

MODERNIZING DR. AMBEDKAR'S IDEOLOGY

Innovative Approaches for Today's Youth

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GSE
Publications

#26-38-159, 11 AT Agraharam, Guntur,
Andhra Pradesh, India

ISBN 978-81-973305-2-0 ISBN 978-81-973305-0-6



9 788197 330520



9 788197 330506

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GSE
Publications

INDIA

June, 2025

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Book Title : **Modernising Dr. Ambedkar's Ideology**

Authors : Prof. M. James Stephen

Imprint /Series Name : **GSE Publications**

Book Category : Authors Volume

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First Edition : June, 2025

Book Size : B5

Product Form : Paperback / Softback

Price : Rs.499/-

Publisher Website : www.gsepublications.in

DOI : www.doi.org/10.58599/9788197330506.05062025

ISBN Number (s) : 978-81-973305-2-0 (Print);978-81-973305-0-6 (Online)

Published by

GSE Publications Private Limited, India.

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PREFACE

In today's rapidly evolving world, we face an urgent challenge: how to preserve the profound legacy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar while making it resonate with the new generation. His vision for an inclusive, modern India remains one of the most powerful blueprints for social justice and equality. Yet, in an age of digital disruption and constant transformation, we need to rethink how we present these ideas in a way that is not only relevant but also engaging for the youth.

As Chair Professor of the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University, I have been fortunate to witness firsthand the potential that lies within today's students. Their energy and curiosity are boundless, but it is our duty to ensure that they are connected to the roots of India's journey toward equality and social progress, led by stalwarts like Dr. Ambedkar. This book is a reflection of that commitment—an attempt to bridge the gap between the wisdom of the past and the demands of the present. Over the past two years, we have undertaken various initiatives to create a dynamic environment for students and scholars to engage with Ambedkar's ideals. These initiatives were designed not just to educate, but to inspire action, creativity, and deeper understanding. I have seen students come alive with new perspectives on social justice, and I have witnessed how modern formats of learning and interaction can make the principles of Babasaheb Ambedkar resonate more strongly than ever. **“Modernising Dr. Ambedkar's Ideology”** is more than just a recounting of events—it is a call to action. It is an invitation to universities, educators, and students across the country to take the lead in revitalizing the ideals that Ambedkar fought for. Through innovative approaches, we can ensure that his vision continues to light the path toward a more equitable and just India. This work is a product of collective efforts, collaboration, and the sincere belief that Dr. Ambedkar's philosophy holds the key to addressing many of the social and economic challenges we face today. I hope that this book serves as a resource and an inspiration for those who believe in the transformative power of education and inclusion.

Prof. M. James Stephen

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Andhra University, Visakhapatnam

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work was supported by the Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, in partnership with Andhra University. Special recognition goes to the field researchers, educators, and students who made this transformative work possible.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

The motivation behind writing **“Modernising Dr. Ambedkar’s Ideology”** stems from a striking moment on the popular Telugu TV show “Everu Meelo Koteswarudu”, hosted by renowned actor Akkineni Nagarjuna. During the show, a simple yet significant question was posed: “Who among the following is popularly known as Babasaheb?” The options were A) Vallabhbhai Patel, B) Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, C) Rajendra Prasad, and D) Subhas Chandra Bose. A young contestant, playing to win a large prize, hesitated when faced with this question. Instead of identifying the correct answer—Dr. B.R. Ambedkar—she dismissed Ambedkar as a possibility and sought help through two lifelines. Unfortunately, even the audience poll steered her in the wrong direction, with the majority voting for Vallabhbhai Patel. After using the 50-50 lifeline, narrowing the options to Ambedkar and Patel, she still chose the incorrect answer, highlighting a troubling disconnect between today’s generation and Ambedkar’s legacy. This incident clearly reveals that many young people are unaware of the profound contributions of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, not only as the chief architect of India’s Constitution but also as a visionary philosopher who championed modernization, urbanization, and industrialization. It underscores a growing gap between contemporary society, especially the Zee Generation, and the rich legacy of Ambedkar’s ideology, which is more relevant than ever in the modern world.

In response to this disconnect, the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University, under the leadership of Prof. James Stephen Meka, took up the responsibility of reconnecting this generation with Ambedkar’s principles through a series of innovative events. These initiatives were designed to make students active participants, engaging them in ways that resonate with the digital age and contemporary sensibilities. Through interactive, creative, and inclusive formats, these events have proven successful in effectively communicating Ambedkar’s message to a modern audience. The central message remains unchanged—the advocacy for equality, social justice, and inclusion—but the methods of dissemination have been adapted to suit the evolving needs of society. By adopting modern approaches and leveraging student participation, these initiatives have bridged the gap between Ambedkar’s timeless ideology and the digital-savvy youth of

today. It is the sincere hope of the author that this book, “Modernising Dr. Ambedkar’s Ideology”, will serve as a model for universities across India, encouraging them to implement similar initiatives to address the disconnect between today’s youth and Ambedkar’s enduring legacy. With a deeper understanding of his vision, this generation will be better equipped to carry forward the values of social justice, equality, and progress that Ambedkar envisioned for India.

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CHAPTER 1

MODERNIZING DR. B.R. AMBEDKARS IDEOLOGY THROUGH DIGITAL INDIA: A CASE STUDY

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's vision was rooted in justice, equality, and human dignity. Modernizing his ideology means adapting these values to confront today's challenges. From digital rights to inclusive governance, his principles remain timeless. We must reinterpret his thoughts not just to remember, but to reform.

1.1 Introduction

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's ideology, deeply grounded in the principles of social justice, equality, and the empowerment of marginalized communities, continues to resonate powerfully in today's socio-political landscape. His vision of "liberty, equality, and fraternity" forms the cornerstone of India's democratic framework, advocating for a just and inclusive society where every individual, irrespective of caste or creed, has equal opportunities. While Ambedkar's legacy has long shaped India's quest for social equity, the emergence of the digital age presents unprecedented opportunities to realize his aspirations on a broader scale[1].

In the current era, the "Digital India" initiative, spearheaded by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has become a transformative force in bridging the digital divide and offering new tools for empowerment. By bringing critical services such as banking, education, and governance to the fingertips of millions, Digital India is significantly advancing Ambedkar's goal of uplifting the historically disadvantaged. The initiative provides a powerful platform for fostering inclusion, enabling marginalized communities to access resources and opportunities that were previously beyond their reach. This chapter explores the intersection of Ambedkar's ideals and modern digital initiatives, with a particular focus on a one-day seminar titled "Digital India: Ambedkar's Vision - Modi's Provision." Organized by the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University, this seminar examined how digital infrastructure and governance can be effectively aligned with Ambedkar's philosophy of social justice, empowering the excluded and fostering a more equal society. Through this exploration, the chapter sheds light on how technology, when rooted in the values of social inclusion, can serve as a catalyst for realizing Ambedkar's vision in contemporary India.

1.2 The One-Day Seminar: An Overview

The one-day seminar, the first of its kind under the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University, marked a historic moment for the institution. As a pioneering academic and social event, it successfully brought together a wide range of participants, including over

700 students, esteemed scholars, government officials, and national leaders, all united by a common goal: to explore the role of digital initiatives in realizing Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's vision of social justice, equality, and empowerment. The theme, "Digital India: Ambedkar's Vision - Modi's Provision," captured the essence of the seminar by linking Ambedkar's timeless pursuit of social justice with the transformative power of modern technology. It highlighted the profound impact that digital infrastructure, particularly through the "Digital India" initiative, can have in bridging societal gaps, creating equal opportunities, and empowering marginalized communities—goals that were central to Ambedkar's lifelong mission. The seminar provided a platform for critical discussions on how government-led digital initiatives could serve as tools for social change, creating a more inclusive society where everyone has access to opportunities and resources, regardless of their social or economic background. The event featured a series of expert lectures, panel discussions, and interactive sessions, where participants delved into topics ranging from digital literacy to e-governance and from financial inclusion to access to education and healthcare through digital platforms. Renowned speakers from both academia and industry shared insights on how technology can play a pivotal role in leveling the playing field for historically disadvantaged communities.

Beyond the academic discussions, the seminar created a sense of positive engagement and activism across the university campus and the city of Visakhapatnam. It fostered a new wave of enthusiasm among the student community, empowering them with knowledge and tools to advocate for digital inclusion and social justice. The event's success was not only measured by its attendance but also by the vibrant dialogue it initiated—dialogue that will likely shape future academic and policy-oriented efforts aimed at fulfilling Ambedkar's vision through the lens of modern technological advancements. This seminar stands as a testament to the enduring relevance of Dr. Ambedkar's ideals in contemporary society and the pivotal role that digital innovation can play in creating a more just and equal world.

1.3 Ambedkar's Vision and Digital India: A Synergy

At the heart of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's ideology is the principle of social inclusion—a vision where historically oppressed and marginalized communities, especially Dalits, are granted equal access to opportunities and resources. Ambedkar dedicated his life to breaking down the barriers of caste, economic inequality, and social discrimination that prevented these communities from realizing their full potential. His dream was to create a society where every individual, regardless of caste or background, could thrive without the weight of discrimination holding them back. In today's digital age, the "Digital India" initiative, launched on July 1, 2015, serves as a powerful tool to advance Ambedkar's vision by harnessing the transformative potential of technology. The initiative seeks to bridge the gap between the privileged and the underprivileged by

providing equal access to the digital world, thereby empowering those who have historically been excluded. By leveraging modern technological infrastructure, Digital India aims to break down entrenched systems of inequality, offering marginalized communities a chance to access opportunities that were once out of reach. The seminar highlighted the numerous ways in which Digital India has created pathways for inclusion and empowerment, emphasizing programs such as UPI (Unified Payments Interface), BharatNet, and various startup schemes. These initiatives have democratized access to essential financial, educational, and technological resources, significantly impacting rural and underserved populations. UPI, for example, has revolutionized digital payments, making financial transactions easy, accessible, and cost-effective for millions, including those in rural areas who previously had limited access to banking services. Similarly, BharatNet has expanded internet connectivity to India's rural heartlands, providing access to digital services that can enhance education, healthcare, and governance in these regions. In essence, the "Digital India" initiative reflects Ambedkar's philosophy of "Including the Excluded" and "Reaching the Unreached." By bringing digital services to marginalized communities, it empowers individuals with the tools necessary to improve their socio-economic conditions. The seminar underscored how these digital advancements are not only aligning with Ambedkar's call for social justice but also creating tangible changes in the lives of millions of disadvantaged citizens, offering them a future of greater equality and opportunity. Through initiatives like these, the digital revolution becomes a means to continue Ambedkar's legacy of dismantling discrimination and ensuring that all citizens can participate fully in the nation's progress.

1.4 Seminar Highlights: Expert Insights on Ambedkar's Vision

The one-day seminar on "Digital India: Ambedkar's Vision - Modi's Provision" was a landmark event that brought together notable dignitaries and experts, each contributing their unique perspectives on how Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's vision of social justice is being realized through modern digital advancements. Among the distinguished guests was Prof. P.V.G.D. Prasad Reddy, the Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University, who played a pivotal role in hosting the event. He emphasized how Ambedkar's timeless ideals of equality, fraternity, and social justice are finding new expressions in the digital age. Prof. Reddy underscored that technology, when harnessed correctly, can be a transformative tool in creating a more inclusive society, breaking down barriers that have historically marginalized certain communities. Shri A. Narayanaswamy, the Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, served as the chief guest and delivered an inspiring address. His speech focused on the lasting legacy of Dr. Ambedkar, not just as a social reformer but as a visionary thinker whose ideas resonate deeply in today's India. He emphasized that Ambedkar's fight for equality and justice laid the foundation for a more democratic and inclusive India. Shri Narayanaswamy pointed out that

with the rapid digitization under the "Digital India" initiative, the tools for realizing Ambedkar's dreams are now more accessible than ever before. By integrating digital technology into governance, education, and public services, the government is creating pathways for the empowerment of Dalits, women, and other historically marginalized communities.

A key highlight of the seminar was the expert lecture delivered by Dr. Suresh Batha, Additional Director and Officer In-Charge (OIC) at the Software Technology Park of India (STPI), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. Dr. Batha provided a comprehensive analysis of the "Digital India" initiative, focusing on its core components and how they align with Ambedkar's vision of social equality. His lecture, titled "Translating Ideals into Action: The Nine Pillars of Digital India," meticulously detailed the foundational pillars that support the program. From digital infrastructure to universal access to mobile connectivity, and from e-governance to digital literacy, Dr. Batha explained how these pillars are designed to break down social and economic barriers. One of the most impactful points of Dr. Batha's talk was his focus on how digital governance has democratized access to government services. He explained that initiatives such as Aadhaar-enabled service delivery, online banking through UPI, and the integration of technology in welfare schemes have brought the government closer to the people, particularly those in remote and rural areas. These initiatives are directly aligned with Ambedkar's ideals of equality and accessibility for all citizens, as they empower marginalized communities to access resources that were previously out of reach. Dr. Batha also shed light on how digital literacy programs, one of the nine pillars, are playing a crucial role in equipping underprivileged communities with the skills necessary to participate in the digital economy. He connected this with Ambedkar's philosophy that education is the most powerful tool for social empowerment. By promoting digital literacy, the government is ensuring that marginalized groups, especially in rural areas, are not left behind in the technological revolution. The expert lectures, particularly those by Prof. Reddy and Dr. Batha, brought to light the practical steps being taken to align digital advancements with Ambedkar's vision. The seminar served as a platform to reaffirm the relevance of Ambedkar's ideals in the contemporary digital landscape, showcasing how the government's efforts through "Digital India" are laying the groundwork for a more equitable and inclusive society.

1.5 Empowering the Marginalized through Digital Platforms

A particularly impactful moment during the seminar was the performance of a skit by a group of students that vividly illustrated the transformative power of digital platforms in empowering marginalized communities. The skit focused on the journey of a Dalit student from a rural background, highlighting the numerous barriers that individuals from underprivileged sections of society face in accessing essential services, education,

and economic opportunities. The student in the skit struggled with societal discrimination, limited access to quality education, and a lack of awareness about government services. However, with the advent of digital initiatives, his life takes a turn for the better. The skit effectively portrayed how digital platforms such as Common Service Centers (CSCs) have become a game-changer in rural India. CSCs, which serve as access points for the delivery of various government services, are designed to bridge the gap between the government and the underserved populations in remote areas. These centers provide an array of services including telemedicine, financial inclusion programs, skill development courses, and online access to educational resources. In the skit, the Dalit student used CSCs to access online education platforms, apply for scholarships, and even seek guidance on career opportunities—all from the confines of his village. The student’s empowerment through digital means allowed him to break free from the cycle of poverty and marginalization, embodying the seminar’s theme of “Including the Excluded.”

This performance captured the essence of the broader discussion during the seminar—how digital platforms are not merely tools of convenience but are instrumental in leveling the playing field for disadvantaged groups. Programs like BharatNet, which is providing high-speed internet connectivity to rural and remote areas, and DigiLocker, which allows individuals to store and access important documents digitally, were highlighted as crucial steps in ensuring that people in marginalized communities have the same opportunities as those in urban centers. These platforms ensure that government services reach the last mile, providing historically excluded communities access to healthcare, banking, education, and governance. The skit reinforced the seminar’s central message: digital platforms are not just technological advancements but vehicles of social change. The portrayal of the Dalit student’s empowerment through digital services aligned perfectly with Ambedkar’s vision of a society where everyone, irrespective of their caste or economic background, has equal access to resources and opportunities. It emphasized that technology, when deployed inclusively, has the power to dismantle long-standing structural inequalities and open up new avenues for marginalized communities to thrive. The audience, which included students, scholars, and national leaders, responded enthusiastically to the performance, recognizing the profound message it conveyed. The theme of “Including the Excluded” resonated deeply throughout the seminar, as discussions frequently returned to the real-world impact of digital empowerment in marginalized communities. The skit, with its relatable depiction of the challenges faced by disadvantaged individuals and the transformative role of digital platforms, served as a powerful reminder that the digital revolution has the potential to create a more equitable and just society. In essence, the skit was not just a performance but a symbolic representation of the broader objectives of the Digital India initiative—bridging the digital divide and ensuring that the benefits of technol-

ogy reach every corner of the country, especially those that have historically been left behind.

1.6 Prof. James Stephen's Role in Driving the Vision

The seminar was a visionary initiative conceived and organized by Prof. James Stephen Meka, the newly appointed full-time Chair Professor of the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University. Taking on the role with a clear sense of purpose, Prof. Stephen wasted no time in demonstrating his commitment to advancing Ambedkar's legacy through a blend of academic scholarship and practical community engagement. In less than a short span of his appointment, he orchestrated this significant seminar, which not only brought attention to Ambedkar's enduring ideals but also connected them with the contemporary digital landscape. The event's success served as a testament to his leadership and vision, marking the seminar as a landmark in the university's ongoing efforts to foster social justice and inclusion. In his address, Prof. Stephen highlighted the timeliness and relevance of continuing Dr. Ambedkar's mission in the digital age, asserting that technology provides new avenues to realize the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity that Ambedkar held so dear. He emphasized that the Digital India initiative is more than just a technological upgrade; it represents a tool to bridge long-standing socio-economic divides, allowing marginalized communities access to resources and opportunities that had previously been out of reach. For Prof. Stephen, digital platforms are modern-day instruments of social change, capable of fostering the inclusive society Ambedkar envisioned. Prof. Stephen's remarks went beyond just reflecting on the present; he outlined an ambitious and forward-looking agenda for the Chair. He spoke passionately about the long-term goals of the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair, which would focus on a range of future activities aimed at deepening the impact of Ambedkar's philosophy. These plans include hosting more seminars that explore the intersection of technology and social justice, launching educational campaigns to spread awareness about Ambedkar's teachings in the context of modern challenges, and conducting outreach programs specifically designed to engage rural and tribal communities. He stressed that reaching these underrepresented areas was not only a moral imperative but also a critical step in achieving true equality in a digital society.

Prof. Stephen's vision also includes practical, hands-on initiatives such as digital literacy drives in remote areas, collaborations with government and non-governmental organizations to ensure that the benefits of digital advancements reach the most disadvantaged, and partnerships with academic institutions to create research that bridges the gap between digital innovation and social justice. He articulated how these initiatives would carry forward Ambedkar's work in dismantling caste-based discrimination and empowering the marginalized, aligning with the broader national efforts under Digital India. His leadership in organizing the seminar not only reaffirmed Andhra University's

commitment to fostering a more inclusive society but also set the stage for the Chair to become a beacon of social change. By integrating Ambedkar's vision with the tools and platforms of the digital era, Prof. Stephen has positioned the Chair as a leading voice in the ongoing struggle for equality and justice in India. The seminar was thus not just a singular event but the starting point of a much larger movement aimed at creating a digitally empowered, socially inclusive society that honors Ambedkar's legacy.

1.7 Conclusion: The Future of Ambedkar's Ideals in the Digital Age

The one-day seminar at Andhra University served as a powerful catalyst for furthering the conversation about how modern technology can actualize the social justice ideals championed by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. In an era where digital transformation is reshaping every aspect of society, it is crucial to explore how these technological advancements can be harnessed to bridge long-standing social and economic divides. Ambedkar's vision of an inclusive and equitable society, one that grants equal access to resources and opportunities regardless of caste or social background, finds new relevance in the digital age. The seminar underscored that the alignment of digital initiatives with Ambedkar's vision is not merely a possibility but a necessity as India continues its rapid technological advancement. Throughout the event, it became evident that digital technology holds immense potential to empower those who have historically been marginalized. Programs like Digital India, which seek to democratize access to essential services such as education, healthcare, and financial tools, echo Ambedkar's call for social inclusion. The seminar illuminated how these technologies are breaking down barriers, enabling Dalits, tribal communities, and other underrepresented groups to access opportunities that were once beyond their reach. The real-world examples of digital empowerment presented during the seminar, such as the skits and expert lectures, offered tangible proof of how Ambedkar's ideals are being realized in the modern world. Yet, the seminar was just the beginning. The Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University, under the leadership of Prof. James Stephen, is poised to play a crucial role in ensuring that Ambedkar's legacy not only endures but also evolves to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Prof. Stephen's commitment to academic engagement, research, and community outreach positions the Chair as a pivotal institution in advancing Ambedkar's vision. By organizing future events, promoting digital literacy, and fostering dialogues on the intersection of technology and social justice, the Chair will continue to be a beacon of progress.

Looking ahead, the task of integrating Ambedkar's ideals with the tools of the digital era is a long-term mission. As India strides further into the digital age, the need to ensure that these technologies are inclusive and equitable will only grow. This ongoing effort requires sustained academic inquiry, government initiatives, and grassroots activism to create a society where everyone, regardless of caste or background, can

benefit from technological progress. In conclusion, the seminar not only highlighted the transformative power of digital platforms but also set the stage for continued exploration and action. Under Prof. Stephen's stewardship, the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University is well-positioned to lead this effort, ensuring that Ambedkar's vision for a just and inclusive society becomes a living reality in the digital age. The future of Ambedkar's ideals, interwoven with the promise of digital technology, holds immense potential for creating a more equal and empowered India.

Productive Outcomes of the One-Day Seminar: *Digital India: Ambedkar's Vision – Modi's Provision*

1. **Increased Awareness of Ambedkar's Vision:** The seminar helped participants, especially students and scholars, gain a deeper understanding of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's ideology of social justice, equality, and the need to uplift marginalized communities. The focus on "Including the Excluded, Reaching the Unreached, and Touching the Untouched" provided fresh insights into the application of Ambedkar's vision in modern India.
2. **Connection Between Ambedkar's Vision and Digital India:** The seminar successfully highlighted how the *Digital India* initiative, launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, is directly aligned with Ambedkar's vision of creating an inclusive society. The discussions illustrated how digital platforms have provided equal opportunities and access to essential services for marginalized groups, thereby reducing inequality.
3. **Encouragement for Youth Participation in Digital Transformation:** The seminar encouraged students to actively participate in the country's digital transformation. By showcasing successful examples of digital banking, UPI transactions, and start-up ecosystems, the event inspired the youth to leverage technology for societal change, in line with Ambedkar's emphasis on social inclusion.
4. **Enhanced Understanding of Government Schemes:** With detailed presentations from government officials and industry experts, participants gained in-depth knowledge of key government schemes like BharatNet, Start-Up India, and Common Service Centres (CSCs). This understanding empowers students and scholars to utilize these schemes for social, educational, and economic progress, especially in rural areas.
5. **Strengthened Role of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair:** The event established the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University as a dynamic platform for intellectual discourse and social initiatives. The overwhelming participation and positive feedback reinforced the chair's potential to lead more such events, contributing

to the propagation of Ambedkar's ideology and the promotion of Digital India.

6. **Commitment from Government Support:** The Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, Shri A. Narayanaswamy, assured continued support for the initiatives of the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair. His endorsement signified the government's alignment with the vision of equality and empowerment through digital initiatives, further strengthening the chair's future endeavors.
7. **Promotion of Digital Literacy and Governance:** The seminar emphasized the importance of digital literacy, governance, and banking in bridging social gaps. By encouraging participants to explore these areas, the event contributed to the broader goals of enhancing digital skills and understanding digital governance mechanisms in marginalized communities.
8. **Launch of Digital Platforms for Ambedkar Chair:** The launch of the official website and social media handles of the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair marked a significant step towards greater visibility and engagement. These platforms will serve as essential tools for spreading Ambedkar's ideology, organizing future events, and connecting with scholars and students across the globe.
9. **Motivation for Future Academic and Social Events:** The success of the event motivated both organizers and participants to plan future seminars, workshops, and outreach programs focusing on digital empowerment, social justice, and inclusive development. The momentum from this seminar is expected to lead to more impactful initiatives under the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair.
10. **Building a Network of Scholars and Experts:** The event created a network of students, scholars, and experts who are now more connected to the broader goal of social justice through digital means. This network is likely to foster collaborative efforts in research, policy-making, and community development, further advancing the mission of Ambedkar's ideology in the digital age.

These outcomes not only demonstrate the immediate impact of the seminar but also set the stage for sustained engagement in social transformation through technology, in alignment with Ambedkar's timeless vision of equality and justice.

1.8 Event Details and Report

Event:	One-Day Seminar
Title:	“ <i>Digital India</i> ”
Theme:	Ambedkar’s Vision – Modi’s Provision
Date and Time:	03 December 2022 (Saturday), 10:00 AM onwards
Venue:	Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Assembly Hall, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam
Organiser:	Dr. M. James Stephen, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair Professor, Andhra University
Participants:	700 Students and Scholars
Special Address (Online):	Shri A. Narayanaswamy ji, Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, Govt. of India
Chief Guest:	Prof. P.V.G.D. Prasad Reddy, Hon’ble Vice-Chancellor, Andhra University
Guests of Honour:	Prof. K. Samatha, Rector, Prof. V. Krishna Mohan, Registrar, Andhra University
Expert Lectures:	1. Dr. Suresh Batha, Additional Director and OIC, Software Technology Parks of India (STPI), Ministry of Electronics and IT, GoI 2. Prof. James Stephen Meka, Full-Time Chair Professor, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair, Andhra University

Purpose: To educate young scholars and students about the ideology of Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar—“Including the Excluded”, “Reaching the Unreached”, and “Touching the Untouched”—through the *Digital India* initiative.

Objectives of the Seminar:

1. To propagate the vision of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar for equal opportunities without any discrimination.
2. To bring awareness of the provisions made under the leadership of Shri Narendra Modi ji through the *Digital India* initiative in realizing Ambedkar’s vision of social justice.

Context and Theme: *Digital India* is a flagship programme of the Government of India

launched on 1 July 2015 by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, aiming to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. This seminar explored how Ambedkar's ideals of social justice, equality, and fraternity align with the transformative digital provisions made under Digital India.

Motto: The seminar aimed to explain how Digital India has enabled "Including the Excluded, Reaching the Unreached, and Touching the Untouched," particularly in connecting the disconnected youth to Dr. Ambedkar's ideology in the digital age.

The event began with a special song and a skit performed by Andhra University students, showcasing the empowerment of a Dalit student through digital services. The skit received overwhelming appreciation from participants.

Guest Participation and Remarks

Dignitaries seated in the front row included:

- IPR Chair, Govt. of India
- Rector, Andhra University
- Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Andhra University
- Registrar, Andhra University
- Additional Director and OIC, STPI, Ministry of Electronics and IT, Govt. of India
- HoD, Computer Science



Figure. 1.1 Guests in the first row (Left to Right): The IPR Chair, Govt. of India, Rector of A.U., Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor of A.U., Registrar of A.U., Additional Director and OIC, Software Technology Parks of India (STPI), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Govt. of India, and HoD, Computer Science.

The Guest of Honour, the Rector of Andhra University, Prof. K Samatha spoke and congratulated the Ambedkar Chair for organizing such an interesting seminar. Prof T.Shobasri, Principal, IASE also spoke about Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and his role in independent India.

Special Address by Shri A. Narayanaswamy ji

Shri. A. Narayanaswamy ji, Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, Govt. of India gave a special address to the participants online and said that it is the first time he participated in a seminar of this kind after becoming the Minister of State. He congratulated Prof. James Stephen for organising such a wonderful event with in few days of his charge as Full-time chair professor. Knowing the importance of this seminar I joined virtually, He said. He spoke of the vision of Dr. B.R Ambedkar of equal opportunities without any discrimination, which is fulfilled by Digital India, launched by the visionary Prime Minister Shri. Narendra Modi ji. He also spoke about how Digital India pursues to transform India into a digitally empowered society and economy. He advised the Ambedkar chair to organise many such seminars, awareness, campaigns, and orientation programs, especially in the rural and tribal areas in and around the District. The Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, Govt. of India assured the best support towards all the future endeavours of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair, Andhra University.

