

Press Release Report

One Day National Conference on

Transformative Justice: Dr. Ambedkar's Legacy in Lawyering, Advocacy, and Constitutional Reforms

Symbiosis Law School, Pune, a constituent of Symbiosis International (Deemed University), in collaboration with the Symbiosis Centre for Advanced Legal Studies & Research (SCALSAR) and the Symbiosis Centre for Ambedkar Studies, successfully hosted a One Day National Conference on “*Transformative Justice: Dr. Ambedkar's Legacy in Lawyering, Advocacy, and Constitutional Reforms*” on 30th August 2025. The conference witnessed the participation of more than 100 students, faculty members, and paper presenters from across the country.

The event was graced by eminent dignitaries including **Chief Guest Prof. (Dr.) Dilip Ukey**, Vice Chancellor, Maharashtra National Law University, Mumbai. The Guests of Honour were **Prof. (Dr.) Ajay Choudhary**, Dr. Ambedkar Chair, Symbiosis Centre for Ambedkar Studies, and **Dr. Ramratan V. Dhumal**, Associate Professor, Ajeenkya D. Y. Patil University, Pune.

The inaugural session commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp, symbolizing enlightenment and growth. **Prof. (Dr.) Shashikala Gurpur**, *Fulbright Scholar*, Director of Symbiosis Law School, Pune, and Dean, Faculty of Law, SIU, delivered the welcome address. She highlighted the enduring global relevance of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's vision, drawing parallels with affirmative action, feminist jurisprudence, critical race theory, and constitutional reforms worldwide. She reminded the audience of Ambedkar's powerful advocacy for social justice, labour rights, and equality, citing landmark episodes such as the 1927 *Chowdar Tank* case. Dr. Gurpur urged the academic community to integrate Ambedkar's philosophy into their teaching, research, and advocacy, noting that his ideals resonate with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Chief Guest **Prof. (Dr.) Dilip Ukey** delivered the keynote address, recalling Ambedkar's journey from extreme poverty and caste discrimination to becoming the principal architect of the Indian Constitution and a global icon of justice. He emphasized that Ambedkar's contributions cannot be confined to categories such as jurist, sociologist, or economist, but must be seen as shaping the foundation of modern India. He also traced the influence of thinkers like Lord Buddha, Kabir, and Mahatma Jyotiba Phule on Ambedkar's philosophy. Dr. Ukey underscored Ambedkar's vision of the Constitution as a transformative instrument for reshaping India's social and economic order.

Prof. (Dr.) Ajay Choudhary further elaborated on Ambedkar's perspective that law must emerge from society's lived experiences and serve as an instrument of justice rather than domination. He stressed Ambedkar's faith in committed lawyers to drive social transformation and explained how Ambedkar interpreted Buddhism as a moral philosophy centered on equality and compassion. **Dr. Ramratan V. Dhumal** emphasized that Ambedkar saw law as a tool to address human suffering and insisted on active citizen participation, meaningful social reforms, and democratization beyond politics to ensure the effectiveness of rights.

The conference also featured an engaging second session of student and scholar paper presentations on diverse themes such as reservation policies, social and political democracy, the Uniform Civil Code, caste census, labour rights, federalism, and manual scavenging. Participants critically examined Ambedkar's legacy in light of contemporary challenges, linking constitutional provisions with ongoing struggles for justice and equality. Noteworthy presentations included discussions on reservations as substantive justice, Ambedkar's vision of federalism amidst linguistic disputes, the

persistence of caste-based inequalities, and the need for stronger labour rights in the gig economy. Innovative research also explored intersections between Ambedkar's thought and modern issues like artificial intelligence in education. Eleven papers were presented on the theme of the conference. The paper presentations sparked active discussions, with experts offering valuable feedback to young researchers. The Q&A sessions reflected the vibrant engagement of students and highlighted the continuing relevance of Ambedkar's ideas in addressing systemic inequalities.

The day-long event concluded with a vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to the speakers, organizers, and participants. The conference succeeded in creating a meaningful dialogue between scholars, students, and practitioners, reaffirming Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's enduring vision of justice, democracy, and equality. It underscored that Ambedkar's philosophy is not merely a historical legacy but a living framework that continues to inspire social and constitutional transformation in India and beyond.



The conference opened with the lighting of the lamp and floral tributes by the dignitaries: **Prof. (Dr.) Shashikala Gurpur**, *Fulbright Scholar*, Director of Symbiosis Law School, Pune, and Dean, Faculty of Law, SIU, Chief Guest **Prof. (Dr.) Dilip Ukey**, Vice Chancellor, Maharashtra National Law University, Mumbai; Guest of Honour **Prof. (Dr.) Ajay Choudhary**, Professor Dr. Ambedkar Chair, Symbiosis Centre for Ambedkar Studies, Symbiosis International University, Pune; **Dr. Ramratan V Dhumal**, Associate Professor, D.Y. Patil University, Pune and **Dr. Aparajita Mohanty**, Deputy Director (Academics), Symbiosis Law School, Pune.



Address by the Keynote Speaker, **Prof. (Dr.) Dilip Ukey**, Vice Chancellor and Professor of Law, Maharashtra National Law University, Mumbai.



Delegates and participants attending the conference