In commemoration of

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s 100th Year of Graduation from Columbia University, USA

Two-Day International Seminar

Dalits and African-Americans in 21st Century: Learning from Cross-Cultural Experiences

Organized by
Centre for Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policies (CSSEIP) &
Dr. Ambedkar Studies Centre
National Law School of India University (NLSIU), Bengaluru

Sponsored by
Indian Council For Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi

9 & 10 July, 2015

Venue
International Training Centre, NLSIU
Baba Saheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s stay at Columbia (July 1913 –May 1916)

“The great escape! At the age of 22, the young Ambedkar came to Columbia, and began to make the intellectual and personal connections that shaped the rest of his life. He experienced what it was to be free—for a time—from the stigma of untouchability”

(Source: [http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00ambedkar/timeline/1910s.html](http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00ambedkar/timeline/1910s.html))
Prologue

The dialogue in 1946 between Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963) and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (1891-1956) exemplified commitment, demonstrated mutual sympathies for each other’s cause of removal of untouchability and apartheid; it was one of the historic moments in the history of social justice. It was also one of the rarest of the moments when these two leading intellectual giants of 20th century initiated a dialogue, exchanged notes on their struggles, and extended solidarities towards each other. Dr. Ambedkar and Dr. Du Bois dedicated their lives to liberate these two oppressed communities in their respective countries and their contributions will greatly be remembered in the history of humanity. Their contributions and theories not only remain central but are the most critical for all those concerned with human rights, democracy, equality, and social justice. However, this dialogue initiated by these two intellectuals in the 1940s, over a period of time has been lost, in sense it has remained on the margins. This two days’ seminar to be held at the National Law School of India University, is another historic opportunity where leading scholars, intellectuals from both the communities will come together in order to share their experiences, revisit their histories of oppressions, triumphs of their struggles, and discuss their future challenges.

This seminar is proposed to bring scholars from USA and India to discuss and share their expertise and learning focused on understanding caste and race from critical perspective. The purpose of the conference is therefore to engage in cross-cultural discussions about the similarities and differences between the African-Americans in USA and the Dalits in India with regard to their experiences of exclusion and discrimination, marginalization and exploitation and threat to their life itself, and that it would provide the participants of both USA and India with invaluable insights in understanding such realities that the two countries are faced with today.

Sub-themes of the Seminar

1. Changes in Dalit and Afro-American Identity in the context of Intensified Capitalism

During the last two decades of neo-liberal era, where free market, profit, individuality have not only become a desirable state policy, but also the much adored social and personal values, the question of equality is somewhat de-politicized, to mean equality for competing corporate forces with the blessing of state capitalism than pro-people. In India, the concepts like Dalit capitalism are widely used and many scholars have argued that such conceptualizations based on the principle of profit reduces the class-solidarity. This conference will examine this sub-theme to identify whether an opportunity or challenge exists there.
2. Social Policies that address Dalits and Afro-Americans

A person born to a deprived community may, because of the conditions of upbringing, have different endowments compared to those with a better upbringing. Hence struggle for substantial equalities have to face greater challenges today than ever before. Some of the challenges lie in formulating policies and programmes which are sensitive to address the notion of equality from specific socio-economic perspective. On the contrary, creating conditions for substantial equality would mean attending to the pressing need for social regulation of market for a sustainable economy. This sub-theme will examine what has been achieved and not achieved through social policies addressing the communities suffering from depressed identity.

3. Parliamentary Democracy and Marginalised Communities

To address this global interconnected structural complexities we need to turn to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar again who, while drawing heavily from the experiences of parliamentary democracies of Europe and experiences of Americans and Afro-Americans in the US, propounded that equality, liberty and fraternity should go together and without equality, liberty would only privilege the existing hierarchical order. The form and quality of nature of participation in political processes from Afro-Americans and Dalits will be examined in this sub-theme.

4. Human Rights Paradigm: Dalits and Afro-Americans

The idea of Human Rights has been privatized, making it as a part of corporate responsibility than upholding the rights of people to various forms of resources is a case in point. Thus, while upholding human rights as an integral virtue of democracy, people are being evacuated from the natural habitat to make way for multi-national companies. Moreover, struggles against rapacious developmental projects that push communities out of their land and resources are often described as anti-national. Through this sub-theme the conference will examine how the discourse and practice of human rights have contributed to the struggles of Dalits and Afro-Americans.

