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# Prabha प्रभा

The Prabha Khaitan Foundation Chronicle



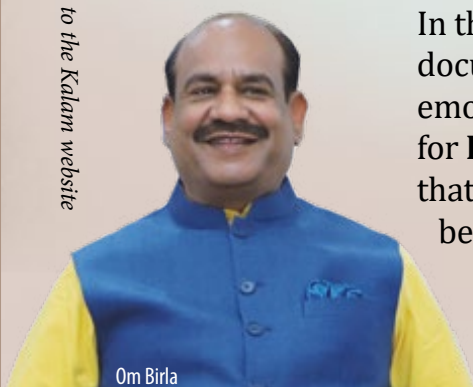
## The Mighty Pen



*Apni bhasha, apne log...* the sense of joy, belonging and familiarity sparked by one's own language and people is unparalleled. In this issue of *Prabha*, we document the intensity of this emotion at the launch of the website for **Kalam** — a unique initiative that highlights the richness and beauty of Hindi literature — and in conversations on language and books across India

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\*Click on the Search button to go to the Kalam website



Om Birla

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Prabha  
प्रभा

MANISHA JAIN  
Communications & Branding Chief,  
Prabha Khaitan Foundation



## For the Love of Language

The pursuit of literature, especially that which is written in India's rich vernacular languages, is a driving force behind the cultural initiatives of **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**. In fact, the beauty of Hindi literature fuels **Kalam**, one of the Foundation's most unique initiatives. It was thus a matter of immense pride for us to formally launch the **Kalam** website in the presence of **Ehsaas** Women from all over India. An even greater honour was that it was launched by the Honourable Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Om Birla, along with his wife, Dr. Amita Birla, at their Akbar Road residence in Delhi.

The love of the vernacular written word and the drive to foreground women's voices are reflected further in the launch of the Foundation's translation project with the feminist publishing house Zubaan — a venture that shall transcend gender and language barriers and unite readers. Find more perspectives from women writers, be they Kiran Manral and Shobha Tharoor Srinivasan from India, Bongiswa Kotta-Ramushwana from South Africa or Patricia Loison, Marie Darrieussecq, Christine Jordis and Marie Desplechin from France. The Foundation also places great value on fitness and sport. June 21 is the International Day of Yoga; I hope you will read about its origins and importance in this issue of *Prabha*, as well as about the Foundation's association with The Tollygunge Club, Kolkata, to encourage women and underprivileged children to foster an interest in golf. And for avid music lovers, in an exclusive interview, I spoke to the Grammy-winning musician, Ricky Kej, who is also the creator of the Foundation's official caller tune, on his experiences as a composer, environmentalist and global Indian. The conversation was deeply engaging, and I hope you will enjoy reading it.

The Foundation is part of a luminous constellation along with distinguished associates, hospitality partners and **Ehsaas** Women of India. I am happy to announce that we are restarting features on our hospitality partners and **Ehsaas** Women in *Prabha*. This issue features two wonderful women from Dehradun who have joined the **Ehsaas** family and are set to launch activities in their city.

Do keep writing to us at [newsletter@pkfoundation.org](mailto:newsletter@pkfoundation.org). You can also connect with our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages. We look forward to hearing from you.

*Manisha Jain*

*Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors. They do not reflect the opinions or views of the Foundation or its members.*



## [ SNAPSHOT OF THE MONTH ]

1



Aaradhya Bhattar



Akshita Jain

**Muskaan** organised an elocution competition to celebrate Rabindra Jayanti, the birth anniversary of Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore. More than 200 students from all over the country participated in the competition, with some reciting their favourite poems by Tagore. The winners were given exciting prizes.

2



Dhriti Ghosh



Hitanshi Balani

3



Harshika A. Khanna



Twisha Singhal

## Happy Birthday

Prabha WISHES **EHSAAS** WOMEN BORN IN JUNE

5th June



Nidhi Garg

6th June



Ketki Bhatia

7th June



Shazia Ilmi

16th June



Preeti Mehta

22nd June



Sushma Sethia

26th June



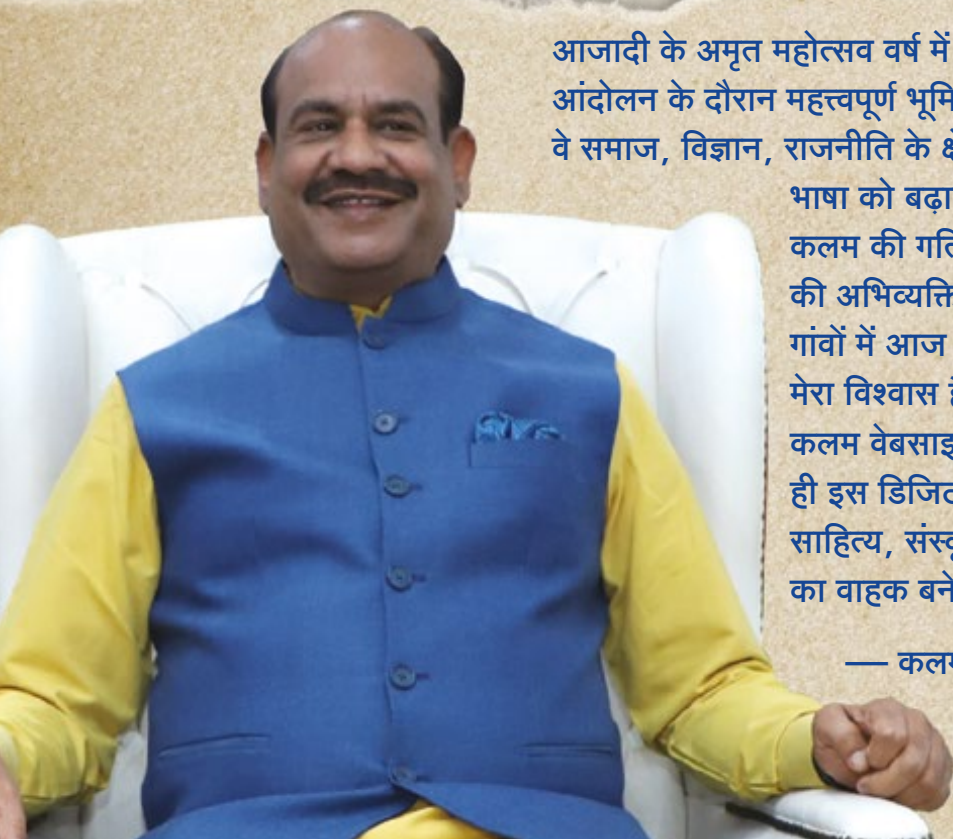
Deepika Goyal

27th June



Karishma Mehta

# कलम-गौरवशाली परंपरा का वाहक



आजादी के अमृत महोत्सव वर्ष में हम यह मानते हैं कि महिलाओं ने आजादी आंदोलन के दौरान महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई थी और वर्तमान समय में भी वे समाज, विज्ञान, राजनीति के क्षेत्र में बदलाव की वाहक हैं। अपनी मातृ भाषा को बढ़ावा देने के साथ लेखकों-कलाकारों के लिए कलम की गतिविधियां सराहनीय हैं। लोकतंत्र में विचारों की अभिव्यक्ति और संवाद की अपनी भूमिका है। हमारे गांवों में आज भी लोकाचार के अनुसार निर्णय होता है। मेरा विश्वास है कि प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन द्वारा संचालित कलम वेबसाइट अपनी मातृ भाषा को बढ़ावा देने के साथ ही इस डिजिटल युग में देश की गौरवशाली परंपरा, कला, साहित्य, संस्कृति, सभ्यता और पुरातात्विक विशेषताओं का वाहक बनेगी।

— कलम वेबसाइट के शुभारंभ अवसर पर लोकसभा  
अध्यक्ष ओम बिरला



# कलम वेबसाइट डिजिटल युग में भारत की गौरवशाली परंपरा का वाहक बनेगी: लोकसभा अध्यक्ष ओम बिरला



The Honourable Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Om Birla, launches and talks about the Kalam website

“युवा लेखकों में अपने देश और विश्व के प्रति जो नजरिया है, कला, संस्कृति और साहित्य के प्रति जो उनकी अभिव्यक्ति है वह कलम वेबसाइट द्वारा निश्चित रूप से देश के सामने आएगी। इससे देश और दुनिया के साहित्यकारों, कलाकारों, लेखकों, बुद्धिजीवियों को एक मंच मिलेगा।” लोकसभा अध्यक्ष ओम बिरला ने नई दिल्ली में कलम वेबसाइट का शुभारंभ करते हुए यह बात कही। प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की संस्थापक डॉ प्रभा खेतान को याद करते हुए उन्होंने कहा कि समाजसेवी, उद्यमी, साहित्यकार के रूप में डॉ खेतान ने नारी सशक्तीकरण की दिशा में जो पहल की थी, फाउंडेशन से जुड़े हुए लोग आज भी आने वाले कल को बेहतरीन बनाने की दिशा में वैसा ही काम कर रहे हैं।

बिरला ने अहसास वूमेन के काम की भी तारीफ की और कहा कि आजादी के अमृत महोत्सव वर्ष में हम यह मानते हैं कि महिलाओं ने आजादी आंदोलन के दौरान महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई थी और वर्तमान समय में भी वे समाज, विज्ञान, राजनीति के क्षेत्र में बदलाव की वाहक हैं। अपनी मातृ भाषा को बढ़ावा देने के लिए कलम की गतिविधियों की सराहना करते हुए उन्होंने कहा



Shinjini Kulkarni



Shraddha Mardia

समाजसेवी, उद्यमी, साहित्यकार के रूप में डॉ खेतान ने नारी सशक्तीकरण की दिशा में जो पहल की थी, फाउंडेशन से जुड़े हुए लोग आज भी आने वाले कल को बेहतरीन बनाने की दिशा में वैसा ही काम कर रहे हैं





Amita Birla and Om Birla with Ehsaas Women from all over India and the team of Prabha Khaitan Foundation

कि लोकतंत्र में विचारों की अभिव्यक्ति और संवाद की अपनी भूमिका है। आज भी हमारे गांवों में लोकाचार के अनुसार निर्णय होता है। उन्होंने संसदीय प्रणाली और लोकतंत्र में महिलाओं की बढ़ती भूमिका की चर्चा की और उम्मीद जताई कि **कलम** वेबसाइट डिजिटल युग में भारत की गौरवशाली परंपरा, कला, साहित्य, संस्कृति, सभ्यता और पुरातात्विक विशेषताओं का वाहक बनेगी।



A decorative plate designed by the Foundation's in-house artist, Sudipta Kundu, and bearing the inscription *Apni Bhasha Apne Log*



Anindita Chatterjee, Executive Trustee of Prabha Khaitan Foundation, presents the *Apni Bhasha Apne Log* decorative plate to Om Birla

कार्यक्रम संचालक शिंजिनी कुलकर्णी ने लोकसभा अध्यक्ष और देश के अलग-अलग भागों से यात्रा कर दिल्ली पहुंची सभी **अहसास** वूमेन का आभार ज्ञापित करते हुए कार्यक्रम की शुरुआत की।

**अहसास** वूमेन उदयपुर श्रद्धा मुर्डिया ने लोकसभा अध्यक्ष ओम बिरला और अन्य अतिथियों का औपचारिक स्वागत किया। उन्होंने सदन के भीतर और बाहर महिला सशक्तीकरण को बढ़ावा देने के लिए बिरला की सराहना की। फाउंडेशन की एक्जीक्यूटिव ट्रस्टी अनिदिता चटर्जी ने बिरला का अभिनंदन कलम के ध्येय वाक्य 'अपनी भाषा अपने लोग' से जुड़ा प्रतीक चिह्न देकर किया। **कलम** के आयोजनों और कार्यक्रमों की विस्तृत जानकारी फाउंडेशन की राजस्थान और मध्य भारत की मानद समन्वयक अपरा कुच्छल ने दी।

कुच्छल ने बताया कि एक गैर-लाभकारी न्यास के रूप में **प्रभा खेतान**





Amita Birla

फाउंडेशन की स्थापना 1980 में प्रख्यात नारीवादी, लेखिका, सामाजिक कार्यकर्ता और उद्यमी डॉ प्रभा खेतान ने की थी। बेहतर भविष्य को काम करने की उनकी कर्मठता और 'कर्म ही जीवन है' का उनका ध्येय वाक्य फाउंडेशन का भी संचालक मंत्र है। कोलकाता स्थित यह फाउंडेशन प्रदर्शन कला, संस्कृति, लैंगिक समानता और साहित्य को बढ़ावा देता है, और भारत और विदेश के लगभग 43 शहरों में सांस्कृतिक, शैक्षिक, साहित्यिक और समाज कल्याण से जुड़ी परियोजनाओं को

लागू करने के लिए इन क्षेत्रों के समर्पित, प्रतिबद्ध व्यक्तियों और समान विचारधारा वाले संस्थानों के साथ मिल कर कार्य करता है। बीते सालों में, फाउंडेशन के कार्यक्रमों और प्रयासों को कई मौजूदा राष्ट्राध्यक्षों और समाज के प्रतिष्ठित नेताओं ने गरिमा प्रदान की है।

फाउंडेशन यूनेस्को के आदर्श का समर्थन करते हुए लैंगिक समानता, समाज के हाशिए से जुड़े वर्ग के अधिकार, महिला अधिकार और नारी सशक्तीकरण की



Amita Birla and Om Birla receive a memento from Aarti Gupta, Ehsaas Woman of Kanpur



Aakriti Periwal, Ehsaas Woman of Jaipur and the Foundation's Honorary Convenor of Overseas Affairs, and Karishma Mehta, Ehsaas Woman of Mumbai, gift a memento to Om Birla



Anshu Mehra, Ehsaas Woman of Meerut, gifts a memento to Om Birla



Apra Kuchhal, Ehsaas Woman of Jaipur and the Foundation's Honorary Convenor of Rajasthan &amp; Central India Affairs, hands over a memento to Amita Birla and Om Birla



Aradhana Pradhan, Ehsaas Woman of Gurugram and the Foundation's Honorary Convenor of Bihar Affairs, gifts a memento to Amita Birla and Om Birla





Aakriti Periwal, Manisha Jain, Apra Kuchhal, Shraddha Murdia, Anindita Chatterjee and Aradhana Pradhan with Amita Birla and Om Birla

नीतियों के प्रभावी कार्यान्वयन को लागू कराने हेतु एक सुरक्षित, समावेशी और लिंगभेद से परे उत्तरदायित्वपूर्ण वातावरण के निर्माण का हिमायती है और इस हेतु प्रतिबद्ध है। फाउंडेशन के कार्यक्रमों की एक लंबी शृंखला है, जिसमें **किताब, आखर, सुर और साज, लफ़्ज़, एक विशेष मुलाकात, चलचित्र** जैसे महत्वपूर्ण आयोजन शामिल हैं। फाउंडेशन की बहुविध गतिविधियों में से एक प्रमुख पहल है – **अहसास** – भारत की महिलाएं। उन्होंने अपनी भाषा की समृद्धि के लिए ‘**कलम**’ के समावेशी रुख का उल्लेख किया और ‘**कलम**’ के प्रायोजक **श्री सीमेंट, अहसास** वूमेन के साथ अलग-अलग शहरों में हॉस्पिटैलिटी पार्टनर, मीडिया

पार्टनर व समान सोच वाले संगठनों व व्यक्तियों के सहयोग की भी चर्चा की।

दुनिया के कई देशों में चलाए जा रहे फाउंडेशन के कार्यक्रमों की जानकारी ओवरसीज मामलों की मानद समन्वयक आकृति पेरिवाल ने दी। उन्होंने बताया कि 2017 में पहली बार देश से बाहर की धरती लंदन से शुरू हुआ हमारा यह सफर अब योरोप और अमेरिका के कई शहरों में फैल चुका है। हम दक्षिण एशियाई देशों में भी अपने कार्यक्रमों की कड़ी पर काम कर रहे हैं। फाउंडेशन की ब्रांडिंग और कम्युनिकेशन प्रमुख मनीषा जैन ने बीते सात वर्षों में **कलम** के 550 से अधिक सत्रों का उल्लेख किया और **कलम** वेबसाइट की विस्तार से जानकारी दी। उन्होंने



Esha Dutta, Ehsaas Woman of Kolkata, gifts a memento to Amita Birla and Om Birla



Garima Tiwari, Ehsaas Woman of Bilaspur, hands over a memento to Amita Birla and Om Birla





Ehsaas Women of Delhi, Shazia Ilmi, Archana Dalmia, Dipali Bhasin, Neelima Dalmia Adhar and Anantmala Potdar, with Amita Birla and Om Birla

बताया कि इस साइट को तैयार करने में हमें लगभग तीन साल लग गए। होम पेज पर कलाकार सुदीप्त कुंडू की बनाई पेंटिंग का उल्लेख करते हुए जैन ने बताया कि 'कलम' वेबसाइट पर इससे जुड़े शहर, सहयोगी, प्रस्तुतकर्ता, लेखक, कार्यक्रम, सत्र, संक्षिप्त रिपोर्ट, तस्वीरें, मीडिया कवरेज के साथ वीडियो पर क्लिक करके कार्यक्रम भी देखे जा सकते हैं। उन्होंने बताया कि कलम वेबसाइट संपर्क पृष्ठ के माध्यम से लोगों की प्रतिक्रिया, सुझाव और सुधार के लिए भी खुली है।

कार्यक्रम के अंत में अहसास वूमैन ने लोकसभा अध्यक्ष बिरला और उनकी धर्मपत्नी श्रीमती अमिता बिरला को अपने साथ लाई स्मरणिका प्रदान की। इनमें

आगरा से विनती कथूरिया, अमृतसर से प्रीति गिल; बिलासपुर से गरिमा तिवारी; दिल्ली से नीलिमा डालमिया अर्धर, अर्चना डालमिया, दीपाली भसीन, अनंत माला पोद्दार, शाजिया इल्मी; गुरुग्राम से आराधना प्रधान; जयपुर से अपरा कुच्छल, आकृति पेरिवाल, करिश्मा मेहता; जालंधर से रुही स्याल; कानपुर से आरती गुप्ता; कोलकाता से ईशा दत्ता; लखनऊ से दीपा मिश्रा, कनक रेखा चौहान; मेरठ से अंशु मेहरा; नागपुर से प्रियंका कोठारी, मोनिका भगवागर; रांची से पूनम आनंद और नोएडा से शिजिनी कुलकर्णी शामिल थीं। इस दौरान एक फोटो सत्र भी हुआ, जिसमें विशेष आमंत्रित वंदना सिंह भी उपस्थित थीं। आराधना प्रधान ने औपचारिक रूप से सभी का धन्यवाद ज्ञापित किया।



Ehsaas Women of Lucknow, Kanak Rekha Chauhan and Deepa Mishra, gift a memento to Amita Birla and Om Birla



Amita Birla and Om Birla receive a memento from Poonam Anand, Ehsaas Woman of Ranchi





Om Birla receives a sketched portrait of himself from Anindita Chatterjee and Shraddha Murdia, Ehsaas Woman of Udaipur



Preeti Gill, Ehsaas Woman of Amritsar, gifts a memento to Amita Birla and Om Birla



Ehsaas Women of Nagpur, Priyanka Kothari and Monica Bhagwagar, gift a memento to Amita Birla and Om Birla



Ruhi Walia Syal, Ehsaas Woman of Jalandhar, gifts a memento to Amita Birla and Om Birla



Shinjini Kulkarni, Ehsaas Woman of Noida, hands over a memento to Amita Birla and Om Birla



Vinti Kathuria, Ehsaas Woman of Agra, gifts a memento to Amita Birla and Om Birla



# क्षेत्रीय भाषा में महसूस होता है अपनापन: 'तत्पुरुस' के विमोचन अवसर पर महाराव इज्यराज सिंह



Kishan Pranay

“क्षेत्रीय भाषा में जो अपनापन महसूस होता है, जो अभिव्यक्ति होती है, वह हिंदी में नहीं कही जा सकती। हर क्षेत्रीय भाषा की अपनी विशेषता होती है।” यह बात महाराव इज्यराज सिंह ने प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन और ग्रासरूट मीडिया फाउंडेशन की ओर से कोटा में आयोजित आखर पोथी कार्यक्रम में कही। उन्होंने कहा कि मैं जितने भी सामाजिक-धार्मिक, या अन्य कार्यक्रमों में जाता हूँ वहाँ हाड़ौती ही

