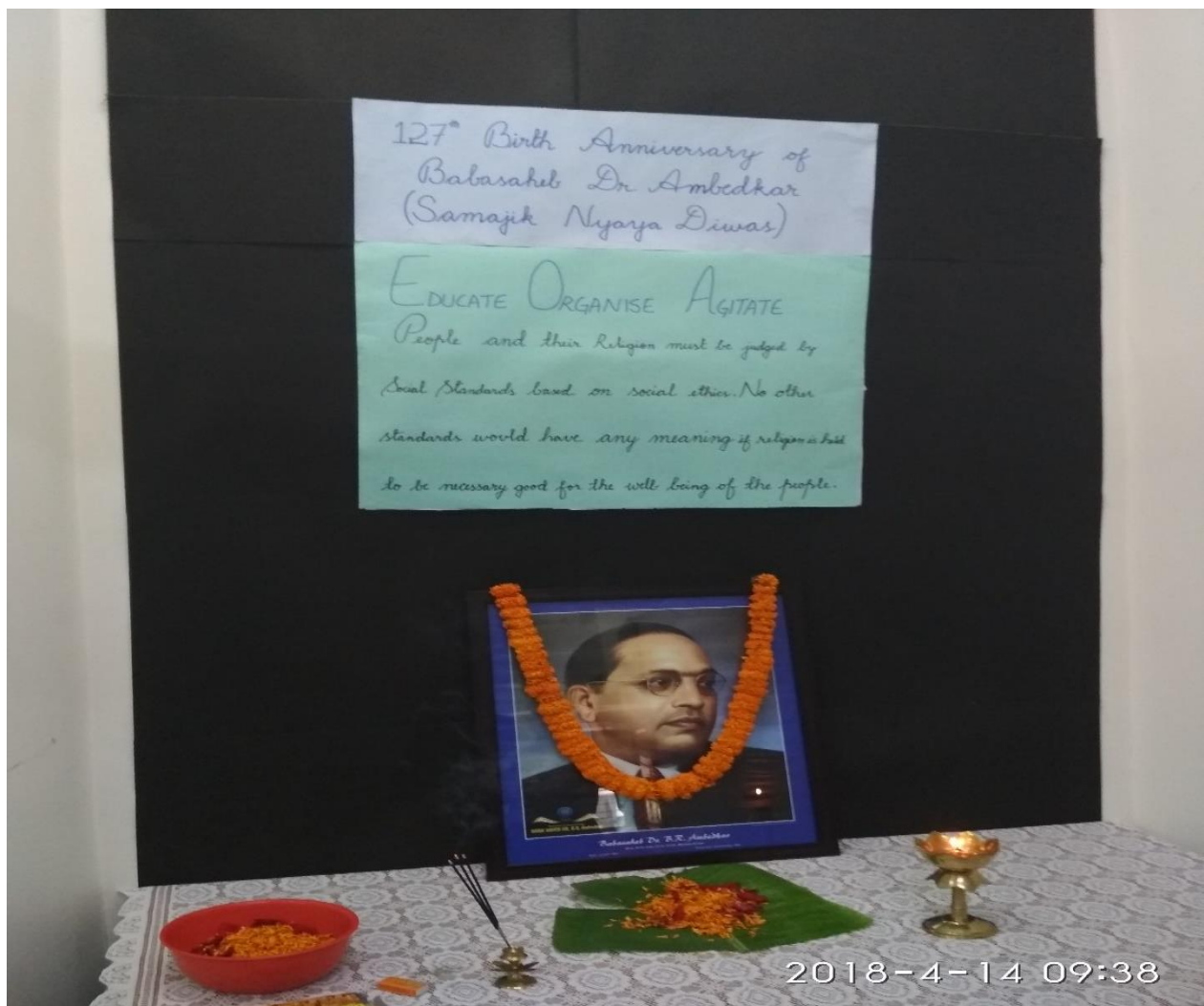


127th Birth Anniversary Celebration
of
Bharat Ratna Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