The Registrar of Andhra University, Prof. V. Krishna Mohan congratulated on the Ambedkar Chair for organizing such an exciting event in such a short span of time. Seeing the response of the people, He said, this chair is definitely going to be an impacting chair at Andhra University. He articulated the prime theme of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who has not only given us the constitution but also emphasised on the development of society by avoiding social menace, social evil, and social disparities and bringing them to equality and justice. He also opined that digitalization is the order of the day, so such a theme integrated with Ambedkar's vision and the Prime Minister's ideology by including the excluded population, which brings them to the main fold, especially women. The Chief Guest Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University Prof. P.V.G.D. Prasad Reddy inaugurated a video of "Dr. B.R. Ambedkar chair, Andhra University", which details about Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and the roles and responsibilities of the Chair.

The guest lecture by Dr. Suresh Batha, Additional Director and OIC, Software Technology Part of India (STPI), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Govt. of India, appreciated the theme "Ambedkar's Vision - Modi's Provision" and appreciated the wonderful thought. The chair was appreciated for selecting the right person for the right theme to present the expert lecture in the seminar. He expressly explained in detail the vision points of Digital India and its Nine pillars and elaborated on how the government has achieved so far. He also pointed out that through the introduction of UPI payments (digital payments), 2500 transactions happen every second in India. He also explained about the Common Service Centres (CSS), which enable government initiatives to reach directly the rural population. Other schemes such as Electronic Manufacturing Clusters (EMC), India BPO Promotion Scheme (IBPS) Scheme,



Figure. 1.2 Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, Govt. of India addressing the gathering - Online .

National Policy on Software Products (NPSP) Scheme, Startup India Scheme, Next Generation Incubation Scheme (NGIS) encourage the start-up ecosystem. He proudly stated that India has successfully risen from 400 to 85000 startups in India since 2014 because of the inception of Digital India. He told the students to take advantage of the schemes available and reminded them of the slogan that states, Indian Talent + Indian Technology = India Tomorrow (Digital India).



Figure. 1.3 Dr. Suresh Batha, Additional Director and OIC, STPI, Govt. of India giving the guest lecture .

Dr. James Stephen Meka, the newly appointed full-time Chair Professor of the Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University was welcomed with a huge applause by the participants. He wholeheartedly thanked all the students and scholars who had come on time and gave a brief sketch about the thrust areas of the Dr. B.R.Ambedkar Chair, Andhra University.

He said that Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was the only champion who had shaped the modern India. One thought provoking statement of Ambedkar’s Vision is : “I like the religion that teaches liberty, equality and fraternity”. He also zeroed on how Ambedkar’s vi-



Figure. 1.4 Prof. James Stephen, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Full-time Chair Professor, welcoming the participants.

sion has extended in “Including the Excluded, Reaching the Unreached and Touching the Untouched”. He also expounded on Digital governance, Digital Banking and its impact on India. He clearly said to the audience that he pretty well knew his mission as a Professor of the Dr. Ambedkar Chair and affirmed that he would fulfil the tasks that have been mentioned in the MoU between Dr. Ambedkar Foundation and the Andhra University. He also assured the administration of Andhra University and Shri. A. Narayanaswamy ji, Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, Govt. of India and the directors of Dr. Ambedkar foundation that he would certainly bring out the expected outcome.

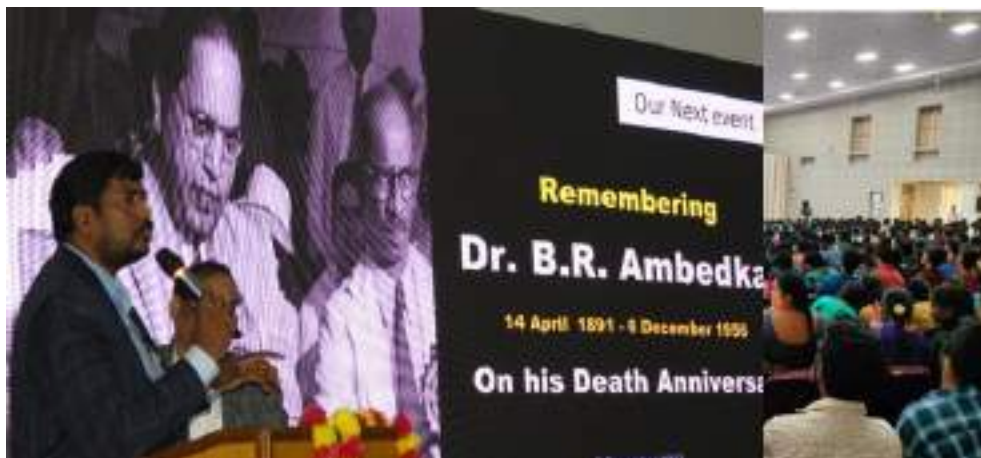


Figure. 1.5 Prof. James Stephen, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Full-time Chair Professor, giving the guest lecture

The Chief Guest Hon’ble Vice Chancellor Prof. P.V.G.D. Prasad Reddy has recollected the statement “Cultivation of the mind should be the ultimate essence of human existence”. He highly commended Dr. James Stephen for organising a seminar with a huge gathering, which is the first of its kind. He also advised that this kind of theme with a great prominence must be propagated in various other universities to reach out

the contemporary society.



Figure. 1.6 Chief Guest address by Hon'ble Vice-chancellor, Prof. P.V.G.D. Prasad Reddy.

He also stressed the importance how technology connects the disconnected; People with ethics will have the power to overcome the economy. The concept of India - Be Indian first and be Indian last and nothing should come in between, neither caste, nor religion, no influence, no money and nothing, which is the sole philosophy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. He also spoke on how the Prime Minister of this country in his flagship programs such as Startup India, Digital India, Young India, has emphasised the pride of India. He also acknowledged the efforts of young and dynamic Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Shri. Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy who has been implementing various schemes for the marginalised people in letter and spirit. He also highlighted the various initiatives of the University, he encouraged the students to be serious and work towards their goal and make the most of the benefits available. He suggested that once you have received it, give it back to society, not just in terms of money but also in terms of knowledge, warmth or good word. He concluded by saying to make use of digital technology and connect entire India and make India the most happening place.

The Hon'ble Vice Chancellor has launched the website, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts officially on the LED Screen in the presence of various administrators of the University. The Seminar concluded with the National Anthem. Students have expressed their sincere thanks to Prof. James Stephen for organizing such an enlightening seminar. The scholars of the university expressed their views about this program that was Innovative, Informative and thought-provoking. They also wanted to be part of such several events by the chair in the future as well. Prof. V. Krishna Mohan, Registrar of Andhra University, expressed appreciation for the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair and emphasized its importance in promoting the vision of social justice through digital means. The event set a strong precedent for future academic, outreach, and policy-based discussions under the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair, contributing to the national agenda of digital empowerment and social inclusion. The one-day seminar on "Digital India: Ambed-

kar’s Vision – Modi’s Provision” served as a powerful convergence of ideology and innovation, effectively bridging Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s timeless vision of social justice with the transformative potential of the Digital India initiative. With expert insights, enthusiastic student participation, and the esteemed presence of dignitaries from academia and government, the event underscored how digital empowerment can be a catalyst for inclusive growth. The overwhelming response from over 700 participants reflected the seminar’s success in igniting intellectual discourse, fostering digital awareness, and reinforcing the role of technology in realizing Ambedkar’s dream of an equitable society. This event not only marked a milestone for the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University but also laid the foundation for future initiatives rooted in justice, empowerment, and innovation.



Figure. 1.7 Chief Guest, Hon’ble Vice-chancellor, Prof. P.V.G.D. Prasad Reddy opening the website of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair, Andhra University.



Figure. 1.8 Chair Professor addressing the press in the presence of Rector of A.U. and Adl. Director of STPI.

CHAPTER 2

REJUVENATING AMBEDKAR'S IDEOLOGY THROUGH CULTIVATION OF DIGITAL MINDS

On December 6, 2022, Dr. Ambedkar Chair, Andhra University organized a noteworthy round table discussion to honor the 66th death anniversary of Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, one of India's most revered social reformers and architects of the Indian Constitution. This event, titled "Rejuvenating Ambedkar's Ideology through Cultivation of Digital Minds," aimed to explore innovative ways to reconnect contemporary youth with Ambedkar's profound thoughts and teachings, particularly in the context of the digital landscape that defines modern communication and learning. The event attracted a remarkable turnout, with over 650 participants joining online, comprising students, scholars, and engaged citizens keen to explore Ambedkar's relevance today. Additionally, 30 distinguished experts from diverse fields contributed their insights, representing a rich tapestry of perspectives that included judiciary members, industrialists, academicians, social workers, and research scholars. This multidisciplinary approach underscored the event's goal of fostering a holistic understanding of Ambedkar's ideology and its applicability to contemporary issues. The gathering served as a platform for dynamic discussions centered around two fundamental questions posed by the moderator, Dr. M. James Stephen, the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair Professor at Andhra University. The first question examined the disconnection of today's youth from Ambedkar's teachings, prompting reflections on the reasons behind this gap. The second question focused on identifying strategies to effectively re-establish that connection, particularly through digital means. This chapter delves into the rich insights and recommendations that emerged from this pivotal gathering, capturing the collective vision articulated by the participants. The discussions not only celebrated Ambedkar's legacy but also emphasized the need for a renewed commitment to his ideals of social justice, equality, and empowerment. The event highlighted the critical role that digital tools and platforms can play in disseminating Ambedkar's teachings, making them accessible and engaging for a new generation that navigates a vastly different social and technological landscape. As the dialogue unfolded, it became clear that integrating Ambedkar's ideology into contemporary discourse is not merely an academic exercise; it is a necessary endeavor to inspire youth to become active agents of change. By harnessing the power of digital technology, the participants envisioned a future where Ambedkar's principles could resonate widely, challenging societal norms and advocating for the marginalized[2]. This chapter serves to illuminate the vital conversations and collaborative efforts that took place during this round table discussion, showcasing how the enduring relevance

of Ambedkar's teachings can be rejuvenated in the digital age. Through a synthesis of expert opinions, personal anecdotes, and forward-thinking proposals, the narrative will underscore the imperative of not only preserving Ambedkar's legacy but also dynamically engaging with it to inspire action and foster social transformation in today's world.

2.1 Inaugural Remarks and Keynote Addresses

The event commenced with an invigorating set of inaugural remarks delivered by Dr. M. James Stephen, the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair Professor at Andhra University. In his opening address, Dr. Stephen set a reflective tone for the discussions that were about to unfold, emphasizing the profound relevance of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's ideology in contemporary society. He warmly welcomed both the online and offline attendees, acknowledging the diverse audience gathered to honor Ambedkar's legacy and engage in meaningful dialogue. Dr. Stephen introduced the keynote speakers, highlighting their significant contributions to social justice and governance, thus laying the groundwork for a thought-provoking session. The first keynote address was delivered by Shri N. Sanjay, IPS, the Director General of A.P. Fire Services. His speech was compelling and charged with urgency as he underscored the critical need to reconnect today's youth with the visionary ideals of Ambedkar. Drawing upon a poignant moment from a widely viewed quiz show, he shared an anecdote where a young contestant was unable to identify Ambedkar as the answer to a fundamental question about Indian history and social reform. This incident resonated deeply, serving as a stark reminder of the broader disconnect that exists between contemporary youth and the foundational principles of social justice, equality, and empowerment that Ambedkar tirelessly championed throughout his life.

Shri Sanjay's narrative struck a chord with the audience, framing this disconnect as a pressing challenge that necessitates immediate attention. His remarks became a clarion call, urging the panel and participants to explore innovative and engaging educational strategies aimed at rejuvenating Ambedkar's ideology. By advocating for the cultivation of digital minds, he emphasized the importance of utilizing modern technology to disseminate Ambedkar's teachings and make them accessible to a new generation that thrives in a fast-paced digital world. Following Shri Sanjay's inspiring address, Shri Debender Prasad Majhi, the former Director of the Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, provided further insights into the enduring relevance of Ambedkar's teachings. He highlighted the various initiatives undertaken by the foundation to promote Ambedkar's ideals and underscored the importance of community engagement in making these teachings resonate within society. Together, the inaugural remarks and keynote addresses set the stage for an enriching dialogue, igniting a shared commitment among participants to actively seek out ways to bridge the gap between Ambedkar's timeless philosophies

and the current realities faced by youth today. The discussions that followed would be guided by the urgent need to reestablish this connection, ensuring that Ambedkar's vision remains a vital force in shaping the future of social justice and equality in India. Expert Perspectives: Disconnection and Reconnection Following the keynote speeches, the round table discussion at Andhra University evolved into a dynamic and multi-faceted dialogue, segmented into five expert tables. Each table was assigned the task of exploring various dimensions of Ambedkar's ideology, enabling participants to engage deeply with specific aspects of his vision for social justice, equality, and empowerment. This structure fostered a rich exchange of ideas and perspectives, reflecting the collective commitment to rejuvenating Ambedkar's teachings for a new generation.

Dr. M. James Stephen, as the organizer and moderator, skillfully framed the discourse by posing two critical questions that resonated with the event's overarching theme: Where, why, and how did the youth become disconnected from Dr. Ambedkar's ideology? and What measures can be taken to reconnect them? These questions acted as a catalyst for thoughtful discussion, prompting participants to critically reflect on the current state of youth engagement with Ambedkar's teachings and the various barriers that contribute to this disconnection. Disconnection from Ambedkar's Ideology At the expert tables, participants began by unpacking the concept of disconnection from Ambedkar's ideology. Many experts emphasized that the youth's disengagement can be traced to several interrelated factors. One of the primary concerns raised was the pervasive influence of modern digital culture, characterized by the rapid consumption of information. This culture often leads to a superficial understanding of historical figures and their contributions. The anecdote shared by Shri N. Sanjay about a young contestant struggling to identify Ambedkar during a popular quiz show became a focal point in this discussion, effectively illustrating a broader, alarming trend: a widespread lack of awareness and appreciation for Ambedkar among young people. Furthermore, several experts highlighted systemic issues within the education system as a significant contributor to this disconnection. They argued that while the curriculum might mention Ambedkar's contributions, it often lacks the depth necessary to convey the relevance of his ideas to contemporary challenges. Many noted that the focus on rote learning over critical engagement with historical contexts leaves students ill-equipped to grasp the significance of Ambedkar's work. The reduction of his teachings to mere facts in textbooks does not encourage meaningful connections to current social justice issues or inspire a commitment to advocacy. In addition to educational shortcomings, experts discussed the role of societal narratives and media representations in shaping youth perceptions of Ambedkar. They pointed out that mainstream media often overlooks or misrepresents his contributions, failing to present him as a relevant figure in today's discourse on equality and social justice. This lack of visibility further exacerbates the disconnect, making it challenging for young people to see Ambedkar as a source of

inspiration or guidance. As discussions continued, participants brainstormed potential strategies to address these disconnection points. They recognized that fostering a deeper understanding of Ambedkar's life and teachings requires a multifaceted approach, one that engages youth through innovative educational methods, community involvement, and the effective use of digital platforms to disseminate knowledge. By collectively addressing the barriers to engagement, the participants aimed to pave the way for a renewed interest in Ambedkar's ideology among young people, empowering them to carry forward his legacy in meaningful ways.

2.2 Reconnection Strategies

In addressing the second question about reconnection, the discussions at each table yielded a wealth of innovative ideas and strategies. Experts proposed a range of initiatives aimed at bridging the gap between Ambedkar's timeless teachings and the aspirations of modern youth.

1. **Integrating Ambedkar's Ideology into Education:** Many suggested revising educational curricula to include more comprehensive studies of Ambedkar's life, philosophy, and his vision for a just society. This could involve the development of specialized courses or modules that emphasize critical thinking and social justice, rather than mere historical facts.
2. **Utilizing Digital Platforms:** Participants recognized the power of technology in engaging youth. Proposals included creating digital content, such as podcasts, webinars, and social media campaigns, to disseminate Ambedkar's teachings in formats that resonate with younger audiences. Leveraging platforms popular among youth could help make his ideology more relatable and accessible.
3. **Community Engagement Initiatives:** Several experts advocated for community-based programs that involve youth in social justice activities inspired by Ambedkar's principles. These could include workshops, seminars, and outreach programs that encourage young people to actively participate in societal change, thereby embodying Ambedkar's ethos of empowerment.
4. **Creating Collaborative Spaces:** The idea of establishing libraries, cultural centers, and discussion forums dedicated to Ambedkar's work emerged as a crucial point. These spaces could serve as hubs for learning and dialogue, fostering a deeper understanding of his ideology among youth.
5. **Promoting Leadership Development:** Lastly, there was a consensus on the importance of cultivating young leaders who are well-versed in Ambedkar's ideology. Programs aimed at leadership development that incorporate discussions on social justice and equity could empower youth to advocate for change within their communities.

The expert tables became a fertile ground for brainstorming and exchanging ideas, with participants passionately engaging in dialogues that not only highlighted the issues at hand but also provided concrete pathways for reconnection. The discussions underscored a collective recognition that re-engaging youth with Dr. Ambedkar's ideology is not merely an academic endeavor; it is a vital necessity for nurturing informed, active citizens who can carry forward the legacy of social justice and equality that Ambedkar envisioned.

Expert Tables

1. Judicial Perspectives

Experts:

- Mr. D. Ramulu, M.A., LL.M (Ph.D), District and Sessions Judge
- Mr. Byapa Arun Kumar, Senior Advocate and Member, BAR Council
- Mr. I.A. Ahamed, Senior Advocate
- Mr. B. Krishna Rao, Advocate
- Mr. Vagupalli Chinna Rao, Advocate and President, Visakha SC/ST Advocate Welfare Association

Notes: This table emphasized the importance of creating accessible resources, such as Ambedkar memorial libraries and digital platforms, to enhance youth engagement with Ambedkar's teachings. The focus was on legal education reform and deeper integration of Ambedkar's contributions into the justice system.

2. Industrial Insights

Experts:

- Mr. Battula Srinivasa Rao, DGM, RINL
- Mr. Pakki Bhaskar, Technology Manager, Deloitte
- Mr. K. Sanjeeva Rao, General Manager, HR, RINL
- Mr. O.R.M. Rao, Retd. General Manager, RINL
- Mr. Matori Sreenivasa Rao, AIDRF State Secretary

Notes: The industrialists advocated for national recognition of Ambedkar's broader contributions beyond reservations, urging a focus on meritocracy and social justice in addressing contemporary societal issues.

3. Academic Contributions

Experts:

- Prof. K. Samatha, Rector, Andhra University
- Prof. T. Sobha Sri, Principal, IASE, Andhra University

- Prof. V. Vijay Lakshmi, Principal, College of Law
- Dr. I. Vijaya Babu, Principal, Dr. VS Krishna Govt. Degree College
- Prof. K. Venkata Rao, HoD, CS and SE, Andhra University
- Prof. P. Rajesh Kumar, HoD, ECE Dept., Andhra University

Notes: Academicians discussed the challenge of information overload, stressing the need for engaging methodologies to teach Ambedkar's principles. They proposed integrating biographies of leaders into educational curricula to enhance students' understanding of his impact.

4. Social Work and Community Engagement

Experts:

- Ms. E.P.S. Bhagyalakshmi, DPO, NSS, Visakhapatnam District
- Ms. M. Nirupama, MSW, Banyan Organization
- Ms. S. Satyaveni, MSW, Program Coordinator, Plastics for Change India Foundation
- Dr. Sridevi Talluri, State Coordinator, 108 Ambulances in Emergency Response Center (ERC)
- Mr. M. Paul Bhaskar, MBA, LLB, Director, Axis Seven Eco Structures Pvt. Ltd.

Notes: Social workers called for integrating community service into educational programs, emphasizing the need for students to focus on social change and activism rather than just academic success.

5. Research Insights

Experts:

- Mr. Lakshmaiah, Dept. of English
- Mr. G. Vinay Kumar, Dept. of Botany
- Mr. P. Srikanth, Dept. of Environmental Sciences
- Mr. M. Pruthvi Raju, Dept. of Oceanography
- Mr. K. Giribabu, College of Pharmaceutical Sciences

Notes: Research scholars highlighted the importance of understanding Ambedkar's life and struggles as foundational knowledge for youth to appreciate his contributions. They advocated for further research into his ideology and its relevance in contemporary society. These expert tables provided a platform for targeted discussions that identified the factors contributing to the disconnection between contemporary youth and Ambedkar's teachings, while also generating actionable insights for revitalizing his ideology in modern contexts. The following section presents a comprehensive overview of the

insights, perspectives, contributions, and engagements from each expert table. This detailed analysis highlights the multifaceted discussions that emerged during the round table event, reflecting a collective commitment to reconnecting youth with the principles of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Each table brought forth unique viewpoints and actionable recommendations, contributing to a richer understanding of how Ambedkar's ideology can be revitalized for contemporary relevance. By examining the distinct themes and suggestions from the judicial, industrial, academic, social work, and research perspectives, we can appreciate the diverse approaches to fostering a deeper engagement with Ambedkar's teachings. Each expert table engaged in thoughtful dialogue, identifying the barriers to youth connection and proposing innovative solutions to bridge these gaps. This synthesis not only underscores the significance of Ambedkar's legacy but also sets the stage for future initiatives aimed at embedding his philosophy into the educational and social fabric of society.

2.3 Judicial Insights

The judicial table at the round table discussion provided a critical perspective on the ways in which Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's ideology can be integrated into contemporary society, particularly through legal and educational frameworks. Mr. D. Ramulu, the District and Sessions Judge, took the lead in articulating a vision for enhancing youth engagement with Ambedkar's teachings, emphasizing that the physical commemoration of Ambedkar—while important—should not overshadow the need for substantive educational resources and access to information.

2.3.1 Advocating for Ambedkar Memorial Libraries

Mr. Ramulu passionately argued for the establishment of more Ambedkar memorial libraries across the nation. He contended that these libraries would serve as vital repositories of knowledge, enabling young people to explore Ambedkar's life, writings, and ideologies in a comprehensive manner. He suggested that these spaces should not only house books and documents but also incorporate digital resources that make Ambedkar's thoughts accessible to a broader audience. This would allow youth to engage with his work in ways that resonate with their everyday lives, fostering a deeper understanding of his contributions to social justice and equality. The emphasis on digital resources reflects an understanding of the contemporary landscape in which youth engage with information. By integrating technology, these libraries could offer online access to lectures, webinars, and interactive discussions that align with Ambedkar's ideals, making his teachings more relatable and engaging for the digital generation.

2.4 Educational Reforms

Building on Mr. Ramulu's insights, other advocates at the table echoed the sentiment that educational reforms are essential for fostering a deeper appreciation of Ambed-

kar's contributions. They argued that current curricula often provide a limited view of Ambedkar's legacy, focusing predominantly on his role in drafting the Constitution without fully exploring the breadth of his ideas on social justice, economic equity, and human rights. Advocates proposed that educational institutions should integrate comprehensive modules on Ambedkar's philosophy, including discussions on his critiques of caste, his vision for gender equality, and his thoughts on economic empowerment. By presenting these topics in a nuanced manner, educators can inspire students to draw connections between Ambedkar's teachings and the pressing social issues of today. Furthermore, they highlighted the importance of involving legal studies and social justice courses in the reformation process. By fostering a curriculum that emphasizes the relevance of Ambedkar's ideology in contemporary law and social movements, students would be better equipped to understand and advocate for the principles of justice and equality in their communities.

Conclusion The insights from the judicial table underscored a collective call to action: to move beyond mere symbolic gestures and toward concrete initiatives that promote a living legacy of Ambedkar's teachings. By establishing libraries that serve as centers for learning and by advocating for educational reforms that prioritize Ambedkar's contributions, the judicial community envisions a future where youth are not only aware of Ambedkar's legacy but are also actively engaged in embodying his principles. This multifaceted approach has the potential to revitalize interest in Ambedkar's ideology, ensuring that his vision for a just society continues to inspire and empower future generations.

2.5 Industrial Perspectives

The discussion among industrialists at the round table emphasized the importance of recognizing Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's contributions beyond the conventional narrative surrounding reservations. Mr. Battula Srinivasa Rao, the Deputy General Manager at Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL), took a prominent role in this discourse, advocating for a national recognition of Ambedkar's work and its profound relevance to contemporary societal and industrial issues. National Recognition of Ambedkar's Contributions Mr. Srinivasa Rao initiated his remarks by underscoring that Ambedkar's legacy should not be confined to his role as the architect of the Indian Constitution or the champion of reservation policies. Instead, he argued that a broader understanding of Ambedkar's contributions is essential for appreciating his holistic vision for Indian society. He stressed the need for a national acknowledgment that celebrates Ambedkar as a pioneering social reformer, economist, and advocate for human rights, whose ideas continue to resonate in various sectors, including industry and business. He posited that recognizing Ambedkar's work on a national level could foster a deeper engagement with his philosophies among industrial leaders, policymakers, and the workforce. Such

recognition could help cultivate a culture that values inclusivity and meritocracy while honoring the principles of social justice that Ambedkar ardently defended. *Shifting Perspectives on Meritocracy and Social Justice*

A key aspect of Mr. Srinivasa Rao's argument was the call for a paradigm shift in how Ambedkar is perceived in the context of meritocracy. He urged participants to move away from a narrow focus on reservations and instead explore how Ambedkar advocated for a fair and just society that rewards talent and hard work. This perspective aligns with contemporary discussions in the industrial sector, where meritocracy is often touted as a foundational principle for success. Mr. Srinivasa Rao pointed out that Ambedkar's vision encompassed the creation of opportunities for all, particularly for marginalized communities, while emphasizing the importance of fostering skills, education, and entrepreneurship. By advocating for a merit-based system that also considers historical injustices, industrialists can better align their practices with Ambedkar's philosophy, ultimately contributing to a more equitable workforce. *Implications for the Industrial Sector* The implications of Mr. Srinivasa Rao's insights are significant for the industrial sector. He proposed that businesses should actively engage in practices that reflect Ambedkar's ideals, such as promoting diversity and inclusion within their organizations. This includes creating pathways for underrepresented groups to access training and development opportunities, thereby empowering them to succeed based on their skills and potential. Additionally, he emphasized the role of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in this context. Industries can contribute to social justice by investing in community development projects, educational initiatives, and skills training programs aimed at uplifting disadvantaged populations. By integrating Ambedkar's principles into their CSR strategies, companies can play a pivotal role in fostering social equity and bridging the gap between meritocracy and historical inequalities.

Conclusion In summary, the industrialists' discussion, particularly the insights from Mr. Battula Srinivasa Rao, highlighted the necessity of rethinking Ambedkar's legacy in light of contemporary challenges. By advocating for national recognition of Ambedkar's broader contributions and promoting a meritocratic framework rooted in social justice, the industrial sector can contribute to a more equitable and inclusive society. This approach not only honors Ambedkar's vision but also positions industries as catalysts for positive social change, aligning economic growth with the foundational ideals of justice and equality that Ambedkar championed.

2.6 Academic Contributions

The round table discussion brought together academicians who critically examined the challenges posed by information overload in contemporary society, particularly concerning the dissemination of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's ideology. While acknowledging the vast reservoir of knowledge available today, they collectively emphasized the neces-

sity of making Ambedkar's teachings both engaging and accessible to the youth. The Challenge of Information Overload The participants noted that in an era characterized by rapid technological advancements and an overwhelming amount of information, the youth often struggle to filter through the noise and connect with substantive content. This phenomenon can lead to apathy and disengagement, particularly concerning significant historical figures like Ambedkar, whose teachings remain relevant but may get overshadowed by more sensational or easily digestible content. Prof. K. Samatha, the Rector of Andhra University, articulated the concern regarding society's general negligence toward the importance of reading biographies of great leaders. She pointed out that biographies serve as vital narratives that not only chronicle the achievements and ideologies of influential figures but also provide context for their contributions to society. By neglecting these narratives, the youth miss out on essential lessons that could inspire and motivate them to engage with social justice and equality in meaningful ways.