बोलता हूँ ताकि अपनी भाषा जीवित रहे। एक युवा साहित्यकार का अपनी मातृभाषा में साहित्य सृजन और पुस्तक लिखना अच्छी बात है। हालांकि यह चिंता का विषय है कि कोटा शहर में हाड़ौती में बोलना कम होता जा रहा है लेकिन अच्छी बात यह है कि गांवों में अभी भी यह बोली जा रही है।

महाराव ने कहा कि साहित्य समाज का आईना होता है। जो हो रहा होता है, वह उसे सामने रखता है, चाहे कविता हो या कहानी। युवा साहित्यकारों को अपनी भाषा विशेषकर राजस्थानी भाषा में लेखन के लिए प्रोत्साहित करने की आवश्यकता है। स्थानीय साहित्यकारों के हाड़ौती में बोलने, लिखने और उपयोग करने से हाड़ौती का उपयोग बढ़ेगा। इससे नई पीढ़ी का भी उत्साह बढ़ेगा और भविष्य में भी अपनी भाषा का उपयोग बढ़ेगा। साथ ही जो लोग बाहर से आए हैं वह भी अपनी अपनी क्षेत्रीय भाषा का उपयोग करेंगे तो क्षेत्रीय भाषाएं बचेगी। युवा साहित्यकार किशन प्रणय को हाड़ौती में 'तत्पुरुस' लिखने के लिए उन्होंने शुभकामनाएं भी दी।

आखर पोथी के दौरान 'तत्पुरुस' का विमोचन और पुस्तक पर चर्चा हुई। प्रस्तावना में ममता 'महक' ने कहा कि साहित्य में प्रतीकों और बिम्बों का प्रयोग होता रहा है। प्रणय ने अपने काव्य संग्रह में प्रतीकों का प्रयोग कर भाषा की सभा में सुंदर अतिथि लाकर बैठा दिए हैं। विषय का चुनाव, शब्दों का रचाव और भावों का बखान उनकी समझ का परिचय देते हैं। एक अच्छे रचनाकार की पहचान यही होती है कि वह पूरे मन से रचता है, विषय जो भी हो। अब रात की ही बात लीजिए। रात यूँ तो काली है लेकिन उसको काटने वाले कई रंग होते हैं। रात एक और पाठ पढ़ाती है—अबार तू सूरज नं बण्यो। कितनी बड़ी बात कह दी है। प्रणय उनकी बात करते हैं, जिनकी बात कोई नहीं करता है। अब पेड़ को ही लें तो हम फूलों की, पत्तों, तनों और डालियों की बात करते हैं लेकिन इस रचना में कवि कहता है—पण मूँ जमीन सूँ जुड्यो रह्योएक जगह ई ऊभो रह्योअर होयो यो के म्हारे पावा सूँ जड़ां खडगी। 'भूख' कविता में वे लिखते हैं—लोभी बी भूख छै पण कदी न्है मटबा हाकी भूख। संग्रह की सभी रचनाएं अच्छी हैं भाव अनूठे हैं। दुःख से लेकर बीड तक की यात्रा कराते प्रणय का यह काव्य संग्रह ऐसी सतरंगी ओढ़नी है, जो पाठक को अपने रंग में रंग लेगी।

अध्यक्षता कर रहे वरिष्ठ साहित्यकार जितेंद्र निर्मोही ने कहा कि आज का दिन ऐतिहासिक है, क्योंकि हमने राजस्थानी भाषा साहित्य के सबसे कम उम्र के साहित्यकार

की काव्य कृति 'तत्पुरुस' का लोकार्पण किया है। हाड़ौती अंचल के शासक हाड़ा वंश के हैं, जिन्होंने इस अंचल की बोली हाड़ौती का संरक्षण और संवर्धन किया है। यह राजस्थानी भाषा की प्रमुख बोलियों में से एक है। प्रणय का राजस्थानी काव्य अध्यात्म और दर्शन का काव्य है।

समालोचक कुंदन माली ने कहा कि कवि, कविता और लोक के आपसी संबंध खासे उलझन भरे और जटिल हुआ करते हैं। एक सुलझे हुए कवि की कसौटी इस बात से तय हुआ करती है कि वह अपनी कविता में समय और समाज, व्यक्ति और समष्टि, दबाव और चुनौतियों को अपनी विषय-वस्तु में किस तरह ढालता है। मौजूदा काव्यकृति तत्पुरुस की विषय-वस्तु समसामायिक सवाल को, मुद्दों को, अपने सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक, राजनीतिक और नैतिक के साथ-साथ व्यक्तिपरक और लोकपरक आदि के धरातल पर भी साफगोई, सुथराई, सादगी और सुगमता से प्रकटीकरण की कोशिश करती है।

तत्पुरुस काव्य-संग्रह की कविताओं को साररूप में हम इस तरह देख सकते हैं कि यह सामाजिक विसंगतियों पर चोट और राजनीतिक व्यवस्था तंत्र के दोहरे व्यवहार पर व्यंग्य तो करती ही है, इसमें सांस्कृतिक माहौल में आने वाली कमी पर चिंता के भी सुर



Vijay Joshi, Mamta Mahak, Pramod Sharma, Jitendra Nirmohi, Ijya Raj Singh and Kundan Mali with Kishan Pranay



Gaurikant Sharma

हैं। समाज में बराबरी, गांव और शहरों के जीवन स्तर में अंतर और नारी को उन के अधिकार की बयान यहां है। कविताओं का सुर, काव्य विवेक, संयम और संतुलन के साथ-साथ लोक संस्थान, प्रकृति और मानवीय प्रवृत्ति के अलग-अलग रंगों को प्रकट करने की संवेदनात्मक कोशिश और जन जुड़ाव की भाषा पढ़ने योग्य है।

रचनाकार किशन प्रणय ने कहा कि राजस्थानी भाषा में हाड़ौती क्षेत्र में युवा लेखकों की कमी आ रही है। यहां युवा लेखन लगभग 10 वर्षों से बाधित है। बहुत दिनों बाद इस संग्रह का आना और कोटा महाराव का हाड़ौती भाषा के संरक्षण की बात कहना मायदा भाषा का महत्व बढ़ाती है। इसके लिए हम सभी को मिलकर प्रयास करना होगा। आयोजकों की ओर से प्रमोद शर्मा ने कहा कि प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन और ग्रासरूट मीडिया फाउंडेशन की ओर से राजस्थान में आखर और आखर पोथी के कार्यक्रम से राजस्थानी भाषा को काफी प्रोत्साहन मिला है। प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन आखर के तहत अन्य क्षेत्रीय भाषाओं में भी कार्यक्रम आयोजित करता है। संचालन साहित्यकार विजय जोशी ने किया।

प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन और ग्रासरूट मीडिया फाउंडेशन के सहयोग से आयोजित आखर पोथी और किताब कोटा के प्रायोजक हैं श्री सीमेंट, हॉस्पिटैलिटी पार्टनर हैं आईटीसी राजपूताना

# Women's Voices Unite Across Different Tongues



Parminder Singh Shonkey, Devyani Bhardwaj, Saraswathi D. and Manisha Chaudhry

Literature and the practice of translation are inextricably linked. It is through translations that language barriers between people are truly broken; it is also through translations that the emotions and ideas of authors in all corners of the world can reach their readers who don't understand the language of the original texts. Translating literature gives lovers of the written word across cultures the opportunity to learn about, and from, each other. And in a country like India, where people speak a mind-boggling array of languages, translation enables literature to transcend time and geographical boundaries.

These are the principles on which the Prabha Khaitan Foundation-Zubaan Translation Programme is based. This translation series aims to foreground feminist literature and the voices of women writers in Indian languages all over the country. This will be done by collaborating with several regional publishing houses across India. The formal launch of this programme took place in New Delhi in the presence of translators, publishers and **Ehsaas Women of India**.

The executive trustee of **Prabha Khaitan**



Urvashi Butalia

**Foundation**, Anindita Chatterjee, addressed the audience first. "Books are mirrors of lives, relationships, society and cultural diversities... they have the transcendental power to influence and enrich human minds," she said, while praising the initiative. She also spoke about the long-standing partnership between Zubaan and the Foundation, which began with the translation of Prabha Khaitan's autobiography, *Anya se Ananya*, into English.

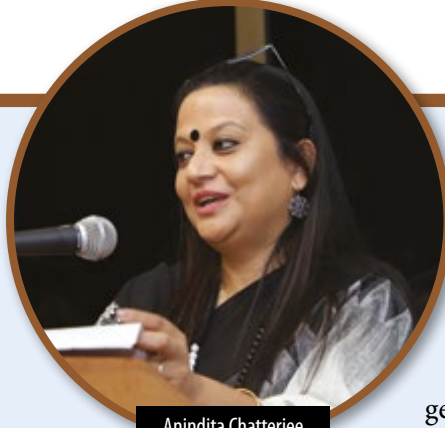
Urvashi Butalia, author and director of Zubaan, spoke about the time when she met Sundeep Bhutoria at the Jaipur Literature Festival. "He suggested that I work on the autobiography of his mother, Prabha Khaitan, who was a feminist writer," she revealed. "While talking about the possibilities that both organisations could accomplish, the idea of a translation series project was sparked. Zubaan has always been the voice for women's literature and empowerment: another reason why it works so well with the Foundation."

Manisha Chaudhry, project head of the translation series, under whose guidance Zubaan, in association



with the Foundation, has already done 18 translations in eight Indian languages, moderated a panel discussion that involved Kannada translator and activist Saraswathi D., Punjabi publisher Parminder Singh Shonkey and Hindi translator Devyani Bhardwaj. All the panellists spoke passionately about the need for translating feminist content in India. Saraswathi, who has translated *We Also Made History: Women in the Ambedkarite Movement*, spoke about the legacy and integral connection between Dalit and feminist movements in Karnataka. She said that it was her most earnest intention to bring to the forefront the role of women in the Dalit movement. Saraswathi also spoke about *Manasa*, a magazine that has been written, designed, published and sold entirely by her and a group of friends for the last 25 years.

“The biggest challenge for non-fiction translations has always been about taking the book titles to readers, given that Punjabi is a marginalised language in the publishing industry,” said Shonkey, who facilitated the translation of *Do You Remember Kuran Poshpora?* into Punjabi. “That is why my publishing house Rethink Foundation tries to divert publication work towards a more dominant language like Hindi. This helps translations of Punjabi non-



Anindita Chatterjee

fiction to enter the mainstream literature market.”

Bhardwaj spoke about the problems of translating English books into Hindi, a language strongly governed by gender rules. “When we are reading English, gender is marked at certain places; but while reading Hindi, gender is marked in each sentence or at several places in a full sentence. So, in Hindi, the entire formation of the sentence becomes gendered, as objects are also gendered in the language.” However, she seems to have found a solution. “I usually convert sentences written in singular into plural as we can include more groups while addressing the audience,” she said. “You cannot ignore the author’s original perspective and intention, and you cannot ignore the target audience of the translation. Moreover, if the text has a feminist vision, it is essential to stay true to that vision in the translated version of the text, while making the transition from one language to the other smooth. Most importantly, there is a serious lacuna when it comes to finding feminist content in Hindi. I believe that there should be more translations of feminist literature from other Indian languages rather than just from English.”



Ashok Vajpayee

*This session was presented by Shree Cement Ltd*



(Clockwise from left) Ruhi Walia Syal, Garima Tiwari, Anantmala Potdar, Deepa Mishra, Poonam Anand, Dipali Bhasin, Kanak Rekha Chauhan, Aradhana Pradhan, Esha Dutta, Anindita Chatterjee, Archana Dalmia, Neelima Dalmia Adhar, Monica Bhagwagar and Karuna Goenka





Shobha Tharoor Srinivasan

**I**ndi-Alphabet, Prince with a Paintbrush: The Story of Raja Ravi Varma, Parvati the Elephant's Very Important Day and How Many Lines in a Limerick?—these popular children's books have all been written by the prolific author, poet, translator and editor Shobha Tharoor Srinivasan. But when **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, under its **Kitaab** initiative, invited Srinivasan as a guest for a special session on the occasion of Mother's Day, she had a different story to tell. The event witnessed the unveiling of *Good Innings: The Extraordinary, Ordinary Life of Lily Tharoor*, Srinivasan's new book about her mother. The chief guest at the event was the parliamentarian Shashi Tharoor, who also happens to be Srinivasan's brother. In conversation with Srinivasan was Archana Dalmia, **Ehsaas** Woman of Delhi. Introducing the speakers to the audience was Neelima Dalmia Adhar, **Ehsaas** Woman of Delhi.

Srinivasan views her book as a celebration of motherhood. "*Good Innings* is dedicated to



## Beautiful, Driven and Distinct: The Story of Lily Tharoor



Lily Tharoor

my mother, but it's also a dedication to mothers and women everywhere," she said. "I know that all of your stories, in many ways, are in the pages of this book."

She went on to say that those who know her mother will recognise her in this book. "And for those of you who don't know her, I hope that the stories I have shared will inspire you to think about your own stories and reflect on the women in your life. I strongly believe that a book on a mother is not exclusive to that mother. Such a story can be a reflection of the lives of all mothers who brave life's hardships and dark days."



Archana Dalmia

Lily Tharoor is a fierce, pragmatic, ambitious and independent woman. She has always known how to overcome challenges and adversities in life. Dalmia commented on the kind of matriarch she was: one who had an indomitable spirit and was ready to face all odds and struggles. "My mother is an extraordinary woman who inspired us, encouraged us and lived a fiercely independent life,"





Neelima Dalmia Adhar, Karuna Goenka, Anindita Chatterjee, Archana Dalmia, Anantmala Potdar and Dipali Bhasin with Shobha Tharoor Srinivasan and Shashi Tharoor

said Srinivasan. “She has left a mark on many other people who crossed paths with her.”

Srinivasan also acknowledged her father Chandran Tharoor’s position in the news and advertising world, which played a role in shaping their lives. She reminisced about being the first Amul baby and the privilege of being photographed by Shyam Benegal. “My mother always pushed us to take part in contests and pageants,” she said. “She would walk into offices with her children to showcase their unique talents!” The challenges grew with Chandan Tharoor’s deteriorating health. “My mother recognised that she was perhaps living a life where she was taken care of too much. She thought it was important for her to be more independent. So she got herself enrolled into junior college and pushed us to explore our potential instead of wasting time. Her worries on account of our father’s ill health spurred her on. Her incredible spirit has driven her children to achieve more in life,



“My mother recognized the value of independence. She pushed us to explore our potential instead of wasting time. Her worries on account of our father’s ill health spurred her on. Her incredible spirit has driven her children to achieve more in life, and made her the woman whose stories can now inspire others”

and made her the woman whose stories can now inspire others.”

What about the evolution of Srinivasan’s relationship with her mother over the years? “As all women become mothers themselves, they start having a different relationship with their own mothers,” she said. “I do pat myself on the back for intuitively understanding some of my mother’s insecurities, which perhaps caused her to push us more. I see that kind of push as encouragement, as not being happy with the *status quo*. I also consider myself fortunate for being the only one to give her a granddaughter!”

The engaging session also saw Srinivasan reading out an excerpt from her book before interacting with the audience. In the session’s closing moments, she was asked to describe Lily Tharoor in three words. “Beautiful, driven and distinct,” she replied.

*This session of Kitaab was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with Penguin India and with the support of Ehsaas Women of Delhi*



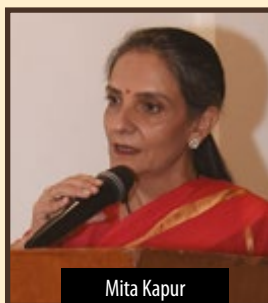
# A Lifelong Search for Roots



Patricia Loison

Mugdha Sinha

Patricia Loison's contributions to French journalism are well known. Having specialised in international current affairs, the Indian-origin journalist is recognised as one of the best-known television hosts in France, with shows like *Faut pas rêver* and *JT Soir 3* to her credit. As a part of the Bonjour India festival, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** organised the first-ever in-person session of **The Universe Writes** at the ITC Rajputana, Jaipur, with Loison as guest. She was in conversation with Mugdha Sinha, poet and secretary of the Department of Science and Technology under the Rajasthan government. Mita Kapur, author and CEO of Siyahi, introduced the speakers.



Mita Kapur

Loison's story is a unique one. Before being adopted at six months of age by a Franco-Belgian couple, she lived in the Mother Teresa orphanage in Delhi. Loison, who grew up in Paris, narrated the story of her search for her origins in her first book, *Je cherche encore ton nom (I Am Still Searching For Your Name)*. "I was like a little bird clinging to a rock, very determined not to fall down," said Loison. "I was quite close to my brother, who had been adopted from Lebanon. From a young age, I had a deep sense of family and bonding."

Loison also talked about her relationship with her mother and about how grateful she felt when she experienced motherhood herself. "It was an emotional event, in a happy way," she said. "I went through a hard

phase when it came to my own mother. I was angry and had to seek a psychologist's help to deal with all the anger and rejection. Writing was the beginning of my journey of dealing with these issues." As Sinha astutely pointed out, Loison almost had a second birth as a writer.

Loison also shared the conflicts she has dealt with over the course of several years. "It's still hard for me to think that my mom and dad are really not my mom and dad," she said. "There is a lot of suffering that is out there in the world for children who have been abandoned by their birth parents or have seen worse. When I gave birth to my daughter, I suddenly felt like I'd been run over by a train, especially when I would watch movies that deal with adoption. When I meet other people who were adopted, we get each other."

Loison's life as a writer has been greatly influenced by her experiences and conflicts; this is clearly reflected in *I Am Still Searching For Your Name*. "There has been a lot of hurt," she revealed. "Finding my dad didn't matter to me, but I was disheartened to have never found my mother's name anywhere in my adoption papers. When my own daughter has trouble adjusting to my absence, even for a few minutes, I assure her that I will never leave her."

*This session of **The Universe Writes** Jaipur is presented by Shree Cement Ltd as a part of Bonjour India, in association with Siyahi, Ambassade de France en India and Institut français*



Nandini Atal

Ajay Atal

Meeta Singh

Goutam Sen

Rajeev Bagarhatta



# Writing About Grief, With A Personal Touch

Marie Darrieussecq

Nandini Krishnan

French author Marie Darrieussecq has enjoyed worldwide success. Her debut novel *Truismes* sold over a million copies in France and has been translated in more than 20 languages. The English translation, titled *Pig Tales*, distinguished her as a notable author among the younger generation of writers around the world. On her second visit to Chennai, Darrieussecq was invited by **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** to a session of **The Universe Writes**, organised in association with Alliance Française. The Prix Médicis-winning author spoke on a range of subjects, from literature to nature to animal rights.

"I don't have a rule for writing", said Darrieussecq. "When I write, I think of my grandmother who loved to read but was discouraged from writing owing to the 'rules' of poetry and formats of writing. So I try to keep my writing style simple, funny and relatable. I try to be a good storyteller, and don't dwell on emotions without giving it a personal touch." Darrieussecq's writing particularly resonates with women readers: a phenomenon that is likely a direct result of writing about her experiences as a woman. "The rest are stories and experiences that other people share with me or a piece of my imagination."

Speaking at length about the characters in her stories, Darrieussecq said, "The characters are usually based on real people: me, my parents or my friends. I often pay tribute to my brother through my novels; he died when

he was just two days old. My parents couldn't share that grief by talking or writing about it. Sometimes I feel like I am writing to share their grief." Darrieussecq also believes that her work is often interpreted as novels for women, but she writes for everybody. "The meaning is open, so I am glad when everybody relates to what I write."

Darrieussecq also talked about being one of the millions of people worldwide who lost loved ones to the global pandemic. Her youngest child, who was 11 years old at the time of the bereavement, suffered a bout of depression and is still undergoing treatment. "The loss has taken away a piece of us: our spirit, emotional wellbeing and the energy that drives us. The French government did their bit, but the scars left by the pandemic will take years to heal. As a writer, I can only vent about the sadness and anxiety brought upon us by the pandemic through my novels. If I can even write a piece of fiction on it embracing the complexities and chaos of people's lives, I'm sure I'll be able to reach and connect with my readers who are dealing with their own tragedies."

