

National Seminar:

**'Shakti workshop in India** with special reference to Kerala'

A three day long national seminar titled 'Shakti Worship in India' with special reference to Kerala, was organized by Nari Samvaad Prakalp (NSP), Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), in collaboration with Amritha Darshanam, International Centre for Spiritual Studies (ICSS), Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham (AVV), at Amrithapuri Campus, Kollam, Kerala from 21st September to 23rd September, 2018. The seminar aimed at having academic discussions on various aspects of Shakti Worship in India including the textual traditions, the rituals, their significance and their continuous observance through ages; the manifestation of Shakti in Indian arts, Shakti temples in Indian sub-continent, etc.

The conference was a mix of academic sessions and cultural performances. Many presentations on the above mentioned diverse themes of the Shakta traditions along with Power Point presentations were made by both senior and young scholars during these days..

The academic sessions were followed by the cultural performances namely, *Kalamezhuthu Pattu and Padayani (literally meaning, the military formations)*. Kalamezhuthu Pattu is an intricate temple art of drawing large picture (Kalam) on the temple floor as a part of the temple ritual (usually associated with Devi, Nagas or Shasta) in Kerala. The drawing of goddess Bhadrakali was made by the traditional artists with the help of organic colors which depicted the theme of creation, sustenance and dissolution, through the ritual. The entire ritual was accompanied by rhythm of musical instruments. Padayani is a beautiful ritualistic art and dance form of Kerala associated with the legends related to Bhadrakali, with the blend of music, dance, theatre, satire, facial masks and paintings. It was performed on the last evening of the conference, and the theme depicted through the whole ritual-performance was 'appeasing the fierce Bhadrakali after she kills the demon Daruka'.