2.7 Creative Methodologies for Teaching Ambedkar's Principles

In response to the challenges highlighted, Prof. V. Vijay Lakshmi proposed innovative and creative methodologies for teaching Ambedkar's principles. She emphasized the need to move beyond traditional pedagogical approaches that often rely heavily on lectures and textbooks. Instead, she suggested that educators explore diverse, interactive formats that can captivate students' attention and foster a deeper understanding of Ambedkar's ideology. Prof. Lakshmi advocated for the integration of multimedia resources, such as documentaries, podcasts, and social media campaigns, which could present Ambedkar's teachings in relatable contexts. By utilizing these platforms, educators can engage students in discussions that link Ambedkar's ideas to current social issues, thereby making his ideology more relevant to their everyday experiences.

2.8 Experiential Learning and Community Engagement

In addition to multimedia resources, the academicians discussed the importance of experiential learning and community engagement. They proposed organizing workshops, debates, and seminars where students could actively participate in exploring Ambedkar's principles and their applications in today's society. Such initiatives would not only deepen students' understanding but also encourage them to think critically about how these ideals can be translated into action. Moreover, partnerships with local communities and organizations could be established to provide students with hands-on experiences related to social justice initiatives inspired by Ambedkar's teachings. Engaging with real-world issues can empower youth to become advocates for change, thereby fostering a generation that is not only informed about Ambedkar's contributions but also motivated to uphold and promote his values.

Conclusion The discussions among academicians at the round table underscored the

pressing need to adapt educational practices to the realities of information overload while making Ambedkar's ideology engaging and accessible to the youth. By emphasizing the importance of reading biographies and proposing creative teaching methodologies, the academicians aimed to rekindle interest in Ambedkar's teachings. Through innovative and interactive approaches, they envisioned a future where young people are not only aware of Ambedkar's contributions but are also inspired to embody his principles in their lives, ultimately contributing to a more just and equitable society.

2.9 Social Work and Community Engagement

During the round table discussion, social workers highlighted the essential role of community engagement in shaping the values and responsibilities of students. They emphasized that integrating community service into educational curricula could significantly enhance students' sense of responsibility and commitment to social activism. This perspective aligns with the broader goal of nurturing well-rounded individuals who are not only academically proficient but also socially conscious. Integrating Community Service into Education The social workers argued that community service should be viewed as an integral component of education rather than an optional extracurricular activity. By embedding service-learning opportunities within academic programs, institutions can provide students with practical experiences that connect theoretical knowledge with real-world challenges. Such integration allows students to apply their skills and insights in meaningful ways, fostering a deeper understanding of societal issues and the importance of contributing to the common good. For instance, students could participate in projects that address local community needs, such as organizing health camps, educational workshops, or environmental initiatives. Through these experiences, students would gain firsthand knowledge of the challenges faced by marginalized groups and the significance of collective action in driving social change. This experiential learning approach not only enriches students' educational journeys but also cultivates empathy and a sense of duty toward their communities.

2.10 Cultural Shift in Aspirations

Ms. E.P.S. Bhagyalakshmi passionately called for a cultural shift in student aspirations, urging them to prioritize social change over mere academic achievements. She noted that in contemporary society, there is often an overwhelming emphasis on grades and academic success, which can overshadow the importance of social responsibility. This narrow focus can lead to a generation of individuals who may excel in their studies but lack the awareness or motivation to engage with pressing social issues. Bhagyalakshmi advocated for a redefinition of success, one that encompasses not only academic accomplishments but also the impact individuals can have on their communities. She encouraged students to envision their futures in terms of how they can contribute to

social justice and equality, inspired by the ideals of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. By fostering a culture that values social engagement, educational institutions can help cultivate a generation of leaders who are committed to making a difference. *Strategies for Promoting Social Change*

To facilitate this cultural shift, the discussion included strategies for promoting social change among students. Social workers proposed implementing mentorship programs where experienced activists could guide students in their journeys toward becoming socially responsible citizens. These mentors could provide insights into effective activism, community organizing, and advocacy, empowering students to take meaningful action. Additionally, incorporating discussions on social issues into the curriculum—whether through dedicated courses or interdisciplinary approaches—can enhance students’ awareness and understanding of the challenges facing society. By engaging with topics such as inequality, discrimination, and environmental sustainability, students can develop a more nuanced perspective on the world around them.

Conclusion The contributions of social workers at the round table emphasized the critical importance of community engagement in education and the need for a cultural shift in student aspirations. By integrating service-learning into curricula and redefining success to include social responsibility, educational institutions can foster a generation of students who are not only academically proficient but also deeply committed to social change. In doing so, they can honor the legacy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar by cultivating a society that values justice, equality, and the collective welfare of all its members.

2.11 Research Insights

During the round table discussion, research scholars provided valuable contributions that underscored the critical importance of comprehensively understanding Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s life and ideology. They argued that a foundational knowledge of his struggles, achievements, and the historical context in which he operated is essential for the youth to truly appreciate the significance of his contributions to Indian society.

2.12 The Necessity of Contextual Understanding

The scholars emphasized that Ambedkar’s ideology cannot be fully grasped in isolation; it must be understood within the broader narrative of his life experiences and the socio-political challenges he faced. They pointed out that Ambedkar was not just a theoretical thinker; he was a pragmatic leader who navigated immense personal and societal obstacles in his quest for justice and equality. His journey from a marginalized background to becoming the chief architect of the Indian Constitution is not only inspiring but also illustrative of the systemic issues he sought to address. By studying Ambedkar’s life in detail, students can better understand the historical injustices that motivated his work. The scholars suggested that educational curricula should include

comprehensive biographical studies, which highlight key events in Ambedkar's life, such as his struggles against caste discrimination, his advocacy for women's rights, and his efforts to secure social justice for the oppressed. This foundational knowledge can foster a deeper appreciation of his contributions and the relevance of his teachings in contemporary society.

2.13 Bridging the Gap between Ideology and Application

Moreover, the researchers argued that understanding Ambedkar's ideology is not just about recognizing its historical significance; it is also about applying his principles to current social issues. They stressed that Ambedkar's vision encompassed a commitment to social justice, equality, and human rights, which remain crucial in today's context. By engaging with his ideas, youth can find guidance on how to address ongoing challenges such as caste-based discrimination, gender inequality, and economic disparities. The scholars proposed that educational institutions should create platforms for students to engage in discussions and debates centered around Ambedkar's thoughts. These forums could serve as spaces for students to explore how his principles can be applied to contemporary issues, encouraging critical thinking and active participation in social change. Utilizing Research for Advocacy Additionally, the research scholars highlighted the role of academic research in furthering the understanding of Ambedkar's ideology. They encouraged scholars to conduct studies that analyze the impact of Ambedkar's teachings on various aspects of Indian society, including education, politics, and social movements. Such research could inform policy decisions and advocacy efforts aimed at promoting equality and justice. The scholars also suggested that universities could establish research centers focused on Ambedkar's contributions, providing resources for students and the community to engage with his work more deeply. By facilitating access to scholarly articles, books, and other materials related to Ambedkar's life and ideology, educational institutions can help cultivate a more informed and socially aware student body.

Conclusion The insights shared by research scholars at the round table highlighted the necessity of understanding Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's life and ideology as a foundational step for youth engagement with his principles. By emphasizing the importance of contextual knowledge, bridging the gap between ideology and application, and utilizing academic research for advocacy, scholars underscored the potential for Ambedkar's teachings to inspire a new generation committed to social justice and equality. Through a deeper understanding of Ambedkar's legacy, students can become empowered agents of change in their communities, embodying the values he championed throughout his life.

2.14 Collective Recommendations

The round table discussion led to a series of actionable recommendations aimed at effectively bridging the gap between the youth and the profound ideology of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. These recommendations, drawn from the diverse perspectives of participants, focus on enhancing educational engagement, fostering community involvement, and leveraging modern technology to make Ambedkar's teachings more accessible and relevant.

1. **Enhanced Educational Resources** One of the foremost recommendations was the establishment of more Ambedkar-centric libraries and digital platforms. These resources would serve as repositories of knowledge, offering access to Ambedkar's writings, biographies, and analyses of his contributions to society. By creating a rich repository of information, students and scholars alike would have the opportunity to engage deeply with his work. Digital platforms could include interactive websites, online forums, and databases that provide comprehensive resources for research and study.
2. **Curriculum Integration** Participants unanimously advocated for the inclusion of Ambedkar's works in school and college syllabi. This integration would ensure that students are exposed to his philosophy early in their educational journey. By embedding Ambedkar's writings into the curriculum, educational institutions can instill a sense of social justice and equality from a young age. This approach would not only familiarize students with his ideas but also encourage critical thinking about their relevance in today's society. The integration could take various forms, including dedicated courses, project-based learning, and interdisciplinary studies that connect Ambedkar's teachings with subjects like history, political science, and sociology.
3. **Community Outreach Programs** The discussions highlighted the need to mobilize youth to engage with underprivileged communities, fostering a practical understanding of Ambedkar's ideals. Community outreach programs could involve volunteering, advocacy initiatives, and educational workshops aimed at empowering marginalized groups. By participating in these programs, students would gain firsthand experience of the social issues Ambedkar fought against, cultivating empathy and a commitment to social change. Such initiatives would help bridge the theoretical understanding of Ambedkar's philosophy with real-world applications, encouraging young people to become active agents of transformation in their communities.
4. **Innovative Learning Approaches** To capture the interest of younger generations, participants emphasized the importance of utilizing innovative learning approaches that leverage digital media. This could include the development of engaging content for social media platforms, interactive learning modules, and multimedia presentations that make Ambedkar's teachings relatable and appealing. Educational institutions could collaborate with technology experts to create mobile applications and online courses that present Ambedkar's philosophy in an engaging manner, using gam-

ification, storytelling, and visual arts to enhance learning experiences. By adapting to the digital habits of today's youth, these approaches can help foster a deeper connection to Ambedkar's ideals. 5. Advocacy and Awareness Campaigns

Finally, the participants recognized the necessity of organizing advocacy and awareness campaigns to raise public consciousness about Ambedkar's contributions and their relevance to contemporary social issues. This could involve seminars, workshops, public forums, and cultural events that celebrate Ambedkar's legacy while addressing current challenges such as caste discrimination, gender inequality, and social justice. Engaging experts, activists, and community leaders in these campaigns would amplify the message and encourage broader participation from diverse audiences. Such initiatives would not only honor Ambedkar's contributions but also inspire ongoing dialogue about how his teachings can inform efforts to create a more equitable society.

6. Interactive Workshops and Seminars Organize regular interactive workshops and seminars where students can engage directly with scholars, activists, and practitioners who specialize in Ambedkar's philosophy. These sessions could focus on specific themes such as social justice, caste dynamics, and constitutional rights. By creating a platform for dialogue and discussion, participants can explore the practical implications of Ambedkar's teachings in contemporary society. 7. Ambedkar Study Circles Establish Ambedkar Study Circles in educational institutions, where students can gather to read, discuss, and analyze Ambedkar's works together. These informal groups can facilitate peer learning and encourage critical thinking about his ideas, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation among participants. Such circles can also invite guest speakers to share insights, making the discussions more dynamic and engaging. 8. Cultural Programs and Competitions Encourage schools and colleges to host cultural programs, debates, and competitions centered around Ambedkar's ideals. Activities like essay writing contests, poetry readings, and art exhibitions can creatively express students' interpretations of his teachings. These platforms can stimulate interest and passion for social justice themes, encouraging students to articulate their thoughts and engage with the material in a meaningful way. 9. Digital Storytelling Initiatives Develop digital storytelling initiatives that encourage young people to share their experiences related to social justice, equality, and Ambedkar's principles through video, podcasts, or blogs. By amplifying youth voices and perspectives, these initiatives can help personalize Ambedkar's teachings, making them more relatable and inspiring. Collaborating with media students or professionals can enhance the quality and reach of these stories. 10. Partnerships with NGOs and Community Organizations Forge partnerships with NGOs and community organizations that align with Ambedkar's principles. By collaborating on projects that address social issues—such as poverty alleviation, education, and gender equality—students can gain practical experience while actively promoting Ambedkar's vision. These partnerships can also create opportunities for internships,

volunteer work, and field studies, providing students with hands-on involvement in social change initiatives. 11. Mentorship Programs Implement mentorship programs where students are paired with professionals who are well-versed in Ambedkar's ideology and its applications in various fields. Mentors can guide mentees on how to incorporate these principles into their careers, providing insights into social justice advocacy, law, education, and public policy. This one-on-one engagement can deepen students' understanding and inspire them to embody Ambedkar's teachings in their personal and professional lives. 12. Social Media Campaigns Launch social media campaigns that promote Ambedkar's teachings and relevance to contemporary issues. Using hashtags, infographics, and short videos, these campaigns can reach a broader audience and engage youth where they spend a significant amount of their time. Highlighting success stories, relevant quotes, and discussions on current social issues can create a sense of community and shared purpose among young people. 13. Involvement in Policy Advocacy Encourage youth to participate in policy advocacy efforts that align with Ambedkar's vision for social justice. This could involve organizing petitions, attending public hearings, and collaborating with local leaders to address community issues. By actively engaging in advocacy, students can apply their understanding of Ambedkar's principles in real-world contexts, fostering a sense of agency and empowerment. 14. Research Grants and Scholarships Create research grants and scholarships dedicated to studying Ambedkar's contributions and their impact on modern society. Encouraging students to conduct research projects or theses on relevant topics can deepen their engagement with his ideology while fostering academic exploration and innovation.

The collective recommendations from the round table discussion reflect a comprehensive strategy for reconnecting youth with Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's ideology. By enhancing educational resources, integrating his works into curricula, fostering community engagement, employing innovative learning approaches, and conducting advocacy campaigns, stakeholders can create a dynamic environment that celebrates Ambedkar's legacy. These actionable steps aim to empower young people to embrace Ambedkar's principles, fostering a new generation committed to the ideals of social justice, equality, and human rights.

Conclusion: The round table discussion at Andhra University served as a significant tribute to the enduring legacy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, marking a crucial initiative to adapt and modernize his ideology for the digital age. This gathering was not merely a commemoration but rather a proactive engagement aimed at fostering a deeper understanding of Ambedkar's teachings among contemporary youth. The collective insights shared by experts from diverse fields highlighted an urgent need to nurture a generation that is not only knowledgeable about Ambedkar's principles but is also empowered to apply them in advocating for social justice and equality. The discussions brought forth a wealth of ideas on how to bridge the gap between Ambedkar's timeless philosophy

and the realities faced by today's youth. By emphasizing the importance of educational reforms, innovative teaching methodologies, and community engagement, the round table underscored a shared commitment to revitalizing Ambedkar's teachings. It aimed to ensure that his ideas resonate with the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century, thereby equipping the younger generation to navigate the complexities of modern society.

Moreover, the event exemplified the importance of sustained dialogue and collaborative efforts among educators, social workers, researchers, and industry leaders. Such partnerships are essential for creating a robust framework that fosters engagement with Ambedkar's ideology. The recommendations that emerged from the discussions provide a roadmap for integrating his principles into various educational and social initiatives, making them more accessible and relevant to young minds. The Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University, under the visionary leadership of Dr. James Stephen, is uniquely positioned to spearhead this transformative journey. By continuing to facilitate discussions, promote research, and encourage community outreach, the Chair can play a pivotal role in ensuring that Ambedkar's ideals remain a source of inspiration and empowerment for marginalized communities across India. As we move forward, it is imperative that the collective efforts initiated at this round table extend beyond the confines of academia. By actively engaging youth in the pursuit of social justice and equality, we can create a more inclusive society that honors Ambedkar's vision. In doing so, we will not only honor his legacy but also cultivate a generation of informed advocates who are committed to realizing his dream of a just and equitable world for all.

2.15 Event Details and Report

Occasion: 66th Death Anniversary of Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

Theme / Topic: *Rejuvenating Ambedkar's Ideology through Cultivation of Digital Minds*

Date and Time: 06-DEC-2022 (Tuesday), 02:00 PM onwards

Venue: Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair Cluster, First Floor, Science and Technology Bhavan, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam

Experts: 30 Experts, spread over five different expert tables from different fields

Participants: 650+ online participants (Students and Scholars)

Keynote Address: Shri. N. Sanjay, IPS, Director General, A.P. Fire Services

Special Invitee: Shri. Jupudi Prabhakar, Advisor - Social Justice, Government of Andhra Pradesh

Special Address (Online): Shri. Debender Prasad Majhi, CSS Faculty Consultant and Course Director, DOPT-ISTM, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Government of India, Former Director, Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India.

Organiser and Moderator: Dr. M. James Stephen, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair Professor, Andhra University

Agenda: Raising Young Leaders with Dr. Ambedkar's Ideology

Expert Tables:

- Judicial
- Industrialist
- Academicians
- Social Workers
- Research Scholars



Figure. 2.1 Judicial Table.

Judicial

1. Mr. D. Ramulu, M.A., L.L.M. (Ph.D), District and Sessions Judge
2. Mr. Byapa Arun Kumar, Senior Advocate and Member, BAR Council
3. Mr. I.A. Ahamed, Senior Advocate
4. Mr. B. Krishna Rao, Advocate
5. Mr. Vagupalli Chinna Rao, Advocate and President, Visakha SC/ST Advocate Welfare Association



Figure. 2.2 Industrialist Table.

Industrialist

1. Mr. Battula Srinivasa Rao, DGM, RINL
2. Mr. Pakki Bhaskar, Technology Manager, Deloitte
3. Mr. K. Sanjeeva Rao, General Manager, HR, RINL
4. Mr. O.R.M. Rao, Retired General Manager, RINL
5. Mr. Matori Sreenivasa Rao, AIDRF State Secretary



Figure. 2.3 Academicians Table.

Academicians

1. Prof. K. Samatha, Rector, Andhra University
2. Prof. T. Sobha Sri, Principal, IASE, Andhra University
3. Prof. V. Vijay Lakshmi, Principal, College of Law
4. Dr. I. Vijaya Babu, Principal, Dr. V.S. Krishna Govt. Degree College

5. Prof. K. Venkata Rao, HoD, CSandSE, Andhra University
6. Prof. P. Rajesh Kumar, HoD, ECE Dept., Andhra University



Figure. 2.4 Social Workers Table.

Social Workers

1. Ms. E. P. S. Bhagyalakshmi, DPO, NSS, Visakhapatnam District
2. Ms. M. Nirupama, MSW, Banyan Organization
3. Ms. S. Satyaveni, MSW, Program Coordinator, Plastics for Change India Foundation
4. Dr. Sridevi Talluri, State Coordinator, 108 Ambulances (ERC)
5. Mr. M. Paul Bhaskar, MBA, LLB, Director, Axis Seven Eco Structures Pvt. Ltd.



Figure. 2.5 Research Scholars Table.

Research Scholars

1. Mr. Lakshmaiah, Department of English
2. Mr. G. Vinay Kumar, Department of Botany

3. Mr. P. Srikanth, Department of Environmental Sciences
4. Mr. M. Pruthvi Raju, Department of Oceanography
5. Mr. K. Giribabu, College of Pharmaceutical Sciences

The meeting started with inaugural remarks by Prof. James Stephen Meka and he introduced the guests to both online and offline audiences. Shri. N. Sanjay, IPS and Shri. Debendra Prasad Majhi, former Director, Dr. Ambedkar Foundation has joined online. The meeting started with a video where a young girl was questioned in Kaun Banega Crorepati (KBC – Telugu) hosted by Telugu actor Nagarjuna, the question was “Who among the following is popularly known as Babasaheb”. The options were A) Vallabhai Patel, B) B.R. Ambedkar C) Dr. Rajendra Prasad D) Subhas Chandra Bose. The young girl had first taken an audience poll as lifeline, but astonishingly the audience gave A) Vallabhai Patel as the right answer, then she went for the second lifeline (double dip).



Figure. 2.6 Prof. James Stephen, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Full-time Chair Professor, giving the opening remarks.

In this context, Prof. James Stephen posed two significant questions to the panel:

1. Where, why, and how did the youth of this digital age get disconnected from Dr. Ambedkar’s ideology?
2. What are the measures to be taken to reconnect the present disconnected youth with Dr. Ambedkar’s ideology?

Shri. N. Sanjay, IPS, initiated the discussion by addressing the core of the issue. He also made a mention of a song co-written by himself and Shri. Debendra Prasad Majhi on Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, which was created upon request from the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO).

This was followed by Shri. Debendra Prasad Majhi, former Director, Dr. Ambedkar Foundation remarks, he said he was very happy to join this session and was happy to



Figure. 2.7 Shri. Debendra Prasad Majhi, former Director, Dr. Ambedkar Foundation and Special Invitee Shri. Jupudi Prabhakar, Advisor - Social Justice, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh spoke passionately about Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

see so many online participants and told briefly about the functions of chair and how to decimate Special Invitee Shri. Jupudi Prabhakar, Advisor - Social Justice, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh spoke passionately about Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, he told the former Director about Prof. James Stephen, how he believes that he can bring a tectonic shift in the way an Ambedkar Chair would perform, and he appreciated Dr. Stephen's enthusiasm and congratulated him on organizing such a large-scale event in short notice. He said today's youth needs to be educated and be a voice to the voiceless by going to the un-reached areas. He also highlighted how the present state government has implemented Ambedkar's ideology with the collaboration of the PMO and Others. He reminded to the panel that a generation is only for 30 years and said we should take necessary steps before we lose a generation.

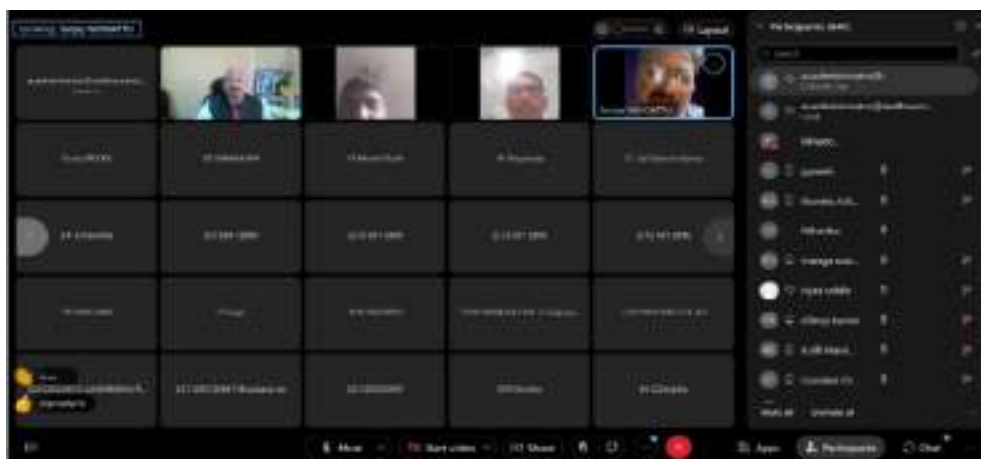


Figure. 2.8 Online Participants (Students and Scholars) - More than 640 participants in the screenshot.

Mr K Sanjeeva Rao, GM, HR, RINL opined that people became selfish, even their studies are selfish, even in their studies they are selfish, the education system itself is selfish and advised that students should be made society centric. **Mr. D. Ramulu**, Dist

and Sessions Judge told Dr. Ambedkar's ideas needs to be propagated. He also advised that more Ambedkar memorial libraries and digital libraries needs to be set up instead of statues, as libraries would influence the youth of today. **Prof. V Vijay Lakshmi**, Principal, the College of Law told that there is an explosion of information and everybody has a lot of information but we have to make his ideology fascinating. **Mr. I.A. Ahamed**, Senior Advocate reminded that all the 139 crore population are benefitted from Dr.B.R. Ambedkar but they don't know from where they are befitted and this point should reach to everyone. Even in Constitution's three main wings, Judiciary, Legislative, Executive everyone is given a provision, which is the broad vision of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. This should start at home **Prof.Stephen** said. **Ms. E. P. S. Bhagyalakshmi**, DPO, NSS, Visakhapatnam District, told that everybody is interested in Engineering and Medical field, students are more interested in marks

The Round Table Discussion organized on the 66th Death Anniversary of Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar served as a powerful platform for intellectual exchange, critical reflection, and collective vision-building. Through insightful deliberations across judicial, industrial, academic, social, and research domains, the event not only revisited the timeless relevance of Dr. Ambedkar's ideology but also explored ways to revitalize it in the digital era. The shared perspectives emphasized the urgency of reconnecting today's youth with the values of social justice, equality, and democratic participation that Dr. Ambedkar championed. As the discussions concluded, a renewed sense of responsibility emerged—to cultivate digitally conscious minds that can carry forward the legacy of Babasaheb with conviction, compassion, and commitment.

CHAPTER 3

CELEBRATING REPUBLIC THROUGH YOUTH EXPRESSION: A DIGITAL TRIBUTE TO THE CONSTITUTION

In celebration of the 74th Republic Day of India, the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair Cluster at Andhra University organized a dynamic symposium of student-centered events under the theme “Fruit of the Indian Constitution.” Designed to engage the younger generation in understanding and expressing the essence of India’s constitutional values, the event featured a series of competitions including essay writing, painting, quiz, and elocution. With over 1100 online registrations, the event reflected the power of digital platforms in bringing together students from diverse backgrounds to showcase their talents and perspectives. Anchored in the spirit of democratic participation and guided by the vision of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the symposium served as a vibrant platform for cultivating constitutional awareness among youth in a digitally connected India.

3.1 Introduction

The 74th Republic Day was commemorated by the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University through an intellectually vibrant and creatively engaging symposium of events for college students. Anchored on the theme “Fruit of the Indian Constitution,” this initiative sought to reignite constitutional awareness among youth by providing them with platforms to express, articulate, and reflect on democratic values through competitions. With over 1105 online registrations, the event reflected the deep interest of students in participating in civic discourse and celebrating the legacy of the Indian Constitution. Under the able leadership of Dr. M. James Stephen, Ambedkar Chair Professor, the event demonstrated how digital tools, academic initiatives, and creative participation could converge to promote national integration and constitutional literacy[3].

3.2 Competitions and Format

The symposium included four student competitions: Essay Writing, Painting, Quiz, and Elocution. Essay writing and painting were conducted digitally with students submitting their entries via email by January 25, 2023. The Quiz and Elocution competitions were held physically at the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair Cluster on January 26, 2023, from 10:30 a.m. onwards. The competitions held during the Symposium of Events—Essay Writing, Painting, Quiz, and Elocution—embodied the spirit of “Digital India” by engaging students in democratic discourse, creative expression, and digital participation. From Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s perspective, such initiatives represent a powerful means of promoting social justice, inclusion, and constitutional awareness among youth. By leveraging digital platforms for registration, submission, and initial rounds of partici-

pation, the events ensured accessibility and equal opportunity, reaching students from diverse geographical and socio-economic backgrounds. These competitions served not only as platforms for showcasing talent but also as instruments for cultivating civic responsibility, critical thinking, and a collective national consciousness—ideals central to Ambedkar’s vision. In essence, the fusion of technology with education and constitutional values echoed Dr. Ambedkar’s lifelong mission to empower the marginalized through knowledge, thereby contributing to a united and digitally inclusive India. A series of competitions were conducted under the theme “*Fruit of the Indian Constitution*” as part of the symposium organized on Republic Day. These competitions aimed to engage students intellectually, creatively, and expressively in reflecting upon the core values of the Constitution as envisioned by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. The four competitions—**Essay Writing, Painting, Quiz, and Elocution**—provided a multi-dimensional platform for students to articulate their thoughts on justice, equality, liberty, and fraternity. Each event was carefully designed to encourage deeper understanding, critical thinking, and a sense of civic responsibility among participants. With over a thousand online registrations, the competitions witnessed enthusiastic participation from colleges across the region, making the event a vibrant celebration of constitutional awareness and youth empowerment.

The symposium received an overwhelming response, with **1105 students registering online** to participate in various competitions. This remarkable turnout reflected the enthusiasm and awareness among the youth regarding the relevance of the Indian Constitution and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s ideology. The registrations were streamlined through digital platforms, enabling wide outreach and accessibility. Students from diverse academic backgrounds and institutions eagerly enrolled for events such as Essay Writing, Painting, Quiz, and Elocution. The high number of participants not only showcased their interest in academic and co-curricular engagement but also underscored the success of digital outreach in promoting constitutional literacy and national integration.

