

“Shakti Parva 2022”

A Report*

-Shivani Gupta

Project Assistant, Nari Samvaad Prakalp, IGNCA.

Every year 8th of March is celebrated as International Women’s Day all over the world. The Nari Samvaad Prakalp (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 to three days long festival comprising thematic programs. 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, ‘Divya Prakriti Parva: The Divine Nature’ in 2019, ‘Shakti Parva 2020: Celebrating the Feminine Energy’ and ‘Shakti Parva 2021’. Through these festivals, the contribution of women to the different fields of Indian Arts, Culture, Education System, Politics, etc is highlighted and celebrated.

Continuing the same tradition, this year, Nari Samvaad Prakalp organised the sixth edition of the festival titled “Shakti Parva 2022”, constituting panel discussions, thematic book discussions, special cultural programmes, thematic musical performances, exhibition, etc from 8th-9th March 2022 at IGNCA premises.

On 8th March 2022, to mark the beginning of the event, the erudite dignitaries namely, Ms. Rama Sundar Ranganathan, esteemed classical singer, Dr. Vidushi Sharma, eminent author, Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi, Member- Secretary, IGNCA, Dr. Priyanka Mishra, Director (Administration), IGNCA, Dr. Sushma Jatoo, Project Director, NSP, and HoD, Kalakosa division, IGNCA lighted ceremonial lamp. Dr. Gayatri Sathyanarayana, an acclaimed Karnataka music exponent rendered a sonorous Manglacharan comprising of Gayatri mantra and Durga suktam. Dr. Mishra extended a hearty welcome and deliberated upon how 'Shakti', the power of the feminine, is believed to be the primordial cosmic energy which represents the dynamic force that is thought to move through the entire universe. Dr. Mishra also spoke that the women cannot move forward without the support of man. It is like a journey hand in hand. Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi felicitated the distinguished participants and guests. Dr. Sushma Jatoo also extended a warm welcome to the participants and made a detailed presentation of the various academic projects and events, held so far under the umbrella of the Nari Samvaad Prakalp of IGNCA. She presented the details of each activity and emphasized on the achievements of all the NSP projects.

The first session of the day began with a musical performance titled ‘मेरी विशिष्ट पहचान’ (Expressions of Identity) presented by esteemed Hindustani classical singer Ms. Rama Sundar Ranganathan with her group of well known musicians namely, Pt. Bharat Bhushan Goswami, nuanced Sarangi player, Ustad Akhtar Hasan, an acclaimed Tabla player. The performance was a musical adaptation of the bold poetry of five lady saints namely, Meera Bai, Andal of Tamil Nadu, Akka Mahadevi of Karnataka, Soyarabai of Maharashtra and Lalleshwari of Kashmir, who transcended from *sagun* to *nirgun*. Ms. Ranganathan, a shagird of the late Smt. Shanti Sharma and Pt. Tejpal Singhji - the foremost disciple of Ustad

Amir Khan of Indore Gharana, dedicated her performance in honour of such women who resisted patriarchal norms, injustice, etc. The performance was moderated by Nitin Vaidya, an IT professional and an avid music rasika whose deep understanding of music enables him to interpret the idiom of Hindustani classical music in simple language thus engaging the audience and enhancing their pleasure of listening.

A book discussion titled, “Prathama” was held in the second session of the day which was based on the well-researched articles written on the life stories of the first women achievers in the history of India. The session was chaired by Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi, Member Secretary, IGNCA and moderated by Dr. Vidushi Sharma, chief editor of the book. The session began with the felicitation of the erudite dignitaries by Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi, Member Secretary, IGNCA. During the welcome address, Dr. Joshi stated that the 'Shakti' should be worshipped every day, as has been happening in Indian Culture from ancient times. He also urged that the society should realize that women are the indispensable pillars of the nation, and they should be encouraged and provided with equal opportunities.

