

THE HINDU

PAGE NO: 02

DATE: 22.03.23

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## Region

Wednesday, March 22, 2023  
CHENNAI

# Seminar on environmental consciousness in literary tradition held by Pondicherry varsity

**The Hindu Bureau**  
PUDUCHERRY

Highlighting the rich reverence for nature in the literary tradition, speakers at a seminar called for modern-day writers to raise public awareness on the environmental fallout of materialistic pursuits.

Participating in the two-day G.D. Birla Memorial national seminar on 'Environmental Thinking and Ideology in Indian Prose Literature', organised by the Department of Hindi, Pondicherry University, in collaboration with UCO Bank, R. Jayachandran, Director, Faculty of Indian Languages, University of Kerala, said environmental problems were not specific to any region and represented a universal problem.

In such a scenario, literature can play a leading role in repre-

**Literature can play a leading role in representing the problems of people by transcending its regional template**

senting the problems of the common people by transcending its regional template, he said.

C. Jaya Sankar Babu, seminar convenor, said there had been a historical tradition of environmental protection in Indian thought. The country that worships rivers, trees, animals, birds, mountains and the earth is encountering many environmental challenges in the twenty-first Century. An increasingly materialistic world was witnessing relentless exploitation of natural resources

at the cost of ecological balance. The seminar is relevant in the prevailing situation to ponder upon our failures to protect the environment, he said.

A. Bhavani, former Professor of Manonmaiam Sundaranar University dwelt on the human endeavours of nature worship, as embodied in the ancient Indian thought stream of knowledge.

Human tradition of offering worship to trees, rivers and mountains has started disappearing. The environment is being exploited. Unless we change this behaviour, nature is bound to wreak havoc and mankind can do little to control it, she said.

V. Padmavathi, Head, Department of Hindi, P.S.G. Krishnammal Women College, Coimbatore, discussed the di-

versity of nature found in Tamil Sangam literature. With the ancient Ayurvedic tradition and knowledge of medicinal herbs, man used to connect himself directly with nature. But due to the modern lifestyle, this association has started disintegrating.

Gurmeet Singh, Vice-Chancellor of Pondicherry University, underscored the fact that environmental protection was a collective responsibility. He also released the abstract of the seminar papers.

Rajesh Kumar Tiwari, UCO Bank Chennai Zonal Head, said the increased participation of youth in environmental protection activities was a positive sign.

Padmapriya, Head of the Department of Hindi, said contemporary literature was much aware of environmental issues.