

Nari Chetana – New feminisms, New discourses

Feminism is not just limited to gender archetypes, it is about achieving the dreams of a woman, it is about the liberation of thoughts hitherto weighed down by societal obligations, it is about the individuality in writing. These thoughts resonated at the Jain University Campus on 07 July 2015, when Sahitya Akademi conducted a programme “Nari Chetana: Discourses on New Feminism and New Responses – Literary Readings and Interactions” in association with Jain University.

The programme witnessed multilingual lectures ranging from topics such as Vedic woman philosopher Ghosha and her prowess in the art of debate to the era of Kamala Das and confessional poetry. Fouzia Choudhary, an Urdu Scholar, spoke about the need to evaluate the social norms binding women, from the right perspective, “We should not be militant in mood while addressing these issues, we need to initiate dialogues about what part of ‘ism’ we should occupy.” Anshu Johri, Hindi poet and author, stressed on feminism’s need for balance, “In the current social structure, the dos and don’ts of boys and girls differ. We need to be gender neutral.”

Vijaya Subbaraj, Kannada author and playwright, emphasised on the necessity to get rid of the clichés regarding feminism and placing things in context, “You can’t expect writers of yester age to come and defend themselves today. Accusing them for what they wrote or didn’t write doesn’t make any sense.” Anjum Hasan, poet and novelist, talked about the individuality of the author, “The fundamental value of being a writer is to be open ended. This may sound diplomatic or ambivalent when put in the feminist setting, but an author should have individuality. The individual voice is more authentic.” The programme concluded on the optimistic note that woman should be liberated, individually and at the societal level.