*This session of **The Universe Writes** Chennai was a part of Bonjour India, in association with Ambassade de France en India, Alliance Française of Madras and Institut français, and was organised with the support of **Ehsaas Women of Chennai***



Vidya Gajapathi Raju Singh



Kaveri Lalchand



Deepika Goyal



Monica



Chita



Preethi



Jean Paul Hirsch



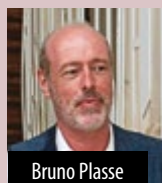
Raji



Kausalya Devi



Nandi



Bruno Plasse





Christine Jordis



# The French Connect: Linking India and France Through Gandhi



Sunandan Roy Chowdhury

A writer, editor, journalist and specialist in English literature, Christine Jordis's novels have always been about her spiritual awakenings during her travels to Asia. However, at the first in-person session of the Kolkata chapter of **The Universe Writes**, organised by **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** in collaboration with Bonjour India, Jordis discussed her book, *Gandhi*, which focuses primarily on her understanding of Mahatma Gandhi from the 'inside'. Moitrayee Dhar, the cultural manager at Alliance Francaise du Bengale, invited Nicolas Facino, the director of Alliance Francaise du Bengale, to say a few words on the 75th year of the establishment of Indo-French diplomatic relations, and Esha Dutta, **Ehsaas** Woman of Kolkata, introduced Jordis and the moderator — author and publisher Sunandan Roy Chowdhury — to the audience.

Why did Jordis choose Gandhi as the topic of her book? "Despite being terrified of travelling, I felt a spiritual discontent in the humdrum life in France," said Jordis. "For my books, I wanted to undertake a spiritual quest, and Asia, especially India, permitted that. When I was approached to write a biography, I chose Gandhi despite knowing that much had been said about him already. In the three years of writing the book, I made Gandhi a part of my life, and wanted to present how I personally understood him."

Steering the conversation towards spirituality, Roy Chowdhury asked if Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence was, in a way, influencing the spiritual awakening of the modern European youth. "While there is a search among the youth for a philosophy, I am unsure whether Gandhi is a part of it," responded Jordis. Later in the conversation, she referred to Martin

Green, in whose book Gandhi has been hailed as the "the prophet of the new age". "While there are many interpretations of Gandhi, one is to consider him as the preacher of an alternative way of living and thinking, since many in France are now experiencing a tiredness of the modern civilization of profit-making," she explained.

What is Jordis's perspective on 'suffering' in spirituality, as an important tenet in Gandhi's political quest in India? "I was brought up Christian. For me, much like for other people, suffering is the basis for inner progress and improvement," said the author. "It is a way to get rid of what is superfluous, a way of touching what is essential, of purification of the self." However, she also pointed out that in the Christian world, the idea of suffering leaves little room for pleasure. Adding to her reflections on suffering in *Gandhi*, she said, "In the context of colonisation and Indian independence, Gandhi wanted complete control of himself and to obtain non-violence from the Indian people. Suffering, self-control and non-violence are probably the most exacting things you can ask of an individual. You very rarely obtain it, but Gandhi obtained that from the Indian people."

The discussion ended with a Q&A session with the audience on subjects like caste, religion and revolutions. The session concluded with Anindita Chatterjee felicitating the guests on behalf of the Foundation.

*This session of **The Universe Writes** Kolkata was presented by Shree Cement Ltd as a part of Bonjour India, in association with Ambassade de France en India, Alliance Française du Bengale and Institut français*



Nicolas Facino



Anindita Chatterjee



Christine Cornet



Esha Dutta



# Telling Stories For All



Neelam Seolekar



Marie Desplechin

Marie Desplechin is acclaimed in France for her literary prowess. In her novels for young people, she explores a variety of literary tropes. In the historical trilogy comprising *Satin Grenadine*, *Séraphine* and *La Capucine*, Desplechin explores the lives of women in the 19th century in Paris; fantasy and contemporary reality meet in *Verte et Pome*; *Le journal d'Aurore* deals with adolescence; fantasy and strange things abound in *Le monde de Joseph* and *Elie et Sam*.

For adults, Desplechin has written a collection of short stories, *Trop sensibles*, and the novels *Sans moi*, *Dragons* and *La Vie sauve*, the last having been written in collaboration with Lydie Violet. Desplechin also contributes to magazines as a journalist and participates in the writing of film scripts.

In 2020, she was awarded the Grande Ourse Prize at the Children's Literature Fair at Montreuil. **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** organised an engaging session of **The Universe Writes** in Pune with Desplechin as guest, during which the author spoke at length about her writing.

*This session of **The Universe Writes** Pune was presented by Shree Cement Ltd as a part of Bonjour India, in association with Ambassade de France en India and Institut français and with the support of Ehsaas Women of Pune*



Audience members and Ehsaas Women Amita Munot and Neelam Seolekar with Marie Desplechin



# A Meeting Of Cultures Over Lunch



In 2022, we celebrate the fourth edition of Bonjour India — an artistic, cultural, educational and social initiative that brings France and India together. Put together by the French cooperation network in India that mainly comprises the Embassy of France and its cultural service known as Institut Français en Inde, the Alliance Française network and the Consulates of France, this unique festival has played a significant role in furthering Indo-French cultural relations and enriching the people of both nations. Having always been at the forefront of India's socio-cultural landscape, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** organised a sumptuous lunch for the authors and guests from France who visited India for the festival. Here are a few glimpses from the afternoon at the ITC Royal Bengal, rich with conversation and literary insights.



Moitrayee Dhar, Alexander Jordis, Christine Jordis, Nicolas Facino, Tiffany Tavernier and Christine Cornet





Christine Cornet and Kanchana Mukhopadhyay



Manisha Jain and Alexander Jordis



Malika Varma



Esha Dutta, Gaurav Soneja (General Manager, ITC Royal Bengal) and Nicolas Facino



# Universal Truths in the Words of the Bard

The legendary poet, writer and freedom fighter, Rabindranath Tagore, is Bengal's pride; for Ranjan and Bratati Bandyopadhyay, he has always been a part of their lives. Ranjan, a Bengali scholar, veteran journalist and former lecturer, has authored several bestsellers, with Tagore being one of his most deeply-researched subjects. Bratati, a renowned Bengali elocutionist, has garnered accolades over several decades for her performances and albums on Tagore's works. She is the founder of Kabyayan and Bratati Parampara, two institutes that train elocutionists and other performing artists. **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, under its **Aakhar Bangla** initiative and in association with Purba Paschim, organised a session with Ranjan and Bratati, where the guests talked about what the bard means to them and shared lesser-known stories about him. Titled *Amar Rabithakur*, the session took place at the Kolkata Charukala Bhavan to mark Tagore's birth anniversary, an occasion popularly called 'Pochishe Boishakh'.

Ranjan looks at Tagore through his own lens. "He could create a work of art or literature even from immense sorrow. His works can be felt, but we cannot achieve that level of supremacy. Tagore travelled a path that took him to eternity. Some people are immortalised through their work: Tagore is one of them." While discussing Tagore's solitary literary pursuits with Bratati, Ranjan commented on how the cellular phone is the "enemy of loneliness". "A generation that is always connected with each other through social media is bound to be afraid of solitude," he opined. "They fear introspection. Voluntary exile is necessary for creation, not agitation. Tagore spent years on his own, away from the comfort of his home and family. I have learned that loneliness is essential to let your soul speak, express itself and bloom."

Bratati seconded him. "Our lives revolve around entertainment, addiction, profit and loss — everything else is irrelevant," she said. "Finding our true inner self has become an underrated practice. Knowing his true



Bratati Bandyopadhyay

Ranjan Bandyopadhyay



Soumitra Mitra

self helped Rabi Thakur propagate honesty through his work. He always addressed eternity as 'you'. Tagore helps me rediscover myself every time I go through his lines, whether it's poetry, a play, a novel or a song."

Highlighting the impact of loneliness, Ranjan drew a parallel between Tagore and the German novelist, Franz Kafka. "Kafka drowned himself in loneliness and despair. He witnessed devastating loss. Tagore, too, felt despair and depression, especially after the tragic loss of his son Shamindranath. He had even confessed to having had suicidal thoughts. But his dedication towards self-discovery and his life experiences had taught him to look at life beyond pain and death. He could experience the deepest pain, absorb it into his heart and use it as a tool to create something that ascended to a higher level." For Ranjan, Tagore isn't God, but a human being mightier than God.

Bratati lightened the mood by talking about how the bard depicted love in his writing. "Take *Shesher Kobita*, for example," she said. "It is a touching tale that tells us why separation is not the end of true love." The deeply poignant session was a gentle reminder that 'Kobiguru' remains relevant to our lives to this day.

*This session of Aakhar Bengal was presented by Shree Cement Ltd*



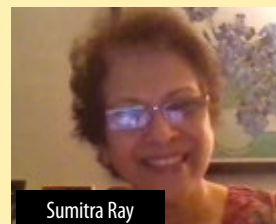


Bongiswa Kotta-Ramushwana

# A TIME FOR STORIES

Anitej Mukhopadhyay  
La Martiniere For Boys

especially children, with whom she dances and sings. Owing to an overwhelming response, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, under its **Muskaan** initiative, hosted two



Sumitra Ray

sessions with the renowned storyteller. What is really unique about Kotta-Ramushwana is the way in which she narrates her stories — she manages to modulate her voice based on the age of the characters. Moreover, her stories involve dance and songs, making the whole experience a complete one. After she finishes a story, she shares the value hidden within its lines.

The storytelling session was followed by a Q&A round. The little ones were given a chance to ask the storytelling genius a few questions, and they seized it. All sorts of interesting, out-of-the-box bouncers poured in for our guest, and, like the professional that she is, Kotta-Ramushwana answered each question wonderfully. The audience gained a lot of useful information as a result of this session. The mood at the show was not morose; rather, it was filled with joyous voices, as all the children sang a song with Kotta-Ramushwana. The hour with her was truly a delight.

*This session of **Muskaan** was presented by Shree Cement Ltd*

*"There's always room for a story that can transport people to another place."*

— J.K. Rowling

One of the biggest problems faced by the younger generation today involves their reduced attention spans. In a world that is dominated by the metaverse and thrives on instant gratification, the fact that it becomes a problem to focus on something for a significant period of time comes as no surprise. In the process, what these young people are missing out on are the wonderful stories one reads in early childhood and the pre-teen years: tales of fairies, witches, dwarves, princesses and talking animals.

Born in the Eastern Cape in South Africa, Bongiswa Kotta-Ramushwana embarked on her career as a storyteller in 2004 at the Zanendaba Storytelling Company in Johannesburg. Not only has she been featured on different platforms nationally and internationally, but she has also performed at schools, libraries, orphanages, old-age homes and prisons. She has attended storytelling festivals in South Africa (the Nozinwadi Kwesukela National Book Week and the Ungasali International Storytelling Festival), in Kenya (the Sigana International Storytelling Festival) and also in Norway.

Kotta-Ramushwana is driven by her passion and love for telling stories; she enjoys the company of her audience,





# ‘विधि, समाज और लोक विमर्श’ विषय पर किताब जयपुर में रंजन गोगोई और कलराज मिश्र के विचार



पांच हजार साल पहले हिंदू ऋषि वृहस्पति ने कहा था कि समाज को कानून की आवश्यकता तब पड़ती है जब लोगों का चरित्र गिर जाता है...कानून क्या है? कानून की आवश्यकता आचरण को संचालित करने के लिए होती है। पर क्या ये ढेर सारे कानून अनुशासनहीनता को नियंत्रित करने में सफल हो पाए? उत्तर है ‘नहीं’। दुर्भाग्य से जनता इसे आचरण से नहीं व्यवहार से जोड़कर देखती है।” यह कहना है सर्वोच्च न्यायालय के पूर्व मुख्य न्यायाधीश और राज्यसभा सांसद रंजन गोगोई का। वे प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन और ग्रासरूट मीडिया फाउंडेशन की ओर से जयपुर में आयोजित ‘किताब’ कार्यक्रम में अपनी पुस्तक ‘जस्टिस फॉर दी जज’ के विमोचन के बाद ‘विधि, समाज और लोक विमर्श’ विषय पर बोल रहे थे। इस अवसर पर मुख्य अतिथि के रूप में राजस्थान के राज्यपाल कलराज मिश्र मौजूद थे। पुस्तक विमोचन और अतिथियों के उद्बोधन के पश्चात गोगोई से राजस्थान उच्च न्यायालय के अधिवक्ता रमन नंदा ने संवाद किया।

गोगोई ने सबसे पहले पूर्वोत्तर का होने के चलते ‘घर में हिंदी नहीं चलती’, और दो दशकों तक कोर्ट-कचहरी में हिंदी में काम न करने के चलते अंग्रेजी में अपनी बात कहने की इजाजत ली। उन्होंने कहा अभी मैं केवल दो मिनट अपनी बात कहूंगा, क्योंकि इसी कार्यक्रम में नंदा के साथ लगभग घंटे भर का संवाद-सत्र है। मजाकिया अंदाज में गोगोई ने कहा कि सब कुछ अभी बोलूंगा तो संवाद के लिए क्या बचेगा। उन्होंने कहा कि समाज में नैतिक आचरण में कमी आने पर नियम-कानूनों की आवश्यकता पड़ती है, इसलिए चरित्र निर्माण आवश्यक है, और यह ‘परिवार’ के बीच निर्मित होता है। जबकि आज हम इससे बहुत दूर हो गए हैं और निजता पर जोर देने लगे हैं। उन्होंने कहा कि वर्तमान दौर में पारिवारिक मूल्यों के खत्म होने और समाज के व्यक्ति केंद्रित होते जाने के कारण आधिकाधिक कानूनों की आवश्यकता महसूस की जा रही है। पर सच तो यही है कि अगर समाज सही ढंग से संचालित होने लगेगा, लोग अपने आचरण को सुधार लेंगे तो कानून की आवश्यकता ही नहीं होगी।

राज्यपाल मिश्र ने गोगोई की पुस्तक के विमोचन और तत्पश्चात हो रहे संवाद पर प्रसन्नता जाहिर करते हुए कहा कि ‘विधि, समाज और लोक विमर्श’ जैसे विषय पर आज के परिप्रेक्ष्य में संवाद की बहुत आवश्यकता है। उन्होंने संविधान की प्रस्तावना ‘हम भारत के लोग’ से अपने वक्तव्य की शुरुआत की और कहा कि ये शब्द स्वयमेव भारतीय लोकतंत्र की जीवंतता की अनुभूति कराने वाले हैं। संविधान में लोगों को मूलभूत अधिकार प्रदान किए गए हैं, तो उनके कर्तव्य भी निर्धारित किए गए हैं। अधिकारों के साथ कर्तव्यों का संतुलन जब होता है तभी मानवीय गरिमा सभी स्तरों पर स्थापित होती है। इस दृष्टि से देखें तो भारतीय संविधान मानवीय गरिमा का आधार स्तंभ है। यह हमारे लोकतंत्र की गहराई को दर्शाता है। इसके हर शब्द में संविधान का मूल आधार समाहित है। उन्होंने राजभवन में संविधान पार्क बनवाने की बात कही और बताया कि यह अद्भुत होगा, जिसमें नई-नई सूचनाएं प्राप्त होंगी। मिश्र ने कहा कि लोकतंत्र ‘लोगों’ से है, इसीलिए हमारे संविधान में उनके अधिकार और कर्तव्य निर्धारित किए गए हैं। मिश्र ने कहा कि देश में न्यायपालिका, कार्यपालिका और विधायिका ने लोकतंत्र से जुड़े मुद्दों पर, संकट पर सदा ही आगे बढ़कर अपनी महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई है।

राज्यपाल ने कहा कि भारतीय संविधान की प्रमुख विशेषताओं के बारे में लोगों को जागरूक करने के उद्देश्य से राजस्थान राजभवन में बन रहा संविधान पार्क देश में अपनी



Kalraj Mishra, the Honourable  
Governor of Rajasthan



Raman Nanda

तरह का पहला उद्घान होगा। उन्होंने कहा कि सामाजिक न्याय से संबंधित कानून बनाने में हमारा देश विश्वभर में सबसे आगे है, पर कानून बनाने के साथ समाज में ऐसा वातावरण बनाया जाना भी जरूरी है, जिससे व्यक्ति-व्यक्ति के बीच भेदभाव, छुआछूत, कुरीतियों और आर्थिक असमानता को पूरी तरह मिटाया जा सके। पंडित दीनदयाल उपाध्याय के एकात्म मानववाद दर्शन का उल्लेख करते हुए मिश्र ने कहा कि व्यक्ति राष्ट्र, समाज, परिवार और स्वयं से एकात्म स्थापित कर लेता है। राज्यपाल ने संसदीय व्यवस्था, कार्यपालिका एवं न्यायपालिका के नेतृत्व में परस्पर विचार-विमर्श हेतु संस्थागत प्रावधान और कानूनों की समीक्षा की प्रणाली विकसित किए जाने का सुझाव भी दिया।

राज्यपाल मिश्र ने कहा कि जब तक कानूनों का सही भाव से क्रियान्वयन नहीं होगा तब तक उसका लाभ नहीं मिल सकेगा। लोक मत और लोक प्रतिष्ठा पर बल देते हुए उन्होंने कहा कि हमारी त्रिस्तरीय व्यवस्था हमारे संविधान का मूल आधार है। विधि, समाज और लोक के समन्वय पर बल देते हुए मिश्र ने कहा कि न्यायपालिका चुनी नहीं जाती, पर विधायिका के साथ समन्वय स्थापित कर वह लोकतंत्र के पाए को मजबूती प्रदान करती है। देश के न्यायालय संविधान प्रदत्त मानव अधिकारों के प्रहरी और न्यासी हैं। हमारी न्यायपालिका बेहद पारदर्शी है। व्यक्ति की स्वतंत्रता, रक्षा और गरिमा में न्यायालय की अपनी भूमिका है। राज्यपाल ने चौथे स्तंभ के रूप में मीडिया की भूमिका की भी विस्तार से चर्चा की और लोकतंत्र के सभी स्तंभों के समन्वय और संतुलन पर बल दिया। भारत को भाववाचक संज्ञा बताते हुए उन्होंने जोर दिया कि लोकहित को ही हमने, हमारे चिंतन ने, दर्शन ने केंद्र में रखा है। हमने समाष्टि को प्रमुखता दी है। परिवर्तनशील इस विश्व में हमारे देश ने युगानुरूप, जनहित में कानूनों के संशोधन की आवश्यकता पर बल दिया है। राज्यपाल ने गुरुदेव रबीन्द्रनाथ टैगोर के गीतांजलि की इन पंक्तियों—

चित्त जेथा भयशून्य  
उच्च जेथा शिर,  
ज्ञान जेथा मुक्त,  
जेथा गृहेर प्राचीर...जिसका अर्थ है, जहां चित्त भय से शून्य हो, जहां हम गर्व से माथा ऊंचा करके चल सकें, जहां ज्ञान मुक्त हो, जहां दिन रात विशाल वसुधा को खंडों में विभाजित कर, छोटे और छोटे आंगन न बनाए जाते हों, से अपने उद्बोधन को विराम दिया।

बाद के संवाद सत्र में गोगोई ने पूजा स्थल अधिनियम, अयोध्या राम जन्मभूमि, मीडिया की भूमिका, जनमत की सोच, न्यायपालिका की भूमिका, वर्चुअल सुनवाई, संसद की भूमिका, तकनीक से जुड़े नंदा के सवाल के उत्तर दिए। उन्होंने कहा कि तकनीक और उम्मीदें इंसान के ऊपर दबाव डालती हैं। अयोध्या मामले में उच्चतम न्यायालय के





Pramod Sharma, Apra Kuchhal and Raman Nanda with Ranjan Gogoi and Kalraj Mishra

समक्ष चुनौतियां थीं। जब कोई मामला न्यायालय के समक्ष विचाराधीन होता है, तब लोग इस पर विमर्श करते हैं। पर लोगों की अपेक्षा और कयास हमेशा उचित हों यह जरूरी नहीं। उन्होंने कहा कि तकनीक के चलते लोगों की उम्मीदें काफी बढ़ गई हैं, लेकिन हमें यह भूलना नहीं चाहिए कि तकनीक को संचालित करने वाला, उसके आगे और उसके पीछे कोई न कोई इंसान ही है। उन्होंने कहा कि उम्मीदों का स्वागत है, पर उसकी सीमा निर्धारित होनी चाहिए। फैसले दिमाग में आते हैं, तकनीक कभी न्यायिक फैसलों पर हावी नहीं हो सकती।

भारत के 46वें प्रधान न्यायाधीश रहे गोगोई ने अपनी पुस्तक में शामिल कई घटनाओं से जुड़े सवाल के भी उत्तर दिए, जिसमें *केशवानंद भारती* केस के उल्लेख से लेकर

