

Tagore took every gender as an 'ardhanarishwara': Prof. Malashri Lal  
CUO Organized a Special Lecture in Literature on

# 'Tagore and the Feminine'



A special lecture on "Tagore and the Feminine" has been organised by the Dept. of English Language and Literature, Central University of Orissa at its permanent campus Sunabeda today. Prof. Malashri Lal, Dean of Colleges and Dean, Academic Activities and Projects, Delhi University delivered the special lecture on the topic. The session was chaired by Prof. Sachidananda Mohanty



Vice-Chancellor, CUO who delivered the inaugural lecture.

“Tagore was a cosmopolitan writer not confined to his place of birth or his mother tongue or India. His writing inspired many to take a closer look of feminine in the Indian literature” Prof. Mohanty said while highlighting the writings of Tagore with their present relevance. He also advised the students to read the contemporary writings of Tagore. Prof. Mohanty introduced Prof. Malashri Lal as an internationally acclaimed scholar of English Literature.

In her lecture Prof. Lal said “the concept of feminism as any piece of writing on women both by men and women, not merely by women. The true feminist movement owes its root in the activities and writings of Indian reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Vivekananda and Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore who preferred the performative aspect of gender to the normative or traditional one. Tagore has variously shown his unceasing reverence of women in his writings. She emphasized that western feminist theoretical schema - the feminine, the feminist, and the female – cannot be implemented to the works of Tagore because he took every gender as an *‘ardhanarishwara’* (androgynous), i.e an



amalgam of masculine and feminine traits. Tagore was inspired more by the feminine force and spiritualism in his *Gitanjali* which is already in the cultural ethos of our land". "Tagore's felicitation of independent womanhood through the character *Lavanya* of *Farewell song*. In our Indian context the true worth of woman is found in the mythical character *Chitrangada* in Tagore's writing through companionate marriage." Prof. Lal said in her lecture. In conclusion Prof. Lal said that Tagore had an empathetic heart for all categories of women and he conceived higher education as the only means of their emancipation and empowerment.

Shri. Sanjeet Dash, Asst. Professor Department of English Language and Literature delivered the welcome address. Vote of thanks was given by Sushree Mehuli Sarkar, student of Department of English Literature. Programme was compeered by Sushree Priyanka Sharma, student of English Literature. The programme was organized by the Department of English Language and Literature of the University. Students, faculty members and staff were present in a large number in this occasion.

## **Prof. Malashri Lal, Professor of English - CV in brief**

Prof. Malashri Lal, Professor of English, is the Dean of Colleges, Dean, Academic Activities & Projects and also Chairperson, Research Council at the University of Delhi. She has held other senior administrative positions in the same University, including being Head, Department of English (2000-2003), and Director, Women's Studies (2000-2006). As a recipient of fellowships from the Fulbright, the British Council, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Shastri-Indo Canadian Institute, she has conducted research in prestigious institutions including Harvard University, USA, Bellagio, Italy, and Newcastle, UK, Malashri Lal's academic specialization is in Women and Gender Studies about which she has fourteen books. Recently she has published *Tagore and the Feminine: A Journey in Translations*, *Speaking For Myself: An Anthology of Asian Women's Writing*, and *In Search of Sita: Revisiting Mythology*. She has served on international book award committees including the Commonwealth Writers Prize, The Hindu Fiction Prize and the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature.

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