3.3 Quiz Competition

Due to overwhelming registrations, the first round of the quiz was conducted online. Participants answered 50 questions in 15 minutes through QR-code-enabled forms. Based on the results, the top 9 teams advanced to the final round held offline, where they competed in five rigorous rounds. Questions were worth 5 points, and if unanswered, the opportunity passed to another team for 3 bonus points. The top 4 teams were awarded prizes based on performance. The Quiz Competition conducted under the theme “Digital India” reflected Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s vision of an informed and empowered society. By using digital platforms for the preliminary round—where students accessed the quiz through QR codes and participated online—the competition ensured inclusivity and wide accessibility, especially for students from remote and di-



Figure. 3.1 Competition poster.

verse backgrounds. This digital approach to testing constitutional knowledge resonated with Ambedkar’s belief in using education as a tool for social transformation. The quiz not only promoted awareness of the Indian Constitution among youth but also demonstrated how technology can be effectively used to uphold democratic values, bridge inequalities, and unite the nation through shared civic understanding.

3.4 Elocution Competition

Participants were allotted 3 minutes each to speak on topics related to the Constitution. The speakers expressed themselves with passion, and a panel of professors judged the presentations on various parameters. The competition reflected the rhetorical strength and civic engagement of India’s student community. The Elocution Competition served as a powerful platform for students to voice their understanding of constitutional values, aligning closely with Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s vision of empowering the marginalized through free expression and public discourse. By encouraging participants to speak on themes related to the Indian Constitution, the competition fostered critical thinking, articulation, and civic awareness. In the context of “Digital India,” the event highlighted



Figure. 3.2 Registrations and Waiting hall for the events.

how the power of speech—amplified through digital documentation and outreach—can unify diverse voices across the nation. It reflected Ambedkar’s emphasis on democratic participation, equality of opportunity, and the importance of raising one’s voice against social injustice. Through their words, students became ambassadors of Ambedkar’s ideals, reinforcing national unity and digital inclusivity.



Figure. 3.3 Students giving speeches in elocution competition.

3.5 Essay Writing and Painting Competitions

Judged by a team of faculty experts, the essay and painting submissions were evaluated on thematic clarity, creativity, depth, and presentation. Selected winners demonstrated remarkable insight and artistic interpretations of constitutional values. The Essay Writing and Painting Competitions provided creative and reflective avenues for students to explore and express the essence of the Indian Constitution, resonating deeply with Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s vision of informed citizenship and social empowerment. These competitions encouraged participants to critically engage with constitutional values such as equality, justice, and liberty—principles Ambedkar passionately advocated. Con-



Figure. 3.4 Faculty Volunteers and Giving guidelines to some competitors .

ducted through digital submission platforms, the events ensured broad participation, aligning with the spirit of “Digital India” by bridging geographical and institutional boundaries. While essays promoted analytical thinking and awareness of democratic ideals, paintings captured the spirit of unity and constitutional pride through visual storytelling. Together, these competitions demonstrated how digital tools and creative expression can collectively foster a more inclusive, informed, and constitutionally conscious youth—reflecting Ambedkar’s dream of a socially just and united India.



Figure. 3.5 Some of the arts / paintings by students.

3.6 Valedictory Function and Guest Remarks

The valedictory session began with a brief report on the activities of the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair. Dr. M. James Stephen, in his address, congratulated all the participants and emphasized the core ideals of Republic Day. He highlighted the importance of making the Constitution meaningful in the lives of young citizens, especially through participatory academic events.

Several distinguished guests shared their insights and reflections during the session.



Figure. 3.6 Guests during Valedictory and Prize Distribution.

Dr. Veera Raju, Head of the Department of Political Science, praised the initiative and emphasized Dr. Ambedkar’s humanist vision. **Shri Paka Satyanarayana**, Senior Advocate, delivered a powerful address in Telugu, expressing concern over the discontinuation of English medium in government schools and linking it to constitutional empowerment. He also appreciated Dr. Ambedkar’s role in advancing women’s rights in India. **Prof. T. Shobhasri**, Principal of IASE, reiterated Ambedkar’s famous call to action—*Educate, Agitate, Organise*—and encouraged students to become proactive citizens and role models. **Smt. Girija Augustine**, the Chief Guest and Executive Council Member of Andhra University, shared her emotional journey as an alumna and appreciated the evolving academic environment of the university. She shared her personal inspiration drawn from the bust of Dr. Ambedkar at Columbia University, USA, where she pursued her education.

3.7 Winners of the Competitions

A series of student-centered competitions were conducted under the banner of the symposium, encompassing four diverse categories—Essay Writing, Painting, Quiz, and Elocution. These events were designed to promote constitutional awareness, creativity, and critical thinking among youth in line with the ideals of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. The enthusiastic participation across institutions reflected the academic spirit and civic engagement of students. Each competition witnessed outstanding performances, with winners selected through a rigorous evaluation process by subject experts. The following tables present the list of students who excelled in their respective categories, showcasing not only their individual talents but also their commitment to upholding the values of democracy, equality, and social justice as envisioned in the Indian Constitution.

Table 3.1 Winners of Painting Competition

Place	Name	College
First	Veera Sri Lalitha	Dr. V.S. Krishna College, Visakhapatnam
Second	Sala Sravani	GIET School of Pharmacy, Rajahmundry
Third	S. Revathi	WISTM College, Visakhapatnam
Fourth	N. Neeladhri Naidu	College of Engineering, Andhra University

The Painting Competition provided a vibrant platform for students to express their understanding of the Indian Constitution and its values through visual art. Participants used their creativity to depict themes such as justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity, all of which form the core of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's constitutional vision. The competition encouraged students to interpret these principles artistically, resulting in thought-provoking and emotionally resonant works. Submissions were evaluated based on originality, relevance to the theme, aesthetic presentation, and conceptual depth. The winning entries stood out for their powerful symbolism and clarity of message, proving that art can be a compelling medium for civic education and national integration.

Table 3.2 Winners of Essay Writing Competition

Place	Name	College
First	Jagatha Sivani	Dr. B.R. Ambedkar College of Law, Visakhapatnam
Second	M. Veerendra Kumar	IASE, Visakhapatnam
Third	K. Rupa Lavanya	Dr. B.R. Ambedkar College of Law, Visakhapatnam
Consolation	G. Lavanya	College of Engineering, Andhra University

The Essay Writing Competition served as an intellectual platform for students to articulate their thoughts on the foundational values of the Indian Constitution and the visionary ideals of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Participants were encouraged to explore topics related to democracy, social justice, inclusion, and the relevance of constitutional principles in contemporary India. The competition aimed to foster critical thinking, reflective analysis, and effective communication among young minds. Essays were evaluated on clarity of thought, originality, coherence of argument, and relevance to the theme. The winning entries demonstrated not only a deep understanding of constitutional values but also a strong personal connection to the ideals of equality and justice, reflecting Dr. Ambedkar's enduring influence on India's intellectual and moral framework.

Table 3.3 Winners of Quiz Competition

Place	Name(s)	College
First	N. Vishnu, B. Srividya	College of Engineering, Visakhapatnam
Second	M. Veerendra Kumar, M. Nagarjuna	IASE, Visakhapatnam
Third Consolation	R. Durga Praveen, V. Divyateja G. Sai V. Kalyana Rama Rao	Law College, Visakhapatnam Dr. B.R. Ambedkar College of Law, Visakhapatnam

The Quiz Competition was designed to test and enhance the constitutional literacy and general awareness of students, with a special focus on the life and legacy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and the core principles of the Indian Constitution. Conducted in two phases—an online preliminary round and an offline final round—the quiz attracted a large number of enthusiastic participants. The questions spanned diverse topics including constitutional provisions, Indian polity, historical milestones, and contemporary developments in governance and social justice. The competition encouraged teamwork, quick thinking, and analytical skills, fostering a spirit of healthy academic rivalry. The winners demonstrated exceptional knowledge and composure under pressure, making the event a significant exercise in civic education and democratic engagement, aligned with Ambedkar’s vision of an enlightened and informed citizenry.

Table 3.4 Winners of Elocution Competition

Place	Name	College
First	D. Harshitha	Dr. B.R. Ambedkar College of Law, Visakhapatnam
Second	R. Durga Praveen	Dr. B.R. Ambedkar College of Law, Visakhapatnam
Third Consolation	B. Siddarth N. Swathi	WISTM College, Visakhapatnam St. Joseph’s College for Women, Visakhapatnam

The Elocution Competition provided a powerful platform for students to voice their thoughts on constitutional values, social justice, and the visionary ideals of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Participants delivered speeches on carefully chosen topics that reflected contemporary relevance, enabling them to engage critically with issues of equality, inclusion, democracy, and digital empowerment. Each speaker was given a limited time to present their views with clarity, conviction, and rhetorical skill. The event not only encouraged public speaking and confidence among students but also deepened their understanding of Ambedkar’s philosophy and its application in today’s society. The winners impressed the judges with their passion, originality of thought, and persuasive communication, making the competition a meaningful reflection of youth engagement

with national ideals. Dr. James Stephen congratulated all the participants and especially the winners in the competitions that were held in the morning. He iterated the importance of the Republic Day and the motto of the event. He also thanked the Chief Guest and the Special guests for accepting the Invitation.



Figure. 3.7 Prof. James Stephen, Dr. Ambedkar Chair Professor and Dr. Veera Raju, Chief Warden addressing the student in the valedictory function.

Special guest Mr. Veera Raju garu congratulated the winners of the Competition and also thanked Dr. James Stephen for showing another face of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar which is not bound by caste. He reminded everyone of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar motto of humanity and equality that one has to learn from. He also thanked the Vice Chancellor of Andhra University Prof. PVGD Prasad Reddy garu for the opportunities provided in the University.

Special Guest and Senior Advocate in the city, Mr. Satyanarayana Garu greeted the gathering and clearly spoke on the importance of English language. He, in a protest against the high court judgment that the government schools should not be in English medium, spoke in Telugu. He reminded of the state of the ancient India how the ladies were purely confined to the house hold work and family. It was Dr. B. R. Ambedkar who had pioneeringly recognised women as equal citizens and highlighted their individuality. He gladly said that the 50% women are present in the meeting because of the implementation of the Constitution.

Prof. T. Shobhasri, Principal, IASE gave a brief and powerful message, reminding everyone of the clarion call stated by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar: “Educate, Agitate, Organise”. She also encouraged all the participants and winners to be good role models and told them to dream higher and do their duties in a better manner.

The Chief Guest, Smt. Girija Augustine, was exceedingly happy and told the participants that it was the most memorable day for her. She, having studied in the university 48 years ago, was very happy to see the changes that have taken place in the university over the period of time. She said that she could see the fruit of the Indian Constitution –



Figure. 3.8 Shri. Satyanarayana, Sr. Advocate and Prof. Sobhasree - addressing the gathering.



Figure. 3.9 Smt. Girija Augustine, Chief Guest of the Valedictory function.

highlighting the theme. Smt. Girija Augustine, an alumni of Columbia University, New York told every one of the bust of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar there at the Columbia University that inspired her in life. She also congratulated all the winners and thanked Dr. James Stephen for all his initiatives through the Ambedkar Chair. A special attraction of the symposium was the display of selected paintings created by students who participated in the Painting Competition. These artworks, thoughtfully arranged in the venue, captured the essence of the Indian Constitution and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s vision through vibrant colors and creative expressions. Each painting reflected the young artists’ deep understanding of themes such as equality, justice, liberty, and fraternity. The visual representations served not only as a medium of artistic expression but also as powerful tools to communicate constitutional values to the attendees. The exhibition drew attention from guests and participants alike, adding a visual and emotional dimension to the intellectual spirit of the event.

The prize distribution ceremony marked a celebratory conclusion to the symposium, recognizing the talents and efforts of students who excelled in the competitions. Winners from the categories of Essay Writing, Painting, Quiz, and Elocution were hon-



Figure. 3.10 Displaying some of the paintings by the students who participated in the competitions.

ored with certificates, mementos, and accolades by the distinguished guests and jury members. The atmosphere was filled with pride and encouragement as each name was announced, with loud applause resonating from the audience. The dignitaries appreciated the enthusiasm and creativity of the participants, highlighting how such recognition boosts confidence and motivates youth to engage actively in nation-building. The ceremony not only celebrated individual achievement but also reinforced the spirit of unity and constitutional awareness among students.



Figure. 3.11 Prize Distribution.

As a mark of respect and gratitude, the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University extended a warm facilitation to all distinguished guests who graced the symposium with their presence and insights. Each guest was honored with a traditional shawl, memento, and bouquet, symbolizing appreciation for their valuable contribution to the event. The Chair Professor, Dr. M. James Stephen, personally acknowledged their efforts in promoting Dr. Ambedkar's ideology and their support in encouraging young minds to engage with the values enshrined in the Indian Constitution. This gesture reinforced the Chair's commitment to fostering intellectual collaboration and honoring

those who contribute meaningfully to social transformation.



Figure. 3.12 Facilitation to the guests by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair.

The symposium conducted under the theme “Fruit of the Indian Constitution”, held on the 74th Republic Day, emerged as a highly impactful initiative aligning with the vision of Digital India, particularly in the ideological framework laid down by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Through well-structured competitions such as essay writing, painting, quiz, and elocution, the event succeeded in creating an inclusive academic space where young minds could express their interpretations of constitutional values, justice, equality, and digital empowerment. These activities promoted national unity and civic consciousness across diverse academic disciplines and backgrounds. The format of the event reflected a digital-forward approach—demonstrated by online registrations exceeding 1100 participants, online preliminary quiz rounds using QR codes, and digital submissions for essays and paintings. This digital facilitation not only broadened participation but also exemplified how technology bridges regional, linguistic, and socioeconomic barriers, echoing the core objective of “Digital India.” The enthusiastic involvement of students from law, engineering, pharmacy, and arts disciplines represents the inclusive spirit of “Digital India,” wherein the Constitution is not limited to textbooks but becomes a living document guiding youth actions. Furthermore, the valedictory speeches delivered by academicians, legal experts, and administrative leaders highlighted the relevance of constitutional literacy in contemporary India. Discussions around educational equity, digital inclusion, and social justice framed in the spirit of Ambedkar’s ideology underscored the deep-rooted value of such events. The exhibition of student paintings and the heartfelt speeches in the elocution segment gave voice to youth aspirations and their

readiness to uphold constitutional values in a digitally transforming society. Ultimately, the outcomes of the symposium align seamlessly with the vision of “Digital India” by empowering youth through digital platforms, fostering constitutional awareness, and nurturing an inclusive national identity rooted in equality, fraternity, and liberty. The Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair, through this initiative, not only celebrated Republic Day meaningfully but also charted a path forward for how digital transformation can become a vehicle for constitutional and social enlightenment.

CHAPTER 4

INTERPRETING LEGACY: WHO OWNS DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR-A MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDENT DEBATE

4.1 Introduction

In a world driven by ideological plurality and democratic discourse, the legacy of visionaries such as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar extends far beyond academic boundaries. On April 13, 2023, a thought-provoking student debate titled *Who Owns Dr. B.R. Ambedkar?* was conducted under the aegis of the **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair Cluster**, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam. This event marked a unique convergence of disciplines and perspectives, encouraging intellectual dialogue around the contemporary relevance of Dr. Ambedkar's ideas. Hosted at the **Ambedkar Chair Cluster**, the event brought together **25 students**, five each from diverse domains—**Science, Arts, Engineering, Law, and Pharmacy**. Esteemed faculty members from these disciplines graced the event, offering academic insights and contextual guidance. The session was presided over by **Prof. M. James Stephen**, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair Professor, Andhra University.

This chapter documents the structure, proceedings, and intellectual outcomes of this multidimensional debate, capturing how students interpreted the legacy of Dr. Ambedkar through the lens of their academic disciplines.

4.2 Event Details

- **Date and Time:** 13-04-2023, 04:00 PM
- **Venue:** Ambedkar Chair Cluster, 1st Floor, Science and Technology Bhavan, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam
- **Participants:** 25 Students
- **Guests:**
 - Prof. K. Venkata Rao (Engineering)
 - Dr. A. Krishna Manjari (Pharmacy)
 - Dr. T. Sharon Raju (Arts and Commerce)
 - Dr. K. Pallavi (Law)
 - Prof. T.V. Krishna (Sciences)
- **Host:** Prof. M. James Stephen, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair Professor, Andhra University

To promote the debate event titled “Who Owns Dr. B.R. Ambedkar?”, a thoughtfully designed poster was created and circulated among students and faculty across various departments. The poster prominently featured the title of the debate along with the date, time, and venue details. It also included the names of the esteemed guests and the host, emphasizing the interdisciplinary nature of the program. Visually, the design integrated symbolic elements such as Dr. Ambedkar’s image, the Indian Constitution, and minimalist icons representing education, equality, and social justice. The color scheme reflected dignity and seriousness, using shades of blue and white commonly associated with Ambedkarite thought. The poster played a significant role in attracting a diverse audience and generating interest in the debate, especially among students from different academic backgrounds. It served not only as an invitation but also as a visual representation of the event’s theme—unity through dialogue and shared ownership of one of India’s greatest reformers[4].



Figure. 4.1 Debate poster on the topic “Who owns Dr. Ambedkar.

4.3 Objective of the Debate

The event aimed to achieve the following:

- To foster critical thinking among students about Dr. Ambedkar’s multifaceted legacy.
- To explore the relevance of Ambedkar’s ideologies in varied academic and professional contexts.
- To promote cross-disciplinary dialogue and empathy in interpreting historical contributions.

- To encourage youth engagement with social justice, equity, and constitutional values.

4.4 Structure of the Debate

The debate followed a **structured, equitable format**, where each group received equal opportunity to present their viewpoints, backed by research and examples. The session was interactive, with opportunities for counter-arguments, ensuring a dynamic exchange of ideas. Each team framed their arguments around how their domain relates to Dr. Ambedkar’s ideology, his vision for social reform, and the concept of “ownership” of his legacy in their respective fields. The debate was designed with a structured and inclusive format to ensure balanced participation and thoughtful engagement from all student groups. Each of the five academic disciplines—Science, Arts, Engineering, Law, and Pharmacy—was represented by five students, forming a total of 25 participants. The structure allowed every group to present their viewpoints on the central theme, “Who Owns Dr. B.R. Ambedkar?”, through opening arguments, counterpoints, and concluding remarks. A time-bound framework was followed to maintain discipline and equal opportunity, with each team allocated specific durations for their presentations. The format encouraged evidence-based arguments, collaboration within groups, and critical questioning across disciplines. Faculty experts from the respective fields provided mentorship and served as an advisory panel, further enriching the quality of discourse. The structured approach fostered not only intellectual rigor but also respect for diverse interpretations of Dr. Ambedkar’s ideology.

The students were given equal time to express their views, supported by research and evidence.

4.5 Faculty Panel

To guide the discourse with academic depth and interdisciplinary insight, a distinguished panel of faculty members was invited to represent each participating discipline. These experts brought valuable perspectives that aligned with both the intellectual and social dimensions of the debate. The panel included Prof. K. Venkata Rao from Engineering, Dr. A. Krishna Manjari from Pharmacy, Dr. T. Sharon Raju from Arts and Commerce, Dr. K. Pallavi from Law, and Prof. T.V. Krishna from Sciences. Their presence ensured that students received not only mentorship during preparation but also constructive feedback during the event. By offering reflections grounded in their respective fields, the faculty members played a crucial role in bridging academic thought with Dr. Ambedkar’s multifaceted legacy, thereby enhancing the richness and relevance of the debate. The panel consisted of distinguished faculty members, each representing a different discipline:

- **Prof. K. Venkata Rao** – Engineering



Figure. 4.2 Debate by the students groups.

- **Dr. A. Krishna Manjari** – Pharmacy
- **Dr. T. Sharon Raju** – Arts and Commerce
- **Dr. K. Pallavi** – Law
- **Prof. T.V. Krishna** – Sciences

Their presence added scholarly depth and helped bridge academic theory with social realities.

4.6 Thematic Presentations by Discipline

The core strength of the debate lay in the thematic diversity brought forth by students from five distinct disciplines—Science, Arts, Engineering, Law, and Pharmacy. Each group presented a unique lens through which they interpreted the relevance and ownership of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s legacy. The Science group connected Ambedkar’s rational thought and evidence-based ideology to the foundational principles of scientific inquiry and ethical reasoning. The Arts team highlighted how Ambedkar’s ideas have deeply influenced literature, cultural resistance, and the empowerment of marginalized com-



Figure. 4.3 Faculty panel addressing expert groups.

munities, especially through Dalit literature and socio-political art. The Engineering group emphasized the application of technology for social equity, aligning Ambedkar’s vision with the goals of digital inclusion and innovation for the underserved. The Law students focused on Ambedkar’s pivotal role in drafting the Constitution and advancing social justice through legal mechanisms, reinforcing the responsibility of the legal fraternity in upholding his values. Meanwhile, the Pharmacy group explored the intersection of Ambedkar’s advocacy for social welfare and the need for accessible, ethical healthcare, viewing medical professionals as stewards of health equity. Together, these thematic presentations underscored the universality of Ambedkar’s vision and illustrated how his ideals transcend academic boundaries, remaining deeply relevant across all fields of human endeavor.

4.6.1 Science Perspective: Rationality and Universalism

The students representing the field of Science approached Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s legacy through the lens of rationality, empirical inquiry, and universal human values. They emphasized that Ambedkar’s thoughts were rooted in logical reasoning, evidence-based analysis, and a scientific temper—qualities that resonate strongly with the core principles of scientific practice. The group highlighted how his critique of caste and social



Figure. 4.4 Debate poster expo by the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar chair with faculty experts.

inequality was not just moral but also rational, built on careful observation and socio-economic analysis. They argued that Ambedkar's insistence on critical thinking, reform through education, and rejection of blind faith aligns closely with the scientific method. According to the group, the scientific community bears the responsibility to uphold his vision by promoting equality in access to scientific education and ensuring that science serves all sections of society, especially the marginalized. Their perspective concluded with the assertion that Dr. Ambedkar's ideology is not confined to a specific group but is universal in nature—belonging to every individual who upholds truth, reason, and justice. The Science team emphasized that Dr. Ambedkar's approach aligned with scientific rationalism, empirical thinking, and universal human rights. His insistence on **evidence-based reasoning** resonated with the scientific method. The group representing the Science field presented their perspective on how Dr. Ambedkar's ideologies and contributions resonate with scientific principles of equality, rationality, and evidence-based decision-making. They emphasized the universal ownership of Dr. Ambedkar's ideas and the need to apply his teachings to address social and scientific challenges.

Key arguments:

- Ambedkar's advocacy for equality echoes the impartial nature of science.
- His logical dismantling of caste hierarchy finds resonance in rational scientific thought.
- Science students should carry forward his vision by applying ethical and inclusive practices in research and technology.



Figure. 4.5 Science students experts group.

4.6.2 Arts Perspective: Culture, Literature, and Social Movements

The Arts team brought out the rich legacy of **Dalit literature**, socio-political art, and grassroots movements inspired by Dr. Ambedkar. The Arts group explored Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's legacy through the rich dimensions of culture, literature, and socio-political movements. They emphasized how Ambedkar's life and work have profoundly influenced Dalit literature, theatre, poetry, and other forms of cultural expression that challenge caste oppression and social exclusion. The group argued that Dr. Ambedkar's ideology has become a powerful symbol of resistance and identity for marginalized communities, particularly within the artistic and literary domains. His thoughts have inspired generations of writers and artists to articulate the pain, hope, and aspirations of the oppressed. The students also reflected on how Ambedkar's vision extends beyond the written word, energizing social movements that advocate for dignity, equality, and justice. They concluded that while Ambedkar's ideas are shared widely, their most intimate ownership lies with those who continue to fight systemic inequality through culture and expression—making the arts a living repository of his transformative legacy. The Arts group explored the ownership of Dr. Ambedkar's legacy through the lens of literature, culture, and social movements. They highlighted the impact of Dr. Ambedkar's work on Dalit literature and the ownership of his ideas by marginalized communities. They argued that Dr. Ambedkar's legacy is shared by those who fight against caste-based discrimination and inequality.

Key arguments:

- Ownership of Ambedkar's ideology belongs to the oppressed and those resisting



Figure. 4.6 Arts students experts group.

social injustice.

- The arts help amplify marginalized voices and celebrate Ambedkar’s transformative power on cultural identity.
- Literature and creative expression have become powerful tools for continuing Ambedkarite narratives.

4.6.3 Engineering Perspective: Innovation for Social Good

Engineering students focused on how **technological advancements** can realize Ambedkar’s vision of equity and progress. The Engineering group approached Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s legacy by emphasizing the transformative role of technology in achieving social justice and inclusive development. They argued that Ambedkar’s vision of an equitable society aligns with the ethical application of engineering solutions that address real-world problems, especially those affecting marginalized communities. The students highlighted the importance of bridging the digital divide and ensuring that technological advancements—such as digital infrastructure, smart governance, and assistive technologies—are accessible to all. They drew parallels between Ambedkar’s efforts to democratize knowledge and the responsibility of engineers to design innovations that serve society without bias. Furthermore, the group asserted that engineers today have a duty to embed principles of equity, sustainability, and inclusivity in their work, echoing Ambedkar’s lifelong commitment to upliftment through education and empowerment. In this way, they viewed engineering not merely as a technical discipline but as a powerful tool to extend Ambedkar’s mission of building a just and progressive nation. The

Engineering group focused on the role of technology and innovation in advancing Dr. Ambedkar's vision of an inclusive society. They discussed the responsibility of engineers in ensuring equitable access to technology and utilizing it for social change. They contended that engineering students and professionals are the torchbearers of Dr. Ambedkar's ideas in the realm of technological advancements.



Figure. 4.7 Engineering students experts group.

Key arguments:

- Digital India must be inclusive—bridging the digital divide reflects Ambedkar's fight for social access.
- Engineers are custodians of ethical design and must build technologies that serve underrepresented communities.
- Tools like digital governance, Aadhaar, and UPI align with his dream of a just and accessible society.

4.6.4 Law Perspective: Constitutionalism and Social Justice

Law students explored Dr. Ambedkar's **architectural role in the Indian Constitution** and legal reforms. The Law group centered their presentation on Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's monumental role as the principal architect of the Indian Constitution and a lifelong advocate for justice, liberty, and equality. They highlighted how Ambedkar embedded constitutional safeguards to dismantle caste discrimination and promote social justice through legal empowerment. His commitment to constitutional morality, due process, and individual rights continues to guide India's legal system and democratic institutions. The students argued that the legal community holds a profound responsibility in

preserving and actualizing Ambedkar’s vision by interpreting laws in the spirit of inclusivity and reform. They also emphasized how contemporary legal challenges—ranging from social inequality to access to justice—demand a reaffirmation of the constitutional values that Ambedkar championed. According to the group, every legal scholar, practitioner, and student carries forward his legacy by upholding the principles enshrined in the Constitution. In their view, ownership of Ambedkar’s ideals is best reflected through the practice of law that protects the rights of the most vulnerable and fosters an egalitarian society. The Law group delved into the legal aspects of Dr. Ambedkar’s legacy. They explored how his contributions to constitutional law and social justice continue to shape the legal landscape of the country. They argued that the legal fraternity has a significant stake in owning and upholding Dr. Ambedkar’s vision of an egalitarian society.



Figure. 4.8 Law students experts group.

Key arguments:

- Ambedkar’s work is embedded in every democratic institution and legal safeguard.
- Ownership lies with every citizen who upholds justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity.
- The legal fraternity must ensure the Constitution evolves to meet new social challenges.