देता है। फाउंडेशन इन क्षेत्रों के समर्पित, प्रतिबद्ध व्यक्तियों और समान विचारधारा वाले संस्थानों के साथ मिल कर कार्य करता है। बीते सालों में फाउंडेशन के कार्यक्रमों और प्रयासों को कई मौजूदा राष्ट्राध्यक्षों और समाज के प्रतिष्ठित नेताओं ने गरिमा प्रदान की है।

कुच्छल ने बताया कि फाउंडेशन यूनेस्को के आदर्श का समर्थन करते हुए लैंगिक समानता, समाज के हाशिए से जुड़े वर्ग के अधिकार, महिला अधिकार और नारी सशक्तीकरण की नीतियों के प्रभावी कार्यान्वयन को लागू कराने हेतु एक सुरक्षित, समावेशी और लिंगभेद से परे उत्तरदायित्वपूर्ण वातावरण के निर्माण का हिमायती है और इस हेतु प्रतिबद्ध है। उन्होंने *द राइट सर्कल*, *किताब*, *आखर*, *सुर और साज*, *लफ्ज*, *एक विशेष मुलाकात*, *चलचित्र* आदि कार्यक्रमों के उल्लेख के साथ **अहसास** वूमेन- भारत की



Ankit Tiwari



Anuj Sharma



Devkaran Saini



Rajesh Vyas



Rajesh Methi

उच्चतम न्यायालय के प्रधान न्यायाधीश बनने से पहले 'कुख्यात' संवाददाता सम्मेलन, यौन उत्पीड़न के आरोप और टैबलॉयड पत्रकारिता के प्रभाव आदि पर विचार शामिल थे। अयोध्या केस की सुनवाई के दौरान के हालात का बयान करते हुए गोगोई ने कहा कि उन दिनों जो बातें चल रही थी, उससे मैं पूरी तरह वाकिफ था और अच्छी तरह से समझ चुका था कि क्या कुछ दांव पर लगा है। *केशवानंद भारती* केस की चर्चा होने पर उन्होंने कहा कि *केशवानंद भारती* केस पर फैसला 1973 में हुआ था। उसने संसद की सीमा बांधी थी कि संसद भी संविधान के मूल स्वरूप को बदल नहीं सकता। वह फैसला 7-6 की बेंच ने दिया था जबकि अयोध्या मामले में फैसला सर्वसम्मति से हुआ। गोगोई ने सवाल-जवाब सत्र में श्रोताओं के सवालों के भी उत्तर दिए। उन्होंने कहा कि हमारे सामने समस्याओं का पहाड़ है। बतौर मुख्य न्यायाधीश जो समस्या, मसला मुझे महत्वपूर्ण लगा मैंने उसकी सुनवाई की। अदालतें हर मसले के लिए जवाबदेह नहीं हैं। न्यायपालिका हर मसले का स्वतः संज्ञान नहीं ले सकती। अगर कहीं कोई खामी न्यायिक व्यवस्था में है तो वह खुद से सुधार लेगी, यह कहीं बाहर से नहीं होगा। पुस्तक लेखन का श्रेय उन्होंने कोरोना काल को दिया।

कार्यक्रम के आरंभ में अनुज शर्मा ने अतिथियों को मंच पर आमंत्रित किया। इस अवसर पर राष्ट्रगान के पश्चात राज्यपाल ने संविधान की उद्देशिका का वाचन किया, जिसे सभी ने दोहराया। उन्होंने संविधान के अनुच्छेद 51-ए में वर्णित 11 मौलिक कर्तव्य का पाठ किया। आयोजकों की ओर से **प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन** की राजस्थान और मध्य भारत की मानद समन्वयक अपरा कुच्छल ने आमंत्रित अतिथियों का अभिनंदन कर स्वागत वक्तव्य दिया। कुच्छल ने फाउंडेशन का विस्तार से परिचय दिया कि 1980 में स्थापित फाउंडेशन गैर लाभकारी और गैर सरकारी संस्था है। कोलकाता स्थित यह फाउंडेशन प्रदर्शन कला, संस्कृति, शिक्षा, लैंगिक समानता और साहित्य को बढ़ावा

महिलाएं की भी चर्चा की। उन्होंने मुख्य अतिथि गोगोई का भी विस्तार से परिचय दिया और बताया कि 18 नवम्बर, 1954 को असम में पैदा हुए गोगोई ने अपनी उच्च शिक्षा दिल्ली में प्राप्त की। आप 46 वर्ष की आयु में हाईकोर्ट के जज नियुक्त हुए और 3 अक्टूबर, 2018 को भारत के 46 वें मुख्य न्यायाधीश के रूप में शपथ ली। 17 नवंबर, 2019 को अपना कार्यकाल समाप्त होने के कुछ समय बाद ही 19 मार्च, 2020 को आप राज्यसभा सदस्य के रूप में मनोनीत किए गए। अपनी भाषा की समृद्धि के लिए 'कलम' के समावेशी रुख का उल्लेख उल्लेख करते हुए उन्होंने प्रायोजक श्री सीमेंट और अन्य सहयोगियों की भी चर्चा की।

ग्रासरूट मीडिया फाउंडेशन के प्रमोद शर्मा ने महाकवि गोस्वामी तुलसीदास जी की पंक्ति '*मूक होइ बाचाल पंगु चढ़ई गिरिबर गहन। जासु कृपा सो दयाल द्रवउ सकल कलि मल दहन*' का उल्लेख करते हुए अतिथियों का स्वागत करते हुए सवाई जय सिंह को याद किया, जिन्होंने वास्तु पुरुष से वचन लिया था कि यह शहर ऐसे केंद्र के रूप में विकसित हो कि जहां गुणीजन विमर्श करें। उन्होंने महाभारत युद्ध की समाप्ति के बाद युधिष्ठिर द्वारा राजगद्दी न स्वीकारने के संदर्भ का विस्तार से वर्णन किया और राज्य के निर्माण की मूल भावना का उल्लेख किया और अतिथियों द्वारा इस कार्यक्रम का आमंत्रण स्वीकारने के लिए धन्यवाद दिया। कार्यक्रम के अंत में *अरविंदो सोसाइटी* की ओर से श्री राजावती ने श्री *अरविंदो एंड द कॉन्स्टिट्यूशन ऑफ इंडिया* की प्रति भेंट की। गोगोई ने राजेश व्यास को स्मृति चिन्ह प्रदान किया। राजेश मेठी ने गोगोई और देवकरण ने नंदा का अभिनंदन किया। अंकित तिवारी ने धन्यवाद ज्ञापित किया।

प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन और ग्रासरूट मीडिया फाउंडेशन द्वारा आयोजित किताब के प्रायोजक हैं श्री सीमेंट। हॉस्पिटैलिटी पार्टनर हैं आईटीसी राजपूताना जयपुर और वी केयर का सहयोग मिला।





Shobha Tharoor Srinivasan

# A MOTHER'S EXTRAORDINARY LIFE INNINGS



Nilisha Agarwal

Shobha Tharoor Srinivasan wears many hats. She is an award-winning children's author whose works have been published in India and the United States. She is also a poet, a translator, an editor and a voice-over artist. As a former non-profit development professional, she worked tirelessly to advocate and raise funds for the disabled. Her voice-over work has involved documentaries, educational programmes, journalistic initiatives and audio books. **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** recently invited Srinivasan to **An Author's Afternoon** to discuss her book: *The Extraordinary, Ordinary Life of Lily Tharoor*, and to celebrate mothers and their contribution to our lives. Srinivasan was in conversation with Nilisha Agarwal, **Ehsaas** Woman of Kolkata. Both Srinivasan and Agarwal were introduced to the audience by Esha Dutta, **Ehsaas** Woman of Kolkata.

*Good Innings* was the result of Srinivasan reconnecting with her life experiences, childhood memories and her relationship with her mother, Lily Tharoor. Through this book, she seeks to inspire readers to reconnect with these aspects of their own lives. "Kolkata's charm had influenced both my mother and her children," said Srinivasan. "This is the reason I believe the book will connect with readers from the city."

"My mother had asked her granddaughter Ragini to write a story about her," Srinivasan revealed. "But when I told her about my book, she asked me what she had done that warranted the writing of a book! I had never intended to write this story with the goal of pitching it to a publisher. It took some convincing by a commissioning editor, who told me he wanted me to write a book about my mother because he had heard that she renewed her driving licence at the age of 82 and may have seen pictures of her in the newspaper climbing atop campaign vehicles! In his words, 'this is definitely somebody who is extraordinary, and I know a lot of people who would like to hear her story'. This book was worth writing because it may spark conversations and inspire the young generation to think differently."

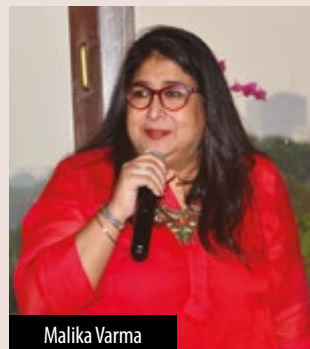
The author wrote the book like a collection of stories instead of a traditional biography. She begins most chapters in the first person in order to connect with



the reader; thereafter, the storytelling transitions to a third-person narrative. “Did writing the book take a lot of time? What effect did it have on you?” wondered Agarwal. “The writing did not take more than a few months, the real work lay in the thinking and the putting together of a timeline for all the stories I have heard over the years,” responded Srinivasan. “Essentially, it is my telling of my mother’s story, and my telling has been informed by my years growing up and my conversations with her. I feel a lot closer to my mother, even though we are thousands of miles apart. Writing the book felt like having conversations with her every moment.”

Lily Tharoor is a valiant woman who braved all odds and managed to raise her children with dignity. *Good Innings* tells the story of a pragmatic, confident and courageous woman and all that she did to manage the difficult times in her life. Srinivasan, whom many may remember as having been the first ‘Amul baby’, spoke about the fame that came along with that distinction. “Before his illness, my father Chandran Tharoor’s position as an advertising executive and the advertising manager of *The Statesman* certainly helped my family live a charmed life. Besides, fame is bound to follow if one is being shot by Shyam Benegal!” she quipped.

The author revealed that Kolkata is still her favourite city; she reminisced about her childhood there, from her school days in Loreto House to her time with friends and the warmth of Kolkata’s people. “The old-world charm and grace are what make Kolkata special for me,” she said. “Kochi, however, also holds a special place in my heart. We loved going back to Kerala as we cherished the idea of a large family. It



Malika Varma



Shamlu Dudeja

allowed us to remain in touch with our roots. There are stories of us going to the movies on bullock carts!”

Srinivasan also shared the valuable lessons that have had a deep impact on her life. “My mother is my greatest inspiration. Her ability to pick herself up after encountering any adverse situation has

“My mother is my inspiration. Her ability to pick herself up after encountering any adverse situation has been the biggest lesson for my siblings and me”

been the biggest lesson for my siblings and me. As a famous basketball coach once said, failing to prepare is preparing to fail.” She also revealed that she believes in spirituality and embracing change. “Change is great. It is an opportunity to discover new things, new people, new places, and to enjoy the differences. We saw it as a

challenge, and we embraced it. I am not a regular temple goer. Spirituality should be in one’s heart. It should be in one’s actions and viewpoints on life.” As a conclusion to the deeply engaging session, Srinivasan read an excerpt from her book and interacted with the audience.

*An Author’s Afternoon* was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with Taj Bengal Kolkata and The Telegraph Online—My Kolkata



The audience at the session



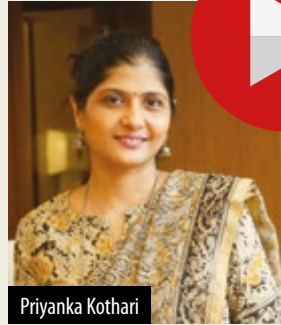
## युवा पीढ़ी पढ़े-जाने, इसलिए लिखी CODE काकोरी: मनोज राजन त्रिपाठी

**क**लम के इतिहास में ऐसा पहली बार हुआ कि उसका कोई आयोजन निर्धारित समय से दोगुना समय तक चला। जी हां प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन द्वारा आयोजित कलम नागपुर में लेखक मनोज राजन त्रिपाठी के साथ संवाद के दौरान यही हुआ। इस सत्र में कहानियां, किताबें, युवा, समाज, गीत, क्रिकेट, लेखन और मीडिया सहित तमाम विषयों पर चर्चा हुई। अहसास वूमेन नागपुर प्रवीण तुली फाउंडेशन का परिचय देते हुए संस्थापक डॉ प्रभा खेतान को याद किया और कलम के बारे में विस्तार से बताया। उन्होंने अतिथि लेखक त्रिपाठी का परिचय दिया और बताया कि त्रिपाठी करीब तीस वर्षों से पत्रकारिता में हैं। उन्होंने पत्रकारिता में पुरस्कार के साथ-साथ सिंगिंग रियलिटी शो सा रे गा मा पा, अंताक्षरी, संगम कला जैसे कई राष्ट्रीय मंच पर अवार्ड्स भी जीता है। परिचय के बाद त्रिपाठी से संवाद के लिए उन्होंने अहसास वूमेन नागपुर प्रियंका कोठारी को आमंत्रित किया।

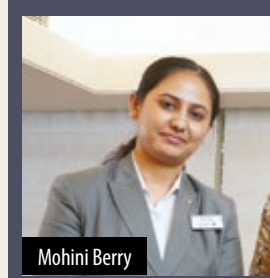
कोठारी ने पूछा कि CODE काकोरी से पहले मैं जानना चाहूंगी कि मनोज क्रिकेटर, मनोज सिंगर, मनोज पत्रकार, मनोज डायलॉग राइटर, मनोज क्राइम थ्रिलर ऑथर में असली मनोज कौन है? त्रिपाठी का उत्तर था, “असली मनोज कौन का उत्तर है या तो मैं टैलेंटेड ज्यादा हूँ या मैं कन्फ्यूज्ड ज्यादा हूँ कि बनना क्या है। यह एक समस्या रही है। असल में जिंदगी का जो मसला है, लोग कहते हैं कि आज में जीओ, कोई कहता है कि कल में जीओ, कोई कहता है कि प्लान करके जीओ, मुझे लगता है कि लाइफ एसओएस होनी चाहिए। लाइफ जिस चीज में आपको नाकाम कर रही हो उसे लॉक कर देना चाहिए, रोक देना चाहिए। नो रिस्ट के साथ।” त्रिपाठी ने इसके बाद क्रिकेट के सीके नायडू, रणजी के अपने अनुभवों को बताया। फिर इसके बाद मुंबई में गायन के क्षेत्र की अपनी कोशिशों के बारे में बताया। उन्होंने बताया कि किस तरह वह अखबारों में छपते रहे और दैनिक जागरण से जुड़े। त्रिपाठी ने प्रिंट मीडिया से टीवी की यात्रा के बारे में भी बताया।

त्रिपाठी ने बताया कि टीवी के दौरान ही मैंने फिल्म के बारे में सोचा था। मैंने 1996 फूलन देवी पर बहुत काम किया था। रेड एंड ब्लड डे बेहमई लिख रहा था। वरिष्ठ पत्रकार आलोक तोमर जो अब इस दुनिया में नहीं हैं के निर्देश पर कभी चंबल के इलाके में गया था। वहां रिसर्च किया, काफी कुछ नोट किया था। सोचा कि जिंदगी जब फुर्सत देगी तब इस कोई कहानी लिखूंगा, फिल्म बनाऊंगा। 2000 के आसपास की बात है, एक मैगजीन में एक आर्टिकल क्या जानकारी छपी थी कि मैंने जो जानकारी जुटाकर रखी थी, कहानी सोची थी, उस पर तो फिल्म बन रही है ‘पान सिंह तोमर’। तब मैंने तय किया मैं मुंबई जाऊं। इसी के बाद ‘अतिथि तुम कब जाओगे’, फिर प्लान बी बना और मैं किताब लिखने लगा। हो सकता है कभी मैं बनारस के घाट पर मैं संत बना दिखाई दूं। मैं कुछ न कुछ करता रहना चाहता हूँ। बस घुटने जवाब न दें। दिमाग ठीक रहे। मैं मनोज राजन त्रिपाठी की तलाश करता रहता हूँ।

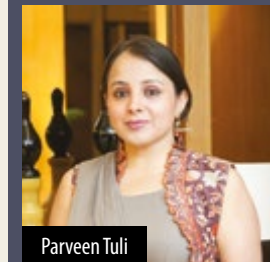
कोठारी का अगला सवाल था कि मैं CODE काकोरी की कहानी उजागर नहीं करना चाहती पर, CODE काकोरी में काकोरी बहुत कम है, मैं आपसे ही जानना चाहती हूँ कि क्या है CODE, क्या है काकोरी? त्रिपाठी का उत्तर था कि युवा पीढ़ी को अगर काकोरी कांड के बारे में बताना है तो उसे केवल यह कहने से काम नहीं चलेगा कि 1925 में वहां खजाना लूटा गया था। ऐसे बताने पर वह कहेगी, सानू की? उन्होंने संक्षेप में साल 1921 में घटे कबाब वाकिफ के



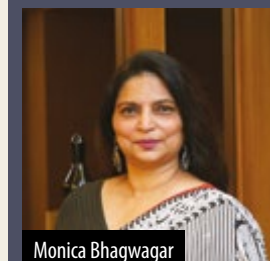
Priyanka Kothari



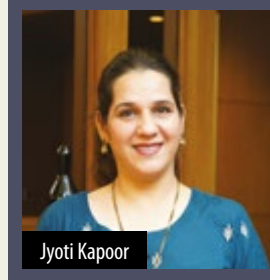
Mohini Berry



Parveen Tuli



Monica Bhagwagar



Jyoti Kapoor



Manoj Rajan Tripathi

बारे में बताया। त्रिपाठी ने कहा कि गवर्नर हरकोर्ट बटलर को नवाब कासिम ने खाने पर बुलाया और जब कबाब परोसे गए तो वे बहुत सख्त थे। वह डिनर छोड़कर जाने लगा। रकाबदारों ने उड़द की दाल की जगह पपीते को मिलाकर गिलावटी कबाब बनाया। उसे ही काकोरी कबाब कहा जाता है। त्रिपाठी ने इसके बाद 1925 में घटे ऐतिहासिक काकोरी कांड का विस्तार से जिक्र किया। उन्होंने बताया कि काकोरी सबसे बड़ा पटाखा सप्लायर है। चिकन का कपड़ा भी वहीं से सबसे अधिक मात्रा में आता है। काकोरी नाम से एक खास दशहरी आम है और मार्स से भी काकोरी का नाम जुड़ा हुआ है। वहां कलंदरी दरगाह है। मेरी कहानी 2021 में शुरू होती है। यहां सारे कैरेक्टर के नाम पुराने समय से मिलते हैं और उस समय के हथियार और उस समय की घटनाओं से जुड़ती हैं। आखिर 2021 का 1925 से क्या ताल्लुक है इसकी खोजबीन कोड से शुरू होती है। इस उपन्यास में कबाब, क्रिएटर, कलंदर, माउजर, इंस्टा, फेसबुक, टैटू, हिंदुस्तान रिपब्लिकन पार्टी और इंस्पेक्टर अशफाक उल्ला बिस्मिल जैसे लोग भी मिलेंगे। मैंने आज को अतीत से जोड़ा है ताकि नई पीढ़ी जुड़ सके। आगे की कहानी जानने के लिए उपन्यास को पढ़ा जाना चाहिए।

यह पूछे जाने पर कि क्या आपको क्राइम थ्रिलर पसंद हैं? त्रिपाठी का उत्तर था, हां। लेकिन जब भी आप किसी मिस्ट्री में जाते हैं, तो आपको जिज्ञासा होगी। मैं हंसाते-गुदगुदाते हुए थ्रिलर लिखता हूँ। काकोरी में ढेरों भाषाएं हैं। उन्होंने कई डायलॉग भी सुनाया। त्रिपाठी ने उपन्यास लेखन से जुड़ा अनुभव भी बताया और इस सवाल का भी उत्तर दिया कि लेखक की प्राथमिकता क्या है कि उसे पुरस्कार मिले या उसके लेखन पर वेब सीरीज बने। त्रिपाठी ने श्रोताओं के सवालों के उत्तर देने के साथ ही कई गीत भी सुनाए। अहसास वूमेन ज्योति कपूर और मोनिका भगवागर की भी सक्रिय भूमिका थी। आयोजकों की ओर से रेडिसन ब्लू की मोहिनी बेरी ने स्मृति चिन्ह प्रदान किया।

