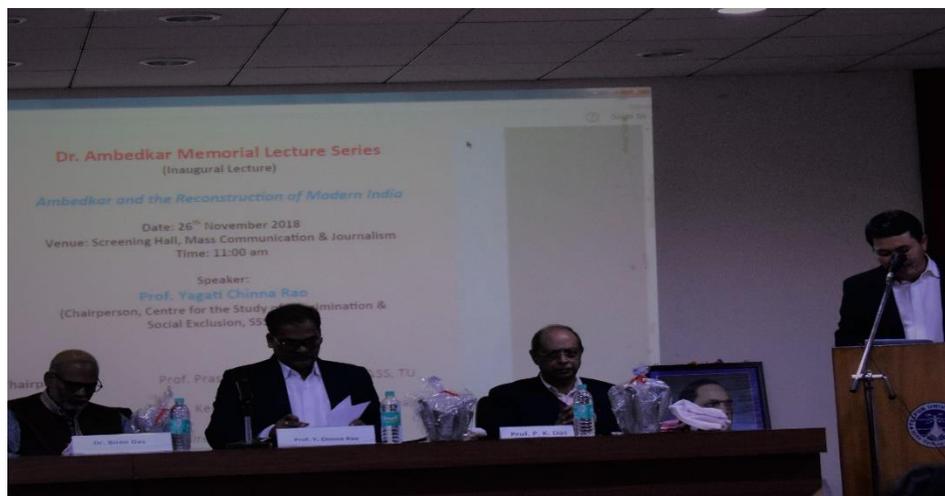


69th Constitution Day Celebration

On 69th Constitution day celebration Ambedkar Chair, Tezpur University organized series of events. At the outset in the morning around 9 a.m. Dr. Biren Das, Registrar of the university attempted to sensitize campus towards Indian Constitution by reading its preamble and taking oath to fulfill enshrined fundamental duties. This was done in the administrative block of the university campus. Thereafter, at screening hall of MCJ, inauguration of Dr. Ambedkar memorial lecture series happened with lecture entitled ‘Ambedkar and the Reconstruction of Modern India’ by Prof. Yagati Chinna Rao from Jawaharlal Nehru University.



The program began at 11:30 a.m. with a floral tribute to Dr. B.R Ambedkar, and welcome speech by Prof K. Kikhi, Chair Professor (Dr. Ambedkar Chair, TU) who briefly outlined significance of the day along with acknowledgement and gratitude towards Bharat Ratna Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, father of the Indian constitution. He then introduced Dr. Biren Das, Registrar (Tezpur University) by outlining the fact of his instrumental role in establishing Dr. Ambedkar Chair at Tezpur University in the year 2016. Acknowledging this Prof. Kikhi showed his determination to provide a strong foundation towards a brighter future of the Chair while working along with other team members.



Prof. Yagati Chinna Rao, the keynote speaker highlighted a brief life sketch and contribution of Dr. B.R Ambedkar towards builds of constitution of India and mentioned various social problems prevalent at the time of Independence which were posing threat for India's future. These social problems were largely related to issues of the disadvantaged sections in caste ridden Indian society. Therefore, he mentioned that Dr. Ambedkar initiated steps to eradicate caste system, ensure gender equality and economic equality for all citizens through different provision like Maternity Benefits, labor laws, Employment exchange schemes etc.



First session of the program ended with a formal vote of thanks by Dr. D. R. Gautam (Research Officer) who summarized the entire discourse with a significant mention of Dr. Ambedkar and his multiple contribution in the formation of modern India. On behalf of the entire team of Dr. Ambedkar chair, Dr. Gautam acknowledged valuable contribution and support received to organize this and other events. In this he mentioned broad names as Dr. Ambedkar Foundation (Ministry of Social Justice & empowerment), Administrative staff and Faculty members of different disciplines viz. Humanities & Social Sciences (with special mention of Sociology, Social Work, EFL & MCJ), Scholars and Students of above-mentioned disciplines and also otherwise of Tezpur University.