The book discussion highlighted the role of women in shaping modern India which has been phenomenal. It also accentuated that how the Indian sub-continent is gradually emerging as a powerful area since women began playing notable roles for the development of this land — its culture and economy. The book “Prathama” consists of articles on 31 leading ladies, first female Prime Minister of India; first woman Chief Minister, first lady recipient of the Sahitya Akademi Award; the first Indian woman to win an Olympic medal; first Indian woman to win Noble Peace Prize; first Oscar winner in history from India; etc. The discussants were Dr. Vijya Kumar Kaushik, Co-editor of the book Dr. Jyoti Kumari, Faculty, Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya, Wardha, Maharashtra; Dr. Neha Tiwari, Assistant Professor of English, Karim City College, Jamshedpur; Dr. Rekha, Assistant Professor of Hindi, Shri Lal Nath Hindu College, Rohtak; Ms. Shalini Verma, HoD of Hindi Department in DPS Doha, Qatar.

The third session of the day was organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, which began with a Vedic Invocation presented by the Students of Sri Satya Sai University for Human Excellence, Karnataka. The welcome address was presented by Ms. Sanjukta Mudgal Joint-Secretary, Ministry of Culture. Four publications were released in the presence of Smt. Meenakashi Lekhi, Hon'ble Ministry of State for Culture, Govt. of India and Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi, Member Secretary, IGNCA, namely, 'Streedesh: the extraordinary story of forgotten women of Kashmir', based on IGNCA-NSP in-house project; 'Prathama: First Women Achievers'; 'Bharat Ratna Kavya Mala: First Poetry Book on Bharat Ratna Award Recipients'; 'Golden Book of World Records: First Poetry Book on Arjuna Award Recipients'.

Another session titled 'Relevance of Yoga Post Pandemic' was presented by Ms. Neetu Sharma, Yoga practitioner and expert from Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga explaining that how Yoga can be a powerful tool to deal with the uncertainty, as well as to maintain physical well-being. Professor Tanuja Nesari, Director, All India Institute of Ayurveda during her presentation titled 'Lifestyle Management in the New Normal' which focuses on the positive coping mechanisms of one's life such as exercise, meditation,

reading, or further developing certain skills or hobbies, maintaining remote relationships, active volunteering and community service etc. A Stand –up- Comedy by Mr. Robin Pupneja was also been a part of the programme along with a musical band performance by ALANKAAR & ARIA, Hindu College, Delhi University.

A brief session titled ‘Sharing of Thoughts’ by Smt. Meenkashi Lekhi, Hon’ble MoS for Culture, Govt. of India was also held wherein she talked about the initiatives- ‘breaking the bias’ and ‘sharing is caring’. She also urged from the audience to share the thoughts of being the first and breaking the shackles. Some members of foreign embassy also spoke about their circumstances, achievements from their lives, thus building inspirations for other women showcasing the path of courage and living a life of fulfilment aligned with their dream. The vote of thanks was proposed by Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi expressing his sincere gratitude towards the eminent minister, dignitaries, foreign ambassadors, scholars, audience for their presence. This was followed by an inauguration of a special exhibition on Historical women who played a decisive role in India from the Vedic period to the freedom struggle, which was inaugurated by Hon’ble minister Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi in the presence of Sh Ram Bahadur ji, President, IGNCA, Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi, and eminent dignitaries.

A unique cultural performance and talk titled ‘Brahmoday: India's Dialogue Tradition’ was also held in the last session of the day in collaboration with Sanskriti Ganga Trust and Ministry of Culture, in which the Chief Guest was Smt. Meenkashi Lekhi, Hon’ble MoS for Culture, Govt. of India. The event was based on the topic "Dialogue tradition rooted in folk singing", which was hosted by Dr. Satchidanand Joshi and Smt. Malini Awasthi shared her experience on the topic, by singing and describing the theme in her eloquent style which left the audience spellbound, and a standing ovation was presented in her honour. The event ended with a vote of thanks to the dignitaries and audience. Hence, the sixth edition of the Shakti Parva was hugely successful and was well received by the audience. The event was streamed live on the IGNCA Facebook and YouTube page.

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