अहसास वूमेन के सौजन्य से आयोजित कलम नागपुर के प्रायोजक हैं श्री सीमेंट। हॉस्पिटैलिटी पार्टनर होटल रेडिसन ब्लू नागपुर और मीडिया पार्टनर लोकमत का सहयोग मिला।



The audience interacts with the guest



# आजादी आंदोलन में जनजातीय क्षेत्र का योगदान अप्रतिम: तुहिन ए सिन्हा

“बिरसा मुंडा मेरी बारहवीं पुस्तक है। जब आप अनेक विषयों पर लिख लेते हैं तो आप अपनी आंतरिक यात्रा शुरू करते हैं।” यह कहना है लेखक तुहिन ए सिन्हा का। वे प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की ओर से आयोजित ‘कलम’ फरीदाबाद में बोल रहे थे। आयोजकों की ओर से ह्यूमेन फाउंडेशन की श्वेता अग्रवाल ने अतिथियों का स्वागत किया और फाउंडेशन के कार्यक्रमों की चर्चा की। अतिथि वक्ता सिन्हा का परिचय देते हुए उन्होंने बताया कि आप बेस्टसेलिंग लेखक, पटकथा लेखक और राजनीतिज्ञ हैं। नई विधाओं के प्रयोग की अपनी मनमौजी आदत के चलते आपको देश के बेहद लोकप्रिय लेखकों में शुमार किया जाता है। आपकी ग्यारह से अधिक पुस्तकें प्रकाशित हैं, जो अपने विषय और शैली के चलते बेहद लोकप्रिय हैं। संवादकर्ता रमी निरंजन देसाई का परिचय देते हुए अग्रवाल ने बताया कि जानीमानी लेखक, स्तंभकार और मानवविज्ञानी देसाई किंग्स कॉलेज लंदन की पूर्व छात्र हैं और आपने एंथ्रोपोलॉजी ऑफ रिलीजन एंड थिओलॉजी में डिग्री ले रखी है। आप वर्तमान में इंडिया फाउंडेशन में एक विशिष्ट फेलो हैं।

सिन्हा ने बातचीत की शुरुआत ही फरीदाबाद की तारीफ से की। उन्होंने कहा कि यहां आकर बहुत खुशी मिलती है। दिल्ली से बाहर आते ही भीड़भाड़ भरे माहौल से दूर एक सुकून मिलता है। 2006 में भारतीय प्रकाशन उद्योग एक तरह से जब खुल रहा था, तब हमारी पीढ़ी के तमाम लेखक, जो लेखक नहीं बनना चाहते थे, पर बाई-डिफाल्ट लेखक बन गए। कुछ नहीं कर रहे होते तो लिख लेते हैं और जब वहां सफलता मिलती है तो और भी किताबें लाते हैं। मेरी पहली पुस्तक शहरी प्यार पर थी। फिर मैंने बहुविध विषयों पर लेखन को एक चुनौती के तौर पर लिया। लेकिन उस समय भी ऐतिहासिक विषय पर लिखने के बारे में नहीं सोचा था। मैं यह कह सकता हूं कि 2014 से हमारे सोचने के नजरिये में बदलाव आया है। खास कर आजादी का 75वां वर्ष है, जिसमें प्रधानमंत्री का भी विजन है कि जिन्होंने आजादी के लिए अपनी अहम भूमिका निभाई है और उन्हें महत्त्व नहीं मिला है, उनकी कहानी जनता तक, छोटे शहरों, गांव तक पहुंचा सकते हैं।

सिन्हा ने कहा कि बिरसा मुंडा का चरित्र इसलिए भी महत्वपूर्ण हो जाता है कि जिस शहर में मैं बड़ा हुआ हूं, वहां एक बिरसा चौक, एक बिरसा नगर, और बिरसा मुंडा का जो आंदोलन स्थल था वह शायद मेरे घर से अस्सी-सौ किलोमीटर की दूरी पर है। लेकिन दुख की बात यह है कि शुरुआती दिनों में, या स्कूल के दिनों में जब यह जानने की जिज्ञासा होती थी कि बिरसा मुंडा कौन हैं,



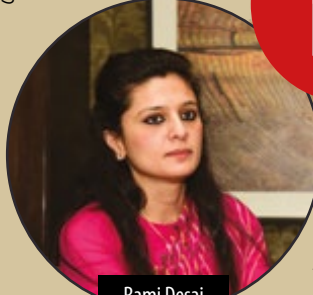
Amit Bohra, Rajshri, Deeksha Bohra and Suyash Gupta



Rachna Bhola Yamini



Tuhin A. Sinha



Rami Desai



Shweta Aggarwal

उनकी कहानी, जीवनी क्या है, तो वह खोज अधूरी रह जाती थी। उनके बारे में कोई प्राथमिक, प्रमाणिक जानकारी बहुत सीमित होती थी। चाहे वीर सावरकर हों या बिरसा मुंडा हों, ऐसे बहुत से ऐतिहासिक नायक, जिनका योगदान स्वतंत्रता आंदोलन में, हमारे सामाजिक, राष्ट्रीय जागरण में तो बहुत रहा है, पर उन्हें लगातार अनदेखा किया गया। बिरसा मुंडा किताब, हमारे ऐसे किरदार, महानायक को उनका वह स्थान दिलाने का प्रयास है, जिसके वे हकदार हैं। देसाई ने पूर्वोत्तर के जनजातीय क्षेत्र में अपने दशक भर से अधिक के काम के दौरान प्राथमिक स्रोतों से हासिल होने वाली जानकारी की अड़चनों का जिक्र करते हुए कहा कि मैं समझ सकती हूं कि तुहिन को अपने इस काम के दौरान कितनी मुश्किलें आई होंगी। उन्होंने तुहिन की तारीफ करते हुए कहा कि उन्होंने लेखकों के लिए एक मानक स्थापित किया है।

देसाई के एक सवाल के उत्तर में सिन्हा ने कहा है कि आजादी आंदोलन में जनजातीय क्षेत्र के योगदान को याद किया जाना चाहिए। यह सभी लोग कहते हैं कि आजादी का पहला आंदोलन 1857 में हुआ, पर सच यह है कि उससे बहुत पहले से जनजातीय क्षेत्र में ऐसे आंदोलन होते रहे, जिन्होंने मुख्यधारा के आंदोलनों को एक दिशा दी। उनका कहना है कि बिरसा मुंडा ने अपनी निजी फौज को न केवल संगठित किया, बल्कि मेरा मानना है कि संभव है सुभाष चंद्र बोस ने भी आजाद हिंद फौज की प्रेरणा बिरसा से ली होगी। देसाई ने जनजातीय क्षेत्र की अपनी व्यवस्था और जमीन, जंगल को भगवान मानने की उनकी सोच का जिक्र किया और अंग्रेज और मिशनरी के हस्तक्षेप का उल्लेख किया, तो सिन्हा ने अंग्रेजों के सांस्कृतिक हस्तक्षेप का उल्लेख किया और बताया कि कैसे बिरसा मुंडा 11 साल की उम्र में ईसाई बने और महज चार साल के भीतर वह समझ गए कि यह एक ट्रैप है। जो मिशनरी आदिवासियों को ईसाई बना रही थी, वही जमींदारों की भी सहायता कर रही थी।

सिन्हा ने धर्मांतरण से जुड़े मसलों पर बिरसा मुंडा की सोच और सांस्कृतिक योगदान का उल्लेख करते हुए विस्तार से अपनी बात रखी और सभ्यता के विकास पर उसके प्रभाव की भी जिक्र किया। उन्होंने बताया कि अब बिरसा मुंडा पर बहुत काम हो रहा है। अब इस दिशा में इतना काम हो रहा कि दस साल पहले इसके बारे में सोचा नहीं जा सकता था। हिंदी अनुवादक रचना भोला यामिनी ने भी अपनी बात रखी। तुहिन ने प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन के काम की भी विस्तार से तारीफ की। अतिथि वक्ता सिन्हा और संवादकर्ता देसाई ने इस दौरान सवाल-जवाब सत्र में श्रोताओं जिज्ञासा का भी समाधान किया। आयोजकों की ओर से सिन्हा को सुयश ने और देसाई को अग्रवाल ने स्मृति चिन्ह प्रदान किए।

कलम फरीदाबाद के प्रायोजक हैं श्री सीमेंट। मीडिया पार्टनर दैनिक जागरण और ह्यूमेन फाउंडेशन का सहयोग मिला।





Kiran Manral

“Black coffee, black coffee and black coffee,” replied Kiran Manral, when asked about the three things she cannot live without. Manral is an author, blogger, social media influencer and a former journalist. As a child, she used to write stories on monsters, fairies and ghouls. Now she can effortlessly dabble in several genres — perhaps with the help of coffee! Her imagination knows no bounds; after all, she wrote prolifically on the English countryside without having visited it. Enid Blyton’s novels were enough to fuel her imagination. It was thus delightful for the audience to see her in conversation with Ruhi Walia Syal, **Ehsaas** Woman of Jalandhar, at a session of **The Write Circle** organised by **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**. Sonia Aggarwal, **Ehsaas** Woman of Jalandhar, introduced the speakers to the audience.

As Manral has proved, she can stick to her distinct style of writing irrespective of the subject. Her first novel, *The Reluctant Detective*, was full of humour while *The Face At The Window* was literary noir. She then went on to co-author a book on parenting called *Thirteen Steps to Bloody Good Parenting*. Manral equated parenting to being on a battlefield. “You hit the ground running, get bruised and you learn along the way. Every child is different, every parent is different. You just have to figure out what works best for you and your child. As they say, parenting is tap

## Do Not Sit Down To Write Without Standing Up To Live



Ruhi Walia Syal

dancing in a minefield.”

Syal and Manral discussed the status of women in India today. “Better socio-economic conditions in cities may offer urban women better lives than those living in rural areas, who still battle for basic rights. The plight of such women becomes newspaper reports. It is disturbing. Marital rape is still not recognised as a crime and the idea of consent remains unaddressed. Even today, a very high percentage of women quit work or are forced to compromise on their professional aspirations owing to the societal burdens of marriage and motherhood. Domestic and sexual violence have only increased since the pandemic. With less than adequate representation of women’s issues in Parliament, the status of women in India remains dismal.”

Manral spoke about her book, *Rising: 30 Women*





Sonia Aggarwal, Simran Paintal, Divya Kapoor Sardana, Praneet Bubber and Ruhi Walia Syal with Kiran Manral

*Who Changed India*, which evolved from her columns and writings driven by feminist thought. She was determined to include well-known personalities as well as less-famous women who had inspirational stories to tell. One of the chapters in the book is dedicated to renowned Punjabi novelist and poet Amrita Pritam. “What a powerful, powerful personality!” exclaimed Manral. “To be so unfettered in her love for Sahir Ludhianvi, so unabashed about it. What immense courage she had in that day and age. Can you imagine how people must have spoken about her? She left her husband for a man who didn’t even love her back in the same way. That courage and conviction for her own passion, whether or not it was reciprocated in its entirety, was incredible. In fact, courage, passion and conviction are the common denominators in all the women in my book.”

Manral urged every girl and woman to find their passion and ambition: something that matters to them above anything else and pushes them to greater heights. “Because we, as women, put ourselves last, our passions become our hobbies, our desires become things to be looked at in the intervals of our lives as mothers, wives and daughters,” she observed poignantly. The author, Anita Desai, remains Manral’s favourite out of the 30 women she writes about in *Rising*. Desai was a devoted mother who used to write only when her children were in school. For someone who refused to take on writing



Seema Sondhi



Ritika Mahajan



Nargis Sud



Adwaita Tiwari

assignments during summer vacations, Desai is extraordinary, given that she was shortlisted for the Booker Prize thrice. Urging mothers who are aspiring writers to not give up their dreams on account of family responsibilities, Manral said, “I come from a place of privilege where I don’t have to worry about food on the table or a roof over my head. I have an education and a supportive family, so I have no excuse to not be writing about the things I’m passionate about. I have no right to be wasting opportunities.”

Before moving on, Manral shared an interesting opinion on success and failure. “They are two sides of a wheel,” she said. “As the wheel turns, they follow one another. So, there is no point in being hung up on success or fearing failure. It weighs a person down.” The discussion concluded with a fun rapid-fire session with the author, during which Manral gave an important piece of advice to aspiring writers. “There is a wonderful quote by H.D. Thoreau: How vain of you to sit down to write when you haven’t stood up to live! There is a fair amount of life experience and reading that is needed to be able to write. If I wrote my books earlier, they would not have been the same books. Please live a rich life, and then start to write.”

*The Write Circle Jalandhar was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with Dainik Jagran, Radisson Jalandhar and with the support of Ehsaas Women of Jalandhar*

# Telling the Tale: The Journey of an Author



Kiran Manral



Zarqa Jain

Kiran Manral's authorial voice is a remarkably original one. Having worked at *The Asian Age*, *The Times of India* and *Cosmopolitan*, she went on to become a celebrated author and an independent research and media consultant who was shortlisted for the Femina Women Awards for Literary Contribution in 2017 and conferred the International Women's Day Award 2018 by the Government of India for excellence in the field of writing. **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** organised a special session of **The Write Circle** with Manral at the Radisson Blu in Ludhiana. Praneet Bubber, **Ehsaas** Woman of Amritsar and the Foundation's Honorary Convenor of Punjab Affairs, introduced Zarqa Jain, **Ehsaas** Woman of Ludhiana, as the moderator for the session.

While talking about her passion for writing, Manral reminisced about Enid Blyton's influence on her; the British children's writer had fuelled her zeal for creating something of her own. With her stories featuring goblins, tea and scones, she admitted that even though she was heavily influenced by the language and imagery of English literature, she realised early on that, much like everyone else, she too had her own stories inside her.

This realisation was, perhaps, even stronger on Manral's mother's part; the latter pushed Manral to be more than she already was. Even after establishing

herself as a noted journalist and juggling her personal and professional responsibilities, Manral was relentlessly goaded by her mother to become a writer. "It was only to get my mother off my back that I embarked on my literary career almost at the age of 40!" revealed Manral.

I believe it is important to have stories of women out there, and more stories need to be told from the woman's perspective. Even though women's writing is considered 'domestic', it is actually universal, as seemingly domestic themes have important societal implications

Even though she started later than others, Manral has written with an exuberance unlike any other. Having explored romance, horror, fiction, non-fiction, chick-lit and noir, it is clear that Manral's creative ambit is limitless. How is she able to do it with such panache? "Besides reading a wide range of books, it is also my career as a journalist that I have to thank for my versatility," she admitted. "In all my years of

journalistic training, I did the crime beat, business beat, women's issues, fashion and even a party column. I wrote it all. I must thank my journalistic years for my abilities."





Swastika Sobti



Anindita Chatterjee



Praneet Bubber

Despite their wide variety of genres, Manral's books mostly feature women as protagonists or are feminist in their themes. Manral pointed out that her choice to create women protagonists had nothing to do with her own gender. "I believe it is important to have stories of women out there, and more stories need to be told from the woman's perspective. Even though women's writing is considered 'domestic', it is actually universal, as seemingly domestic themes have important societal implications."

What does it mean to be a woman in India today? "To be a woman in India today is to know that you're not adequately represented in Parliament; that in corporate India women are paid much less than what men in the same positions are getting; and that women are still held back by violent crime, social evils and the absence of education," she responded. "A change will only occur when the mindset of India's predominantly patriarchal society changes."

As the conversation veered towards writing as a craft, Manral compared writing to 'riyaz'— the practice of doing something repeatedly, despite setbacks and mental blocks. "While reading and writing are both important for developing one's craft, I consider reading to be the better practice," said Manral. "But I must caution the audience against giving into fads; they must be selective about reading." Which authors inspire her, then? "Both P.G. Wodehouse and Stephen King have been my favourites; they've given me the best of both worlds," she

said. "Humour is always an important part of my literary diet. Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat* is the one book I would recommend to everyone."

In a round of questions from the audience, Manral conceded that marketing one's book is now of utmost importance in order to be able to stand out among all the

books being published every month.

But the best form of marketing, Manral pointed out, is still 'word of mouth', which becomes the ultimate catalyst behind a book's success.

Manral also feels that women today are far more comfortable drawing attention to themselves and to their work. "As women, we were taught to shrink because our parents thought that doing so would keep us safe," she said. "We internalised it and believed it was unseemly to draw attention to ourselves. I am so glad that this generation of women does not care about such nonsense." The discussion drew to a close with Manral talking about how the women of her generation find it difficult to talk about their work. "It takes a lot of rewiring to get over that and to say that 'this is what I do, it is

important and I'll talk about it, so you better listen, and if you don't want to, then unfollow me!" exclaimed the spirited writer. The session concluded with Bubber delivering a vote of thanks and Pallavi Verma felicitating Manral on behalf of the Foundation.

**The Write Circle Ludhiana was presented by  
Shree Cement Ltd With the support of  
Ehsaas Women of Ludhiana**

As women, we were taught to shrink because our parents thought that doing so would keep us safe. We internalised it and believed it was unseemly to draw attention to ourselves. I am so glad that this generation of women does not care about such nonsense. The women of my generation find it difficult to talk about their work. It takes a lot of rewiring to get over that and to say, 'this is what I do, it is important and I'll talk about it, so you better listen, and if you don't want to, then unfollow me'

# The Women Who Changed India

“Women who defy the constraints of family, society or relationships are achievers.” That’s why Kiran Manral identifies with the author Anita Desai, as she, too, made a career out of writing even though she was also a devoted mother. “Relationships are a gamble. Men who allow women to outshine them are very rare. Powerful women who cross boundaries seemingly pose a threat to society at large. Hence, they become victims of physical, verbal and mental assault”, said Manral, who was discussing her book, *Rising: 30 Women Who Changed India*, at a session of **The Write Circle** in Chandigarh organised by **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**. *Rising* is a collection of stories of inspirational women who make an impact on other women’s lives. Manral wanted to bring out their stories to inspire and encourage young women in India. She was in conversation with Sharmita Bhinder, **Ehsaas** Woman of Chandigarh.

Manral is an author, social media influencer, blogger and a former journalist with *The Asian Age* and *The Times of India*. *The Reluctant Detective* was her debut novel, after which she wrote compelling books like *Once Upon A Crush*, *All Aboard*, *Saving Maya*, *Missing*, *Presumed Dead*, and *The Face At The Window*. Although she dabbles in various genres, her style of writing is both unique and easy to read.

How did Manral decide which women made the cut to be in *Rising*? “The book has stories of 30 contemporary Indian women,” said Manral. “Each story explores what shaped these women, the challenges they faced, their influences, the choices they had to make, the passion they followed and how they negotiated with society or their circumstances. These stories tell you how they broke the boundaries that were meant to confine them.”

Manral agreed that the list of women she had to choose from was immense, but she could only select 30. But she wanted to maintain a balance in the stories featured in the book. “I was determined that the book would not just



Sharmita Bhinder



Kiran Manral



Manisha Jain



Shalu Goel



Shahida



Anshul Gupta

be about famous personalities whose presence in a book can make it a bestseller overnight,” said Manral. “My book is about courage, conviction and passion. As such, the stories in it should be about women who are courageous and inspirational, and not just famous. These women, who inspire me everyday, are all from different spheres of life, be it politics, sports, cinema, science or the performing arts. In my book, I have tried to present an empathetic account of these women, without judgement or opinion.”

The author also talked about some of the work she had done in her writing career, right from the time when she was a journalist to the time she became an accomplished author. “Even when I took a break from work, I kept working,” said Manral. “I found blogging in those days, and did pretty well as a blogger.” The event concluded with *Dainik Bhaskar*’s Shahida felicitating the guest and the speaker, and Manisha Jain, **Ehsaas** Woman of Chandigarh, thanking Manral and Bhinder on behalf of the Foundation.

*The Write Circle Chandigarh was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with Taj Chandigarh and with the support of Ehsaas Women of Chandigarh*



Akansha Arora



Vandita Dharni



Suneet Madaan



Vivek Atray



# Women on the Rise



Sonakshi Kundra



Kiran Manral

Kiran Manral's books have always spanned genres with grace and ease, and include titles such as *Saving Maya*, which was shortlisted for the Saboteur Awards UK. Moreover, her novels *The Face At The Window* and *Missing, Presumed Dead* were both long-listed for the Jio MAMI Word to Screen. **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** organised a session of **The Write Circle** with Manral in Amritsar, which also concluded the author's four-day tour of different cities in Punjab. Praneet Bubber, **Ehsaas** Woman of Amritsar, welcomed the guest and the audience on behalf of the Foundation, and Sonakshi Kundra deftly moderated the session, centering the conversation around Manral's latest work, *Rising: 30 Women Who Changed India*.