Second event of the day was Panel Discussion on the theme '*Multiple Dimensions of Inclusion: The Context of North East India*'. The discussion was chaired by Prof. Virginius Xaxa (Professor of Eminence) while the panelists were from different faculties at TU which included Prof. Apurba Kr. Das (School of Environmental Science), Dr. Anabarsan & Dr. Joya Chakraborty (MCJ), Dr. Madhurima Goswami (Head- Centre for Women Studies), and Dr. Nirmali Goswami (Department of Sociology). The first panelist Prof. Apurba Kr. Das highlighted privatization of education and its (adverse) impact on accessibility by economically as well as socially disadvantaged sections of the society that includes STs, SCs, Women, and Religious Minorities.



Dr. Madhurima juxtaposed education with culture in the context of women in north eastern states to emphasize need for their empowerment. With an intention to expose the myth of 'gender equality' hypothesis in north east India, she highlighted existing economic disparity against women in this part of India despite their presence in employment sector. Therefore, the need for empowerment of women is true for north eastern states alike other parts albeit in differing proportion. And education could be one potent tool towards their situation as it leads to enhancement of capability and function. However, she highlighted that in case of some parts of north eastern India, there are peculiar cultural traditions which hamper the process of functional returns from education. To support her argument, Dr. Madhurima cited case of Jowai, where practices of 'adolescent marriages by elopement', and 'adolescent unwed mothers' were having cultural sanctions while deferment of marriage of women due to education was looked down upon and is a source of stigma. The role of education is to create critical consciousness which is checked by the existing culture. This is largely detrimental to the development of women there. Therefore, need is to create cultural awareness to facilitate the process of true gender equality.

Dr. Anbarasan took the issue of 'liberty' in the context of deprived sections. He emphasized importance of dissent as an expression of liberty and therefore it needs to be acknowledged by all as fundamental right. Giving this context, he highlighted the concept of 'inclusion' and its relevant comprehension as otherwise the concept (of inclusion) shall continue to be dominated as well as appropriated by few elite class(es).

The next panelist come in the form of Dr. Joya Chakraborty who highlighted the importance of media and its mechanism in context of Assam. She cited about the functioning of media in Assam in contrast to the other parts of India. This is because of limited (two) satellite channels and one community radio for entire state of Assam. In this scenario, voices of downtrodden and disadvantaged communities could not achieve massive expression as their fundamental right and hence we witnessed" voice poverty. Thus, there's a biased coverage of media to favor elite class with hegemonic narrative against the philosophy of Indian constitution. She further mentioned that generally north eastern context is highlighted in media with negative connotation towards the disadvantaged sections. And one probable solution according to her was introduction of community media which will act as a facilitator to enhance and enable dialogue between privileged and under-privileged classes.

Dr..Nirmali Goswami, another panelist taking cue from ideas shared by the previous panelists highlighted violation of fundamental rights of women in particular and common masses in general. To support her argument, she cited some of the cases like Shah Bano, Sabrimala, etc. where failure of government is conspicuous in preserving fundamental rights.



Entire panel discussion exercise was concluded by Prof. Virginius Xaxa (Chairperson) who emphasized inclusion of common voices in discourse generation and meaning making exercise at policy formulation as well as implementation level. He further added that this has to be context

specific as North Eastern states do have differing cultural notions and therefore policies to be made with representation from target stakeholders.

Last event of the day was Elocution Competition for the students of Tezpur University. The theme for Elocution was 'Indian Constitution: En Route to Social Endosmosis', and there were several participants (students and scholars) from different faculties viz. Sciences, Management, Social Sciences, and Humanities. They shared their thoughts and opinion about the topic and highlighted importance of Indian Constitution towards maintaining social as well as communal harmony. Their performance was judged by Dr. Subhadepta Ray (Department of Sociology), Dr. Debajit Sharma (Department of Law) and Dr. Maushami, Mahanta (Centre for Women studies). Three consecutive prizes of Rs. 2000, Rs. 1500, & Rs. 1000 respectively, and four consolation prizes of Rs. 500 each were announced by the jury who conveyed their best wishes to all the participants and winners while distributing certificates to them.

