

'A BETTER WORLD IS POSSIBLE WITH LITERATURE'

Announcement of the upcoming 3rd Dalit Literature Festival on 3rd and 4th February, 2023

Ahead of the Dalit Literature Festival on 3rd and 4th February, 2023 on theme: 'A BETTER WORLD IS POSSIBLE WITH LITERATURE', a press conference was organized at the Aryabhata College, DU to announce and introduce the idea and the theme of the 3rd Dalit literature festival. The conference was addressed by Dr. Balraj Sinhmar, convener, Dalit Literature Festival (DLF); Dr. Suraj Badtiya, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan & founder, DLF; Dr. Hemlata, Ramanujan, Delhi University, Dr. Sudhesh Tanwar; and Dr. Anuj Kushwaha from Shyam Lal College.

Dr. Suraj Badtiya, started the conference with the history of the festival wherein the first edition was organised at the Kirori Mal College, Delhi University in 2019 and second edition in 2020. He said "While literature is facing a constant threat of being commodified, this festival provides space to counter the capitalist, upper class/caste narrative."

Dr. Balraj Sinhmar, spoke on the intent behind the festival by asking "How and what the mainstream literatures teach and preach about the Dalits?" He continued "The first Dalit Literature Festival happened in 2019. The Festival addressed issues on Dalits, Women, Tribals, LGBTQI, minorities etc. from across the nation. In the upcoming festivals there will be writers, culturalists, singers, playwrights and artists from over 15 languages."

"We will also talk about the issues which are the taboos and are not addressed by the mainstream. This festival will talk about the different perspectives from the Dalit lens. There is also an effort to break the popular narrative and talk about equity."

Dr. Anuj Kushwaha, said that when we talk about Dalit, what we are looking at? Political consciousness, their history and memories? He said "Suppression, oppression, pain and suffering are universal and in that sense all of us are dalits. The point is that how we rise to the occasion, like a phoenix, rising from the ashes. Thus, the celebration of those struggles, memories is what one would witness in this literary festival." He added "The DLF is not sponsored and relies on crowd funding to keep it untainted from any outside political influence" and welcomed all to the event after sharing the festival's details.

Sudhesh Tanwar said "It was our dream to do one festival every year; this is our first edition after pandemic. "Dalit is an umbrella term, pertinent to all global communities and drawing influences from them, for instance, the struggles of black panthers. We are trying to provide stage to different kinds of people and communities. Literature makes human and encourages humanity; thus, literature is the theme of upcoming festival".

Dr. Hemlata said "I would like to bring the feminist perspective. While talking of women issues, we do not talk about the Dalit women. Students are yet to know about the Dalit women. We need to talk about also all the oppressed communities, the tribals, labourers, the LGBTQIA communities. There is a marginalization of Dalit women in Academia and society and we are trying to bring justice to it. This is a movement through/in the academia to create an equitable world.

At the end, all speakers of 3rd Dalit Literature Festival concluded with the release of brochure of the program and ensured the next precedential step in the journey in continuation to the past precedencies.

Contact: 9891438166,9818544491

Organisers: Ambedkarvadi Lekhak Sangh (ALS); Dalit Adivasi Shakti Adhikar Manch (DASAM); Aryabhata College, Delhi University (South Campus); Delhi Solidarity Group (DSG); Magadh Foundation; Peoples Media Advocacy & Resource Centre-PMARC; National Domestic Workers Union; Research Institute for Dalit Adiwasi and Minorties (RIDAM); Apni Mati Patrika; Kahani Punjab Patrika; Ridam Patrika