How did Manral choose the 30 women who are featured in her book? "There can never be a comprehensive list of all the women who have changed India," admitted Manral. "The idea was to maintain a perfect balance between well-known women and those who had not remained as much in public memory, while also making sure that all the women featured belonged to diverse backgrounds and different generations." Manral added that she hoped her book, which recounts the lives of luminaries such as Sushma Swaraj, Mahasweta Devi, Lata Mangeshkar and Rekha, among others, would inspire young women to nurture their passions with a single-minded determination in order to achieve greater heights.

Who was the woman who inspired Manral? "My mother," replied Manral. "From being raised by a cruel stepmother and then losing her husband after only a few years of marriage, my mother had a tough life. She raised me as a single mother. I have my inspiration right at home". Her book is, perhaps, a celebration of this '*nari shakti*', a recognition of women who are striving to make a place for themselves in deeply patriarchal institutions and emerge stronger. She did, however, concede that circumstances can only change when women are valued equally as their male counterparts in different spaces,



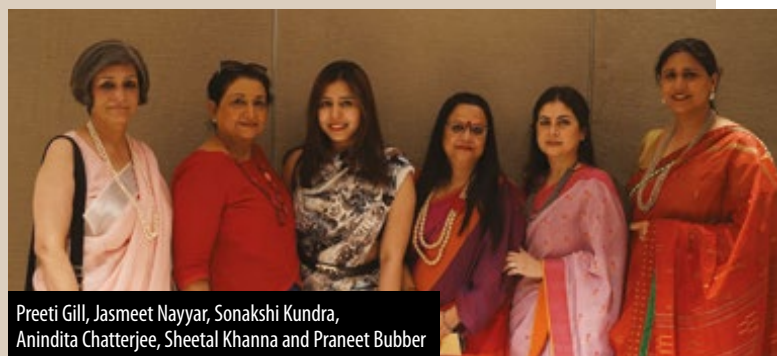
Paramveer Singh

including their homes. "School systems have an important role to play in sensitising boys and helping them grow up to be responsible, respectful and respectable citizens," said Manral.

When asked about her definition of leisure as a woman juggling several roles, Manral stated that for her, much like Virginia Woolf, leisure is having a room of her own, because women are expected to be constantly doing for others. "Moreover, women are also hardwired to feel guilty for desiring 'me time'," she said. "Women need to overcome the shame in wanting time exclusively for themselves. By being consciously feminist and by acknowledging the battles fought by generations of women who came before them, young women, too, can contribute to changing predominant societal narratives and expectations."

Manral concluded the discussion with a keen observation: "Women are a force to reckon with and they always find their own way". After a Q&A session with the audience, Sheetal Khanna, **Ehsaas** Woman of Amritsar, gave a vote of thanks to the author and the audience. Jasmeet Nayyar felicitated Manral on behalf of the Foundation.

*The Write Circle Amritsar was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with Taj Swarna, Dainik Jagran and with the support of Ehsaas Women of Amritsar*



Preeti Gill, Jasmeet Nayyar, Sonakshi Kundra, Anindita Chatterjee, Sheetal Khanna and Praneet Bubber



Sachidananda Joshi

Shilpa Agarwal

## जीवन की आपाधापी में छोटी-छोटी खुशियों को संजोना जरूरी: सच्चिदानंद जोशी

कि ये दे दो, वो दे दो, बल्कि यह मांगो कि हे ईश्वर आप जो भी मुझे देना चाहते हैं, वह दे दो।" जोशी ने कार्यक्रम में युवाओं की उपस्थिति को ध्यान में रखते हुए अपने कॉलेज के जीवन में इंजीनियर न बन पाने की कहानी बताई कि किस तरह उनको प्वाइंट फाइव परसैंट से साइंस में एडमिशन नहीं मिला। बाद में उन्होंने आर्ट्स माध्यम से पढ़ाई करने, नाटक से अपने लगाव और उसकी कमाई से अपनी पसंद के कपड़े खरीदने के बारे में बताया। उन्होंने यह भी बताया कि किस तरह उनके इस लगाव के बीच उनके पिताजी के दोस्तों ने कहा कि जब तक नौकरी में हो लड़के की सरकारी नौकरी लगवा दो, भले ही चपरासी की नौकरी ही लग जाए। मुझे पता चला कि आलम यह है तो फिर मैंने नौकरी करनी शुरू की। शुरू के दो सालों में मैंने तीन-तीन नौकरियां बदलीं, उसके बाद जब लय मिला तो दस-दस साल के तीन कार्यकाल किए।

'जिंदगी का बोनस' किताब की इक्कीस कहानियों की चर्चा करते हुए अग्रवाल ने डॉ जोशी से उनकी सबसे प्रिय कहानी के बारे में जानना चाहा, तो जोशी ने कहा कि हम सब बड़े लक्ष्य की ओर भागने लगे हैं। किसी को नौकरी, पैसा, पद चाहिए, ऐसे में हम छोटी-छोटी खुशियों को भूलने लगे हैं। हो सकता है कि आप एयरपोर्ट जा रहे हों और रास्ते में टैक्सी वाले ने आपसे ऐसी बात कही हो, जिससे आपका भ्रमना हुआ मूड भी ठीक हो गया हो। पर आप एयरपोर्ट पहुंच कर उसे भूल गए हों। आपको बड़ी-बड़ी खुशियों और बड़े लक्ष्यों के बीच उन छोटे पलों और खुशियों को याद रखना चाहिए। पिछले छ-सात सालों में हवाई यात्राओं के दौरान मिलने वाले वक्त में मैंने इन बातों को नोट किया और यह किताब आ गई। जोशी ने बताया कि इस सीरीज की पांचवीं किताब आने वाली है। जिंदगी का यह बोनस हमारी जिंदगी के बोनस को संजोने की बात करता है। यह न तो कहानी है, न यात्रा वृत्तांत है, न संस्मरण है। यह वाकई जिंदगी का बोनस है। जोशी ने अपनी पुस्तक 'कुछ अल्प विराम' और 'पल पल की पहचान' की भी चर्चा की और एक छात्र से मां की बिंदी और उससे जुड़े वर्तनी पर हुए रोचक संवाद को भी साझा किया। अग्रवाल ने जोशी की कई कहानियों और पात्रों की चर्चा करते हुए महाभारत के प्रसंग की चर्चा की और उनसे किसी कहानी पाठ का अनुरोध किया। जोशी ने कोरोना काल के दौरान उपजे मनोभावों को कर्ण की बहादुरी, योग्यता और कुंठा से जोड़ने की वजह बताई और कुछ कहानियों का पाठ भी किया। उन्होंने सवाल-जवाब के सत्र में भी हिस्सा लिया और नई पीढ़ी से जुड़ी अपनी उम्मीदों को भी साझा किया। जोशी ने अपनी पहली नौकरी में मिले 690 रुपए में दोस्तों के लिए खर्चे 640 रुपए की घटना को याद करते हुए बताया कि आज जब वे भारत सरकार की सबसे बड़ी तनखाह वाली श्रेणी में

कहते हैं न कि कोशिश करने वालों की कभी हार नहीं होती। इसलिए आप कोशिश करें और परिणाम की चिंता न करें।" यह कहना है डॉ सच्चिदानंद जोशी का, जो प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की ओर से आयोजित कलम मेरठ में बतौर अतिथि वक्ता बोल रहे थे। कार्यक्रम के आरंभ में आयोजकों की ओर से जोशी का स्वागत और परिचय अहसास वूमेन अंशु मेहरा ने किया। उन्होंने बताया कि डॉ जोशी संस्कृति, पत्रकारिता, समाज, शिक्षा और अध्ययन के क्षेत्र से जुड़े हैं। आपने रंगमंच, टेलीविजन तथा साहित्य के क्षेत्र में भी अपनी पहचान बनाई है। संप्रेषण कौशल, व्यक्तित्व विकास, लैंगिक समानता, सामाजिक सरोकार, समरसता, सांस्कृतिक धरोहर, चिंतन, व्याख्यान और लेखन जैसे विषयों में दक्षता के साथ आपने कथा, कविता, नाटक, ललित लेख और व्यंग्य भी लिखे हैं। आपकी दस से अधिक पुस्तकें प्रकाशित हो चुकी हैं। आपने नाट्य लेखन के साथ पच्चीस से अधिक नाटकों का निर्देशन किया है। मराठी और अंग्रेजी से कई कृतियों के अनुवाद के अलावा आपने प्रकाशन विभाग के लिए प्रधानमंत्री नरेन्द्र मोदी के भाषणों का संपादन भी किया। शैक्षणिक संस्थाओं से लगाव और चित्रांकन से प्रेम आपकी पहचान है। आप लंबे समय तक माखनलाल चतुर्वेदी राष्ट्रीय पत्रकारिता विश्वविद्यालय के कुलसचिव तथा कुशाभाऊ ठाकरे पत्रकारिता और जनसंचार विश्वविद्यालय के कुलपति रहे हैं। कविता-संग्रह 'मध्यांतर', पत्रकारिता इतिहास पर कुछ पुस्तकों के अलावा 'सच्चिदानंद जोशी की लोकप्रिय कहानियां' तथा 'कुछ अल्प विराम' काफी लोकप्रिय रहे हैं। फिलहाल आप इंदिरा गांधी राष्ट्रीय कला केंद्र नई दिल्ली के सदस्य सचिव हैं।



Monica Jain



Manish Jain



Anshu Mehra



Garima Mithal



Malvika Joshi



Sanjeev Sharma



Alka Choudhary



Rajinder Singh

मेहरा ने जोशी से संवाद के लिए लेखक, पत्रकार, संपादक, ट्रेवल और फूड समीक्षक, सोशल मीडिया इन्फ्लुएंसर और योग प्रशिक्षक शिल्पा अग्रवाल को बुलाया। अग्रवाल ने जोशी की बहुमुखी प्रतिभा की चर्चा के साथ उनकी अब तक की यात्रा के बारे में पूछा। जोशी ने बताया, "मैंने कभी सोचा और प्लान नहीं किया। आपका ईश्वर में विश्वास हो या नहीं, पर कोई तो शक्ति, नियति है जो हमारा संचालन करती है। आप उसके सामने प्रार्थना भी करते होंगे, कुछ मांगते भी होंगे। हो सकता है, वह तथास्तु भी कह देते हों। मुझे किसी ने बताया कि जब आप ईश्वर से कुछ मांगेंगे तो तुम अपनी हैसियत से मांगोगे। हो सकता है ईश्वर की नजर में तुम्हारी पात्रता अधिक हो। इसलिए ईश्वर से ये मत मांगो

पिछले सात सालों से हैं, तब भी काम चल रहा है। कार्यक्रम में उपस्थित डॉ जोशी की सहधर्मिणी मालविका जोशी, जो स्वयं एक विदुषी, कवयित्री और रचनाकार हैं ने खुद की घटना सुनाई और जीवन में विश्वास, साथ और सहयोग के महत्व पर बल दिया। उन्होंने अपनी कुछ कविताएं भी सुनाई। कार्यक्रम के अंत में आयोजकों की ओर से अतिथि डॉ जोशी को राजिंदर सिंघल और संवादकर्ता अग्रवाल को डॉ अलका चौधरी ने स्मृति चिन्ह प्रदान किए।

अहसास वूमेन के सौजन्य से आयोजित कलम मेरठ के प्रायोजक हैं श्री सीमेंट।  
हॉस्पिटैलिटी पार्टनर होटल क्रिस्टल पैलेस और मीडिया पार्टनर हैं दैनिक जागरण।



# कविता कोई फार्मूलाबद्ध काम नहीं है: गुंजन श्री



Gunjan Shree

कविता कोई दैनिक क्रिया नहीं है, न ही आप इसे दिवस विशेष की तरह मना सकते हैं, बल्कि यह एक सतत प्रक्रिया है, जो निरंतर आपके भीतर चलती है और समय मांगती है।" यह कहना है रचनाकार गुंजन श्री का। वे प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन और मसि इंक की ओर से आयोजित कार्यक्रम आखर बिहार में बतौर अतिथि वक्ता बोल रहे थे। कार्यक्रम की शुरुआत आराधना प्रधान द्वारा अतिथियों के स्वागत हुई। उन्होंने अतिथि वक्ता गुंजन श्री का संक्षिप्त परिचय दिया और बताया कि के एम ठाकुर उर्फ गुंजन श्री सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी के क्षेत्र में काम कर रहे हैं। अब तक 500 से अधिक कविताएं, लघु कथा और साहित्यिक आलोचना पर लेख लिख चुके हैं। साहित्य चौपाड़ी, देसी बयाना, सखी-बहिनपा आदि से जुड़े हैं। काव्य संग्रह 'तरहती पर समय' उनकी दूसरी पुस्तक है। संवादकर्ता प्रिय रंजन झा शिक्षक होने के साथ ही मैथिली अध्येता हैं और रंगमंच एवं लेखन में सक्रिय हैं।



Priyanjan Jha

झा ने गुंजन श्री से उनके काम, शिक्षा दीक्षा और साहित्य से उनकी रुचि के बारे में पहला सवाल पूछा? श्री ने बताया कि मुझे साहित्यिक रुझान नौवीं और दसवीं में अपने बाबा की पुस्तकों से मिली। वे गीता प्रेस की पुस्तकें मंगाते थे। बाद में वेद प्रकाश शर्मा के उपन्यासों से लगाव हुआ। मेरे पिता भी पढ़ने के बहुत शौकीन रहे तो उन्हीं की किताबों को पढ़ते हुए साहित्य को समझा और जाना। पहली जो साहित्यिक कृति मैंने पढ़ी वह हजारी प्रसाद द्विवेदी की 'पुनर्नवा' थी। इस तरह मेरा साहित्य का सफर गल्प से शुरू हुआ और सहजता से गंभीर साहित्य तक जा पहुंचा।

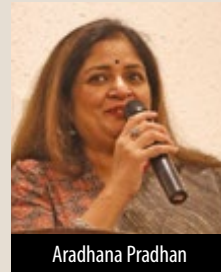
लेखन कर्म कैसे शुरू हुआ, अपनी इस यात्रा के बारे में बताएं? के उत्तर में श्री ने कहा कि साहित्य में सृजन यात्रा को छपने से जोड़कर देखा जाता है और उसे ही लेखक की उम्र मानते हैं। वर्ष 2011 में स्मारिका में पहली कविता छपी थी। लेकिन कविता को समझने में समय लगा। गंभीर लेखन और समझदारी 2016-2017 से आई। इससे पहले की कविताएं अलग थीं। कविता लिखकर उसे समझना, उसकी आलोचना जरूरी है। मुझमें कविता की समझ जो आई उसमें हरे कृष्ण झा का सबसे ज्यादा योगदान रहा।

मैथिली के समकालीन में कविता की समझदारी से जुड़े सवाल पर श्री ने विस्तार से अपनी बात कही। उन्होंने कहा कि हमारी उम्र के लोग कम कविता बूझते हैं। उन्होंने कहा कि कविता कोई दैनिक क्रिया नहीं है कि जब चाहा, कोई अवसर आया लिख दिया। हालांकि आज की पीढ़ी इसे ऐसे ही देखती है, जैसे ही कोई विशेष दिवस आया लिखने लगती है। मरद डे पर सोशल मीडिया पर लिखी जाने वाली कविताएं ही देखिए। इसलिए यह समझना होगा कि कविता कोई फार्मूलाबद्ध काम नहीं है कि जब चाहा लिख दिया। यह संवेदना की बात है। इसे बनने में समय लगता है। श्री ने अशोक चक्रधर का उल्लेख भी किया। उन्होंने गंगा की वंदना और उसकी स्तुति के बीच उसके यथार्थ का उल्लेख किया। उनका कहना है कि अगर कोई शोध छात्र पचास साल बाद पटना आता है तो क्या उसे उस समय की गंगा मिलेगी? आप देखिए मैथिली साहित्य में लोग आज भी उसी तरीके से लिख रहे हैं जैसे 100 साल पहले का लेखन था, जिसे हमें और इस पीढ़ी को बदलना है।

श्री ने कहा कि हमारी पीढ़ी के कवियों को हमारे समकालीनों को समकालीन समय के सवाल को पकड़ना होगा। समय के साथ और समय के पहले के भावों को पकड़ना होगा। एक सवाल के उत्तर में श्री ने कहा कि जब आप किसी कविता को

पढ़ते हैं तो यह देखिए कि कविता क्यों अच्छी लगी या क्यों अच्छी नहीं लगी, इससे ही आप कविता को समझ सकते हैं। यह एक निरंतर प्रक्रिया है। इसे समझने का एक सहज फार्मूला यह हो सकता है कि आप अपने वरिष्ठों को पढ़ते रहें और उन्हें समझते रहें। उन्होंने इस क्रम में अपने प्रिय कवियों का भी उल्लेख किया कि मुझे मंगरेश डबराल, विनोद शुक्ल, अज्ञेय आदि की कविता पसंद है। वहीं मैथिली में हरे कृष्ण झा, यात्री, अजीत आजाद, राजकमल चौधरी आदि पसंद हैं। इन्हें समझते हुए आपके अंदर कविता की समझ आ सकती है।

साहित्य लेखन पर उन्होंने कहा कि इस क्षेत्र में आगे बढ़ने के लिए धैर्य की



Aradhana Pradhan



Kathakar Ashok

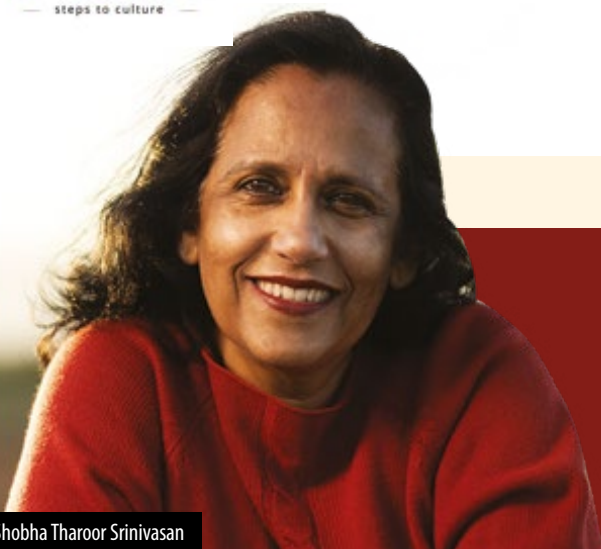


Umesh Mishra

आवश्यकता है। आलोचना को समझना होगा। प्रसिद्ध कवि रांके ने कहा है कि लेखक की जिम्मेदारी है कि वह पाठक की मनोस्थिति को विकसित करे। आजकल के साहित्य की विवेचना पर उन्होंने कहा कि साहित्य में आलोचना बहुत महत्वपूर्ण योगदान रखती है, आलोचना ही लेखक की रचना को महान बनती है। पाठकीय क्रिया, आलोचना, समीक्षा सब अलग अलग चीजें हैं लेकिन आज सभी लोग सभी कुछ करने लगे हैं। आज के समय में समकालीन युवा लेखक आत्ममुग्धा से ग्रसित हैं और यह सब सोशल मीडिया के कारण तेजी से बढ़ा है।

मैथिली के भविष्य पर बात करते हुए उन्होंने कहा कि मुझे इस भाषा का भविष्य बहुत उज्ज्वल नजर आ रहा है। आप देखिए हिंदी, अंग्रेजी को छोड़कर एकमात्र मैथिली भाषा ही है जिसमें अभी 300 से ज्यादा लेखक सक्रिय हैं। उन्होंने अपनी आगामी योजनाओं से जुड़े सवाल पर कहा कि फिलहाल कविता ही लिख रहा हूँ बाकी एक कथा है जो प्रेम प्रसंग पर है, उसे भी लिखना है। उपन्यास भी लिखना है लेकिन अभी संभव नहीं है। कार्यक्रम के दौरान उन्होंने अपनी एक कविता 'जानकी' और हरे कृष्ण झा की कविता का पाठ किया। आयोजकों की ओर से धन्यवाद ज्ञापन मसि इंक की संस्थापक और निदेशक आराधना प्रधान ने किया। कार्यक्रम में कथाकार अशोक, रामानंद झा रमन, उमेश मिश्रा, विवेकानंद झा, धीरेंद्र कुमार झा आदि गणमान्य उपस्थित थे।

आखर बिहार के प्रायोजक हैं श्री सीमेंट, मसि इंक का सहयोग मिला।



Shobha Tharoor Srinivasan

# Sweet Stories of the Wild

Shobha Tharoor Srinivasan is known for being many things—poet, translator, voice-over artist, editor—but her biggest distinction, perhaps, is that of being an award-winning author of children's books. **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, under its **Muskaan** initiative and in association with **Education for All Trust**, organised an interactive online session with Srinivasan. Sumitra Ray, Student Programmes Advisor of the Foundation, delivered the welcome speech. In conversation with Srinivasan was Damayanti Mukherjee, educationist and principal of Modern High School for Girls, Kolkata. Their discussion was centred on Srinivasan's book *Parvati the Elephant's Very Important Day*.