4.6.5 Pharmacy Perspective: Health Equity and Ethics

The Pharmacy group underscored the need for **ethical healthcare systems** aligned with Dr. Ambedkar's vision of social welfare. The Pharmacy group explored Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's legacy through the lens of healthcare ethics, accessibility, and social responsibility. They emphasized that Ambedkar's commitment to the upliftment of marginalized communities extends directly into the domain of public health, where disparities in access to affordable and quality care still persist. Drawing on his advocacy for social welfare and dignity, the students argued that healthcare professionals—including pharmacists—play a critical role in realizing his vision by ensuring equitable distribution of medicines, promoting ethical pharmaceutical practices, and addressing health injustices. The group discussed how Ambedkar's ideals align with the principles of health equity, particularly the right of every individual to receive timely and effective medical treatment, regardless of socio-economic status. They also highlighted the importance of community-based healthcare models and policies that prioritize preventive care and affordability. In conclusion, the Pharmacy team asserted that Ambedkar's teachings urge modern healthcare professionals to go beyond clinical roles and act as agents of ethical and compassionate service, especially in underserved communities. The Pharmacy group highlighted the relevance of Dr. Ambedkar's teachings in the healthcare sector. They discussed the need for accessible and affordable healthcare, emphasizing how Dr. Ambedkar's ideas on social equality align with the principles of healthcare ethics. They contended that the healthcare professionals bear the responsibility of upholding Dr. Ambedkar's vision in the field of medicine.



Figure. 4.9 Pharmacy students experts group.

Key arguments:

- Ambedkar emphasized the need for access to basic human needs—healthcare being paramount.
- Healthcare professionals have a duty to make medicines and services accessible to the poor.
- Public health policies must be inclusive and guided by social accountability.

4.7 Impact and Takeaways

The debate on “Who Owns Dr. B.R. Ambedkar?” emerged as a powerful platform for interdisciplinary engagement, critical reflection, and collective learning. It provided students with the opportunity to delve deeper into the multifaceted legacy of Dr. Ambedkar, examining his relevance from academic, professional, and ethical standpoints. The event highlighted how Ambedkar’s ideology resonates beyond political or historical confines, influencing diverse fields such as science, literature, law, healthcare, and engineering. One of the most significant takeaways was the recognition that Ambedkar’s vision belongs to no single group—it is a shared inheritance that demands active interpretation and responsible action. The debate fostered respect for diverse viewpoints, encouraged intellectual openness, and reinforced the idea that ownership of Ambedkar’s legacy lies in practicing his ideals in everyday academic, civic, and professional life. It also inspired students to become more conscious of their roles in shaping an equitable society, making the event not just a discussion—but a call to thoughtful action. The debate proved to be a **vibrant intellectual exercise**. Key outcomes included:

- Reinforcement of Dr. Ambedkar as a **universal figure**, whose ideology cuts across disciplines.
- Recognition of the shared responsibility among professionals to carry forward his legacy.
- Emergence of **interdisciplinary perspectives** on equity, justice, and nation-building.

4.8 Conclusion: Who Owns Dr. Ambedkar?

The concluding consensus of the debate was clear and profound—Dr. B.R. Ambedkar cannot be owned by any one individual, community, or discipline. His legacy is far too expansive and transformative to be confined within narrow boundaries. Ambedkar belongs to every citizen who upholds the values of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity. He lives in the spirit of students who challenge injustice, in professionals who strive for inclusive progress, and in institutions that aim to serve the marginalized. The question of ownership is not about claiming Ambedkar—it is about embodying his principles in thought and action. His ideas remain as relevant today as they were in his time, guiding

us toward a more equitable and enlightened society. In the digital age, where technology intersects with social reform, Ambedkar’s vision serves as a beacon for building a truly unified and inclusive India. Thus, the true tribute to Dr. Ambedkar lies not in asking who owns him, but in ensuring that his legacy is lived, protected, and advanced by all. The conclusion drawn unanimously was that **no single individual or group owns Dr. Ambedkar**. Instead, his legacy belongs to:

- Every student who questions inequality.
- Every professional who works for inclusive development.
- Every citizen who upholds constitutional morality.



Figure. 4.10 Faculty esteemed guests.

Ownership of Dr. Ambedkar is **not about possession**—it is about **practice**. His ideals are alive in our classrooms, courtrooms, laboratories, hospitals, and digital infrastructures. Through Digital India, we must channel his vision into action, ensuring truly **Equal India**. This memorable debate, organized under the auspices of the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University, served as a vibrant intellectual forum to revisit and reinterpret the legacy of Dr. Ambedkar through diverse academic lenses. The Chair extends its heartfelt appreciation to all the 25 student participants who brought passion, depth, and clarity to the discussion. Their thoughtful arguments and respectful engagement reflected the true spirit of Ambedkarite discourse. A special vote of thanks is extended to the esteemed guests—Prof. K. Venkata Rao, Dr. A. Krishna Manjari, Dr. T. Sharon Raju, Dr. K. Pallavi, and Prof. T.V. Krishna—for their gracious presence, expert insights, and encouragement to the young minds. Sincere gratitude is also conveyed to the faculty mentors and the organizing team for their efforts in planning and

conducting the event with precision and purpose. Collectively, their contributions made this debate a meaningful step toward nurturing democratic values, social awareness, and inclusive thinking among the students.

CHAPTER 5

DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR – THE VOICE OF THE VOICELESS: A SYMPOSIUM OF YOUTH EXPRESSION

5.1 Introduction

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the principal architect of the Indian Constitution, is not only a towering legal mind but also a beacon of social justice, equality, and reform. His vision was rooted in the idea of an India where every individual—irrespective of caste, class, or creed—has equal access to rights, opportunities, and dignity. His legacy has become even more significant in today’s digital age, where inclusive development and social justice are crucial for national progress.

In celebration of his 132nd birth anniversary, the Ambedkar Chair Cluster at Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, hosted a grand event titled “*Dr. B.R. Ambedkar – The Voice of the Voiceless.*” This symposium served as a platform for students from across Andhra Pradesh to honor his contributions through various forms of intellectual and artistic expression. In a rapidly digitizing world where technology bridges distances and empowers citizens, the teachings of visionary leaders like Dr. B.R. Ambedkar continue to offer timeless relevance. His advocacy for education, equality, and the annihilation of social barriers laid the foundation for a truly inclusive society—principles that resonate deeply with the goals of Digital India. To commemorate his 132nd birth anniversary, Andhra University’s Ambedkar Chair Cluster organized a Symposium of Events, bringing together students from diverse academic backgrounds. The initiative not only celebrated Dr. Ambedkar’s legacy but also encouraged the youth to engage critically with his ideals through creative and scholarly expression. By linking Ambedkar’s vision of social justice with today’s digital aspirations, the event served as a meaningful step toward building a more conscious, connected, and equitable India[5].

5.2 General Overview of the Event

The Symposium of Events, conducted on the 132nd birth anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar at Andhra University’s Ambedkar Chair Cluster, was a large-scale, multidisciplinary celebration of one of India’s greatest reformers. Designed to engage students in both academic and creative formats, the event featured competitions such as a thematic quiz, elocution, painting, and precise writing. Each activity revolved around the central theme—Dr. B.R. Ambedkar: The Voice of the Voiceless—allowing participants to explore and express their understanding of his philosophy. With over 1800 participants from various institutions across Andhra Pradesh, the event stood as a testimony to the enduring influence of Ambedkar’s message. It successfully brought together young

minds from diverse academic backgrounds, encouraging them to reflect on constitutional values, civic responsibility, and social equity. The event's inclusive design and enthusiastic response reaffirmed its importance as an intellectual and cultural platform for India's youth.

5.2.1 Objective and Vision

The symposium aimed to create a vibrant and inclusive platform for students to engage with the life, teachings, and values of Dr. Ambedkar. It intended to foster awareness of social justice issues and empower youth to reflect on their roles as future citizens and leaders. Through competitions like quizzes, elocution, painting, and precise writing, the event invited participants to express their understanding of Ambedkar's ideologies creatively and critically. The primary objective of the Symposium was to honor the legacy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar by creating a dynamic and inclusive space for students to engage with his ideals in meaningful ways. The vision behind the event was to cultivate awareness, critical thinking, and social responsibility among the youth by encouraging them to explore the themes of equality, justice, and empowerment through various forms of expression. By organizing competitions that tested knowledge, creativity, articulation, and writing skills, the event aimed to connect Ambedkar's lifelong advocacy for the oppressed with the aspirations of modern India. It envisioned not just a celebration of the past, but a platform for inspiring future leaders who are informed, empathetic, and committed to building a just and inclusive digital society—one that aligns with the transformative goals of Digital India.

5.2.2 Participation and Reach

The event received an overwhelming response, with more than 1800 students registering from colleges across Andhra Pradesh. These included undergraduate and postgraduate students from various disciplines such as law, political science, pharmacy, literature, engineering, and social sciences. This diverse participation highlighted the universal appeal and contemporary relevance of Dr. Ambedkar's vision. Participants included both undergraduate and postgraduate students from diverse academic streams such as engineering, pharmacy, law, arts, commerce, social sciences, and management. This broad representation highlighted the inclusive nature of the event and underscored the universal relevance of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's teachings. The participation of students from urban, semi-urban, and rural institutions reflected the reach and impact of the event's theme, as well as the effectiveness of digital communication and outreach tools used in organizing the symposium. The enthusiasm displayed by the participants during each competition added vibrancy to the occasion and demonstrated the youth's eagerness to connect with Ambedkar's vision in contemporary contexts.

5.2.3 Relevance of the Theme

The theme “*Dr. B.R. Ambedkar – The Voice of the Voiceless*” emphasized his role as a powerful advocate for marginalized communities. The theme was timely and thought-provoking, encouraging students to relate Ambedkar’s life work with current societal challenges, particularly in the context of equality, digital inclusion, and democratic participation. The theme of the symposium, “Dr. B.R. Ambedkar – The Voice of the Voiceless,” was both timely and profoundly significant. In an era where inclusion, equity, and social justice are central to national progress, revisiting Ambedkar’s role as a relentless advocate for the marginalized served as a powerful reminder of unfinished democratic goals. The theme encouraged students to reflect on who remains voiceless in today’s society—whether in physical spaces or digital platforms—and how Ambedkar’s ideals can guide efforts to empower them. It bridged historical struggles with present-day challenges, urging youth to use education, expression, and technology as tools of transformation. By aligning with this theme, participants were not only honoring Ambedkar’s legacy but also exploring ways to make his vision a lived reality in modern India, particularly through the inclusive goals of the Digital India initiative.

5.3 About the Chair Cluster

The Ambedkar Chair Cluster at Andhra University is a dedicated academic space established to promote the study and dissemination of Dr. Ambedkar’s teachings. It serves as a hub for research, debate, and outreach activities centered on social justice, human rights, and constitutional values. Hosting this symposium was in line with its mission to engage youth in meaningful intellectual and civic discourse. The Ambedkar Chair Cluster at Andhra University, known for its academic leadership in social justice education, served as the ideal venue for this prestigious symposium. As a center committed to promoting the values and philosophy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the Chair Cluster provided an intellectually rich environment that encouraged critical engagement with contemporary issues through the lens of Ambedkarite thought. The event was meticulously organized and brought together faculty coordinators, student volunteers, and participants in a collective effort to create an impactful experience. Each competition was hosted within the cluster premises, creating a cohesive and focused space for scholarly and creative activities. From structured quiz rounds to passionate speeches, expressive artworks, and precise writing tasks, the event unfolded as a celebration of both thought and talent. The Chair Cluster not only facilitated academic interaction but also symbolically stood as a reminder of Ambedkar’s legacy in higher education and its responsibility to nurture inclusive, informed, and socially conscious citizens.



Figure. 5.1 The Ambedkar Chair Cluster at Andhra University.

5.3.1 The Event at the Ambedkar Chair Cluster

The symposium featured four thoughtfully designed competitions—Thematic Quiz, Elocution, Painting, and Precise Writing—each tailored to engage students with Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s life and legacy from different perspectives. The Thematic Quiz tested participants’ factual knowledge and conceptual understanding of Ambedkar’s contributions, including his role in drafting the Constitution, his socio-political philosophy, and his advocacy for marginalized communities. The Elocution competition allowed students to deliver speeches that reflected their critical thinking, communication skills, and personal reflections on Ambedkar’s relevance in contemporary times. The Painting competition offered a creative outlet for visually interpreting themes such as equality, justice, and empowerment, inspired by Ambedkar’s ideology. Meanwhile, the Precise Writing contest challenged students to concisely summarize complex ideas related to Ambedkar’s work, enhancing their ability to distill powerful messages into impactful narratives. Together, these competitions not only encouraged academic and artistic engagement but also fostered a deeper, multi-dimensional appreciation of Dr. Ambedkar’s enduring influence. The symposium included four major competitions:

- **Thematic Quiz:** Assessed students’ knowledge of Dr. Ambedkar’s biography, constitutional work, and societal impact.
- **Elocution:** Allowed participants to deliver speeches on topics related to Ambedkar’s life and relevance.
- **Painting:** Gave students a visual medium to express Ambedkar’s ideology and

influence.

- **Precise Writing:** Challenged students to summarize key concepts from Ambedkar's work in concise and impactful ways.



Figure. 5.2 A formal ribbon cutting ceremony of the event.

5.3.2 Organization and Evaluation

The events were conducted with professionalism, with faculty from various departments serving as coordinators and judges. Participants were evaluated based on originality, thematic relevance, clarity, creativity, and overall presentation. The organizing committee ensured smooth logistics, inclusive participation, and a fair evaluation process. The symposium was executed with meticulous planning and collaboration under the guidance of the Ambedkar Chair Cluster, ensuring a smooth and inclusive experience for all participants. Faculty members from various departments served as event coordinators, mentors, and jury members, bringing academic rigor and fairness to the evaluation process. A dedicated team of student volunteers assisted with logistics, registration, and communication, contributing to the event's overall success. Each competition followed a structured format with clearly defined rules, time limits, and assessment criteria. Judges evaluated participants based on originality, thematic relevance, depth of content, creativity, articulation, and clarity of presentation. The evaluation process emphasized not just performance, but the participant's understanding of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's ideas and their ability to apply those ideas in contemporary contexts. The impartiality and professionalism maintained throughout the event reflected the Chair Cluster's commitment to academic integrity and student empowerment.



Figure. 5.3 Event registrations.

5.4 Impact from the Digital India Perspective

The symposium served as a practical reflection of the values championed by the Digital India initiative—particularly inclusivity, accessibility, and the empowerment of youth through technology and education. By leveraging digital platforms for event announcements, registration, coordination, and communication, the organizers ensured broad participation from students across urban and rural colleges in Andhra Pradesh. This approach demonstrated how digital tools can bridge geographic and infrastructural gaps, aligning with Dr. Ambedkar’s vision of equal opportunity for all. Additionally, students were encouraged to engage with Ambedkarite thought not only through traditional formats but also by creating content—speeches, essays, and artwork—that could be digitally archived and shared for wider educational impact. The event highlighted the role of digital literacy in shaping responsible and socially aware citizens. It reinforced the idea that technology, when guided by values of justice and equality, can become a transformative force for inclusive development in India—echoing both Dr. Ambedkar’s legacy and the core mission of Digital India.

5.4.1 Bridging Knowledge with Technology

The event highlighted how Dr. Ambedkar’s vision aligns with the goals of Digital India. By using digital platforms for registration, coordination, and dissemination of results, the symposium demonstrated how technology can be harnessed for inclusive and meaningful engagement. The symposium exemplified how knowledge and technology can work hand in hand to further social empowerment and educational outreach. By inte-

grating digital tools into the planning and execution of the event—from online registrations and communications to the digital sharing of results and media—the organizers demonstrated a practical application of technological innovation in academic settings. More importantly, the event enabled students to explore how Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s philosophies could be adapted and amplified in the digital era. His emphasis on education as a tool of liberation was mirrored in the use of digital platforms to disseminate knowledge, foster dialogue, and provide equitable access to information. This synergy between Ambedkarite values and modern digital infrastructure showcases how technology can be a vehicle for bridging historical injustices, democratizing learning spaces, and driving India toward a more informed and inclusive society.

5.4.2 Inclusive Participation Through Digital Access

Students from remote and rural institutions were able to participate effectively, reflecting how digital connectivity is breaking traditional barriers to education and opportunity. This reflects Ambedkar’s dream of equal access for all, now empowered through digital means. One of the most impactful outcomes of the symposium was its ability to ensure inclusive participation through digital access. Students from remote towns, rural colleges, and less-resourced institutions were able to register, prepare, and compete on an equal platform, thanks to the seamless use of digital tools and communication channels. The democratization of access allowed voices that are often underrepresented in mainstream academic discourse to actively engage in intellectual and creative expression. This approach mirrored Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s vision of dismantling systemic barriers and creating equal opportunities for all. By breaking geographical and institutional limitations, the event highlighted how digital connectivity can serve as a powerful enabler of social inclusion. It also set a precedent for how educational and cultural events across India can be structured to reflect the values of equity and accessibility at the heart of both Ambedkar’s philosophy and the Digital India movement.

5.4.3 Youth Engagement and Civic Awareness

The event empowered students to critically analyze and express opinions on social and constitutional issues. This kind of engagement is essential for developing responsible digital citizens who are informed, articulate, and committed to justice and equality. The symposium proved to be a powerful platform for fostering youth engagement and civic awareness, encouraging students to critically examine the role of justice, equality, and rights in contemporary society. By inviting participants to explore Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s life and legacy through competitions that required research, analysis, creativity, and articulation, the event inspired a deeper sense of social responsibility among young minds. Students were not only celebrating Ambedkar as a historical figure but were also prompted to reflect on how his ideas apply to present-day challenges—be it digital inequality, caste-based discrimination, or lack of access to education. This active en-

agement nurtured a sense of civic duty and moral accountability, empowering students to view themselves as agents of change. In doing so, the event reinforced the importance of preparing digitally literate, socially conscious citizens who can contribute meaningfully to India's democratic and developmental journey.

5.4.4 Content Creation and Archiving

The speeches, paintings, and written content created during the event now serve as a valuable digital archive. These can be shared and accessed online, ensuring that Ambedkar's messages continue to reach new audiences and inspire future generations. An important outcome of the symposium was the generation of rich, student-created content that holds lasting educational and cultural value. Through speeches, essays, artwork, and precise writing, participants produced thoughtful and expressive interpretations of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's legacy. This content was not only showcased during the event but also digitally archived for future reference and wider dissemination. By preserving these creative and intellectual outputs, the event ensured that the voices of today's youth could continue to inspire and educate others well beyond the occasion. The archived materials can serve as a valuable resource for academic discussions, awareness campaigns, and institutional documentation. This process of digital preservation reflects the broader goals of Digital India—not only to improve access to information but to empower citizens to contribute to and shape the nation's collective knowledge ecosystem. It also reaffirms that student-generated content, when guided by purpose and values, can play a critical role in advancing inclusive narratives in a digital society.

5.5 Conclusion and Acknowledgment

The symposium on Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's 132nd birth anniversary was more than a commemorative event—it was a powerful educational movement that brought together students, teachers, and institutions under the banner of equity and empowerment. It reaffirmed the relevance of Ambedkar's teachings in building a modern, inclusive, and digitally empowered India. The symposium held at the Ambedkar Chair Cluster was not merely a commemorative event but a living tribute to the values and vision of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. By combining academic depth with creative freedom, and inclusivity with digital innovation, the event empowered students to become thoughtful participants in the democratic and developmental fabric of the nation. It offered a dynamic platform for the youth to reflect on pressing social issues through the lens of Ambedkar's teachings, while also engaging with the transformative potential of technology. The organizers express heartfelt gratitude to all participants for their enthusiastic involvement, to the faculty mentors and jury members for their dedication and guidance, and to the volunteers for ensuring seamless coordination. Special thanks are also extended to the Ambedkar Chair Cluster and Andhra University for providing the institutional support necessary to realize this vision. The success of this symposium reinforces the idea that when edu-

cation, values, and digital tools come together with purpose, they can ignite meaningful change—paving the way for a more just, informed, and united India. Special thanks are extended to all the participants, volunteers, judges, and faculty coordinators who made the event a success. Their efforts ensured that the spirit of Dr. Ambedkar lived on—not just in books or speeches—but in the actions and voices of India’s youth.



Figure. 5.4 Reflections and Acknowledgments in the Concluding Session.

5.6 Event Summary

The symposium titled “Dr. B.R. Ambedkar – The Voice of the Voiceless” was held on 14th April 2023, starting at 10:00 AM, at the Ambedkar Chair Cluster, 1st Floor, Science and Technology Bhavan, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam. Organized to commemorate the 132nd birth anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the event brought together over 1800 participants from various undergraduate and postgraduate colleges across Andhra Pradesh. The program featured four major competitions—Thematic Quiz, Elocution, Painting, and Precise Writing—designed to encourage intellectual, creative, and civic engagement among students. With a theme centered on social justice and digital empowerment, the event successfully blended tradition with innovation, reinforcing Ambedkar’s enduring relevance in building a more inclusive and digitally connected India.

- **Event Name:** Dr. B.R. Ambedkar – The Voice of the Voiceless
- **Date and Time:** 14th April 2023, 10:00 AM onwards
- **Venue:** Ambedkar Chair Cluster, 1st Floor, Science and Technology Bhavan, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam

- **Participants:** Over 1800 students from colleges across Andhra Pradesh



Figure. 5.5 Event poster:Dr. B.R. Ambedkar – The Voice of the Voiceless.

5.7 Winners List

Winners were announced across four competitive categories, each designed to engage students in different forms of intellectual and creative expression inspired by the life and legacy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. The Thematic Quiz recognized participants with strong knowledge and analytical understanding of Ambedkar’s contributions to social justice and the Indian Constitution. The Elocution category honored students who delivered compelling speeches reflecting critical thought and oratory skill on Ambedkar’s role as a voice for the marginalized. In the Painting category, recognition was given to those who artistically captured Ambedkar’s ideals and societal impact through powerful visual narratives. The Precise Writing category celebrated students who demonstrated the ability to distill complex ideas into clear, concise, and meaningful written expressions. Each category highlighted a unique aspect of student engagement, making the event a comprehensive tribute to Ambedkar’s multidimensional legacy.

5.7.1 Thematic Quiz

The Thematic Quiz was designed to assess the depth of participants' knowledge about the life, works, and ideologies of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. It covered a wide range of topics, including his role in drafting the Indian Constitution, his fight against caste discrimination, his contributions to social reform, and his vision for an inclusive and equitable society. The quiz featured thought-provoking questions that challenged students not just to recall facts but to understand the broader implications of Ambedkar's philosophies in the context of contemporary India. Participants demonstrated commendable enthusiasm and preparation, reflecting their sincere engagement with the subject. The quiz was conducted in a competitive yet intellectually stimulating environment, encouraging students to think critically and connect historical knowledge with modern-day social issues. Winners were selected based on accuracy, speed, and clarity of responses, showcasing their command over Ambedkarite thought and its relevance in today's socio-political landscape. The winners list is given below:

- Mr. Sayyad Mohammad Shabeer Ali – Department of Science and Technology, Andhra University – *Winner*
- Mr. Bolupadra Dora Babu – Department of Science and Technology, Andhra University – *Winner*
- Mr. Arsavelli Gnava Saran Manichandra – Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Andhra University – *Runner*
- Mr. Varada Minna Rao – Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Andhra University – *Runner*

5.7.2 Elocution

The Elocution competition served as a platform for students to articulate their understanding of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's vision and its contemporary relevance through powerful public speaking. Participants delivered passionate and insightful speeches centered on the theme "Dr. B.R. Ambedkar – The Voice of the Voiceless", reflecting on issues such as social justice, equality, caste-based discrimination, and constitutional values. The competition highlighted the oratory talents of students who effectively combined historical perspectives with current societal challenges. Many speakers drew parallels between Ambedkar's struggles and ongoing efforts to ensure digital inclusion, educational access, and rights for marginalized communities. The event not only nurtured communication skills and self-confidence among participants but also encouraged deeper civic awareness. Judges evaluated the speeches based on content, clarity, expression, and overall impact, with the winners showcasing exceptional ability to engage the audience and present compelling arguments grounded in Ambedkarite thought. The winners list is given below:

- Mr. Abhishek – MA Sociology, Andhra University – *Winner*
- Ms. B. Rishitha Naidu – B.V.K. Degree College – *Runner*

5.7.3 Painting

The Painting competition provided a vibrant and creative platform for students to visually represent the life, ideals, and enduring legacy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Participants used a variety of artistic styles and mediums to depict powerful themes such as social equality, empowerment through education, the Constitution of India, and Ambedkar’s fight against caste-based discrimination. The artworks captured not only the historical essence of Ambedkar’s contributions but also their relevance in the context of modern-day issues like digital inclusion, human rights, and social reform. Each painting told a unique story—some symbolic, others literal—but all unified by the spirit of justice and dignity. The competition encouraged students to think critically and express their understanding of Ambedkarite values through visual language. Judges assessed the paintings on creativity, thematic clarity, originality, and emotional impact. The winners stood out for their compelling compositions that honored Ambedkar’s vision while inspiring viewers to reflect on the continued importance of his message in shaping a fair and inclusive India. The winners list is given below:

- G. Askhaya – GIET School of Pharmacy, Rajahmundry – *Winner*
- Chenna Pramodhini – NBM Law College – *Runner*

5.7.4 Precise Writing

The Precise Writing competition challenged participants to distill complex ideas and historical insights related to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar into clear, concise, and coherent narratives. Students were tasked with summarizing topics such as Ambedkar’s constitutional vision, social reform efforts, and contributions to the upliftment of marginalized communities—all within a limited word count. This exercise required not only a thorough understanding of the subject matter but also strong language and analytical skills. Participants demonstrated their ability to communicate powerful messages with brevity, maintaining both accuracy and impact. The competition highlighted the importance of precision in written communication—an essential skill in the digital age where clarity is vital across platforms. Judges evaluated entries based on content relevance, structure, grammar, and the effectiveness of summarization. The selected winners impressed the panel with their ability to capture the essence of Ambedkar’s philosophy in a format that was both informative and thought-provoking. This event not only sharpened writing skills but also deepened students’ appreciation of Ambedkar’s enduring legacy. The winners list is given below:

- Gogadi Lakshmi Prasanna – GIET School of Pharmacy, Rajahmundry – *Winner*
- T. Swetha – College of Pharmacy, Andhra University – *Runner*

CHAPTER 6

EXPLORING INTERDISCIPLINARY INDIA THROUGH AMBEDKAR'S VISION

6.1 Introduction

India's growth as a digitally connected, socially inclusive, and intellectually vibrant nation owes much to the visionaries who laid its foundations. Among them, **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar** stands tall—not only as the principal architect of the Indian Constitution but also as a thinker whose ideas spanned across multiple disciplines. On the occasion of his **132nd birth anniversary**, a unique program titled “*Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Interdisciplinary Thoughts*” was organized by the **Ambedkar Chair Cluster** at Andhra University. This event served as a platform for deep academic engagement, youth-led presentations, and cross-sectoral discussions, showcasing how Dr. Ambedkar's work continues to shape contemporary India—especially in the context of knowledge, governance, and digital inclusion. In today's rapidly evolving social and technological landscape, the relevance of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's intellectual legacy has only grown stronger. As India continues its journey towards becoming a digitally empowered society, there is a renewed need to revisit foundational ideas that promote equity, justice, and inclusive growth. Dr. Ambedkar was not only a jurist and constitutionalist but also a deep thinker whose contributions extended to economics, sociology, political science, education, and beyond. His belief in interdisciplinary learning and rational inquiry laid the groundwork for reforms that still guide our nation. The unique program conducted at Andhra University was a timely initiative that invited students and scholars to view contemporary challenges through the lens of Ambedkarite thought. It emphasized that to build a truly digital India, we must first build a just India—rooted in knowledge, dialogue, and social responsibility[6].

