

Department of Anthropology

Sikkim University

Commemoration of 135th Dr. B.R Ambedkar's Birth Anniversary

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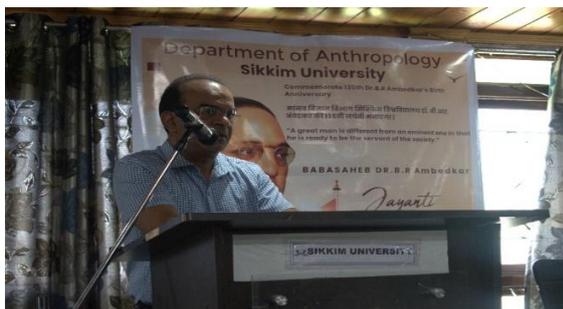
Venue: Barad Sadan Conference Hall

The program officially started with the University Invocation song followed by lighting of ceremonial lamp offered to Dr. B.R Ambedkar.



In the Inaugural programme Prof. Nitish Mondal gave the opening remarks in which he welcomed the guests and audience for the day. He briefly talked about the Contribution and efforts of Dr. B.R Ambedkar, in his vision of creating a just and equitable society and empower the marginalised section.

The Chairperson for the Inaugural programme, Prof. Soheil Firdos, Department of Geography, Sikkim University) started his speech by congratulating the department of Anthropology for organising this programme. Speaking a few words on Dr. Ambedkar Prof. Firdos stated that we don't remember him just as a person but for the transformation for a sustainable society. Further talking about Dr. Ambedkar's political career and his writings which was always for the upliftment of the marginalised society especially Caste based society of India.



The special lecture started with Prof K.R Rama Mohan, Head, Department of Anthropology, focused on lesser importance of Ambedkar's work Anthropological discourse. Caste was studied by various scholars from outside India, and anthropologists paid attention to these foreign scholars and did not take Ambedkar's caste analysis into consideration. However, it was Dr. Ambedkar's intensive work on the caste structure and caste-based inequalities which had repercussions in the society, for which he fought against. According to Prof. Mohan, Ambedkar's works can be considered as an auto-ethnographic exploration as a Dalit himself, the lived experiences and he was critical from the early stages in his life.



The second lecture was by Mr. Shankar Narayan Bagh, Department of Sociology, who talked about Dr. B.R. Ambedkar who rose from the margins to the centre of the society and then went on to contribute in writing the constitution of India. He started with the question, how to look at Ambedkar at present? According to Mr. Bagh, many of us reduced him to leader of the Dalits, maker of the Constitution but he was more than that. He was inviting all to have a dialogue but bringing modernist views on reorganising the Indian society. He combined the American school of pragmatism and Buddhism. He looked into India from a modernist view, the Indian concept of modernity. The lecture dived into Ambedkar's ideologies stemming from organic intellectual which comes from the grassroots, who theorised and spoke from the views of the margins and contributed in overcoming those margins. The lecture also talked about Ambedkar's view on caste system as being not "division of labour but division of labourers". Thus, he focused on the major concern of how to imagine a better society.



In the afternoon session, Scholars and Students presentations chaired by Prof. Nitish Mondal. Shilu Bhai talked on the 'Biography of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar', Saphal Sharma 'Ambedkar and his contributions', Ms. Enamlu Durai, 'Ambedkar and his Publications', Satrabrata Sahu 'Ambedkar as a Philosopher', Geetika Mandavi 'Social exclusion, and Caste Discrimination', Eshan Ali Daar 'Modern Untouchability', Ugen Lepcha 'Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Buddhism', Ankit Oraon, 'Ambedkar in contemporary India'.

The programme concluded with Discussions from the participants.