5. Diversity and Affirmative Action in the Era of Privatization: American and Indian Experiences

Caste system in India and race in the USA are compared for their institutional similarities, and also these two systems become the foundations on which the affirmative action programmes in these two countries operate. In India last six decades since Independence, affirmative action programmes have been implemented, albeit partially, only in government institutions. The institution of economic reforms in 1991 paved the way for the withdrawal of the state from wide range of economic activity and the consequent expansion of the private sector in the national economy. In this context this sub-theme is sought to interrogate cross country analysis of ‘Affirmative Action Policies in USA and India in the context of Privatization’. This will help to suggest the means and strategies...
for advancing a socio-legal vision on affirmative action policies in the current socio-economic environment.


Literary representations of oppressed communities often present the Multidimensional aspects of discrimination and social exclusion in ways that a sociological and political analysis cannot capture. That’s why we have seen literature by Dalits- Afro Americans have been subjected to much scrutiny in both literary and non-literary seminars. Quite often these narratives, while capturing the ups and downs in the life of an individual also carry with them the stories of entire communities. This character of Dalit Afro-American literatures stand out as a unique and distinctly different genre this sub theme will present a comparative analysis of literary works from Dalits and their American counterparts in order to highlight the similarities and differences between the two communities.

7. Media and Diversity- Experiences of Dalits and Afro-Americans

It is the shared experience of African Americans and Dalits in India that in times of their greatest crises, the mainstream news media invariably conjured up something 'more important' to report on. It stands to reason that the lack of journalistic focus on racial faultlines in the US and oppression of Dalits in India is deeply connected to the lack of newsroom diversity in these countries.

Although 36 per cent of the American population is made up of racial minorities, only 13 per cent of US journalists are from these communities according to a 2014 survey conducted by the American Society of News Editors (ASNE). In India, a 2006 survey by the Centre for Study of Developing Societies showed that of the country's top 300 journalists, not a single one was Dalit or Adivasi. In 1996, African-American journalist Kenneth J. Cooper found just One Dalit journalist in India.

Despite the striking similarities, it is evident that American newsrooms are far more accepting of the underclass. They have come a long way since the first survey conducted by the ASNE in 1978 found that less than 4 per cent of American journalists were from racial minorities. The first African American owned newspaper, Freedom's Journal, was launched in 1827. Today, African Americans own 200 newspapers!

These successes hold important lessons for those struggling to make Indian news organisations more inclusive. The focus of this session will be to compare these shared experiences.
PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, 9th JULY, 2015

Time: 10 am - 11.30 am
Venue: International Training Centre, NLSIU

INAUGURAL SESSION

Theme Song: Mr. Chintan Vikas, Singer

Welcome Note and Introductory Remarks
- Prof. S. Japhet, Director, CSSEIP, NLSIU, Bengaluru
- Prof. Kevin Brown, Indiana University, USA

Keynote address
- Prof. Sukhadeo Thorat, Chairperson, Indian Council for Social Science Research & Founding Managing Trustee, Indian Institute for Dalit Studies, New Delhi

Inaugural Address
- Dr. Mallikarjuna Kharge, Former Union Minister and Floor Leader of Indian National Congress Party in Parliament, New Delhi

Address by the Chief Guest
- Dr. Oscar Fernandes, Former Union Minister and Member of Parliament, New Delhi

Guests of Honour
- Prof. Anand Teltumbde, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur
- Mr. Devanur Mahadeva, Poet, Writer and Activist, Karnataka
- Dr. Siddalingaiah, Poet and Director - Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Study and Research Centre, Bengaluru University
- Prof. Gopal Guru, Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
- Prof. Parasuraman, Director, Tata Institute for Social Sciences, Mumbai
- Prof. Gail Omvedt, Sociologist and Research Director-Krantivir Trust, Maharashtra
- Dr. Ronald Hall, Michigan State University, USA
- Prof. Ken Dau Schmidt, Indiana University, USA
- Dr. Jakobi Williams, Indiana University, USA