6.2 General Overview of the Event

This event stood out not only for its academic richness but also for its inclusive and participatory nature. The planning and structure of the program reflected a deliberate effort to reach a wide academic audience, fostering a space where voices from various disciplines could converge. Unlike typical commemorative functions, this event placed students at the center, encouraging them to contribute not as passive attendees but as active thinkers and presenters. The focus on interdisciplinary discussion allowed participants to engage with Dr. Ambedkar's ideas in relation to current social, political, and technological issues, making the program both reflective and forward-looking. Moreover, the integration of structured presentations, panel insights, and audience in-

teraction ensured that the event maintained intellectual rigor while remaining accessible and inspiring to all.

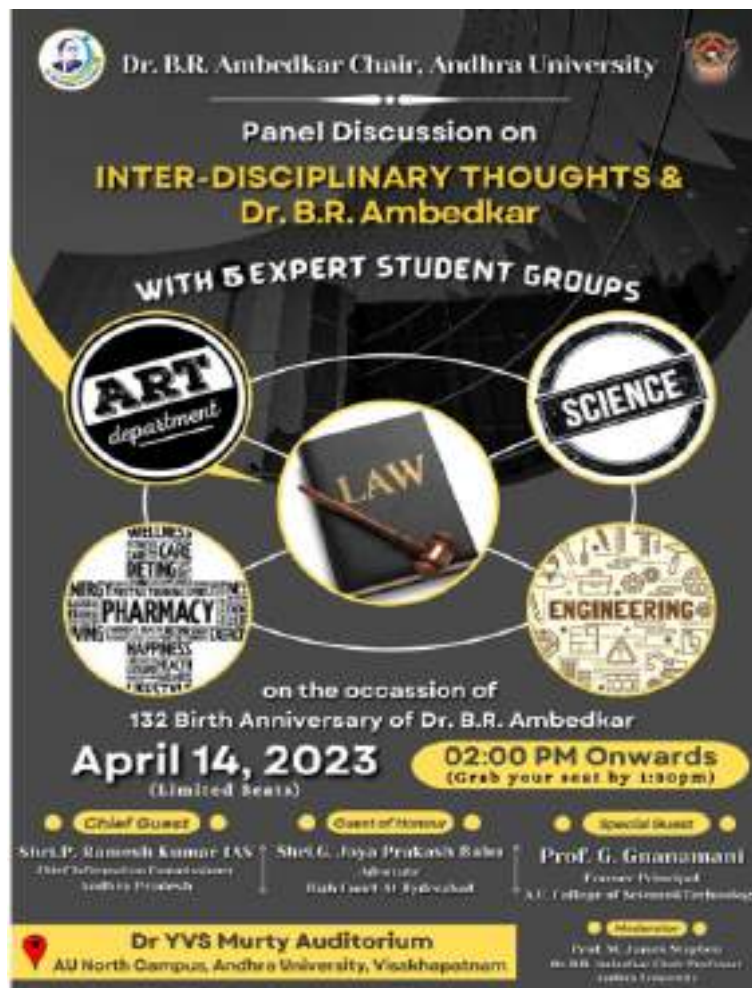


Figure. 6.1 Event poster-Panel Discussion on Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's "Interdisciplinary Thoughts.

6.2.1 Objective and Vision

The event was conceived with a vision to explore and celebrate **Dr. Ambedkar's wide-ranging intellectual contributions**, cutting across disciplines such as law, economics, education, philosophy, and social sciences. The primary objective was to foster critical thinking among students and scholars, and to create an environment where Dr. Ambedkar's interdisciplinary legacy could be revisited in the light of present-day challenges and solutions. Beyond simply commemorating Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's birth anniversary, the deeper objective of this program was to inspire a new generation of thinkers to view social reform through an interdisciplinary lens. It aimed to instill in students the realization that no single field holds all the answers to society's complex challenges. By drawing connections between Ambedkar's work and various domains such as digital governance, public policy, education, and economics, the event envisioned a more integrated approach to national development. Furthermore, the vision extended to fostering

leadership, encouraging students not just to learn about Ambedkar’s principles but to embody and apply them in their academic, social, and professional lives—particularly in driving India forward as a digitally inclusive and socially just nation.

6.2.2 Participation and Format

Held on **14th April 2023 at 2:00 PM** at the **Dr. YVS Murty Auditorium, Andhra University**, the event attracted **over 500 students and scholars**. A major highlight was the inclusion of **28 student speakers**, each representing different academic disciplines, who presented their reflections and research on how Ambedkar’s ideas intersected with their fields of study. The event was also attended by **eminent guests** from the **judiciary, academia, and bureaucracy**, who shared their perspectives on Ambedkar’s interdisciplinary relevance in policymaking, governance, and education. What made the event truly impactful was its well-thought-out format that balanced structured academic engagement with open intellectual exchange. The inclusion of 28 student speakers from diverse disciplines such as law, economics, science, literature, and management ensured a multifaceted exploration of Dr. Ambedkar’s ideas. Each speaker was allotted time to present their perspective, followed by insightful commentary from the panel and audience interaction, promoting a dynamic learning environment. The presence of over 500 students and scholars, along with guests from fields like judiciary and civil services, fostered a sense of academic community and cross-sectoral dialogue. The format encouraged inclusivity and collaboration, reflecting Ambedkar’s own belief in the power of participatory learning and discourse. This approach created an intellectually charged atmosphere where ideas were not only shared but also critically examined in the spirit of mutual respect and curiosity.



Figure. 6.2 Prof. M. James Stephen, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair Professor addressing the gathering.

6.3 The Event at the Ambedkar Chair Cluster

The Ambedkar Chair Cluster at Andhra University has long been a beacon for academic inquiry into social justice and constitutional values. By hosting this interdisciplinary program, the Chair reaffirmed its role as not just a custodian of Ambedkar’s legacy but also as a progressive platform for critical thought and youth leadership. The Cluster provided both the intellectual infrastructure and moral direction necessary for the event’s success. Its unique setting—a blend of scholarly gravitas and inclusive spirit—offered the ideal environment for students to delve into complex social issues through the prism of Ambedkarite philosophy. The event also reflected the Chair’s evolving mandate to not only preserve historical understanding but to foster present-day relevance through dialogue, research, and action. In this way, the Chair functioned as both a guardian of legacy and a springboard for innovation, aligning its academic mission with the broader goals of national transformation and digital empowerment.



Figure. 6.3 Prof. M. James Stephen, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair Professor at Andhra University, Visakhapatnam.

6.3.1 Platform for Intellectual Exchange

The **Ambedkar Chair Cluster**, under the guidance of **Prof. M. James Stephen**, hosted this session as a means to stimulate cross-disciplinary conversations among youth. Each student presentation contributed a unique lens—from constitutional theory to inclusive education, from economic justice to digital citizenship—reflecting the enduring adaptability of Ambedkar’s thought. The event provided a rare and valuable platform where intellectual exchange was not confined to traditional lecture formats but

was instead shaped by collaborative learning and dialogue. Students were encouraged to engage in research-driven presentations that went beyond textbook knowledge, incorporating current data, policy developments, and real-life social observations. This made the exchange not only intellectually rich but also socially grounded. The cross-disciplinary nature of the platform allowed participants to understand how Ambedkar's vision intersects with fields such as digital equity, gender justice, sustainable development, and public health. More importantly, it created an atmosphere where critical thinking was welcomed, diverse viewpoints were respected, and academic freedom was celebrated—embodying the very ideals Ambedkar stood for. The success of this exchange reaffirmed the importance of creating more such forums where young minds can collaboratively explore solutions for a more inclusive and progressive India.

6.3.2 Guest Speakers and Contributions

Guest speakers from diverse domains such as law, civil service, and higher education provided commentary that enriched the student presentations. Their insights not only validated the scholarly work of the students but also expanded the discussion to include real-world applications of Ambedkar's ideas in public policy, institutional governance, and grassroots empowerment. The presence of distinguished guest speakers from various professional backgrounds added significant depth and credibility to the event. These individuals—representing the judiciary, academia, and public administration—brought with them real-world insights into how Dr. Ambedkar's ideas are being interpreted and implemented in contemporary India. Their contributions bridged the gap between theory and practice, helping students see the practical relevance of Ambedkarite thought in legal reforms, digital governance, public welfare policies, and educational access. Many speakers shared personal experiences and challenges encountered in applying constitutional values to everyday governance, making their talks relatable and inspiring. Their words reinforced the idea that Ambedkar's vision is not a static historical artifact, but a living philosophy that demands active participation from every citizen. By engaging directly with students, these guests not only validated the efforts of young scholars but also motivated them to become informed, ethical, and socially responsible leaders of tomorrow.

6.4 Thematic Highlights

The thematic highlights of the event revealed the extraordinary range and relevance of Dr. Ambedkar's thought across academic and societal domains. Each student presentation tackled a unique theme—ranging from the democratization of knowledge and constitutional morality to economic inclusion and the role of technology in empowering marginalized communities. These themes demonstrated how Ambedkar's legacy is not limited to caste reform or legal scholarship but extends deeply into areas like environmental justice, healthcare ethics, and digital rights. The interdisciplinary framing



Figure. 6.4 Guest Speaker Addressing the Audience During the Interdisciplinary Session.

of these topics encouraged participants to draw connections between their academic studies and the larger questions of equity and nation-building. Moreover, the diversity of subjects reflected the adaptability of Ambedkar's ideas to contemporary issues, reinforcing the belief that real progress can only be achieved through a confluence of ideas, critical reflection, and a commitment to justice. The event thus served as a crucible for generating new interpretations of Ambedkar's teachings in ways that resonate with the youth and the digital future of India. The program provided a platform for 28 student speakers to present their research and thoughts on Dr. Ambedkar's interdisciplinary contributions. The students, coming from different academic disciplines, delivered presentations that explored the intersections of Dr. Ambedkar's ideas with their respective fields. The presentations showcased the depth of Dr. Ambedkar's work and its applicability across various disciplines.

6.4.1 Interdisciplinary Depth

A major takeaway from the program was the clear demonstration of **Ambedkar's interdisciplinary intellect**. Rather than restricting himself to a single field, Dr. Ambedkar navigated seamlessly between disciplines, offering visionary inputs on legal reform, labor rights, federalism, caste abolition, and social equality. Student presentations successfully captured this depth and showed how his integrated approach remains relevant in framing holistic solutions today. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's scholarly journey, which traversed disciplines such as law, political science, economics, sociology, and philosophy, served as the foundation for the event's exploration of interdisciplinary depth. The student presentations vividly reflected this multifaceted approach, high-

lighting how Ambedkar’s insights continue to influence various spheres of knowledge. For instance, economics students examined his views on labor and fiscal federalism, while law students analyzed his vision of constitutional safeguards. Simultaneously, students from literature and philosophy explored his writings and speeches as powerful texts that shaped social consciousness. This blending of disciplines emphasized that modern challenges—whether related to digital inequality, caste discrimination, or access to education—require holistic solutions informed by multiple perspectives. The event not only honored Ambedkar’s own interdisciplinary scholarship but also demonstrated how adopting such a broad-based approach can inspire innovative thinking and inclusive policymaking in today’s digital era.



Figure. 6.5 Student speakers presenting their research and thoughts on Dr. Ambedkar’s interdisciplinary contributions.

The program emphasized Dr. Ambedkar’s interdisciplinary thoughts, highlighting his ability to integrate knowledge and ideas from multiple fields. The discussions focused on how Dr. Ambedkar’s contributions transcended traditional disciplinary boundaries, making a significant impact on fields such as law, social sciences, economics, and philosophy.

6.4.2 Dialogue and Critical Thinking

The program promoted meaningful **dialogue between students and experts**, sparking questions and critical reflections on issues like the digital divide, access to education, socio-economic inclusion, and democratic participation. The discussions underscored Ambedkar’s belief in **reasoned debate**, evidence-based policies, and moral courage in

public life. A cornerstone of the event was its ability to foster meaningful dialogue and stimulate critical thinking among students and scholars. The platform was intentionally designed not just for presentation, but for discussion—encouraging participants to question, critique, and expand on each other’s ideas in a respectful and intellectually open environment. Whether debating the constitutional interpretation of equality or the ethical implications of digital surveillance, students engaged with complex topics using both theoretical grounding and contemporary examples. This atmosphere of inquiry reflected Ambedkar’s own commitment to reasoned discourse and his belief that democracy thrives on informed debate. Importantly, it helped participants develop the confidence to articulate their views, defend them with logic, and listen to differing opinions—skills that are essential in both academia and citizenship. Through this critical engagement, the event succeeded in nurturing a generation that is not only well-informed but also unafraid to question injustice and imagine transformative solutions. The program facilitated intellectual exchange and dialogue among participants and guest speakers. The audience actively engaged in discussions, asking insightful questions and providing thoughtful perspectives on Dr. Ambedkar’s interdisciplinary thoughts. The event served as a platform for sharing ideas, fostering collaboration, and promoting critical thinking.



Figure. 6.6 Student speakers presenting Dr. Ambedkar’s interdisciplinary thoughts.

6.4.3 Relevance to Contemporary Society

The event proved that Dr. Ambedkar's ideas are not confined to history books—they are dynamic tools for addressing **modern challenges** such as inequality, digital exclusion, caste-based discrimination, and systemic marginalization. Speakers emphasized that his values of liberty, equality, and fraternity should guide India's development across all sectors, including the digital ecosystem. The enduring significance of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's thought lies in its remarkable applicability to contemporary societal challenges. In an age marked by rapid technological advancement, socio-economic disparities, and renewed struggles for identity and rights, Ambedkar's vision of justice, equality, and fraternity remains profoundly relevant. The event illuminated how his philosophies can guide discourse on issues like the digital divide, caste-based violence, gender inequality, and democratic erosion. Student speakers contextualized his principles in today's frameworks—such as inclusive digital governance, equitable access to education, and socially responsible policymaking—demonstrating how his ideas offer a moral and intellectual compass for modern India. Ambedkar's emphasis on constitutionalism, ethical leadership, and education as a tool for empowerment provides a sturdy foundation for addressing systemic issues in a digital society. By bridging the historical with the contemporary, the event reaffirmed that Ambedkar's work is not just of the past but an active resource for shaping a fairer and more inclusive future. The discussions underscored the continued relevance of Dr. Ambedkar's interdisciplinary thoughts in contemporary society. The speakers and participants explored how his ideas can contribute to addressing current social, political, and economic challenges, emphasizing the need to apply his principles to create a more inclusive and just society.

6.5 Impact from the Digital India Perspective

The event provided a timely reflection on how Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's ideals align with the core objectives of the Digital India initiative. At its heart, Digital India seeks to empower every citizen through access to technology, transparent governance, and inclusive growth—principles that mirror Ambedkar's lifelong advocacy for equality, education, and social justice. By encouraging students to apply his ideas to current digital challenges, the event created a unique intersection of philosophy and innovation. Discussions touched on critical issues such as the digital divide in rural and marginalized communities, the ethical use of data, and the role of e-governance in delivering social services. Students emphasized that technology, if guided by Ambedkarite values, can become a transformative force for equity rather than exclusion. The event also modeled how educational institutions can serve as catalysts for digital inclusion by using technology to broaden access to knowledge and foster civic engagement. In doing so, it highlighted that the success of Digital India depends not only on infrastructure but also on embedding human values and constitutional ethics in its implementation. The

unique program on Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's "Interdisciplinary Thoughts" successfully highlighted the wide-ranging contributions of Dr. Ambedkar to various fields of knowledge and education. The event brought together a diverse group of students, scholars, and guest speakers, fostering intellectual discussions and promoting interdisciplinary thinking. The program served as a platform for young minds to explore the depth and relevance of Dr. Ambedkar's ideas and their potential applications in contemporary society. The organizers and participants were commended for their active participation and for honouring Dr. Ambedkar's legacy on his 132nd birth anniversary.

6.5.1 Empowering Youth Through Knowledge

Empowering youth through knowledge was one of the most visible and inspiring outcomes of the event. By placing students at the center—as speakers, thinkers, and contributors—the program encouraged a sense of ownership over both academic inquiry and social change. It shifted the traditional top-down model of education to a more participatory and empowering format where students were not just learning about Dr. Ambedkar's legacy but actively interpreting and applying it to real-world scenarios. This experiential form of learning enhanced their confidence, critical thinking, and ability to articulate informed perspectives. The interdisciplinary approach exposed students to ideas outside their core fields, fostering intellectual flexibility and problem-solving skills essential for the 21st century. More importantly, it sent a strong message that youth are not passive recipients of policy or reform but active agents in shaping a just and digital future. By integrating technology, academic freedom, and civic responsibility, the event demonstrated how knowledge—when democratized—can be a powerful tool for personal growth and national transformation. The event aligned seamlessly with the goals of **Digital India**, particularly in terms of youth empowerment and knowledge dissemination. Through student-led presentations and digital documentation, the event amplified young voices and encouraged **intellectual ownership of national issues**.

6.5.2 Promoting Cross-Disciplinary Digital Learning

The interdisciplinary approach mirrored **Digital India's emphasis on integrated development**, where education, technology, governance, and social inclusion must work together. The ability of students to connect Ambedkar's ideas with areas like digital literacy, e-governance, and equitable access to information highlighted how digital tools can serve Ambedkarite values. The event showcased the potential of cross-disciplinary digital learning as a powerful tool to deepen understanding and broaden perspectives. By bringing together students from diverse academic backgrounds—such as law, science, arts, management, and engineering—the program highlighted how digital platforms can facilitate collaborative knowledge exchange. Presenters utilized digital tools to research, prepare, and deliver their insights, demonstrating the role of technology in enhancing academic engagement. More importantly, the event showed that when

students are encouraged to explore connections between their disciplines and larger societal themes, they begin to think holistically—an essential skill in the interconnected digital era. Dr. Ambedkar’s multidimensional approach served as the perfect anchor for this kind of learning, as his work exemplified how social transformation requires inputs from multiple fields. The event therefore not only promoted academic excellence but also set a model for how educational institutions can adopt digital tools to foster interdisciplinary learning that is both socially relevant and intellectually rich.

6.5.3 Inclusive and Informed Participation

Digital technologies played a key role in enabling wide participation and outreach for the event. It also demonstrated the importance of **ensuring digital equity**—a theme that Dr. Ambedkar would have deeply championed. By bridging academic knowledge with digital access, the event became a model of inclusive intellectual participation. The event strongly emphasized the values of inclusivity and informed participation—both fundamental to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s democratic vision and central to the ethos of a digitally empowered India. Students from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and academic disciplines were encouraged to participate, ensuring diverse representation in voices and ideas. The format was deliberately designed to be accessible and open, fostering a sense of belonging and intellectual engagement among all attendees. Presentations were grounded in research, supported by digital resources, and enriched through interactions with expert panelists, enabling participants to think critically and engage meaningfully with complex issues. This approach mirrored the spirit of inclusive governance, where every individual has both the right and the responsibility to contribute. By equipping students with digital tools, analytical skills, and a platform to express themselves, the event succeeded in nurturing a generation that is not only aware of social issues but also empowered to take part in shaping solutions.

6.6 Conclusion and Acknowledgment

This unique program honoring Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s **interdisciplinary thoughts** offered more than a celebration—it was a revival of academic inquiry, civic responsibility, and visionary thinking. Through diverse presentations, expert commentary, and student engagement, the event reflected how Ambedkar’s ideas continue to inform India’s evolving identity, especially in the digital age. The **Ambedkar Chair Cluster** at Andhra University deserves appreciation for curating such a forward-looking event, and heartfelt thanks are extended to all the speakers, guests, organizers, and participants who contributed to its success. In conclusion, the event on “Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s Interdisciplinary Thoughts” stood as a testament to the enduring relevance of Ambedkar’s philosophy in a modern, digital India. It successfully bridged the gap between historical wisdom and contemporary challenges, allowing students to explore the vast impact of his ideas across academic, social, and technological spheres. The program fostered an

environment of active learning, inclusive dialogue, and visionary thinking—reflecting Ambedkar’s ideals of knowledge, equity, and empowerment. The success of this event would not have been possible without the dedicated efforts of the Ambedkar Chair Cluster at Andhra University, under the guidance of Prof. M. James Stephen. A heartfelt acknowledgment is extended to all the guest speakers for their insightful contributions, the students for their enthusiastic participation, and the organizing committee for their meticulous coordination. This event not only celebrated a legacy but also planted seeds of critical thinking and civic engagement among the youth—an essential step toward realizing a truly inclusive and digitally connected India.



Figure. 6.7 Group Photo with Guest Speakers, Faculty, and Student Participants at the Conclusion of the Event.

The event concluded with a vibrant photo session that captured the collective spirit of the occasion. Students, faculty members, guest speakers, and organizers gathered together to commemorate the success of the program. These photographs served not only as a token of participation but also as a visual archive of collaboration, unity, and the shared respect for Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s legacy. The smiles, interactions, and camaraderie reflected the inclusive and intellectually engaging atmosphere cultivated throughout the event. The photo session also symbolized a moment of pride and accomplishment for all participants who had contributed to making the program a memorable and meaningful experience.

6.7 Event Summary

The event, titled “Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s Interdisciplinary Thoughts,” was organized by the Ambedkar Chair Cluster at Andhra University on 14th April 2023 at 2:00 PM in the Dr. YVS Murthy Auditorium, Visakhapatnam. It brought together over 500 participants, including students, scholars, and invited dignitaries from various academic and professional fields. A total of 28 student speakers presented interdisciplinary insights connecting Dr. Ambedkar’s philosophy to their respective disciplines. The event was enriched by the presence of guest speakers from the judiciary, civil services, and academia, who offered practical perspectives on the application of Ambedkarite thought in contemporary society. Hosted under the leadership of Prof. M. James Stephen, Ambedkar Chair Professor, the program served as a vibrant platform for youth engagement, knowledge sharing, and critical discourse. It effectively merged tradition with innovation, creating a meaningful space for reflection on Ambedkar’s legacy in the digital age.



Figure. 6.8 Students Captured During the Session on “The Multifaceted Personality of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar”.

- **Event Name:** A Unique Program (Panel Discussion) on “Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s Interdisciplinary Thoughts”
- **Date and Time:** 14th April 2023, 02:00 PM onwards
- **Venue:** Dr. YVS Murthy Auditorium, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam
- **Participants:** 500+ students and scholars

- **Student Speakers:** 28
- **Guest Speakers:** Representatives from Judiciary, Academia, Bureaucracy
- **Host:** Prof. M. James Stephen, Ambedkar Chair Professor, Andhra University

As part of the thematic reflection on “The Multifaced Personality of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar,” students gathered to participate in an interactive session that emphasized the diverse dimensions of Ambedkar’s life—as a social reformer, economist, constitutional expert, educator, and human rights advocate. The session highlighted his unparalleled contributions across fields, inspiring students to embrace interdisciplinary perspectives. The group photo taken during this segment captured the energy, engagement, and admiration of the students, serving as a symbol of youthful enthusiasm for Ambedkar’s timeless ideals.

CHAPTER 7

CELEBRATING AMBEDKAR'S VISION OF INCLUSION IN A DIGITAL INDIA

7.1 Introduction

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's legacy continues to inspire generations across India, especially in the spheres of social justice, constitutional values, and education. As India rapidly transitions into a digitally driven society, revisiting Ambedkar's philosophy becomes even more essential. His vision of inclusive growth, empowerment through education, and equal access to rights serves as a guiding light for the Digital India initiative. The celebration of his 133rd on **April 15, 2023**, hosted by the **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University**, was designed to bridge historical ideals with modern-day technological possibilities. The event aimed to reflect Ambedkar's multifaceted personality and to renew commitment to his dream of an egalitarian society through art, dialogue, and digital integration.

7.2 General Overview of the Event

The celebration was marked by an atmosphere of academic rigor blended with cultural vibrancy, making it more than just a tribute—it became a living classroom. The event not only encouraged creative expression but also provided a forum for critical inquiry into the continuing relevance of Dr. Ambedkar's ideas. From behind-the-scenes coordination to the stage performances, every aspect was handled by students, making the event a practical learning experience in leadership, digital coordination, and public engagement. Interactive digital kiosks set up at the venue displayed short documentaries on Ambedkar's life and digital milestones in governance, allowing participants to engage with historical and contemporary data. Faculty members facilitated discussions during intermissions, transforming passive audience time into moments of shared reflection. The program was not only a commemoration but also a catalyst for deeper academic conversations and digital innovation within the university environment. The celebrations began with a heartfelt tribute to Dr. Ambedkar, led by the Principals of the various colleges under Andhra University, along with the Chair Professor of the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair. They gathered to pay their respects, underscoring the profound influence that Dr. Ambedkar's work has had on Indian society, particularly in the realms of education and social reform[7].

The structured flow of the program ensured smooth transitions between speeches, performances, and interactions, keeping the audience consistently involved. Importantly, the event also provided a platform for first-time performers and organizers, nur-



Figure. 7.1 Principals and Chair Professor Paying Tribute to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar at the Inaugural Ceremony.

turing new talent and promoting student confidence in public expression.

7.2.1 Objective and Theme

The objective was to immerse students in Ambedkar’s ideology by encouraging creative expression and academic engagement around the theme, **“A Vision of Inclusion.”** It emphasized the importance of removing social barriers and fostering a culture of equity, accessibility, and participation. The event aimed to ignite discussions among the youth on topics like social justice, constitutional values, and digital equity, rooted in Ambedkarite thought. The broader objective of the event was to translate Ambedkar’s timeless ideals into actionable inspiration for the student community in today’s digital and democratic framework. While the theme “A Vision of Inclusion” served as the focal point, the event also aimed to redefine inclusion in contemporary terms—not only as a social principle but as a digital necessity. Organizers emphasized that true inclusion must now also consider access to digital education, representation in online platforms, and equitable participation in the information economy. The theme urged participants to rethink Ambedkar’s philosophy beyond textbooks and courtroom contexts, applying it to issues such as data justice, internet accessibility, and algorithmic fairness. Thus, the event did not merely reflect on inclusion as a moral value, but positioned it as a technological goal essential for building a truly empowered and equitable Digital India.

7.2.2 Participating Institutions

The participation of seven constituent colleges under Andhra University added remarkable diversity and interdisciplinary richness to the event. Each institution contributed a unique academic lens, rooted in their respective disciplines, which led to a nuanced and

multidimensional exploration of the event’s theme. For example, while the College of Law focused on constitutional justice and rights-based frameworks, the College of Science and Technology emphasized the intersection of innovation and social equity. The College of Engineering explored how inclusive design and digital tools could address accessibility gaps, whereas the College of Arts and Commerce highlighted the importance of cultural narratives in shaping public discourse. This diversity of inputs not only strengthened the intellectual quality of the program but also reflected Ambedkar’s own interdisciplinary legacy. The participation of these varied institutions fostered collaboration, mutual respect, and a shared sense of academic purpose—all crucial for shaping a digitally inclusive nation. Seven colleges from Andhra University took part, each offering a distinct viewpoint on inclusion. This cross-college collaboration encouraged diversity in thought, cultural richness, and institutional unity:

- College of Engineering
- College of Arts and Commerce
- College of Science and Technology
- Dr. B.R. Ambedkar College of Law
- College of Pharmaceutical Sciences
- College of IASE (Institute of Advanced Studies in Education)
- College of Engineering for Women

These institutions brought varied socio-academic perspectives to a shared platform, enhancing the interdisciplinary nature of the event. The Principals spoke passionately about how Dr. Ambedkar’s vision continues to inspire the younger generation to strive for a more inclusive and equitable society. They emphasized the importance of education, a cause close to Dr. Ambedkar’s heart, in breaking down the barriers of caste and inequality. The speakers also reflected on how Dr. Ambedkar’s ideals are more relevant today than ever before, urging the students and faculty present to carry forward his mission in their own lives. As the speeches progressed, it became clear that this was not just a celebration of a historical figure, but a reaffirmation of the values that Dr. Ambedkar stood for. The crowd, though vast and pressed for space, remained attentive and engaged throughout the entire program, a testament to the deep respect they held for Dr. Ambedkar and the significance of the occasion.

