

Andhra Pradesh

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'Dalit literature reflects oppression of Dalits'



Special Correspondent

Large number of delegates gathered for the plenary session

Books on Dalit writings brought only a little change: Vimal Thorat

GUNTUR: If the day one was dominated by Fourth World English Literature, it was the native Indian Dalit literature in Hindi, Marathi, Kannada and Telugu that took the centre stage on Tuesday with IGNOU professor Vimal Thorat making an impressive presentation on the 'Autobiography of Dalit Women'.

The plenary session chaired by Ambedkar Open University History Dean E. Sudha Rani turned out to be an intensely debated and largely attended one at the main venue while, the parallel sessions continued at three other venues. In her presentation, Ms.Vimal explained that Dalit women had been subjected to social isolation, deprivation of all forms for centuries in the caste ridden Indian society.

"Caste operates through its various religious and psychological methods, which deprived Dalits basic human rights. The injustice was, however, justified by the Bhraminical classes through religious sanctions, but people like Dr. B.R. Ambedkar played a major role in emancipating such people from suffering.

Recalling the movements to revolt such activities, she said that Maharashtra took the lead in Dalit struggle and pioneered in Dalit literature through prose, poems and autobiographies.

The autobiographies she chose was to highlight caste, class and gender bias during the oppression of Dalits, she said and majority of these writings brought a small change in the outlook in the society, though many of the practices still continue in the society today.

Dwelling on Questions of caste in Dalit Self Narratives, University of Kerala reader in English P.P. Ajay Kumar said that Dalit literature was not structured or entertaining like the ones conforming to Bhraminical ideological theories. Contemporary mainstream literature might not find it suitable but this literature was the realistic reflection of those oppressed classes.

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In a society, the Dalits were demographically sidelined and their writings did not border on romanticising the issues, but resisted it strongly, he observed. The writings may not be imaginative, but were able to make the world sit and think. University Rector K. Viyyanna Rao presented a memento to the participants in the plenary session.

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