Address by The Chair
- Prof. R. Venkata Rao, Vice Chancellor, NLSIU, Bengaluru

Vote of Thanks
- Pradeep Ramavath, Seminar Convener, Assistant Professor and Assistant Director, CSSEIP, NLSIU, Bengaluru

TEA BREAK-11.30 am to 12.00 pm
PERSPECTIVES ON THE THEME

DALITS AND AFRICAN-AMERICANS IN 21st CENTURY: LEARNING FROM CROSS-CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

**Time:** 12 pm - 1.30 pm  
**Venue:** International Training Centre, NLSIU

**Chair**  
Prof. G. Haragopal, Visiting Professor, NLSIU, Bengaluru

**Speakers**  
Prof. Gopal Guru, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi  
Prof. Kevin Brown, Indiana University, USA  
Prof. Gail Omvedt, Sociologist and Director - Krantivir Trust, Maharashtra  
Prof. Ronald Hall, Michigan State University, USA  
Prof. Anand Teltumbde, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur

LUNCH BREAK: 1.30 pm - 2.30 pm

PARALLEL SESSIONS

SESSION-I

SOCIAL POLICIES, DALITS AND AFRO-AMERICANS

**Time:** 2.30 pm - 4.00 pm  
**Venue:** First Floor, Conference Hall, International Training Centre, NLSIU

**Chair**  
Prof. Jayaram.N, Visiting Professor, NLSIU, Bengaluru

**Speakers**  
Prof. Abdul Aziz, Visiting Professor, CSSEIP, NLSIU, Bengaluru  
Prof. Ken Dau Schmidt, Indiana University, USA  
Dr. Amit Thorat, Associate Fellow, National Council for Applied Economic Research, New Delhi  
Prof. Sony Pellisery, Associate Professor, CSSEIP, NLSIU, Bengaluru
SESSION-II

LITERARY REPRESENTATIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION - REFLECTIONS ON AFRO-AMERICAN & DALIT TEXTS

**Time:** 2.30 pm-4.00 pm  
**Venue:** Ground Floor  
Conference Hall  
International Training Centre  
NLSIU

**Chair**  
Dr. Siddalingaiah, Poet and Director - Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Study and Research Centre, Bengaluru University

**Speakers**  
Prof. Nataraj Huliyar, Bengaluru University  
Prof. Sreedhara.V.S, Member, People's Democratic Forum, Bengaluru  
Prof. Mogalli Ganesh, Professor, Kannada University, Hampi  
Prof. K. Marulasiddappa, Writer and Theatre Exponent, Bengaluru  
Prof. S.G Siddaramaiah, Poet and writer, Bengaluru  
Prof. Kevin Brown, Indiana University, USA  
& US Scholars

**TEA BREAK : 4.00 pm-4.30 pm**

PLENARY SESSION

CHANGES IN DALIT AND AFRO-AMERICAN IDENTITY IN THE CONTEXT OF INTENSIFIED CAPITALISM

**Time:** 4.30 pm-6.00 pm  
**Venue:** Ground floor  
Conference Hall  
International Training Centre  
NLSIU

**Chair**  
Prof. Parasuraman, Director, Tata Institute for Social Sciences, Mumbai

**Speakers**  
Prof. Anand Teltumbde, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur  
Dr. Bharath Patanakar, President, Shramik Mukti Dal, Maharashtra  
Prof. Jalil Dozier, Lawyer in Washington, DC, USA  
Prof. Aseem Prakash, Associate Professor, Tata Institute for Social Sciences, Hyderabad

7.00 pm ONWARDS: VICE CHANCELLOR'S DINNER
SESSION -I

DIVERSITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN THE ERA OF PRIVATIZATION: AMERICAN AND INDIAN EXPERIENCES

THURSDAY, 10th July-2015

Time: 9.30 am -11.00 am

Venue: Ground Floor Conference Hall,
International Training Center,
NLSIU

Chair
Prof. Kevin Brown, Indiana University, USA

Speakers
Dr. Rajasekar Vundru, Senior IAS officer, Government of India
Mr. Aarmugam Raju, Founder Director, InvesT HOPE skills Academy, Chennai
Prof. Madeswaran, Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bengaluru
Prof. Trina Jones, Duke Law School, Durham, USA

