

Vice President's Secretariat

Language preservation and development must take the shape of a people's movement

Language is the lifeline of a culture: VP

The Vice President advocates the need for people to speak in the mother tongues

Urges schools to make mother tongue compulsory in primary education

Respective local languages should be used extensively by state administrations: VP;

Harness the power of technology to preserve and promote our languages and culture: VP

Presents the 28th Saraswati Samman to Dr. K. Siva Reddy in New Delhi

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The Vice President, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu today said that language preservation and development cannot be the task of government alone and added that it has to take the form of people's movement. 'Community participation is essential for preserving and protecting languages', he added.

He was addressing the gathering at the 28th Saraswati Samman presentation ceremony organized by the KK Birla Foundation in New Delhi today.

He lauded the KK Birla Foundation for creating a framework to adjudge the creative output in literature of different languages of our vast country to honour the most deserving.

Stating that promotion of Indian languages was a cause that was close to his heart, the Vice President said that language is the lifeline of a culture. 'We must make every effort to preserve, promote and propagate languages. When a language dies, there will be a loss of cultural identity, traditions and customs associated with that language', he added.

Observing that language preservation and development needs a multi-pronged approach, Shri

Naidu advocated the need for people to speak in their mother tongue at all times except where it becomes necessary to communicate in another language.

The Vice President opined that promotion of mother tongue should begin at the primary school level. He advised all state governments to make mother tongue mandatory during primary education.

He also emphasized that the respective local languages should be used extensively by state administrations across the country for improving efficiency and delivery of services. 'The best way to preserve or promote any language is to use it extensively in everyday life', the Vice President said.

Speaking of the Parliament's initiatives to promote regional languages, the Vice President said that Rajya Sabha members can now speak in any of the 22 scheduled languages in the Parliament and put forth their points of view. And added that simultaneous translation is provided and members can effectively communicate their thoughts in any of those languages.

Shri Naidu suggested the harnessing of the power of technology to preserve and promote our languages and culture. He called for the creation of more and more online dictionaries, encyclopedias, glossaries, research articles and searchable databases in all Indian languages. 'Old manuscripts should be electronically stored for easy retrieval', he said.

He urged more and more people should to write poetry, stories, novels and dramas in their native languages. 'There is an urgent need to accord a sense of dignity and a sense of pride to those who speak, write and communicate in their native languages', he said.

He also said that there is an urgent need to develop adequate material in dialects and folk literature of all our states and added that language learning is a catalyst for inclusive development as well.

Opining that reading good poetry, literature and writings will not only kindle new thoughts but also provide us with humour, happiness and soul-fulfilling emotions, the Vice President congratulated Dr. K. Siva Reddy who won the 'Saraswati Samman' for his Telugu poetry collection 'Pakkaki Ottigilite'.

Shri Naidu said that Dr. K. Siva Reddy is one of the major poets of not only Telugu but also of Indian Literature and he has become a trend setter with his prolific writing and effortlessly experimenting with themes and forms.

The Vice President said that Dr. Siva Reddy had a whole range of poetic expression, echoing themes ranging from Marxism to Humanism and added that the poet has been a champion of the oppressed and suppressed people.

Smt. Shobhana Bhartia, President, K.K. Birla Foundation, Shri Priyavrat Bhartia, President's Nominee, K.K. Birla Foundation and others were present on the occasion.

The following is the full text of the speech: (Kindly see the attachment)

I am extremely happy to be present here at the 28th Saraswati Samman presentation ceremony organized by the KK Birla Foundation.

This event is very close to my heart as I have a special affection for the promotion of Indian languages. I admire the concept on which this Foundation has been founded by Late Dr. K.K.

Birla, Former M.P. in 1991 with a great vision to promote Indian culture, literature, art, science and education.

I commend KK Birla Foundation for creating a framework to adjudge the creative output in literature of different languages of our vast country, and to honour the most deserving. It is a remarkable gesture that helps writers to creatively express themselves in Indian languages.

I am glad to note that awards given by this Foundation are considered as some of the most prestigious in the field of Indian literature, and I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to the K.K. Birla Foundation for their endeavours.

Dear sisters and brothers,

Language is the lifeline of a culture. India is home to many languages and we must make every effort to preserve, promote and propagate them. When a language dies, there will be a loss of cultural identity, traditions and customs associated with that language.

