REPORT ON ONE-DAY SEMINAR ON

TWO FACES OF SOCIAL MOVEMENT: BIRSA MUNDA AND KESHAB CHANDRA SEN

Introduction

On the occasion of the birth anniversary of Keshab Chandra Sen (19.11.1838-8.1.1884), the departments of Bengali and History at Brahmananda Keshab Chandra College jointly organised a seminar titled 'Sanskaar Andolaner Dui Mukh: Birsa Munda o Keshab Chandra Sen' on November 18, 2022. The seminar was divided into two halves. The first half dealt with Birsa Munda and the Tribal Movement under his leadership and the subject of the Second half was Keshab Chandra Sen. The Seminar was attended by almost seventy students and thirty teachers.





Objective

The first half was conducted by Dr.Aloke Kr. Chattopadhyay. He gave an initial introduction of how Birsa Munda is still revered as an icon across the tribal communities. Birsa Munda fought bravely against the British colonial system and spearheaded a movement against British oppression, thereby giving a call for 'Ulgulan' meaning Revolution. In her welcome address Principal Dr.Papia Chakroborti stressed the importance of the celebration of the birthday of Birsa Munda and Brahmananda Keshab Chandra Sen. As the IQAC coordinator, Dr. Ahmed Hussain too acknowledged the importance of the two aforementioned historical figures in today's perspective.





Content

Dr. Indranil Chattopadhyay in his lecture described how Birsa Munda as the leader of the tribal communities forced the colonial officials to introduce laws that would protect the land rights of the tribal communities. Birsa converted to Christianity and started the faith of 'Birsait' because he gained insight into the minds of the British colonial rulers and understood the efforts of the missionaries to convert tribals to Christianity. During the period from 1886 to 1890, Birsa Munda spent a large amount of time in Chaibasa which was close to the centre of the Sardars' agitation. The activities of the Sardars had a strong impact on the mind of the young man, who soon became a part of the anti-missionary and anti-government programmes. Birsa was arrested on March 3, 1900, by the British police while he was sleeping

with his tribal guerilla army at Jamkopai forest in Chakradharpur. He died in Ranchi jail on June 9, 1900, at the young age of 25. As a part of the year-long



commemoration of 75 years of Independence, the Union Cabinet has also approved the declaration of November 15 as "Janjatiya Gaurav Divas" to remember the contribution of Birsa Munda and other tribal freedom fighters. The feat that Munda achieved was seen as so important that, in fact, in recognition of his impact on the national movement, the state of Jharkhand was created on his birth anniversary in the year 2000.

The invited speaker Dr. Anil Kumar Sarkar, Babu Jagjivan Ram Chair Professor, University of Calcutta discussed Birsa Munda and his movement from a





historiographical perspective. Dr. Sarkar viewed the subject from a subaltern to a post-modern analysis.

During the second half of the seminar, the invited speaker at the seminar by the Bengali Department was Ritam Mukhopadhyay, Assistant Professor, Presidency University, whose discussions on various aspects of Keshab Chandra Sen's life and

work, such as his patriotism, his perspectives as a literary figure, and his views religion, were as enriching as they were insightful. In 1836, Keshab Chandra initiated the practice of worshipping Brahma vernacular in languages as well as the use of kirtans in spreading Brahmadharma. Besides this,



Keshab Chandra's establishment of the Nababidhan Brahma Samaj, his conflict of views with Debendranath Tagore, as well as his efforts to disseminate Brahmadharma in London were among the subjects of discussion at the seminar. Our speaker also argued strongly in favour of the publication of this pre-eminent orator's corpus of works.

Outcome

- The knowledge is important for the students on the role of Birsa Munda in the Freedom Struggle of India,
- Birsa Munday's ideas and thoughts towards the development of adhivasi or tribal people in India
- The relevance of Birsa Munda in the 21st century.
- The significance of Keshab Chandra's contributions in today's day and age further enriched the gathering and made our seminar a success.

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