On the occasion of 127th birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, elaborate celebration was organized by Dr. Ambedkar Chair on Tezpur University (TU) campus as well as outside. Commemoration began on 14th April 2018 which was 128th birthday of one of the biggest social crusaders for the millennium. This auspicious day had ceremonious coherence with Bihu-the biggest socio-cultural festival in Assam. However, this had implication on TU campus as a small break of four days (13th – 16th April) was observed. Therefore, celebration to mark the joy and gratitude was organized in two phases, first on 14th April itself while the second in the form of a public lecture on 27th April 2018.



A floral tribute was organized on 14th April in the Office of Dr. Ambedkar Chair, Humanities & Social Sciences Building. The ceremony of floral tribute began at 9.30 a.m. where the initiation was done by Hon'ble Registrar, Dr. Biren Das. Prior to this, Prof. K. Kikhi, Chair Professor (Dr. Ambedkar Chair) made some deliberations to the gathering of different faculty members, scholars/students as well as the staff members, in the form of announcing importance of the day and making people aware about the contributions by Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. The round of floral tribute continued till 12.30 p.m. (as was announced earlier in the wake of Bihu Break) where several people (teaching/ non-teaching staff and scholars/students) have displayed their happiness and gratitude towards Babasaheb on his birth anniversary. The joy of celebration also came in the form of distribution of sweets to all by the chair.



Further, it was jointly mentioned by the chair professor and registrar about the recent acknowledgement and announcement by the government of India to commemorate 127th birth anniversary of Babasaheb as 'Samajik Nyaya Divas' (Day of Social Justice) across the country. In this regard, a commemorative function was organized at the office of the Deputy Commissioner (DC of Sonitpur district, Assam) where Prof. Kikhi was invited as honorable guest speaker from Tezpur University. Prof. Kikhi while highlighting some of the major contribution made by Dr. Ambedkar towards India, made people aware about Dr. Ambedkar Chair, TU as an establishment by Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment. Meanwhile he also referred to the group of activities with which Dr. Ambedkar

Chair, TU is involved, and welcomed any effective future collaboration in accordance with the mandate.

The second phase of birth anniversary celebration came in the form of Public Lecture organized by Dr. Ambedkar Chair, TU on 27th April at 3.30 p.m. in the council hall. The lecture was delivered by Sh. Swapan Kumar Biswas (ex-bureaucrat, and a social activist) on the theme 'Relevance of Ambedkar: Then and Now' in the august presence of Dr. Biren Das (Registrar, TU), several faculty members/staff, scholars/students from different disciplines. The program begun at the scheduled time with the formal introduction and announcement by Ms. Gayatri Borah, doctoral scholar from department of sociology. She welcomed all and gave a brief introduction about the speaker Sh. S. K. Biswas who had worked immensely to create awareness about Dr. Ambedkar in different dignified capacities as a bureaucrat. She mentioned that he remained instrumental in acknowledgement by government of India (towards contribution of Dr. Ambedkar) in the form of conferring 'Bharat Ratna' in 1990. Further, she told that Sh. Biswas helped in adding grace to the central hall of parliament house by donating the life size portrait of Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.



After a brief round of felicitation to the speaker (Sh. S. K. Biswas), Chairperson (Prof. P. K. Das, Dean HSS), and Guest (Dr. Biren Das, Registrar), Prof. Kikhi gave his welcome address on the occasion which included reflection on some aspect and opinion about Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar in the form of his sayings. The address further included a brief introduction about the mandate of Dr. Ambedkar Chair, TU, and the progress in terms of activities done and anticipated in the coming days especially proposal of two CBCS courses at post graduate and doctoral level. The session was further taken for public lecture by the chairperson Prof. P. K. Das who with his brief remarks invited Sh. S. K. Biswas.