7.2.3 Event Format

The event featured one-act plays and skits that addressed contemporary issues of discrimination, marginalization, and empowerment. Students used both traditional theatrical methods and digital enhancements (presentations, background visuals, and music) to drive their messages home. This made the performances engaging, relatable, and impactful. The format of the event was carefully curated to blend formal academic



Figure. 7.2 Principals Addressing the Audience on the Enduring Relevance of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s Vision.

structure with dynamic student-led creativity. It began with an inaugural session featuring keynote speeches by esteemed faculty and invited dignitaries, setting the tone for the day. This was followed by a series of thematic performances—including skits, one-act plays, and visual storytelling—each allocated a specific time slot and judged based on creativity, relevance, clarity of message, and audience impact. The performances were interspersed with brief reflections by faculty mentors, encouraging students to articulate the rationale behind their presentations. A notable feature of the format was the integration of audience participation through real-time digital voting, which added excitement and transparency to the evaluation process. Additionally, information booths and interactive digital exhibits were arranged around the venue, allowing attendees to engage with Ambedkarite literature, constitutional milestones, and social reform campaigns. The event concluded with a reflective panel discussion and awards ceremony, making the format holistic, inclusive, and educationally rich.

7.3 Innovative use of Technology

Technology played a pivotal role in the execution and evaluation of the event. **QR-coded entry passes** were issued to attendees, allowing them to vote digitally for the best performance, making the selection process transparent and democratic. This integration of technology represented a practical application of Digital India’s core tenets. Additionally, the event was live-streamed on the university’s digital platforms, reaching a broader audience and promoting digital inclusivity. The event stood out for its thoughtful and practical integration of digital tools, which not only enhanced the effi-

ciency of the program but also served as a demonstration of the potential of Digital India at the grassroots academic level. Beyond QR-based entry and live audience voting, organizers deployed a mobile-based feedback system that allowed participants to submit reflections and rate various segments of the event in real time. A dedicated microsite was created to host information about the program, participants, and Ambedkar’s digital legacy, serving as both a resource hub and a post-event archive. Digital certificates of participation and excellence were automatically generated and emailed to students, eliminating manual processing and promoting environmental sustainability. Moreover, portions of the event were live-streamed on social media platforms, enabling remote participation by alumni and interested public audiences. These digital innovations ensured that the event was not only accessible and efficient, but also aligned with the broader goals of governance, transparency, and citizen engagement envisioned under the Digital India initiative.

7.4 Highlights of the Performances

The performances during the event were not merely theatrical showcases but powerful vehicles of social commentary, each crafted to resonate with Ambedkar’s multifaceted vision. Students from each participating college presented one-act plays and skits that tackled themes such as digital exclusion, caste-based inequality, gender bias, and socio-economic injustice—drawing clear parallels between Ambedkar’s ideals and present-day challenges. What made these performances particularly impactful was the depth of research and emotional intensity infused into each script. For instance, the College of Pharmaceutical Sciences focused on health disparities and ethics in access to medicine, while the College of Law depicted courtroom dramatizations of landmark constitutional battles. Visual aids, digital backdrops, and recorded audio-visual clips were used to enhance storytelling, making the performances immersive and contemporary. Each act concluded with a short reflective note by the performers, explaining how their presentation connects to Ambedkar’s lifelong mission. The creative excellence, emotional resonance, and thematic alignment of these performances made them the soul of the event. Each performance was thematically rich and creatively presented:

- **College of IASE** performed “*A Vision of Inclusion through Education*”, emphasizing how education bridges societal gaps.
- **College of Engineering for Women** staged “*India Today*”, focusing on gender justice and the digital divide.
- **College of Science and Technology** presented “*The Vision of Ambedkar*”, shedding light on Ambedkar’s scientific temperament and futuristic thinking.

Other colleges also addressed themes such as judicial empowerment, healthcare accessibility, and labor rights, all rooted in Ambedkar’s vision. One of the major highlights

of the event was a series of one-act plays and skits performed by students from seven different colleges within Andhra University. These performances were crafted around the central theme of "A Vision of Inclusion," a concept that Dr. Ambedkar championed throughout his life. The performances were not merely acts of entertainment but served as powerful expressions of the ongoing struggle for social justice and equality, values that Dr. Ambedkar fervently advocated. The colleges that participated included the College of Engineering, College of Arts and Commerce, College of Science and Technology, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar College of Law, College of Pharmaceutical Sciences, College of IASE (Institute of Advanced Studies in Education), and the College of Engineering for Women. Each college brought its own unique interpretation to the theme, resulting in a diverse and enriching showcase of talent.



Figure. 7.3 Students Presenting Thematic Skits on "A Vision of Inclusion" from Seven Constituent Colleges of Andhra University.

7.5 Impact from the Digital India Perspective

The event's alignment with the goals of the Digital India initiative was evident in both its execution and its underlying message. It illustrated how digital tools can be seamlessly integrated into academic and cultural activities to enhance inclusivity, transparency, and civic engagement. The use of mobile-based voting and QR-code entry was more than a technical convenience—it served as a symbolic gesture of digital empowerment, making each participant an active contributor to the outcome. Moreover, the event highlighted pressing concerns like digital illiteracy, limited rural internet access, and the ethical implications of technology—all within the framework of Ambedkar's vision for equal opportunity and informed citizenship. Students emphasized that bridging the

digital divide must go beyond hardware and infrastructure, incorporating values like justice, equity, and ethical usage. In doing so, the event became a live demonstration of how Ambedkar's philosophy can serve as a moral compass for navigating India's digital transformation, ensuring that technology becomes a tool for liberation, not marginalization.

7.5.1 Democratizing Participation

The digital voting system allowed audience members to actively participate in judging performances, transforming spectators into stakeholders. This digital engagement symbolized an essential aspect of e-governance and civic participation. One of the most commendable aspects of the event was its strong focus on democratizing participation—ensuring that every attendee, regardless of academic background or social identity, had a voice and a role. The use of QR-coded digital voting empowered students and faculty alike to participate in evaluating the performances, removing hierarchical barriers and embracing a bottom-up model of engagement. This real-time participatory process reflected the spirit of Ambedkar's democratic ideals, where decision-making is collective and inclusive. Additionally, students from different academic disciplines and linguistic backgrounds were encouraged to collaborate, fostering an environment of mutual respect and shared purpose. Even the organizing teams were formed to include representation from all participating colleges, ensuring a fair distribution of responsibilities and recognition. The emphasis on equality in contribution, visibility, and reward showcased how educational institutions can model democratic values not just in theory, but in practice. Through this, the event embodied a microcosm of what a digitally inclusive and participatory India could look like. Beyond digital voting, the event ensured that participation extended to every aspect of planning and execution—right from stage design to script writing and publicity. Students from underrepresented backgrounds were encouraged to take leading roles, reinforcing the commitment to equity. Sign language interpretation and multilingual announcements were introduced for better inclusivity. The seating arrangement itself was non-hierarchical, allowing students, faculty, and guests to engage as equals. This open and accessible structure highlighted how democratizing participation isn't just a concept—it's a practice that shapes how knowledge is created, shared, and celebrated. The event was also marked by the use of innovative technology to engage the audience. Every participant, including students, staff, and faculty members, was provided with a QR code entry pass, which was used to facilitate an online voting system. This system allowed the audience to actively participate in the event by casting their votes for their favourite performances via their mobile devices. The results of this voting process were crucial in determining the winners, making the event both interactive and democratic.

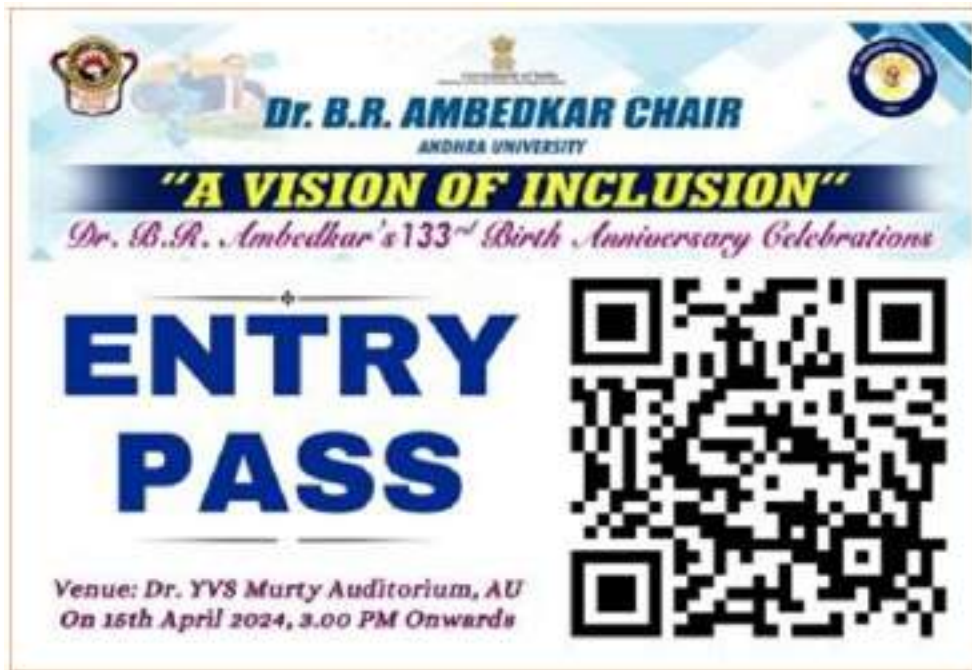


Figure. 7.4 QR Code Entry and Digital Voting Bringing Interactivity to the Celebration.

7.5.2 Encouraging Youth Leadership

Students took on roles as writers, directors, performers, and organizers. This experiential learning helped them develop leadership, public speaking, and teamwork skills—key components of empowered citizenship in a digital world. The event provided a fertile ground for fostering youth leadership by placing students at the helm of every critical role—from planning and organizing to performance and evaluation. Rather than being passive recipients, students actively led each segment of the event, transforming it into a platform for experiential learning and civic empowerment. They formed organizing committees, curated scripts, managed digital tools, coordinated stage production, and even anchored the sessions—showcasing not only their creativity but also their leadership acumen. Faculty served as facilitators, allowing students the freedom to explore, experiment, and take ownership. This empowerment cultivated a sense of responsibility and agency among students, encouraging them to think critically about societal issues and act as change-makers. Moreover, it highlighted how youth can leverage both traditional knowledge and digital resources to advocate for inclusive growth. By centering young voices and entrusting them with meaningful roles, the event modeled the kind of participatory leadership Ambedkar envisioned—rooted in knowledge, equality, and action.

7.5.3 Strengthening Civic Awareness

The content of the performances elevated civic awareness by linking historical injustices with contemporary digital realities. Issues such as online harassment, access to e-



Figure. 7.5 Technology-Enabled Participation Using Mobile-Based Voting During the Event.

learning, and cyber rights were explored through dramatic narratives. The event served as a powerful medium for strengthening civic awareness among the student community by linking Dr. Ambedkar’s legacy with contemporary societal responsibilities. Through their performances and reflections, students explored key constitutional values such as liberty, equality, and fraternity—not as abstract concepts, but as guiding principles relevant to modern governance and digital citizenship. Skits addressed themes like the right to education, fair access to technology, data privacy, and the digital divide, urging the audience to consider how these issues affect marginalized communities in today’s India. Faculty-led dialogues following each act helped reinforce these lessons, encouraging critical thinking and deeper understanding of civic duties. Furthermore, the integration of digital tools like audience voting and feedback mechanisms demonstrated how democratic engagement can be enhanced through technology. By presenting civic education in an engaging and experiential format, the event inspired students to not only understand their rights and responsibilities but also to act on them, making civic awareness a lived and practiced value.

7.6 Culmination: Awards and Reflections

The prize distribution ceremony honored excellence while reinforcing Ambedkar’s message that merit and effort must always be recognized. Student reflections after the event highlighted increased understanding of Ambedkar’s relevance, a deeper appreciation of their rights, and a greater sense of social responsibility. The event concluded on a high note with a well-organized awards ceremony that celebrated not just talent, but

purpose-driven creativity and student-led innovation. Winners were selected based on both jury assessments and live audience votes, reflecting the event's commitment to participatory evaluation. Medals, certificates, and digital accolades were presented across several categories, including Best Play, Best Script, Best Actor, and Audience Choice Award. These recognitions served to validate the hard work and thoughtful engagement of students, while also motivating others to pursue similar excellence in future academic and cultural initiatives. Beyond the distribution of prizes, the closing session featured open reflections by participants, faculty, and guests. Students spoke of how the event deepened their understanding of Dr. Ambedkar's vision, enhanced their leadership skills, and made them more aware of the power of storytelling in social transformation. Faculty praised the interdisciplinary approach and encouraged students to continue applying digital tools for civic advocacy and learning. The reflections brought the event full circle—linking knowledge, action, and inspiration into a collective call for inclusive nation-building. As the day progressed, the audience was treated to a series of compelling performances. For instance, the College of IASE presented a play titled "A Vision of Inclusion through Education," which highlighted the transformative power of education in achieving social equality. Similarly, the College of Engineering for Women offered a performance titled "India Today," reflecting on contemporary social issues through the lens of Dr. Ambedkar's philosophy. The College of Science and Technology also contributed with a performance entitled "The Vision of Ambedkar," which delved into the visionary ideas of Dr. Ambedkar and their relevance in today's world.



Figure. 7.6 Thematic Stage Performances by IASE, Engineering for Women, and Science and Technology Colleges Reflecting Ambedkar's Ideals.

The event concluded with a distinguished medals and prize distribution ceremony, where the best performances were recognized and celebrated. This moment was more than just an acknowledgment of individual talent; it was a culmination of the collective efforts and dedication that had been on display throughout the day. As the winners were announced, the atmosphere was electric, with the audience erupting in applause and cheers. The participants who took the stage to receive their awards were met with admiration and respect, their achievements serving as a testament to the hard work and creativity they had invested in bringing Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's vision to life.



Figure. 7.7 Medal and Prize Distribution Ceremony Honoring Student Excellence and Ambedkarite Expression.

Each award presented during the ceremony carried a deeper significance, representing not only excellence in performance but also a commitment to the ideals of inclusion, equality, and justice that Dr. Ambedkar championed. The categories spanned various aspects of the performances, from best play to best actor, each carefully selected to honour the unique contributions of the participants.

The judges took into account the impact each performance had on the audience; The prize distribution ceremony also provided a moment for reflection on the broader success of the event. As the final awards were handed out, the sense of unity and shared purpose that had been fostered among the participants became evident. The event had not only celebrated Dr. Ambedkar's legacy but had also brought together a diverse community in a shared commitment to his values.

The ceremony closed with a profound sense of fulfilment, as everyone present recognized that they had collectively honoured Dr. Ambedkar in a way that would continue to inspire them well beyond the day's celebrations. The event concluded with a



Figure. 7.8 Award Categories Celebrating Artistic Excellence and Commitment to Ambedkar’s Ideals.

medals and prize distribution ceremony, where the best performances were recognized and awarded. This ceremony was not just about celebrating the winners but was also a moment to reflect on the success of the event in fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose among the participants. As the curtains gradually drew on a day rich with emotion, learning, and celebration, the closing ceremony became a profound moment of collective fulfillment. There was a palpable sense of achievement among the participants, organizers, and audience members, each having contributed meaningfully to the success of the event. The hall echoed with enthusiastic applause as students, one by one, stepped forward to receive their medals and certificates—symbols not just of recognition but of a shared journey shaped by dedication and purpose. Faculty members and guests expressed their pride in witnessing such a deeply engaging and impactful program, emphasizing how it exemplified the ideals of unity, inclusion, and digital empowerment. The atmosphere was reflective yet hopeful, with speakers urging students to carry forward the values of Dr. Ambedkar in their daily lives, especially in an era shaped by technology and rapid social change. The gathering paused for a final group photograph—a symbolic gesture capturing not just faces, but a moment in history where education, technology, and social justice came together on one platform. As participants departed, there was a shared sense that this was not an end, but a new beginning—of informed dialogue, collaborative action, and lifelong commitment to Ambedkar’s vision of an inclusive and equitable India.



Figure. 7.9 Symbolic Recognition of Student Contributions Upholding Ambedkarite Values.

7.7 Conclusion

The event offered a powerful demonstration of how Ambedkar’s vision can be realized in the digital age. It was a convergence of creativity, civic responsibility, and technological innovation. The initiative set a benchmark for how educational institutions can play a pivotal role in promoting inclusive values using modern tools. The collaborative spirit and the digital integration embodied the core ideals of both Ambedkar’s philosophy and the Digital India movement. In conclusion, the celebration of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s 133rd birth anniversary at Andhra University was not merely a commemorative function—it was a vibrant convergence of education, technology, and social consciousness. The event successfully bridged Ambedkar’s enduring ideals with the aspirations of a digitally empowered India, showcasing how his vision continues to guide present and future generations. By integrating interdisciplinary themes, student-led initiatives, and digital tools, the program demonstrated a scalable model of inclusive education and democratic participation. It not only honored Ambedkar’s legacy in spirit but actively extended it through meaningful engagement and innovation. The insights shared, the talents showcased, and the values reinforced during this event will serve as a lasting inspiration for all participants to become informed, responsible, and inclusive citizens in the digital age.

7.8 Event Details

The event, titled “A Vision of Inclusion: Celebrating the 133rd Birth Anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar,” was organized on 15th April 2023 at the YVS Murthy Auditorium,



Figure. 7.10 Judges and Participants United in Celebrating the Impact and Purpose of the Event.



Figure. 7.11 Final Moments of Celebration and Fulfillment at the Closing Ceremony.

Andhra University, Visakhapatnam. It was hosted by the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair, under the leadership of Prof. M. James Stephen, in collaboration with seven constituent colleges of the university. These included the College of Engineering, College of Arts and Commerce, College of Science and Technology, College of Law, College of Pharmaceutical Sciences, College of IASE, and the College of Engineering for Women. The program featured theatrical performances, digital engagement tools like QR-based voting, and student reflections, all centered around the theme “A Vision of Inclusion.” The event brought together students, faculty, and guests in a vibrant and purposeful celebration of Ambedkar’s legacy, while integrating digital innovation and civic learning into its core.

- **Event:** 133rd Birth Anniversary of Bharath Ratna Dr. B.R. Ambedkar
- **Theme:** A Vision of Inclusion

- **Date:** 15th April 2023
- **Venue:** YVS Murthy Auditorium, Andhra University
- **Participating Institutions:** Seven constituent colleges
- **Organized by:** Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair, Andhra University

7.9 Winners in Different Categories

The event concluded with an awards segment that honored outstanding performances across various categories, designed to recognize excellence in creativity, expression, message clarity, and social relevance. Awards were distributed to both individuals and teams who demonstrated a strong understanding of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s vision through innovative storytelling and impactful presentation. Categories included Best Play, Best Script, Best Actor (Male and Female), Most Impactful Message, and Audience Choice Award. The evaluation process was uniquely democratic, combining expert jury reviews with digital audience voting through QR-enabled systems. This transparent and inclusive system allowed everyone in the audience to contribute to the selection of winners, thereby reinforcing the spirit of equality and participatory engagement. The awards served not only as a token of appreciation but also as a motivation for students to use their talents and voices to drive social awareness and positive change. The awards were decided by a combination of audience voting and jury evaluation. The following categories were recognized:

- **Best Play:** College of IASE – *A Vision of Inclusion through Education*
- **Best Actor (Male):** Student from College of Engineering for Women
- **Best Actor (Female):** Student from College of Science and Technology
- **Best Script:** College of Arts and Commerce – *Breaking Barriers*
- **Most Impactful Message:** Dr. B.R. Ambedkar College of Law – *Voice of Justice*
- **Audience Choice Award:** College of Pharmaceutical Sciences

Each of these recognitions not only rewarded artistic talent but also acknowledged the embodiment of Ambedkar’s ideals in creative expression.

CHAPTER 8

REIMAGINING AMBEDKAR'S VISION THROUGH THE FREEDOM QUIZ 2024

8.1 Introduction

The *Freedom Quiz 2024*, organized by the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University, was more than a commemorative activity—it was a visionary step towards reinterpreting and modernising the legacy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar for the digital era. Conducted as part of the 78th Independence Day celebrations, the initiative exemplified a convergence of civic education, digital empowerment, and youth engagement. It provided a unique platform where historical reflection met technological integration, offering students an opportunity to explore India's freedom struggle and constitutional ethos through interactive, technology-driven formats. In a country as diverse and dynamic as India, democracy thrives not merely through electoral participation but through informed dialogue, historical awareness, and digital inclusion. Dr. Ambedkar envisioned an India where education would become the cornerstone of social justice and empowerment. His emphasis on critical reasoning, rationality, and equality remains profoundly relevant today, particularly in a rapidly digitizing society. The Freedom Quiz 2024 brought these ideals to life, not only by educating participants about the nation's constitutional journey but also by doing so through a digitally inclusive and intellectually engaging experience.

The initiative was rooted in the belief that knowledge is the foundation of true freedom—a belief championed by Dr. Ambedkar himself. The format, driven by digital platforms, enabled students from varied geographical and socioeconomic backgrounds to participate without discrimination. It emphasized access, transparency, and merit—principles deeply aligned with Ambedkarite philosophy. The use of real-time quizzes, virtual eliminations, and digital certifications illustrated how Ambedkar's ideals can be contemporized through technology. As India progresses further into the era of Digital India, events like this quiz are not only educational exercises but instruments of democratic renewal. They echo Ambedkar's clarion call for unity, intellectual awakening, and inclusive governance, and show how his vision can be reimagined through tools that the 21st century offers. The Freedom Quiz 2024, thus, stands as a living example of how Dr. Ambedkar's ideology can be preserved, practiced, and modernised—transforming students into informed citizens and digital change-makers. This chapter explores the objectives, structure, outcomes, and digital innovations of the event in detail. It aims to demonstrate how civic knowledge, when coupled with technological accessibility, can uphold the spirit of Ambedkar's teachings while preparing India's

youth to carry his legacy forward in the digital age.

8.2 Objective and Theme

The core objective of Freedom Quiz 2024 was to instill a deeper understanding of India's constitutional values, democratic heritage, and freedom movement among students. This initiative aimed to At the heart of the Freedom Quiz 2024 lay a powerful objective: to rekindle the values of India's freedom movement through the lens of modern technology and inclusive education. Organized by the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University, the event aimed to create a platform where students could not only test their knowledge but also reflect on the relevance of constitutional ideals in today's digital era. The quiz was designed to instill critical thinking, constitutional literacy, and civic responsibility among the younger generation, with an emphasis on participatory learning and equitable access—values that resonate deeply with Dr. Ambedkar's transformative vision for India. The theme, "Freedom Through Knowledge", was carefully chosen to underscore the foundational principle that liberation—whether political, social, or economic—cannot be sustained without intellectual empowerment. Dr. Ambedkar believed that education was the primary tool for breaking the chains of oppression and inequality. He once remarked, "Cultivation of the mind should be the ultimate aim of human existence." This belief continues to echo in contemporary India, especially as we navigate an era dominated by digital technologies and information flow. In this context, the quiz served not only as a test of facts but as a means to engage young minds in meaningful reflections about the purpose of freedom, the responsibilities of citizenship, and the enduring importance of democratic dialogue.

Importantly, the event also demonstrated how digital platforms can be used to propagate Ambedkarite values in a modern context. By leveraging online tools for registration, evaluation, and feedback, the organizers ensured inclusivity, transparency, and wide participation—effectively aligning with the Digital India vision. This use of technology not only democratized the event but also served as a model for how Ambedkar's ideology can be modernised to suit contemporary challenges. Thus, the objective and theme of the Freedom Quiz 2024 go beyond mere academic engagement. They represent a broader movement to integrate Dr. Ambedkar's ideals with the opportunities of the digital age—nurturing youth who are not only well-informed but also socially conscious and technologically empowered to carry forward the mission of justice, equality, and national unity[8].

8.3 Modernising Dr. Ambedkar's Ideology in the Digital Age

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar envisioned a society where justice, equality, liberty, and fraternity were not merely constitutional ideals but lived experiences for every citizen—particularly for those historically marginalized. His enduring faith in education, democratic partic-

ipation, and institutional reform laid the groundwork for a just and inclusive India. In the 21st century, digital advancements present a powerful means to reinterpret and reapply his vision in more accessible, scalable, and inclusive forms. The *Freedom Quiz 2024*, organized by the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University, stands as a compelling example of how Ambedkar's philosophy can be adapted to the digital era. The use of QR code-based entry, mobile-enabled online registration, remote screening, and real-time audience voting ensured that students from all socio-economic and geographic backgrounds could participate equally. This directly reflects Ambedkar's call for removing structural barriers to access and ensuring that opportunities are not confined by privilege. Importantly, the event did not simply digitize traditional academic practices—it redefined civic education for a digital generation. Students engaged with constitutional values, social justice issues, and democratic frameworks through technology platforms they use every day. In doing so, the event breathed new life into Ambedkar's core belief: that knowledge and critical inquiry are the true instruments of liberation. Furthermore, the interactive digital format mirrored the participatory democracy Ambedkar envisioned. By involving the audience in real-time voting and decision-making, the quiz event modeled a form of civic engagement that is democratic, transparent, and technologically enabled. It showed how digital tools can foster a culture of informed participation, where every individual has a voice and a stake in the outcome. In essence, this initiative demonstrated that modernising Dr. Ambedkar's ideology does not mean altering its foundation—it means expanding its reach and relevance. Through thoughtful integration of technology, his ideals of equality, education, and empowerment can be actively realized, ensuring that his legacy continues to guide India's journey in the digital age.

8.4 Format and Structure of the Quiz

The structure of the Freedom Quiz 2024 was intentionally designed not only to test knowledge but also to reflect Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's modernist educational ideals democratic in spirit, inclusive in approach, and transformative in impact. It was a progressive, tiered model that embraced digital methodologies while upholding pedagogical values rooted in Ambedkar's philosophy of rational inquiry, equal opportunity, and participatory engagement. In true Ambedkarite fashion, the quiz format rejected elitism and embraced accessibility. It welcomed participation from a wide range of institutions and social backgrounds, offering an academic space where knowledge could empower, not exclude. This format represented a deliberate step toward modernising civic education in a way that not only imparted facts but cultivated socially responsible thought among the youth of India.

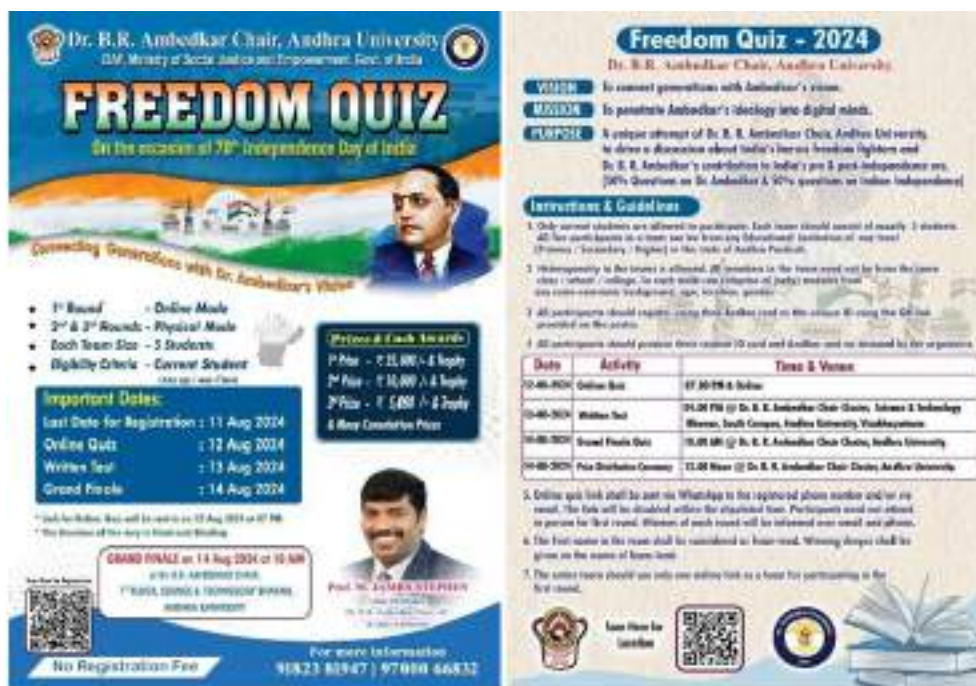


Figure. 8.1 Official Poster of the Freedom Quiz 2024, commemorating the 78th Independence Day and promoting digital civic engagement among students.

