

## Post-Colonial Literature in an Age of Crisis

Reading is a process of comprehension and understanding, and it applies to every aspect of life where we must decode something in order to lead our individual existences.

These were the sentiments shared by Dr. Kamala Naiker at a two-day International e-Conference themed "Emerging Trends in Literature and Language". The event was organized by Hislop College, Nagpur, J. M. Patel College of Arts, Science, and Commerce, Bhandara and Smt Binzani Mahila Mahavidyalaya, India.

Dr. Naiker was a resource person at the Conference and spoke on the topic "Post-Colonial Literature in an Age of Crisis". She explained that there were two contradictory developments in the 21st century - one, the decline in interest in reading books, and the other, that many more books are now being written by Fijian, Pacific and International writers.

"There is both hope and despair. The future is uncertain because of the pandemic. It is possible that in isolation, people are reading more books; at the same time, it is not easy to go to libraries to borrow books, or buy books from bookshops. Many people in the world are not used to online buying, or online reading books. Reading is one of the most important intellectual activities humans can ever engage in," she said.

She questioned why students should read literature in the 21st century?

"There can be many reasons, but there are four main reasons. Stories are about communication. Reading is always an act of empathy, always an imagining of what it is like to be somebody else. Reading critically and thoughtfully gives us better tools to develop more balanced arguments, express oneself clearly, and glean important information efficiently. By knowing what it is like to be the people we read about, we learn more about those around us, those who came before us, and we learn more about ourselves," she said.

She said that Naipaul's texts constitute an arena where several discourses meet, confront each other and overlap, leading to an imagery open to many interpretations.

"Reading (Naipaul's) novels develops one as a human being, increases one's understanding of life and people, enables one to learn about other societies, develops aesthetic faculty and develops one intellectually. With more books being written; their availability online puts such texts at the back stage. Reciting and reading postcolonial discourses in the 21st century is worthwhile learning. People should be educated and prepared for all the wonderful things the world will throw at us. Students of literature of the 21st century have access to a wealth of reading materials spanning as far back as the ancients," she said.

Dr. Naiker concluded by submitting that postcolonial texts should be read and studied in concurrence with the recent ones.