Being a bureaucrat and an activist, Sh. S. K. Biswas made an aberration in the delivery of public lecture in terms of adopting a straightforward and non-linear approach to illuminate the 'relevance' of Dr. Ambedkar in his contemporary time while holding currency hitherto. Without making a formal mention of any discipline he utilized the concepts of history, polity, and sociology to shed some light on the events and achievements by Dr. Ambedkar Chair. Citing

historicity of the Indian national movement he made a mention of instances showing the plight of erstwhile depressed classes, thanks to the ever-existing stratified Hindu social order. In the context, he mentioned role of Dr. Ambedkar in bringing reform (though in constitutional manner) in the (Hindu) social order which was built on primordial lines. With his exceptional talent, Dr. Ambedkar defied (then) existing notion of stratified society and expressed its mythical character of conserving the privileges for the few (dvija) castes.



Referring to proposal of separate electorates by Dr. Ambedkar for the depressed classes, Sh. S. K. Biswas pointed out it to be a redressal mechanism and a (probable) step towards proportional equality in polity and henceforth in the society. However as told by Sh. Biswas, parochial interests were upheld by statesman like M. K. Gandhi through 'Poona Pact' with an idea of joint electorate. This, according to Biswas was one of the biggest failure as realized by Dr. Ambedkar himself towards achievement of social democracy which could be a basis of further political and economic democracy. The concern for social and economic democracy by Dr. Ambedkar was also seen in his statement on the occasion of enactment of the Indian Constitution (prepared

under his erudite supervision) as, 'from now on we are entering into a life of contradictions, we have political equality where vote of each citizen is of equal value however there's no social and economic equality... therefore the need is to resolve these contradictions as early as possible else sooner or later these dissatisfied people will blow up the entire system' (as told by the speaker). The final analysis of the public speaker could be summed up as, despite spending more than sixty five years (since the adoption of the Constitution) these contradictions remain and so is the tendency (of blowing the system) putting democracy in the peril.

Comprehension of the public lecture and idea of relevance was further enriched by the public speaker during his elaborate attempt towards the questions raised by the students/scholars. The questions primarily centred around issue of reservation vis-à-vis merit, reservation on economic basis instead of caste, and about the viable method of bringing reform in India. Sh. S. K. Biswas pointed that though the idea of reservation appears to be filled with prejudice and revenge, however it is the opposite as it's an attempt to ascertain proportional equality at all the levels especially which accrues more privileges and were found to be restricted in the given (Hindu) social order. Further he told that the idea of 'merit' doesn't hold enough merit to uphold as it is arbitrarily defined by select few to maintain social as well as economic status quo. Regarding the query of economic situation as the criterion for reservation, he mentioned this as an 'advance' question till the time social quality is not achieved. In case of viable reform, Sh. Biswas reiterated the saying of Dr. Ambedkar that social democracy is of primary importance.



The program of public lecture was concluded through vote of thanks given by Dr. D. R. Gautam (Research Officer, Dr. Ambedkar Chair, TU) who acknowledged and thanked everyone especially the administrative and academic staff of TU, dignitaries on the dais, and most importantly scholars and students of different faculties. He also announced staging of a street play titled as '*Rupantar*' by the students of TU. Dr. Gautam mentioned that the play was called 'street play' as was originally conceived as street play and was staged previously in two different villages of nearby locality. The play was about making people aware of different schemes to build social harmony in India as announced by Dr. Ambedkar Foundation. These comprised of incentivizing inter-caste marriages, financial support for the victims of social atrocities, and for medical illness of SCs/STs. The play was scripted and enacted by the students of TU, and their contribution was acknowledged by Dr. Ambedkar Chair, TU in the form of certificate of appreciation. These certificates were distributed to the participants by the hon'ble public speaker Sh. S. K. Biswas, and Chairperson Prof. P. K. Das. The program came to a close with some discussion and deliberation during high tea.
