

Dr B R Ambedkar birthday function



Celebrations to mark the birth anniversary of Dr B R Ambedkar are now a major event on the NAL calendar, and as Dr T S Prahlad, Director, pointed out, "this is a laboratory-wide celebration in which everyone participates". The highlight of this year's function, held on 16 April 2002, was, as always, the Dr B R Ambedkar Birthday Lecture delivered by Mr Justice M Ramakrishna, a former chief justice of both the Jammu and Kashmir High Court and the Guwahati High Court on Reservation and the role of Dr Ambedkar in the Constitution of India (ninth in the series).

The lecture proved to be a very thoughtful articulation. For example, Justice Ramakrishna pointed out how the reservation policy for services was introduced in 1935 (and not after Independence as is often believed), he wondered why the Indian Constitution, barely half a century old, has seen 85 amendments while the 300-year old US Constitution has only been amended 27 times. Justice Ramakrishna also vividly described Dr Ambedkar's meticulous home work while drafting the Indian Constitution and discussed the ruling of a 9-judge bench on the social justice vs efficiency question following the 1952 verdict in the State of Bihar vs Kamleshwar case. There was also an interesting anecdote about King Solomon's justice.

The function, compered most capably by Mr M R Narasimha Swamy, Head, TS, opened with an invocation rendered admirably by Mr Shekar Anandan, In his welcome address, Dr Prahlad paid a tribute to Dr Ambedkar ("he was a fearless advocate of the cause of the oppressed") and listed NAL's special initiatives for the SC/ST community. Mr M A Venkataswamy formally introduced Justice Ramakrishna. As always, 3 SC and 3 ST SSLC students scoring high marks in science subjects received gift cheques (this year, the scheme was extended to 2 SC and 2 ST children of NAL's employees). The well-arranged function ended with the vote of thanks by Mr I P Venkataramanappa.