TEA BREAK : 11.00 am-11.15 am

SESSION- I (Contd)

DIVERSITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN THE ERA OF PRIVATIZATION: AMERICAN AND INDIAN EXPERIENCE

Time: 11.15 am- 12.00 pm

Venue: Ground floor Conference Hall
International Training Center
NLSIU

Chair
Prof. Sukhadeo Thorat, Founding Trustee, IIDS, New Delhi

Speakers
Prof. S. Japhet, Director, CSSEIP, NLSIU, Bengaluru
Prof. Sudhir Krishnaswamy, Azim Premji University, Bengaluru
Ms. Saumya Uma, Assistant Professor & Assistant Director, CSSEIP, NLSIU, Bengaluru
National & International Initiatives & Experiences ....
PARALLEL SESSIONS

SESSION-II

HUMAN RIGHTS PARADIGM: DALITS AND AFRO-AMERICANS

Time: 12.00 pm-1.30 pm
Venue: Ground floor Conference Hall
International Training Center
NLSIU

Chair
Prof. Babu Mathew, NLSIU, Bengaluru

Speakers
Prof. G. Haragopal, Visiting Professor, NLSIU, Bengaluru
Ms. Du Saraswathi, Writer and Activist, Bengaluru
Ms. Sydney- Paige Patterson, M.A. Candidate at New York University, USA
Prof. Ronald E. Hall, Michigan State University, USA

SESSION-II

MEDIA AND DIVERSITY- EXPERIENCES OF DALITS AND AFRO-AMERICANS

Time: 12.00 pm - 1.30 pm
Venue: First floor Conference Hall
International Training Center
NLSIU

Chair
Prof. Jakobi Williams, Indiana University in Bloomington, USA

Speakers
Mr. Kotiganahalli Ramaiah, Poet and Activist, Kolar
Ms. B.T. Lalitha Naik, Writer and Social Activist, Bengaluru
Mr. Shivasunder, Writer and Social Activist, Bengaluru
Mr. Sudipto Mondal, Hindustan Times Group
Mr. Karthikeyan Damodaran, PhD Scholar, Edinburgh University, UK
US Scholars...

LUNCH BREAK: 1.30 PM-2.30 PM
PLENARY SESSION

PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY AND MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES

Time: 2.30 pm - 4.00 pm

Venue: Ground floor Conference Hall
         International Training Center
         NLSIU

Chair
Prof. G. Haragopal, Visiting Professor, NLSIU, Bengaluru

Speakers
Prof. Gail Omvedt, Sociologist and Research Director-Krantivir Trust,
Maharashtra
Prof. Muzaffar Assadi, Mysore University
Prof. Jakobi Williams, Indiana University, USA
Prof. Luis Fuentes-Rowher, Indiana University, USA

TEA BREAK: 4.00 pm-4.15 pm

ONE WOMAN SHOW: Du.Sawaswati, Writer & Activist, Bengaluru

Time: 4.15 pm- 4.45 pm

CONCLUDING SESSION

Time: 4.45 pm- 5.30 pm

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Prof. Kevin Brown, Indiana University, USA
Prof. Sukhadeo Thorat, IIDS, New Delhi
Prof. Japhet.S, CSSEIP, NLSIU, Bengaluru

GUESTS OF HONOUR

Prof.(Dr). Venkata Rao, Vice Chancellor, NLSIU, Bengaluru
Prof. Gail Omvedt, Prof. Haragopal, Prof. Anand Teltumbde, Dr. Ronald Hall,
Dr. Luis Fuentes-Rowher, Prof. Abdul Aziz, Dr. Ken Dau-Schmidt