Language preservation and development needs a multi-pronged approach. I have been consistently advocating the need for the people to speak in their mother tongue at all times except where it becomes necessary to communicate in another language. I am not against learning English or any other language. But a person can communicate effectively and articulate better in his or her mother tongue.

However, language preservation and development cannot be the task of government alone. It has to take the form of people's movement. Community participation is essential for preserving and protecting languages.

In my opinion, promotion of mother tongue should begin at the primary school level. I have been advising all state governments to make mother tongue mandatory up to primary school. I am also of the firm opinion that the respective local languages should be used extensively by state administrations across the country for improving efficiency and delivery of services.

The best way to preserve or promote any language is to use it extensively in everyday life. More and more people should start using their native languages at home, in the community, in meetings and in administration.

As you all are aware, Rajya Sabha members can now speak in any of the 22 scheduled languages in the Parliament and put forth their points of view. Simultaneous translation is provided and members can effectively communicate their thoughts in any of those languages.

Thanks to technology, we are now able to facilitate simultaneous translation into different languages. We must harness the power of technology to preserve and promote our languages and culture. Online dictionaries, encyclopedias, glossaries, research articles and searchable databases should be prepared in all Indian languages. Old manuscripts should be electronically stored for easy retrieval.

I also feel that more and more people should be encouraged to write poetry, stories, novels and dramas in their native languages.

There is an urgent need to accord a sense of dignity and a sense of pride to those who speak, write and communicate in their native languages.

Here, I would like to appreciate and compliment organizations such as the K.K. Birla Foundation

for their efforts to promote languages by recognizing and rewarding the merit and talent.

More such efforts are needed by various stakeholders for preserving and promoting Indian languages. There is an urgent need to develop adequate material in dialects and folk literature of all our states.

We should recognize that language learning is a catalyst for inclusive development as well.

I am happy that the Foundation is calling this award “Saraswathi Samman”. What you are doing through these award functions is to honour writers who have the blessings of Goddess Saraswathi, the Goddess of learning, knowledge, music and education. Preserving and propagating good ideas and knowledge through literature, fine arts and creation of other cultural artefacts is the true worship of Goddess Saraswathi. This “Saraswathi Samman” is also a tribute to the creative spark that, in our tradition, comes from the Goddess Saraswathi. It is a spark that ignites imagination, fosters creativity and spreads the light of knowledge all around.

Dear sisters and brothers,

Reading good poetry, literature and writings will not only kindle new thoughts but also provide us with humour, happiness and soul-fulfilling emotions.

I have just had the honour of presenting Saraswati Samman to Dr. K. Siva Reddy for his Telugu poetry collection ‘Pakkaki Ottigilite’.

Dr. K. Siva Reddy is one of the major poets of not only Telugu but also of Indian Literature and he has become a trend setter with his prolific writing and effortlessly experimenting with themes and forms.

His literary career spanning more than four decades encapsulates all the movements and trends of the period, ranging from progressive, revolutionary, protest and humanistic movements which encompass Modernism as well as Post Modernism.

Having been immensely influenced by Marxism, he has been a champion of the oppressed and suppressed. He has great empathy for the labourers and the marginalized sections of the society.

The book ‘Pakkaki Ottigilite’ is one of his recent poetry collections, which captures his ability to creatively deal with diverse themes.

Indeed, Dr. K. Siva Reddy is a prolific poet who never gets tired of writing. Dr. Reddy has been a recipient of the Central Sahitya Academy award, Gangadhar Mehar National Award and Kabir Samman Award.

Dr. Siva Reddy has a whole range of poetic expression echoing themes ranging from Marxism to Humanism. But, he firmly believes that the life is too complex for generalization and simplification.

From the physical and social issues of the world to psychological struggles and quest for the truth of the individual in the recent poems, Dr. Siva Reddy captures different nuances very well.

I am deeply thankful to the K.K. Birla Foundation especially Smt. Shobhana Bhartiya for having given me the opportunity to present this award. I congratulate Dr. K. Siva Reddy for his magnificent contribution to enriching the Telugu literature.

Thank you

Jai Hind !

RR/BK/MS/RK

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