

International Conference on Ecocriticism: A Report

The last week of November Sikkim academia witnessed an innovative inclusion of an interesting area of study which has never been talked in the region earlier. FSLE-India (the Foundation for the Study of Literature and Environment), New Delhi in collaboration with Sikkim Government College, Tadong organized a three-day International conference on ‘*Why Ecocriticism?*’ on November 21-23, supported by NEC (North Eastern Council), Shillong and RUSA (Rashtriya Uchhtar Shiksha Aayog), Sikkim. This was an academic journey filled with various intellectuals, environmentalists and researchers worldwide. The keynote speaker was Prof. Murali Sivaramakrishnan, President, ASLE-India & Former HoD, English Department, Pondicherry.

The chief guest of the conference was the Minister for Forest & Environment, Tshering Wangdi Lepcha accompanied by CCF, CS Rao. The Additional Chief Secretary-cum-Incharge HRDD, G. P. Upadhyaya was the guest of honor accompanied by Deepak Pradhan, the Director, Higher and Technical Education, HRDD.

FSLE-India president Rishikesh Kumar Singh, introduced the LEGH Movement as well on the occasion which deals with Literature, Environment, Gender and Human Rights together. The Convener of the Conference Dr. Shobha Sharma along with Dr. P. S. Thapa, the HoD English Department initiated with the team of enthusiastic faculties and students of the department and further their initiation was highly praised and supported by Dr. Lily Alley, the Principal of the College.

The ambience of the conference was corroborated with the presence of some of the fantastic academicians, artists, laureates, poets and researchers from all over the world- Prof. Murali Sivaramakrishnan from Kerala, Prof. Irshad Ghulam Ahmed from Sikkim University, Prof. Melissa Studdard from Lone Star University, Texas, Prof. Monika Weiss from the University of Washington, USA, Prof. Ron Paul Salutsky from Atlanta, Georgia and Dr. Sherry Duggal from Vancouver, Canada.

The complete three days researchers and faculties from different parts of the country discussed the issues related to ecology and literature and various inter-disciplinary areas. They all tried to get an answer of the esoteric question ‘*Why Ecocriticism?*’ and the need of the study of this particular field of study. The conference paved a way to move on to other ways to look our surroundings and treat the physical nature...not only in the written world but also in our day to day practices. Visiting the field is much more important than just being in theories. Praxis must be considered as one of the most significant way of studying any text and further theories could be propounded. The conference ended with a good note with the valedictory lecture of Prof. Irshad.

FSLE-India President Rishikesh also introduced the upcoming Mega Event of Translation (MET) in India which is going to be launched in January 2018 with the collaboration of prestigious Sahitya Academy. This project will conclude within eighteen months. During this

period in each state of India all the available ecocritical texts in the vernacular language will be selected and further translated into English. This is a highly aspiring and ambitious project of FSLE-India. To achieve this there is a great team of enthusiastic translators.

The question 'Why Ecocriticism?' was not meant for finding a certain answer and get some conclusion and stop...much beyond this...This question opens a platform for seeking out various and numerous possible answers and solutions associated with the question...finding further answers and this endless journey keep us alive and vibrant.