VOTE OF THANKS

Ms. Saveetha Meganathan, CSSEIP, NLSIU, Bengaluru
1. Mr. Aarumugam Raju, Consultant for CII on Affirmative Action Policies
3. Dr. Aseem Prakash, Associate Professor, TISS, Hyderabad. http://www.tiss.edu/faculty/prakash-aaseem
4. Prof. Babu Mathew, Professor NLSIU, Bengaluru
7. Mr. Devan Brown, Graduate from the University of Indianapolis
9. Prof. Gopal Guru, Professor, Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, http://www.jnu.ac.in/Faculty/gguru/
10. Prof. Haragopal, Visiting Professor, NLSIU, Bengaluru http://mpp.nls.ac.in/administrator/upload/faculty/7TySVH_CV_Haragopal.pdf
11. Dr. Jakobi Williams - Professor in the Department of African American and African Diaspora Studies at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana; http://www.indiana.edu/~afroamer/faculty_jakobi.html
12. Dr. Ken Dau-Schmidt - The Willard and Margaret Carr Professor of Labor and Employment Law at Indiana University Maurer School of Law in Bloomington, Indiana; http://info.law.indiana.edu/faculty-research/faculty-staff/profiles/faculty/dau-schmidt-kenneth-g.shtml
13. Prof. Japhet, Professor and Director, CSSEIP, NLSIU, Bengaluru http://mpp.nls.ac.in/administrator/upload/faculty/s2OoGj_CV_Japhet.pdf
14. Dr. Luis Fuentes-Rowher - Professor of Law and Harry T. Ice Faculty Fellow at the Indiana University Maurer School of Law in Bloomington, Indiana; http://info.law.indiana.edu/faculty-research/faculty-staff/profiles/faculty/fuentes-rowher-luis.shtml
19. Prof. Mogalli Ganesh, Professor, Kannada University, Hampi
22. Prof. Muzaffar Assadi, Mysore University, Mysore
   http://uni-mysore.ac.in/assets/faculty/dept_politicalscience/cv-june-2012-FINAL-COPY.pdf
23. Prof. Nataraj Huliyar, Professor, Bengaluru University
24. Dr. Oscar Fernandes, Former Union Minister and Hon'ble Member of Parliament,
25. Prof. Padmaja Shaw, Visiting Professor, NLSIU, Bangalore
26. Prof. Parasuraman, Director, Tata Institute for Social Sciences, Mumbai
   http://www.tiss.edu/faculty/prof.-s.-parasuraman
27. Mr. Pradeep Ramavath J, Assistant Professor and Assistant Director, CSSEIP,
   NLSIU, Bengaluru
28. Dr. Rajasekar Vundru, Senior IAS officer, Government of India
   http://www.usaindiaechamber.org/RajaSekhar.shtml
29. Dr. Ronald E Hall- Professor at Department of Social Work, Michigan State
   University, http://socialwork.msu.edu/about/hall.php
30. Du. Saraswati, Activist and Writer, Bengaluru
31. Prof. Satish Deshpande, Professor, Department of Sociology, Delhi University
   http://people.du.ac.in/~sdeshpande/Hmpge1_CV.html
32. Mr. Shivasunder, Social Activist, Bengaluru
33. Dr. Siddalingaiah Poet and Director -Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Study and Research
   Centre, Bengaluru University
   http://www.caravanmagazine.in/users/siddalingaiah
34. P. Prof. Sony Pellisery, Associate cum Deputy Director, CSSEIP, NLSIU,
   Bengaluru
   http://mpp.nls.ac.in/administrator/upload/faculty/7OQDnv_CV_pellisery.pdf
35. Prof. Sreedhara V.S, Member, People's Democratic Forum, Bengaluru
36. Prof. Sudhir Krishnaswamy, Azim Premji University, Bengaluru
   http://azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/SitePages/sudhir-krishnaswamy.aspx
37. Mr. Sudipto Mondal, Hindustan Times Group
38. Prof. Sukhadeo Thorat, Chairman ICSSR, New Delhi
   http://www.icssr.org/chairman%20bio-data.pdf
39. Ms. Sydney-Paige Patterson, Graduate of the John W. Draper Interdisciplinary
   Master's Program at New York University
40. Prof. Trina Jones, Professor of Law at Duke University School of Law. https://
    law.duke.edu/fac/jones/
41. Prof. R. Venkata Rao, Professor & Vice Chancellor, National Law School of India
    University (NLSIU), Bengaluru
   https://www.nls.ac.in/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=82%3Aadr-venkata-rao&catid=8%3Afaculty&Itemid=58
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