Did the name 'Tharoor' have any role to play in Srinivasan choosing a literary career? "For the greater part of my childhood, reading and writing were the principal sources of entertainment," said Srinivasan, whose brother is Shashi Tharoor, the parliamentarian and former diplomat known for being a wordsmith. "The Tharoor family's inclination towards developing a literary bent of mind did indeed help me foster an interest in writing. However, when I was a child, it was witnessing one of my works being published that acted as a catalyst for me embarking on a literary career."

Why did she choose an elephant as the protagonist



Damayanti Mukherjee

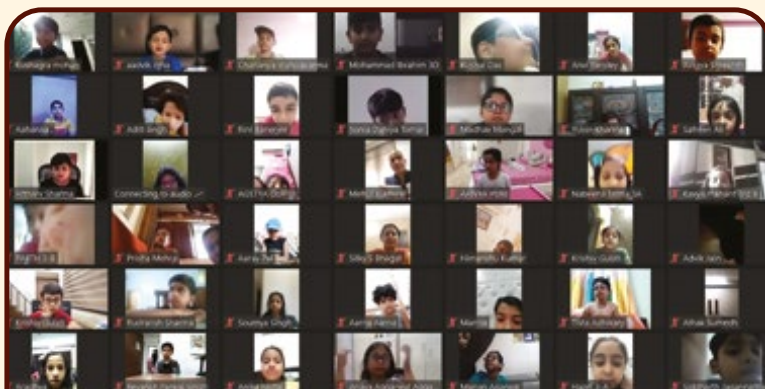


Sumitra Ray

of her book? "The elephant is an important animal in Kerala," said Srinivasan, who hails from the state. "Other than the fact that they are known for their intelligence and gentle nature, elephants are also facing the threat of extinction. By anthropomorphising the animal, I wanted to encourage children to develop empathy towards animals. I wanted to share the idea that animals think, feel and imagine like us. They have the same fears and wonders. I felt the need to write because what children read today is going to inform their decisions and thinking as adults."

The naming of the protagonist also involved some deliberation. Srinivasan pointed out that while she wanted to introduce young readers to the temple traditions of Kerala, she also wanted to make a statement about reversing gender roles. "Pooram is a temple festival celebrating a female god, but it is usually male elephants that are chosen to carry the replica of the deities on their heads. Thus, by choosing a female elephant (who is also named after a Hindu goddess) I wanted to imply that one's gender doesn't have to stand in the way of one's ambition."

Srinivasan also remarked that illustrations in children's books are of utmost importance. "Children who cannot yet read can still follow the story by looking at the pictures. But most importantly, my books are not just for children. My intention has always been to create books that can help both young and adult readers ponder important issues." The session concluded with a Q&A round with children in the virtual audience and a vote of thanks from Ray on behalf of the Foundation.



This session of **Muskaan** was presented by  
Shree Cement Ltd in association  
with HarperCollins



# The Winner Takes All

Winning a Grammy is no mean feat; but winning two Grammys is a monumental achievement. Ricky Kej, however, has done exactly that. The renowned composer won his second Grammy for Best New Age Album at the 64th Annual Grammy Awards in April for *Divine Tides*, on which he collaborated with Stewart Copeland of the iconic rock band, The Police. The album features artists from different backgrounds and nationalities, and is a tribute to the splendour and resilience of the natural world. A unique mixture of nine songs and eight music videos shot around the world, *Divine Tides* makes for a stunning audio-visual experience.

It was only fitting that a Bangalore boy, who has embodied and represented the excellence of Indian music on such an immense global stage, and who is also the creative brain behind **Prabha Khaitan Foundation's** official caller tune, is shown the kind of appreciation and gratitude he deserves. To this end, two star-studded receptions were hosted for Kej in London and Kolkata. They were attended by illustrious guests from various walks of life.

Here are a few glimpses from the two occasions, filled with laughter, warmth and conversations even as they spanned two different continents.



## ITC Royal Bengal, Kolkata



Ricky Kej plays the piano with Aavya M. Bhutoria



Ricky Kej





Nayantara Palchoudhuri, Usha Uthup and Ricky Kej



Jaya Seal and Ricky Kej



Debanjan Chakrabarti and Tanusree Shankar with Ricky Kej



Gaurav Soneja, General Manager of ITC Royal Bengal, and Divya



Sangeeta Khemka and Pradeep Khemka with Ricky Kej



Manjari Maheshwari Bhutoria, Sundeep Bhutoria and Ricky Kej



Koneenica Banerjee and Shuvaprasanna



Indrajit Bhalotia and Mrs. Bhalotia



Malika Varma and Manisha Rampuria



Vivek Gupta and Ruchika Gupta



Zha Liyou, Consul General of China in Kolkata



Pronab Dasgupta and Sharad Khaitan



Ricky Kej and Nitin Bahl





Siddharth Rampuria



Rajat Dalmia



Bithi Chattopadhyay



Melinda Pavek (Consul General of the US in Kolkata) and Ricky Kej



Ricky Kej with Nick Low, Deputy High Commissioner – East & Northeast India, British Deputy High Commission Kolkata



Adrian Pratt, Amy Pratt and Yemi Odanye



Nilufer Bose-Archment with Amy Pratt



Sumeet Suri and Roma Suri



Commodore Rituraj Sahu (Naval Officer-in-Charge, West Bengal) and Sangeeta Sahu



Glimpses of the spread on offer at the Kolkata reception hosted at the ITC Royal Bengal







Nispal Singh Rane



Deepak Menezes



Tabassum Iqbal



Alkesh Agarwal



Smita Roychowdhury and Ricky Kej



Usha Agarwal and Santosh Agarwal



Ricky Kej with Ruchi and Aditya Makharia



Sajeda Momin and Hassan Iqbal

Rupali Kahlon and Major General S.S.  
Kahlon, GOC, Sub Bengal Area

Shilpi Malhotra



Ricky Kej and Samit Malhotra



Lavanya plays the saxophone

A few more glimpses into the delectable  
fare served up at the ITC Royal Bengal



## 51 Buckingham Gate, London



Ricky Kej, Kishwar Desai and Amish Tripathi



Harshvardhan Neotia, Sundeep Bhutoria, Suhel Seth and Amish Tripathi



Lord Meghnad Desai and Shom Datta



Pooja Maru, Shivani Bhandari, Sundeep Bhutoria, Manjari Maheshwari Bhutoria and Sangeeta Datta





Amish Tripathi, Harshvardhan Neotia, Paroma Neotia, Ricky Kej and Madhu Neotia



Ricky Kej and Nischita Shetty



Ricky Kej, Sundeep Bhutoria, Mehnavaz Avari and Shivani Bhandari



# Never Stop The Music



Ricky Kej



What does it mean to be an award-winning, modern musician and an environmentalist with a global audience in a post-pandemic world? Manisha Jain, editor of *Prabha*, caught up with the two-time Grammy-winning composer, Ricky Kej, for an exclusive interview on creativity, inspiration, navigating a pandemic as a performer, and transcending geographical borders through music

2022 has been a momentous year for you. You won a Grammy Award for Best New Age Album for *Divine Tides*. This is, of course, your second Grammy; you won in 2015 for *Winds of Samsara*. Given the overwhelming impact of the Grammy Awards in popular imagination and culture across generations, how do these wins feel?

It feels amazing to be recognised for my work in the industry. This is because the kind of music I make is not commercial music. It is music made for social impact and for the environment. For me, music is not just about entertainment; it is about spreading a message of awareness and advocacy. In the light of this, platforms and awards act as a medium through which I can spread a positive message further and wider, and encourage more people to join me in the journey.



Vinnie Kakkar, National Advisor of Prabha Khaitan Foundation, with Ricky Kej



### Would you call winning a Grammy the highest form of validation?

Yes, of course. At the end of the day, musically speaking, the Grammy is an award for musical excellence; it is not concerned about why the music was made or what it was made for. As such, winning a Grammy is indeed a huge source of validation of a musician's abilities.

collaborator, and a really strong one — someone who could help me compose the album and give it shape. All in all, I needed a really good musician. Therefore, I thought about reaching for the stars and approaching somebody amazing. That's when I reached out to Stewart Copeland — popularly remembered as a drummer of the band The Police — who has been my childhood idol. Throughout my school years, I had two posters of him

on my wall. I reached out to him and, to my surprise, he said that he would join me on this album! He loved the music and the ideas that I put forth, and then we spent about a year making the album, which was released in June last year.

Thereafter, *Divine Tides* was nominated for the Grammys. Even at this point, I had never met Stewart in person. We had called each other hundreds of times over Zoom and Skype, exchanged innumerable WhatsApp messages and emails, and shared countless remote recording sessions, but I had never met him in the flesh. The first time I met Stewart in person was seven days before the Grammy Awards. He had a concert in Nashville, Tennessee, for which he had invited me. I

went to Nashville and met him at the after-party. It was a very emotional experience for me. I got to hug him! Not only was I meeting my childhood idol, but also someone with whom I had spent a year working on an album that earned a Grammy nomination. After that, we flew together to Los Angeles, where we spent a lot of time at his place. Then we went to Las Vegas for the Grammys, and ended up winning.

### That sounds so wonderful! Talking about concerts, could you tell me about a show you did that was iconic for you?

My most surreal moment was the first time I played at the United Nations General Assembly in New York. I had to go and rehearse for the concert a day before the event at the venue itself. I'm very glad we did that; had we not, I would have been very nervous about entering the hall on the day of the concert itself. When you're on that stage, you start wondering about how every single world leader since the United Nations came into effect has stood on that very stage. You think about every single peace treaty,



Ricky Kej meets the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi

In my opinion, awards can be treated in two ways. They can just be sources of vanity, or they can be treated as a means to do bigger and better things. The latter applies to me. It opens up more doors for the future. So that's the idea behind winning awards for me.

### What was it like working with Stewart Copeland on *Divine Tides*?

I have to go back a little bit to answer this question. You see, I had always wanted to compose a follow-up album to the Grammy-winning 2015 album *Winds of Samsara*. But my travelling and touring schedule has truly been relentless. For instance, in 2019, I performed 70 concerts in about 13 countries. That will give you an idea of the average number of concerts I've been doing. There was no time for me to sit down in a focused manner and create a new album or write new music. But I had a couple of ideas in my head.

Then, in 2020, the pandemic hit, and we were all forced to be indoors. That's when I started working on the album. While at it, I really wanted to work with a



every single war cry, everything that has taken place in those particular rooms. I remember how, during the sound check, I was really grateful that we had been given the opportunity to rehearse a day ahead; that equipped me to walk onto the same stage on the day of the concert feeling perfectly alright. I was very nervous during the entire rehearsal!

**You were born in the United States, and you moved to India when you were eight. Tell us a little bit about how your identity as an Indian musician with a global presence has impacted your music.**

I was born in America, but my family moved to Bangalore in India when I was eight years old. Hence, for the last 32 years, I've been living in Bangalore. Having lived in India for most of my life, everything about me is Indian. When I think about and compose music, I think from an Indian perspective. That's why my music is extremely Indian, no matter what I do. Even if I try not to make my music Indian, it innately becomes Indian. Take, for example, an Indian who knows how to make really good pasta. They would get the best ingredients, check out the best recipes online and make the best pasta. But just before it reaches the table, chilli powder and turmeric powder will likely get mixed into it. Thus, the Indian-ness will always find its way in. The same applies to my music. Even if I'm making a rock song, there is always that Indian element in it.

Moreover, in India, Bollywood music is extremely popular. Bollywood music is also popular all over the world. For instance, people from all over the world would come to see Bollywood singers in concert. But these spectators are the Indian diaspora. As such, the musicians haven't actually broken cultural barriers. Their audience does not extend beyond the diaspora. The people who have actually broken cultural barriers are the classical musicians. Look at Pandit Ravi Shankar, Pandit Vishwa Mohan Bhatt, Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, Ustad Alla Rakha or even Anoushka Shankar. These are the musicians who have actually broken down cultural barriers. I've been to a few concerts of Pandit Ravi Shankar while he was alive. I've also attended concerts by Ustad Zakir Hussain in America. It was amazing to see the demographic of

the audience in the hall, often very representative of the demographic of people residing in that particular city. If the city has, say, a population that is 60% Caucasian, 30% African American and 10% Asian, those percentages will also be reflected in the concert hall. That is why classical musicians need to be lauded far more than musicians from Bollywood — the former, unlike the latter, have actually broken cultural barriers. As such, they are the ones who actually carry Indian culture forward. Thanks to them, people who normally would not be exposed to Indian music are now listening to it.



Ricky Kej with A.R. Rahman and Pandit Vishwa Mohan Bhatt

I learned very early in my career that if you are in Bollywood, you're never going to be able to break cultural barriers, because only the Indian population is going to be listening to your music. This is one reason why I decided to stay completely away from Bollywood and just do my own thing.

**While we are on the subject of you being from India, it must be pointed out that your family has a deep connection with Rajasthan. Where is your native place, and have you visited it? If not, do you plan to visit soon? Most importantly, how does it feel to be in Rajasthan right now?**

My father's side of the family is from Churu. Thus, we have a strong connection with Rajasthan. They lived in Churu for many years; then, the previous generation moved to Jaipur. My father donated our ancestral home in Jaipur to the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), which has built a temple at the site.

I used to have a strong connection with Jaipur and with Marwari culture, especially when my grandmother was alive and used to live with us. She used to speak only in Marwari. My dad, on the other hand, was brought up in Yangon in Myanmar, and he was there till his first year of medical college. Then, during that year, the military coup in Myanmar took place. My father decided to leave the country. His entire family, including his father, moved to India. He carried on with his medical studies at Maulana Azad Medical College. That is the history of my family's connection with Rajasthan. They have strong roots when it comes to the state.



**You hail from a family of medical practitioners, and you studied dentistry yourself. How did the shift towards music happen, and what kind of role has your family played in furthering your ambitions as a musician?**

My father used to have a large collection of cassettes and LPs when I was growing up. These were not just what was considered pop music of the time, such as Michael Jackson, the Bee Gees or soundtracks of Indian films. The

He probably knew that I was going to be a musician for the rest of my life. Even so, he was furious that I did not want to study for a professional degree. He always said that music is a hobby, not a profession. After a lot of argument, my father and I reached an understanding: if I got the degree, he would never question my decisions again. So, while I was studying dentistry in college from 9 to 5, I was doing music from 6pm to about 2am in the morning. That is how my professional musical career started.



A 19-year-old Ricky Kej in his first studio

I was already doing commercials for television and radio. I was composing music for various audio-visual presentations. I was already quite successful musically. Therefore, by my third or fourth year of college, my parents knew that I was not going to be a dentist. They knew I would be a musician. And they were okay with that. The only thing they were concerned about was that I would drop out of college. I did not do that, because I had committed to finishing my degree. I got my degree and gave it to my father. I told him, "This is for you," and I became a full-time musician.

collection also contained a lot of world music. He had records from different parts of the world, some of which were very obscure. I spent my childhood listening to a lot of music from all over the world. While my older brother, my classmates and friends were into visual media like cartoons and video games, I was obsessed with my music system. Hence, my room was the only one without a television, because I just loved listening to music all day long and reading the liner notes on all the albums. I had also created a game — a challenge of sorts — where I tried to find similar musicians, or the same musicians with different albums. That is how a lot of my education on culture took place — by listening to music and understanding different musical cultures and forms from all over the world.

We also had a small piano and a guitar at home that nobody played. I tried to play them, and taught myself. Later, as I grew older, I decided to get a formal education in music. I got invested in Indian classical music. It was only when I was in the 12th grade that I had to make a decision about what I would do for the rest of my life. My father already knew how strongly I felt about music.



The premiere of the Indian natural history documentary, *Wild Karnataka*, for which Ricky Kej composed the music, takes place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York

**As an environmentalist, your commitment to the wellbeing of the planet is very well known. How do your passions for music and the environment run parallelly? How powerful a tool is music in furthering advocacy for conservation?**

I have always been an environmentalist along with being a musician. While I was growing up in a small North Carolina town called Roanoke Rapids, our house, surrounded by wooded areas, would see a lot of creepy crawlies coming in. I am talking about snakes, lizards,



chameleons, frogs and all sorts of exotic insects. Snakes, in fact, would slither into our home quite often. My parents and other well-wishers almost trained me to run away from these creatures if I saw them, or to just step on them and kill them. My question to them would always be: why do we have to step on them and kill them? These creatures obviously have some kind of purpose in this world. If they didn't, why would they exist?

Now, of course, we know that every single species, no matter how insignificant they seem, plays a very important role in the ecosystem that keeps all of us alive. That ecological balance is essential for humans to live. These questions used to keep me up at night, and I would look into the eyes of these animals and think of them as my brothers and sisters. Later on, I began to realise that music and nature are deeply connected. Music, after all, started off as sounds from nature — the sounds of animals, birds, and later on from humans using natural materials like bamboo to fashion flutes out of.

Boxes of seeds, bowls of water and animal skin served as drums and percussion instruments. It is only for the last 1,000 years or so that music has actually become academic, complete with notes, scales and *ragas*. If you look at indigenous or tribal populations anywhere in the world, be it in India or elsewhere, music is, at its most fundamental form, an expression of nature. They sing songs about nature, about pleasing nature and about coexisting with nature. That is why, for me, music and nature are one.

**The pandemic had a huge impact on the livelihoods of many musicians and creative artists. What are your thoughts on its effect on the music industry? How did you, as a musician, deal with it over the past two years?**

The pandemic had a huge effect on musicians because those who make music, especially in India, have been depending almost entirely on live concerts for revenue. This is because revenue earned from streaming platforms is very low in India. Moreover, the royalty system in India unfortunately does not work the way it works elsewhere in the world. Owing to the weakness of this mechanism when it comes to royalties, musicians are deeply affected. This also affects the ecosystem of the entire music industry, which includes event companies and sound rental companies.

At the time, musicians needed to understand two things. One, they needed to pivot to doing online work and understanding how to embrace technology for remote recording, as composers could no longer rely on anyone else if they needed to record a song. It was no longer conducive for a musician to go to a studio to record in person. They needed to have their own recording setups. As such, they had to understand technology, including how to record themselves and be completely *atma nirbhar*. If musicians were not self-sufficient, they would just disappear. They also needed to understand that if they were not online, they were invisible.

Musicians thus started understanding the importance of social media and of creating a strong digital presence.

Ricky Kej performs live at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Chennai





Ricky Kej performs at the Live at ProtoVillage Anantapur event. ProtoVillage at Anantapur is a self-sustaining, self-reliant, cashless village in Andhra Pradesh



They also had to be online constantly. If you weren't, then when things would pick up again, you would hit rock bottom. Being constantly visible also ensures that people remember you. It was a very confusing time. But now, I'm grateful that things opened up. I just finished a tour in the US. I'm going to be doing another tour in the African continent, and then in Europe.

#### **How did you spend your time in the last two years?**

I did a lot of online concerts. I collaborated on an online concert of *Divine Tides* with Stewart.

Doing an online concert is like a double-edged sword. The advantage, obviously, is that you can collaborate with musicians all over the world; working with a musician living in New York or in Senegal becomes no different than collaborating with a musician living down the road. Second, the audience is a global one.

The second advantage can also be counted as a disadvantage. Let's say you have an album with about 12 songs. You go to Sweden to perform, then to Finland, to the US and then to Australia. In each place, you

can perform the same show. But if you do an online concert, then that's that; you can't do that show again. All the jokes that you make in between the songs, you cannot repeat. Even when it comes to the songs, people will say, "you've already performed this song in your online concert, perform something new". In a nutshell, an online concert makes a live performance of yours accessible to all; that is, of course, a disadvantage. Moreover, in a live concert, you, as a performer, are feeding off the energy of the audience; in an online concert, you are looking straight into the lens of a camera, so you have no idea what's going on on the other side. I did several successful online concerts, but I stopped because they became too boring for me.

