Nepal, Kazakhstan, Germany, etc participated in the conference. This International conference brought together highly accomplished speakers from the fields of social work, academics, etc. Presentations made by some erudite Indian speakers aimed at the Indian knowledge systems, and how the successful models of the mother and the society can be brought out to inspire the present day community of scholars and students.

The inaugural session of the conference was graced by Shri Venkaiah Naidu, Hon’ble Vice President of India along with other dignitaries Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi, Member Secretary, IGNCA, Shri Mukul Kanitkar, National Organising Secretary, Bhartiyan Shikshan Mandal, and Sushri Geeta Tai Gunde, Head, Akhil Bhartiya Mahila Samanvya Samiti. Hon’ble Vice President of India, in his speech, elaborated on the importance of the theme, with an emotional touch about his own mother and childhood. He also explained the definition of ‘Vasudhiva Kutumbakam’ and how mother is the central figure for the entire family system and society. He referred and quoted many references about ‘mother’ from Rig Veda and Upanishads, etc. On this occasion, Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi, Member Secretary, IGNCA also emphasised on the motherhood and the family system in his speech. He strongly mentioned that mother is the first institution of the child which is known by all but very few acknowledge it. He also mentioned that the rivers of India are named after the feminine divinities, which is very unique to our country. The theme of the conference was introduced by Mrs. Madhuri Sahasrabudhe, Chairperson, FHDAF. Ms. Geeta Tai Gunde presented the Words of Thanks at the end of the Inaugural session.

The keynote address was delivered by Swami Nikhileshwaranandaji Maharaj, Head, Ramkrishna Ashram, Rajkot. In his speech, Swami ji deliberated upon the topic 'Indian philosophy about family system' and spoke on the concept of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, comprehensively. The session was moderated by Dr. Shashi Wanjari, V.C. SNDT University, Mumbai. Among other dignitaries who spoke on the first day were Shri Mukul Kanitkar, National Organising Secretary, Bhartiya Shikshan Mandal who delivered his speech on 'Family and Nation Building'. Prof. R. Vaidyanathan, Former Professor of Finance, IIM Bangalore, delivered his address on the 'Expanse of Motherhood'. The Interactive sessions of the conference included the presentations and discourses by the foreign delegates. Each presentation was followed by lively discussions.

The first day sessions were followed by the cultural programme, organised under the guidance of Mrs. Malvika Joshi, and held at NDMC Convention Centre, Connaught Place. The special performances of Prof. Dipti Omchery Bhalla, Mohiniyattam Exponent and by Asha Karlekar, Kathak Exponent were appreciated by the audience, along with other performances by the foreign delegates and students of NDMC. Ms. Sukriti Bhatnagar and Ms. Gayathri rendered the song on mothers 'Vandematram' in their melodious voices.

On the second day of the conference, the Guest of Honour, Shri V. Muraleedharan, Minister of State for External Affairs enlightened the audience with his views on the theme- Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. In the next session of the day, Prof. Shashi Prabha Kumar, Dean, Sri Sankaracharya Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan spoke on the topic 'Mata Nirmata Bhavathi- Mother as an Architect of her Progeny'. The session was moderated by Dr. Sushma Jatoo, Project Director, Nari Samvaad Prakalp and was highly acknowledged by the participants. Dr. S.P. Kumar conveyed the message of *samsakaras* which a mother passes to her child in moulding his/her future. Other interactive sessions by foreign participants were held during the day. The two days international conference came to a close with the valedictory session chaired by Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi, Member Secretary, IGNCA whose speech was the highlight of this program. Further the team of foreign delegates visited all across India to observe the Indian family system closely.