#### **You are an inspiration to many. But who were your sources of musical inspiration, both among your peers and while you were growing up?**

Among my greatest musical inspirations in the Indian subcontinent has been Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, simply because of the effect his voice had on people. I remember one incident when I was in the fifth or sixth



grade that helped me understand that I was going to be a musician for the rest of my life. I was listening to a song by Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan called *Taa Deem* on our Walkman. I remember tearing up while listening to it. It was an overwhelming feeling because the song was so beautiful. That is when I decided that I want to have this effect on other people, and this is what I want to do with my life.

Then there was another Pakistani band called Junoon. The vocalist was a newer version of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, but they had electric guitars, a bass guitar, drums, and they wore jeans on stage and sang. That showed me that one does not have to stick to a genre. At the end of the day, one just has to make good music. Whether you want to throw in an electric guitar, a keyboard, Sufi vocals or a Celtic choir, all that matters is that you put together elements that sound good and have a profound effect on people.

Another huge influence on me was Pandit Ravi Shankar. He single handedly popularised Indian music all over the world. He was playing his own, traditional music — he wasn't trying to pick up a guitar, and the people he would collaborate with would be doing their own music as well. When Ravi Shankar collaborated with someone else, there was mutual respect and admiration between the musicians, and the collaboration was a proper 50-50 in terms of musical composition. On the contrary, in present times, Indian music is just used as a sprinkling over western music, such as a small section of a sitar or a tanpura, or a small tabla roll in between. This reminds me why I admired Ravi Shankar so much. In terms of music in the film industry, A.R. Rahman has had an influence on everybody in India.

**What would your advice to aspiring musicians be,**

**especially Indian artists who wish to make it to the global stage?**

First and foremost, do not seek validation from the film industry. The latter is so deeply integrated with the music industry in India, that the first question you will be asked if you tell anyone you're a composer is "kaunsa film (which film have you worked for)?" Second, make songs that you feel strongly about. Don't wait for somebody else to ask you to write a song. This is another product of the Bollywood culture; composers wait to get a brief on

the basis of which they create a song. They are told, "this is the script, now make a song". Or they are told, "there are five villains walking into a bar and there's a girl dancing over there; make a song about that". As a result, almost every song coming out of the film industry is either a love song or an item song. What young musicians need to do is think about what they are passionate about. Even if it is the love you feel for your partner, write about that. Write about the problems that you face, the things you want to celebrate in life. Write about nature, about the country, about vacations you've taken. Don't wait for somebody else to ask you to make music.

## RAPID FIRE WITH RICKY

**Your favourite Indian band and international band?**

Indian Ocean, from India. When it comes to the international arena, I pick The Police, for sure.

**A recent movie or show you would recommend?**

I recently watched the show *Pam & Tommy*, which is about Pamela Anderson and Tommy Lee. When I started watching it, I thought it was going to be one of those tabloid type shows which delve into the lives of people. But by the end of the show, one ends up really feeling for the two characters.

**A book you would recommend?**

To be honest, I don't read much. My favourite book is *The Lord of the Rings*.

**What would you have been if you were not a musician? A dentist, perhaps?**

Definitely not. This is a difficult question to answer because I have never had a second thought about being a musician. It has always been music for me.

**The caller tune you have composed for Prabha Khaitan Foundation is greatly appreciated every time we meet a new associate. How was the experience of working with the Foundation for you?**

It was a huge honour. I consider myself a part of the Prabha Khaitan family. But even beyond that, every time I'm associated with the Foundation, I am deeply honoured, mainly because of what it stands for. It is about the arts and true artists, and about people who are working at the grassroots level. It is also about people who have honed their skills for many, many years and are the kind of artists we would want to associate with. In these ways, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** is doing a stellar job of not only supporting these artists but bringing them into the mainstream.



# The Music of



*“Yoga is like music: the rhythm of the body, the melody of the mind and the harmony of the soul create the symphony of life.”*

— B.K.S. Iyengar

The 11th of 13 children, the late B.K.S. Iyengar was born a sickly child in a family plagued by poverty and malnutrition. A series of ailments in childhood left him unable to hold his head up straight. If he tried bending down to touch his toes, his fingers would only reach his knees. It was during his teens that Iyengar turned to yoga as a last resort to improve his health. In a journey fraught with physical pain and hardships, he mastered the 200 *asanas* of yoga and went on to become one of the greatest exponents of yoga in the world.

Tracing the origin of yoga takes us back more than 5,000 years to northern India. The very first mention of the word appears in the sacred text of the Rig Veda, an ancient collection of *mantras* and hymns used by priests in the Vedic age. Refining and developing yoga, Indian monks documented their practices and

beliefs in the Upanishads, a series of religious and philosophical treatises. However, it is the sage Patanjali who is commonly regarded as the Father of Modern Yoga because he compiled the existing teachings of the Indian monks in a format easy to follow and understand. His work, the *Yoga Sutras*, is a classical yoga text comprising 196 verses or *sutras*.

“Yoga is so much more than a simple exercise. Derived from the Sanskrit word *yuj*, meaning “to yoke” or “to unite”, yoga is believed to unify the body, mind and spirit, giving rise to inner peace and harmony. It enhances mental health, calming the mind and reducing stress levels while also improving cardiovascular health, balance, flexibility and muscle strength

Yoga is so much more than a simple exercise. Patanjali defined it as the “restriction of the fluctuations of consciousness”. Derived from the Sanskrit word *yuj*, meaning “to yoke” or “to unite”, yoga is believed to unify the body, mind and spirit, giving rise to inner peace and harmony. It enhances mental health, calming the mind and reducing stress levels while also improving cardiovascular health, balance, flexibility and muscle strength.

Often credited with introducing yoga to the West, Swami Vivekananda described the practice as the “science of the mind”. He started organising conferences on the topic and translating Sanskrit texts on yoga into English soon after going to the US for the first

time in 1893. His demonstration of yoga at the 1893 Chicago World Fair piqued the interest of many, consequently leading to Indian *yogis* being welcomed and appreciated in the West.

Today, people of all ages and abilities across the world have adopted yoga in various forms. In 2014, in his address at the 69th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, “Yoga is an invaluable gift of India’s ancient tradition. It embodies unity of mind and body; thought and action; restraint and fulfilment; harmony between man and nature; a holistic approach to health and well-being. It is not about exercise but to discover the sense of oneness with yourself, the world and nature. Changing our lifestyle and creating consciousness, it can help us deal with climate change. Let us work towards adopting an International Yoga Day”.

Modi proposed celebrating June 21 as Yoga Day every year because it marks the summer solstice in the northern hemisphere and is often regarded as auspicious. After the proposal received resounding support from 175 member states, the United Nations recognised June 21 as the International Day of Yoga on December 11, 2014. The first edition of Yoga Day celebrated at Rajpath in New Delhi in 2015 created two Guinness World Records—one for a record 35,985 people participating in a single yoga session at a single venue, and the other for the highest number of nationalities (84) to have participated in the event.

According to the UN, “The essence of yoga is balance—not just balance within the body or that between the mind and the body, but also balance in the human relationship with the world. Yoga emphasises the values of mindfulness, moderation, discipline and perseverance. When applied to communities and societies, yoga offers a path for sustainable living. Yoga can be an important instrument in the collective quest of humanity for promoting sustainable lifestyle in

ARTWORK BY **SUDIPTA KUNDU**

harmony with planet Earth”. In line with this thought, the theme for the International Day of Yoga 2022 is ‘Yoga for Humanity’. Given that 2022 also marks 75 years of India’s independence, this year’s Yoga Day celebrations in India will be a part of the government’s Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav campaign. The day will be observed at 75 prominent spots in the country, with the prime minister performing yoga on the premises of the Mysuru Palace.

India’s gift of yoga has the power to connect millions through health, happiness and peace. As we build back better after the pandemic and usher in happier times, let’s lead by example and spread the music of yoga. Because, as Iyengar once said, “Example is all, and when example expresses truth, it has the power to transform others.”



# A Dream For Growth

A cherished initiative of **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** is **Ehsaas**, which stands on the shoulders of several inspirational women all across India. These women, known as **Ehsaas Women**, not only carry the baton of curating and organizing the Foundation's events, but are also regularly involved in social outreach programmes and their own entrepreneurial ventures and passion projects. When the pandemic brought life to a standstill in early 2020, the **Ehsaas Women**, along with our other associates, worked relentlessly and with remarkable alacrity to take the Foundation's events online almost overnight. Now, with life slowly returning to normal, they are back to organising offline events with aplomb.

To celebrate the joy of an expanding **Ehsaas** family, the Foundation is delighted to welcome two exemplary **Ehsaas Women** from the Dehradun chapter. In the coming weeks, they will be launching various initiatives of the Foundation in their city, starting with a panel discussion.

Let us now meet our new **Ehsaas Women** of Dehradun!

## POOJA KHANNA

Pooja Khanna's journey as an adult started in Delhi as a banker's wife. She then got the opportunity to work as an event manager with none other than the former Miss India, national swimming champion, actor and well-known social worker, Nafisa Ali Sodhi, and her husband, the famous polo player and Arjuna Awardee, Colonel R.S. 'Pickles' Sodhi.

However, as luck would have it, Khanna and her family had to move back to Dehradun, where she jumped into an entrepreneurial venture that involved the export of hand-crafted products. This venture helped Khanna understand the nuances of craftsmanship; she went on to promote Indian crafts on an international platform. Travelling to different countries across the world proved to be an immense learning experience for Khanna; it helped her understand the business.

In 2014, life gave Khanna another opportunity, one in which she could further her entrepreneurial skills in the hospitality business. She went on to build and run a successful homestay for international travellers. Furthermore, in 2017, she started personality development classes for younger children to enhance their communication skills and to inculcate in them the habit of reading. Today, Khanna says that she feels a sense of achievement and contentment knowing that she has been able to contribute to bringing about a change in the lives of these children. As she says, "A modern woman has different, colourful shades to her life; I feel I have tried to fill these shades with some courage and a lot of hard work."



## POOJA PODDAR MARWAH

Pooja Poddar Marwah is an Indian author, columnist, blogger, corporate counsellor, speaker, content creator and child psychologist. Anyone who has ever said that women are only defined by a single role has certainly never met the award-winning writer, who began her authorial journey just two years ago.

At the tender age of 15, Marwah was India's ambassador to the United States under the Rotary Exchange Banner. She hasn't looked back since. Educated at Dehradun's prestigious Welham Girls' School, Marwah completed her Bachelor's degree in Commerce from Sydenham College, Mumbai, while simultaneously pursuing a diploma in creative writing from the Symbiosis Institute, Pune, to fuel her passion for writing. She writes across several mediums; her articles have appeared in *The Times of India*, the *Daily Pioneer*, the *Garhwal Post* and other publications.

Marwah is now working on two screenplays for OTT platforms; her genres range from contemporary fiction and young adult literature to self-help books and non-fiction.

Alongside writing, Marwah is currently in the process of launching *The Soaring Eaglet*, a newspaper dedicated to empowering children with happy and age-appropriate news. She creates inspiring content for some of the leading content creators of the world, and is passionate about golf, music and dancing the salsa. Marwah's favourite quote is, "Life is too short to live according to another's expectation of you." If that piques your interest, please visit her website at [www.poojapoddarmarwah.com!](http://www.poojapoddarmarwah.com!)





# It's Time For Everyone To Play

The United Nations's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledges the crucial role that sport can play in sustainable development; UN Member States at the highest level have acknowledged "the growing contribution of sport to the realization of development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contributions it makes to the empowerment of women and of young people, individuals and communities as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives". There is much to gain from sport beyond the obvious physical and mental benefits of fitness; it encourages participation by all, thereby enhancing social and economic inclusion. Moreover, sport can help empower individuals with an important sense of self-reliance. **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** has long shared the UN's vision with regard to sport, and has taken concrete steps towards promoting it as a part of development, peace and community-building. In association with the Foundation, the renowned golf course of the Tollygunge Club, in Kolkata, had donned a new avatar; one that encourages women and children from underprivileged communities to take up golf, a sport long viewed as the bastion of the affluent.







**Prabha Khaitan Foundation's** initiatives have helped numerous children all over India follow their dreams. Together, the Foundation and the Tollygunge Club recently organised the 17th edition of the Inter School Golf Championship, and have promoted golf and other sporting activities for the underprivileged. Our latest branding association with the Foundation involving our renowned golf academy will go even further in making golf accessible to women and children who aren't as fortunate as us. I thank the Foundation for working to make our society better.



— Indrajeet Bhalotia







Roopa Pai



# A Universe Of Children's Stories

"I grew up with the feeling that only British children had fun and my childhood was no fun at all because I wasn't doing what they were doing." These were the words of Roopa Pai, who believes that there is a dearth of books with Indian children as central characters. With this concern in mind, she wrote *Taranauts*, India's first fantasy-adventure book series. **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, under its **Muskaan** initiative and alongside **Education for All Trust**, organised an interactive session with Pai to discuss her dream project. Cathy Tongper, the Foundation's Overseas Affairs Officer, welcomed Pai to the session.

Pai is a renowned children's author, journalist and computer engineer. Some of her bestselling books are popular not just with children but with adults as well. She has also co-authored *Made In India: A Memoir* with the iconic model and actor, Milind Soman. Pai is currently translating the poems of acclaimed Kannada poet and Padma Shri awardee K.S. Nissar Ahmed into English. As the director and co-founder of Bangalore Walks, Pai organises history and heritage walks for children across Karnataka.

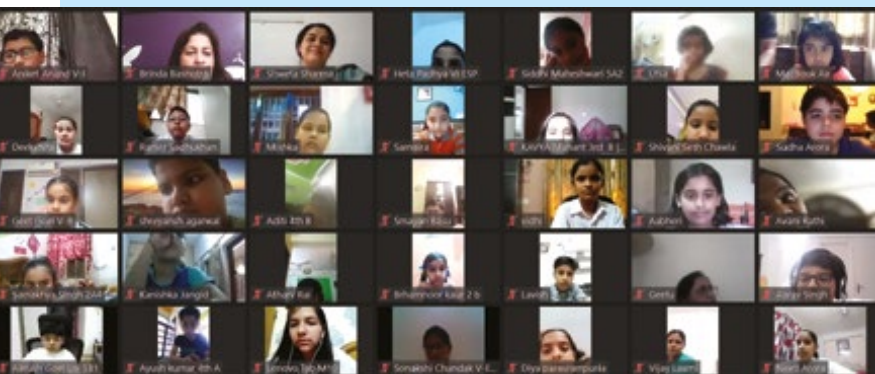
Pai began by talking about the legendary British author of children's books, Enid Blyton, whose works taught her the art of storytelling. "Through her books, I learned how to tell a good story, how to pack it with interesting plot twists, put in fun dialogue, and weave a moral within the story without writing it down

at the end," she said. As a teenager she came across *Target*, a magazine for children, that inspired her to write children's stories. "I realised I was so sucked into Enid Blyton's work that I was unable to look around and see how lucky I was," said Pai. "I want children to appreciate their own heritage, history, languages, culture, festivals, people and their lives, all of which are enriched by the many diversities of our country."

As a children's author, Pai is aware of the importance of keeping children engaged. So, she took her young audience on an exciting journey through a presentation. She introduced them to the *Taranauts* universe, Mythia, which comprises eight realms: Shyn, Dazl, Lustr, Glo, Syntilla, Shimr, Sparkl and Glytr. Its sun, Tara, is made of 32 stars. Mythia has an endless ocean called Dariya, and the ill-humoured volcano, Kay Laas. Shoon Ya, the mighty, benevolent king of Mythia, resides atop this mountain while his evil twin brother Shaap Azur remains captive in the fiery lands under the ocean bed. When Shaap Azur escapes, all hell breaks loose. He seizes every star and leaves all eight realms in darkness. When three children, Zarpa, Zvala and Tufan, rescue the innocent people of Mythia, they are endowed with special powers.

Pai spoke about the eight books from the *Taranauts* series: *The Quest for the Shyn Emeralds*, *The Riddle of the Lustr Sapphires*, *The Secret of the Sparkl Amethysts*, *The Race for the Glo Rubies*, *The Mystery of the Syntilla Silvers*, *The Key to the Shimr Citrines*, *Search for the Glytr Turquoises* and *The Magic of the Dazl Corals*. Her young audience was visibly excited to learn about these books. The session concluded with the author and the children in the audience interacting and solving puzzles, riddles and jumbled words together. Mansi Kamdar Shah thanked Pai on behalf of the Foundation.

*This session was presented by Shree Cement Ltd*



# From Mysticism to Mayhem: India's Spirituality and Politics

**M**akarand R. Paranjape needs no introduction. Apart from being a prolific poet, novelist and columnist, he has also been a professor of English at Jawaharlal Nehru University and the Director of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla. **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** organised a session of **The Write Circle** with Paranjape, where he was in conversation with Jayesh Sharma, an oncological surgeon and literary enthusiast. The speakers were introduced to the audience by Aanchal Garcha, **Ehsaas** Woman of Raipur.



Jayesh Sharma

Makarand R. Paranjape



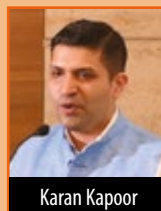
Shrishti Trivedi, Aanchal Garcha, Kalpana Chaudhary and Kirti Kirdatt



Neha Sharma, Meena Sapre and Sowmya Raghubeer

Even though he has a doctorate in English literature, why did mysticism become a predominant theme in Paranjape's works, and also the topic of his dissertation? "During my time at the Illinois Urbana-Champaign, I had access to Indian writing in English that was centred on mysticism," said Paranjape. "The discovery of *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita* by Mahendranath Gupta and the works of Sri Aurobindo inspired me to take up mysticism as the subject of my research. India has wanted to understand mysticism from the very beginning: who we are, what the nature of life on Earth is. This is what the Rig Veda, the oldest text, is also about."

Elaborating further on India's relationship with mysticism, Paranjape pointed out that Indian civilisation has always been self-centric; it has revolved around understanding the self as the subject. Having read the works of poets such as W.B. Yeats and T.S. Eliot during the course of his research, Paranjape realised that both the East and the West were united in their quest for spirituality to redeem themselves from the wasteland of modernity. "This exploration," he said, "has also yielded answers; I have concluded that India is the civilization which found spirituality, and is the custodian of it and is the place



Karan Kapoor



Shilpi Goel



Rahul Kumar Singh

where it is still available".

The discussion on mysticism culminated with the author affirming that consciousness is infinite and has dimensions beyond the corporeal body. "We are infinite in our capacity to be creative," he said. "We take on bodies from time to time." What about India's political atmosphere? What kind of nationalism is desirable in India? "Nationalism should be robust," he said. "Nationalists should be capable of handling criticism and standing up for its values without feeling threatened by dissenting opinions. However, citizens today are losing their ability to think critically, thus making them susceptible to the various flawed narratives around them. This, in turn, is creating a society where freedom of expression and opinion is threatened at every instance."

The session concluded with Shrishti Trivedi, **Ehsaas** Woman of Raipur, delivering the vote of thanks and Rahul Kumar Singh felicitating Paranjape on behalf of the Foundation.

*The Write Circle Raipur was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with Hyatt Raipur and with the support of **Ehsaas** Women of Raipur*



# IN OUR NEXT ISSUE



Abhigyan Prakash



Barkha Dutt



Chandrachur Ghose



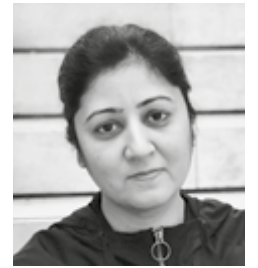
Chitra Desai



Gorakh Prasad  
'Mastana'



Feyago



Hemali Sodhi



Irshad Kamil



Kalyan Singh  
Shekhawat



Kiran Manral



Koral Dasgupta



Makarand R.  
Paranjape



Neelima  
Dalmia Adhar



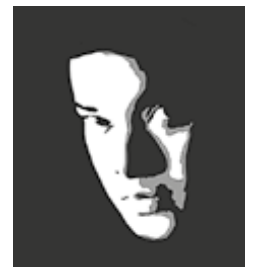
Pandit Vishwa  
Mohan Bhatt



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Srinivasan



Sourav Burman

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