Stage 1 – Online Screening (12 August 2024)

The first stage was a large-scale digital screening round, reflecting the commitment to equity and digital access. Open to students from schools, junior colleges, and universities, the online platform enabled participation without geographic or institutional barriers—an echo of Dr. Ambedkar's insistence that education must reach the margins. Over 1,001 teams registered, out of which 390 completed the round within the given time. The screening questions focused on India's freedom struggle, constitutional values, Ambedkar's legacy, and current issues of social justice and governance—effectively blending historical literacy with contemporary relevance. This stage was not only an assessment tool but a symbolic expression of the democratization of knowledge through digital means. The accessibility of this round, enhanced by QR-based registration and mobile-optimized platforms, brought students from rural and urban areas onto a common intellectual platform. The Freedom Quiz 2024 is a unique and ambitious format that quickly captured the attention of students and educational institutions across the region conducted by Dr B R Ambedkar Chair. Unlike traditional quizzes, this event required participants to form teams of exactly five members, encouraging collaboration and teamwork right from the start. Registration was conducted online, and the response was overwhelming 1,001 teams from various colleges, institutions, and schools eagerly signed up to compete in what was quickly becoming one of the most anticipated events of the year.

The quiz, designed to be both challenging and comprehensive, featured a mix of

multiple-choice questions, but a deep understanding of historical events, key figures, and current affairs. Teams had a limited time to complete the quiz, adding an element of urgency to the challenge. The online format allowed for broad participation, enabling teams from even the most remote areas to compete on an equal footing. By the end of the allotted time, 390 teams had successfully completed and submitted their quizzes. The organizers, led by the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair, then undertook the meticulous task of evaluating the submissions. The competition was fierce, with many teams scoring close to each other, but only the top 20 teams could advance to the next stage. These teams, having demonstrated superior knowledge and quick thinking, were notified of their success and invited to the second round, which promised to be even more demanding. The first stage of the competition was an online quiz held on August 12, 2024. This round was designed to test the teams on a broad range of topics, including historical events, key figures in the fight for independence, constitutional principles, and current affairs. The quiz was structured with a mix of multiple-choice questions, true or false statements, and short-answer questions, all of which required quick thinking and a deep understanding of the subject matter. Out of the 1,001 registered teams, 390 successfully completed and submitted their quizzes within the allotted time. The organizers then meticulously evaluated the results, and only the top 20 teams were selected to move on to the next stage of the competition, marking the end of a highly competitive and challenging first round.

Stage 2 – Quarterfinal Round (13 August 2024)

The top 20 teams moved on to a physically conducted quarterfinal at the Ambedkar Chair Cluster. This stage reflected Ambedkar’s emphasis on social dialogue and participatory learning. Designed around teamwork, interpretive challenges, and rapid-response questions, the quarterfinal tested more than factual memory—it tested collaboration, moral reasoning, and decision-making. The environment fostered equity, as all teams competed under the same conditions and were evaluated using transparent scoring methods. By creating a space where students of different disciplines and social contexts engaged in shared inquiry, the format exemplified Ambedkar’s vision of egalitarian dialogue as the foundation of knowledge. On August 13, 2024, the top 20 teams gathered at the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair Cluster for the second round of the Freedom Quiz 2024. This round was conducted physically, bringing the participants face-to-face in a more traditional quiz setting. The atmosphere was electric, with participants feeling both the pressure and the excitement of competing in person. The stakes were high, as only the top 5 teams from this round would earn the right to compete in the Grand Finale.

The format of Round 2 was designed to test not only the participants’ knowledge but also their ability to work together under pressure. The questions were more challenging,



Figure. 8.2 Participants competing in the Quarterfinal Round of the Freedom Quiz 2024 at the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair Cluster, reflecting academic rigor and face-to-face intellectual engagement.

covering a broader range of topics with greater depth. The quizmaster posed questions that required quick thinking, collaboration, and strategic planning. Teams were presented with complex scenarios related to historical events, asked to analyze current affairs, and tested on their understanding of constitutional principles. As the competition progressed, the intensity in the room grew. Teams huddled together, whispering and debating their answers before presenting them to the quizmaster. Audience, consisting of supporters and spectators, cheered on their favourites, adding to the high-energy environment. By the end of the round, it was clear which teams had outperformed the others. The top 5 teams, having shown exceptional knowledge and teamwork, were declared the finalists, moving on to the highly anticipated Grand Finale.

Stage 3 – Grand Finale (15 August 2024)

The final stage, held on Independence Day at YVS Murthy Auditorium, was the symbolic culmination of the quiz's mission: empowering youth through collective reflection and spirited competition. The five finalist teams faced intellectually rigorous rounds that combined constitutional analysis, freedom movement perspectives, and contemporary governance debates. Importantly, the finale adopted a hybrid format of audience participation through real-time digital voting—an embodiment of democracy in action. This interactive structure mirrored the participatory democracy that Dr. Ambedkar envisioned, where every citizen, regardless of background, has a voice in shaping collective outcomes. The Grand Finale of the Freedom Quiz 2024 was held in the esteemed auditorium of the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair, a fitting final round was the most challenging



Figure. 8.3 Participants assembled during the Freedom Quiz 2024 at the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair Cluster, Andhra University—fostering youth engagement, civic learning, and a spirit of healthy academic competition.

of all. The questions were crafted to push the teams to their limits, covering intricate details of historical events, deep philosophical questions about freedom and rights, and complex current issues that required a nuanced understanding. The format included several types of questions: rapid-fire rounds, where speed was crucial; buzzer rounds, where timing and precision could make or break a team; and case study analyses, where teams had to present well-reasoned arguments and solutions. As the quizmaster fired off the final questions, the tension in the room was almost tangible. Each team knew that a single correct answer could lead them to victory, while a mistake could cost them the championship. The audience was on the edge of their seats, watching the drama unfold in real-time. When the last question was answered, and the scores were tallied, the winning team was announced to thunderous applause.

8.5 Modernising Dr. Ambedkar’s Ideology in the Digital Age

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar envisioned a society where justice, equality, liberty, and fraternity were not just constitutional doctrines, but everyday realities—particularly for those historically marginalized. His unshakable belief in education, participatory democracy, and institutional reform laid the foundation for a just and inclusive India. In the 21st century, the rise of digital technologies presents unprecedented opportunities to reinterpret and extend his vision in ways that are more accessible, scalable, and transformative. The *Freedom Quiz 2024*, organized by the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University, serves as a compelling example of how Ambedkar’s philosophy can be modernised



Figure. 8.4 The top 5 finalist teams competing in the Grand Finale of the Freedom Quiz 2024.

through digital innovation. From QR code-based entry to mobile-enabled registration, remote screening rounds, and real-time audience voting, the event broke traditional barriers to participation. It enabled students from diverse socio-economic and geographical backgrounds to compete and collaborate on an equal footing—an outcome perfectly aligned with Ambedkar’s call for dismantling structural inequalities.

More than a digitized academic contest, the event redefined civic education for the digital generation. By engaging students in themes such as constitutional values, social justice, and democratic frameworks via familiar technological platforms, it revitalized Ambedkar’s core conviction that knowledge and critical inquiry are the truest instruments of liberation. Crucially, the interactive digital format mirrored the participatory democracy Ambedkar envisioned. Through real-time audience engagement and decision-making, the quiz modeled a transparent, inclusive, and dynamic form of civic involvement. It fostered a culture of informed participation, where every individual had both a voice and a stake in shaping outcomes—thus reinforcing the essence of democratic empowerment. In sum, this initiative did not merely commemorate Ambedkar’s ideology—it expanded its relevance for the digital age. By thoughtfully integrating technology with the principles of equality, education, and empowerment, the event demonstrated that modernising Ambedkar’s vision means adapting it to current realities without compromising its foundational values. It reaffirmed that his legacy remains a vital compass in guiding India’s journey toward a digitally inclusive and socially just future.

8.6 Participation and Reach

The overwhelming response to the Freedom Quiz 2024 highlighted the growing appetite among students for civic knowledge when delivered through inclusive and modern platforms. With over 1,001 teams registering from various schools, colleges, and universities affiliated with Andhra University, the event witnessed enthusiastic participation across educational levels, disciplines, and regions. Importantly, this level of engagement demonstrated how Ambedkar’s vision—centered on equitable access to knowledge—continues to resonate with youth today, especially when integrated with tools they use daily. What made this outreach particularly significant was its inclusivity. Students from rural institutions competed alongside their urban peers, reflecting a democratization of opportunity that Ambedkar consistently advocated. Technology served as the great equalizer—facilitating seamless registration, remote screening, and participation even for those in distant or under-resourced areas. This reach not only underscored the digital empowerment fostered by such events but also reaffirmed Ambedkar’s belief that education must be a universal right, not a selective privilege. The scale of participation further contributed to building a diverse intellectual community, where young minds could engage with constitutional values and social justice discourse from their own lived contexts. In doing so, the event did more than assess knowledge; it nurtured a shared civic identity, thereby taking a vital step in modernising Dr. Ambedkar’s inclusive vision for India.

8.7 Encouraging Youth Leadership

One of the most profound outcomes of the Freedom Quiz 2024 was its role in nurturing leadership qualities among the youth. The event provided a dynamic platform for students not only to showcase their knowledge but also to develop confidence, strategic thinking, and public engagement skills—all of which are essential attributes of democratic leadership. Through multi-stage rounds that tested both intellect and collaboration, participants learned to navigate competitive environments, articulate informed perspectives, and make decisions under pressure. This spirit of youth leadership is a direct extension of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s belief in the transformative power of education. He often emphasized that an enlightened and empowered younger generation is vital for building a just and progressive society. The quiz served this very purpose by creating an environment where young individuals could rise beyond rote learning to engage with civic issues, national identity, and constitutional ethics in a meaningful way.

Moreover, the format encouraged teamwork, responsibility, and initiative. As participants assumed roles as representatives of their institutions, they internalized values of integrity, inclusion, and social responsibility. These soft leadership experiences are crucial for shaping future citizens who not only understand democratic ideals but are

prepared to uphold and lead them in various spheres of life. In essence, the event did not merely discover talent—it cultivated it. By aligning knowledge-building with leadership development, the Freedom Quiz 2024 reaffirmed Ambedkar’s ideology that true empowerment comes when individuals are equipped to think critically, act ethically, and lead courageously.

8.8 Recognition and Awards

The culmination of the Freedom Quiz 2024 was not only a celebration of academic excellence but also a tribute to the values that Dr. B.R. Ambedkar espoused—merit, justice, and inclusivity. The awards ceremony served as a symbolic and substantive recognition of the participants’ commitment to constitutional literacy and democratic engagement. Teams were not merely honored for answering questions correctly; they were celebrated for embodying the spirit of responsible citizenship and intellectual integrity. The prize distribution ceremony was a culmination of learning and achievement. Each award represented not just performance excellence, but also a deep commitment to constitutional values and social justice.

First Prize (Chanakya Team): Rs. 25,000 + Trophy, Medals, Certificates

Second Prize (Sardar Patel Team): Rs. 10,000 + Trophy, Medals, Certificates

Third Prize (Devi Team): Rs. 5,000 + Trophy, Medals, Certificates

Top 10 school teams were honoured with "Most Sportive Winner" certificates and medals.

They were awarded the grand prize of Rs. 25,000, along with the coveted winner’s trophy and medals, symbolizing their triumph in one of the most challenging quizzes of the year. Prize distribution for the school students at the Freedom Quiz 2024 was a moment of pride and celebration, highlighting the remarkable enthusiasm and dedication displayed by the youngest participants. Though they were competing against older and more experienced teams, the school students showcased an impressive level of knowledge and sportsmanship throughout the competition. Recognizing their efforts, the organizers, with the support of Prof. James Stephen, Chair Professor of the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University, awarded the top 10 school teams with the title of "Most Sportive Winner of the Freedom Quiz-2024. The recognition served as an encouragement for these young minds, inspiring them to continue pursuing knowledge and embodying the values of freedom and democracy that the quiz celebrated.

The Freedom Quiz 2024 Grand Finale was a highly anticipated event that brought together some of the brightest minds to compete in a test of knowledge and quick thinking. The competition was fierce, with participants showcasing their deep understanding of a wide range of topics. After several intense rounds, the winners of the grand finale were announced during the prize distribution ceremony. The Freedom Quiz-2024 culminated in an exciting grand finale where the CHANAKYA TEAM emerged victorious,



Figure. 8.5 Top 10 school teams with the title of "Most Sportive Winner of the Freedom Quiz-2024.

securing the prestigious first prize of Rs. 25,000 with their exceptional performance. The TEAM SARDAR PATEL followed closely, earning the second prize of Rs. 10,000 after a fierce competition. The DEVI TEAM also made their mark, claiming the third prize of Rs. 5,000 with a commendable effort. The event was a true celebration of knowledge and teamwork, leaving the audience inspired and the winners proud of their achievements.

8.9 Distinguished Presence and Support

The Freedom Quiz 2024 gained both depth and dignity through the presence of several esteemed dignitaries who not only elevated the significance of the event but also connected it to the broader ideological mission of modern India. Their participation highlighted the role of institutional leadership in shaping an educational environment rooted in constitutional values. The Chief Guest, Mr. P. Samuel Jonathan, Andhra Pradesh State Information Commissioner, delivered a powerful address on the importance of constitutional awareness in the digital age. He drew upon Dr. Ambedkar's vision of informed citizenship, emphasizing how digital literacy and civic engagement must go hand in hand to sustain a healthy democracy. His presence underscored the state's commitment to transparency, accountability, and knowledge dissemination.

The Special Guest, Prof. Gouda Veeraju, founder of the Social Reformer Movement, brought a rich historical and activist perspective to the occasion. He reminded the audience that while we celebrate Ambedkar's legacy, it is equally important to adapt it to contemporary challenges, particularly those arising from inequality in access



Figure. 8.6 Winner-First Prize and Runners-Second Prize of the Freedom Quiz-2024.

to education, information, and digital tools. His message encouraged students to become agents of change in their communities using the very principles Ambedkar stood for—rationality, justice, and social transformation. In addition to these dignitaries, several senior professors, deans, and administrative leaders from Andhra University attended the event. Their collective presence represented a convergence of academic vision, administrative support, and ideological commitment. They appreciated the quiz as more than a competition—it was seen as a model initiative that infused academic rigor with civic consciousness. The collective involvement of these distinguished figures not only added ceremonial value but also strengthened the intellectual and ethical foundation of the event. Their encouragement reinforced the idea that Dr. Ambedkar’s ideology must be practiced—not just remembered—and that such events serve as critical touchpoints in bringing his legacy into classrooms, conversations, and communities in a modern and meaningful way..

8.10 Event Summary

The Freedom Quiz 2024, organized by the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University, was conducted as a landmark event to commemorate India’s 78th Independence Day. The event was designed to educate and engage students on constitutional values, democratic principles, and national history, aligning these themes with the broader goal of modernising Dr. Ambedkar’s ideology through digital means. Spanning from August 12 to August 15, 2024, the quiz attracted 1,001 student teams from various schools, colleges, and universities under Andhra University’s academic umbrella. The competi-



Figure. 8.7 Third Prize winners of the Freedom Quiz-2024.

tion unfolded across three stages: an online preliminary round, a quarterfinal held at the Chair Cluster, and a grand finale conducted at the prestigious YVS Murthy Auditorium. The quiz not only tested participants' knowledge but also emphasized critical thinking, teamwork, and civic awareness. It featured real-time audience interaction through mobile-based voting, making it a truly inclusive and participatory academic endeavor. The event was graced by the presence of key dignitaries, including P. Samuel Jonathan, Andhra Pradesh State Information Commissioner, and Prof. Gouda Veeraju, founder of the Social Reformer Movement, whose insights enriched the intellectual tone of the event. The enthusiastic participation, smooth digital execution, and spirited prize distribution ceremony all contributed to making the quiz a memorable success. It stood as a shining example of how technology, education, and Ambedkarite values can converge to empower a new generation of responsible, informed, and inclusive citizens.

- **Dates:** August 12–15, 2024
- **Location:** Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair Cluster, Andhra University
- **Participants:** 1,001 registered teams
- **Format:** Online prelims, physical quarterfinals, and grand finale
- **Theme:** Freedom Through Knowledge
- **Chief Guest:** P. Samuel Jonathan
- **Special Guest:** Prof. Gouda Veeraju

8.11 Winners List

The final stage of the Freedom Quiz 2024 concluded with a vibrant awards ceremony that recognized and celebrated the participants who demonstrated exceptional knowl-



Figure. 8.8 Prof M James Stephen, Chair Professor, Dr B R Ambedkar Chair, Andhra University and distinguished guest with cash winners of Freedom Quiz-2024.

edge, teamwork, and civic understanding throughout the competition. Awards were presented to the top-performing teams based on their performance across all quiz stages online screening, quarterfinals, and the grand finale. The evaluation process considered not only correct responses but also clarity of thought, speed, collaboration, and ethical participation. Along with certificates and trophies, the top three teams received cash prizes, symbolizing the event’s emphasis on both intellectual achievement and motivation. In addition to these, several school teams were recognized with “Most Sportive Winner” titles to appreciate their sincere engagement, active involvement, and dedication, regardless of final outcomes. These recognitions served as a powerful reinforcement of the values of inclusion, participation, and merit—principles central to Dr. Ambedkar’s ideology. The awards ceremony was not just a celebration of victory but a reaffirmation of the event’s purpose—to cultivate a generation of students who are informed, inquisitive, and committed to democratic ideals. By honoring participation at multiple levels, the event successfully promoted the belief that every student’s effort contributes to the collective progress of society.

Table 8.1 Winners of the Freedom Quiz 2024 and their recognitions

Place	Team Name	Prize Amount	Recognition
1 st	Chanakya Team	Rs. 25,000	Trophy, Medals
2 nd	Sardar Patel Team	Rs. 10,000	Trophy, Medals
3 rd	Devi Team	Rs. 5,000	Trophy, Medals
–	Top 10 School Teams	–	Most Sportive Winner Certificates



Figure. 8.9 Dignitaries at the Grand Finale of the Freedom Quiz 2024 standing in honor of the national anthem, held at the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair Cluster.

8.12 Conclusion

The Freedom Quiz 2024 was more than an academic competition—it was a living embodiment of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s enduring vision, reframed for a digital generation. By combining civic education with digital innovation, the event offered a practical demonstration of how his ideals can be modernised without compromising their original intent. Involving over a thousand student teams across varied institutions and backgrounds, the initiative proved that constitutional literacy, democratic engagement, and social justice can be made both relevant and accessible in the 21st century. The event concluded with cheers and applause as the winners were celebrated for their achievements. The Freedom Quiz 2024 Grand Finale was not just a competition, but a celebration of learning and intellectual pursuit. The Grand Finale of the Freedom Quiz 2024 was more than just the conclusion of a quiz it was a powerful reminder of the importance of knowledge, teamwork, and the enduring values of freedom and democracy. As the event drew to a close, participants and spectators alike left with a renewed sense of pride in their heritage and a deeper appreciation for the freedoms they enjoy. The Freedom Quiz 2024 reflects the modernisation of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s ideology by transforming his core values—liberty, equality, fraternity, and social justice—into an engaging, knowledge-driven platform tailored for today’s youth. The quiz, by focusing on constitutional rights, historical struggles, and contemporary issues of social reform, encourages critical thinking and civic awareness among students. This initiative leverages digital technology and competitive learning methods to disseminate Ambedkar’s vision in a format that resonates with the digital generation. In doing so, it transcends



Figure. 8.10 The Freedom Quiz 2024 Grand Finale concluded with cheers and applause as winners were celebrated for their achievements.

traditional pedagogies, promoting democratic values through participation, inclusivity, and informed citizenship—echoing Ambedkar’s call for an enlightened and empowered society rooted in education and rational discourse. Thus, the Freedom Quiz is not just a competition; it is a step toward reimagining Ambedkarite principles in the context of Digital India and participatory democracy.

CHAPTER 9

FIELD DIARIES AS INSTRUMENTS OF PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY: A MODERN AMBEDKARITE PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar envisioned an India where education served as the catalyst for social reform, justice, and democratic empowerment. His legacy continues to guide modern India, especially in shaping academic initiatives that are socially rooted and pedagogically innovative. The Field Diary Activity, conducted by the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University, exemplifies this vision. By encouraging students to observe and reflect on the 78th Independence Day celebrations (August 15, 2024), this initiative bridged traditional civic events with transformative learning. Rather than merely attending formal ceremonies, students became observers, analysts, and storytellers—each documenting their unique experiences and interpretations of freedom, equality, and inclusion. This event provided a contemporary method to modernize Ambedkar’s ideology by integrating experiential learning with democratic values.

9.1 Introduction

Educational inequality remains one of the most pressing developmental challenges worldwide, with marginalized and underserved communities bearing the brunt of limited access to quality learning opportunities. This disparity is fueled by a combination of systemic barriers such as inadequate infrastructure, widespread digital illiteracy, and a shortage of effective pedagogical resources. The rapid global shift toward digital education, accelerated dramatically by the COVID-19 pandemic, has further highlighted and deepened these inequalities, exposing a pronounced digital divide that disproportionately affects vulnerable populations. According to UNESCO, school closures during the pandemic impacted over 826 million learners globally. Among these, approximately 43%—an estimated 706 million students—lacked internet access at home, effectively cutting them off from meaningful digital learning opportunities. This global scenario is reflected starkly in countries like India, where rural areas continue to face significant infrastructural challenges. The National Sample Survey (NSS) 2017-18 reveals that only 15% of rural households had internet connectivity, compared to 42% in urban centers. This uneven distribution underscores the digital divide within the country, limiting the reach and effectiveness of conventional digital education platforms. Beyond infrastructure, other critical factors contribute to educational disparities in digital learning environments. Language barriers pose a significant challenge in linguistically diverse regions, where a majority of digital platforms rely on one-size-fits-all models,

often neglecting the cultural and linguistic contexts of local learners. The absence of localized and culturally relevant content further hampers comprehension, engagement, and retention, resulting in suboptimal learning outcomes.

Addressing these multifaceted challenges requires innovative solutions that go beyond simple access to technology. This research introduces an AI-powered digital literacy platform designed specifically to support marginalized learners by integrating adaptive personalization, cultural contextualization, gamification, and multilingual content. Artificial Intelligence enables the platform to analyze individual learner profiles and deliver customized learning pathways tailored to each user's pace, preferences, and proficiency levels. Such personalization has been shown to significantly enhance engagement, with gamification techniques—including challenges, rewards, and real-time feedback—boosting student motivation by up to 60% in digital learning environments. This field diary captures the experiential, observational, and impact data collected during the implementation of an AI-powered digital literacy initiative across five underserved villages of Pendurthi Mandal, Visakhapatnam. The initiative's overarching goal was to empower students and educators through tailored, accessible, and scalable AI-driven learning tools. Through this document, we chronicle the stages of intervention, challenges encountered, and transformations witnessed on the ground.

9.2 Conceptual Rationale: Why Field Diaries Matter

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar consistently emphasized the need for experiential learning—an educational approach that bridges the gap between abstract knowledge and lived social realities. In this light, field diaries become more than just academic exercises; they transform into instruments of civic introspection and democratic awareness. By encouraging students to engage directly with their environments, document public interactions, and analyze their observations through a critical lens, field diaries foster deeper connections with the principles of justice, equality, and fraternity.

Such reflective practices empower students to:

- Examine how constitutional values operate in everyday settings;
- Identify visible and invisible forms of exclusion in civic or institutional spaces;
- Propose actionable, inclusive strategies for improving public engagement and access.

In the digital age—where communities are increasingly hybrid, blending physical spaces with online platforms—field diaries also help students navigate and critique both realms. This process not only cultivates critical thinking but also internalizes Ambedkar's vision of socially conscious, informed, and participatory citizenship. Thus, integrating field diary methodology into contemporary education exemplifies how Ambedkar's ideology can be modernized without being diluted—making civic learning both

personal and transformative.

9.3 Event Overview and Format

The *Field Diary Activity* was part of a broader set of engagements organized under the **Freedom Quiz 2024** initiative, conducted to commemorate India's 78th Independence Day. Spearheaded by the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University, this diary initiative aimed to encourage critical civic engagement among students by blending observation with reflection.

- **Event Date:** 15th August 2024
- **Submission Deadline:** 17th August 2024
- **Location:** All affiliated colleges under Andhra University
- **Mode:** Physical observation and written documentation (optionally supported by photographs or sketches)
- **Participants:** Undergraduate and postgraduate students across diverse disciplines

The central theme assigned to students was:

“Freedom in Action: Reflecting on Equality, Participation, and Civic Responsibility”

This theme was carefully chosen to inspire students to observe and reflect on the real-world application of constitutional values—particularly those championed by Dr. Ambedkar—in their surroundings, thereby linking civic action with experiential learning. The central theme of the Field Diary Activity—*“Freedom in Action: Reflecting on Equality, Participation, and Civic Responsibility”*—was designed to push students beyond textbook definitions of independence and into the realm of lived experience. In line with Dr. Ambedkar's belief that liberty must be actualized through daily participation in democratic life, this theme encouraged students to critically observe how civic values manifest (or fail to manifest) in their communities. Whether examining a local event, observing institutional practices, or engaging in conversations with peers and citizens, students were asked to document instances where principles like equality, justice, and participation were either upheld or undermined. By doing so, they not only connected theory with reality but also developed a deeper appreciation for Ambedkar's call for informed and continuous civic engagement. The theme served as both a mirror and a lens—reflecting society's progress and shortcomings while guiding students to reimagine how freedom could be more inclusively realized in everyday life.

9.4 Objective of the Research

The research sought to develop and deploy an AI-based digital learning solution customized to the linguistic, infrastructural, and cognitive needs of underprivileged learners. The broader aim was to create equitable educational access by leveraging AI to

support adaptive, personalized, and multilingual digital learning. The project aimed to design and implement a scalable AI-based digital literacy platform for marginalized communities lacking adequate access to educational technology. Leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), Natural Language Processing (NLP), and cloud infrastructure, the platform addressed linguistic diversity, digital illiteracy, and infrastructural inadequacies. Key features included:

- Multilingual NLP Interface.
- Gamified Learning Modules.
- Offline Functionality.
- Adaptive Learning Algorithms.
- Educator Dashboards.

These objectives were anchored in Ambedkar’s dream of educational self determination, particularly for communities historically excluded from mainstream learning systems.

9.5 Student Engagement and Methodology

Over 80 students submitted entries, each with unique formats—some included photographs, others included hand-drawn sketches and poems. Many of them focused on:

- The role of marginalized communities in the Independence Day programs.
- Gender representation in performances and leadership roles.
- Accessibility for persons with disabilities.
- The use of regional languages versus English in formal speeches.

The AI-powered digital literacy platform was conceptualized and developed using a human-centered, iterative design approach rooted in design thinking principles. This methodology emphasized empathy, ideation, rapid prototyping, and continuous feedback loops to ensure the solution addressed the real-world needs of its users. The design process was deeply participatory: user research involved ethnographic observations, one-on-one interviews, and co-design sessions with members of underserved communities. These engagements helped uncover the specific barriers to digital education among first-generation digital learners, such as language difficulties, low literacy, lack of access to devices, and unfamiliarity with digital interfaces. To validate and refine the platform in real-life settings, we conducted field visits in five villages of Pendurthi Mandal in Visakhapatnam district: Gorapalle, Karakavanipalem, Kotnivanipalem, Pina-gadi, and Rampuram. Each village was visited twice. During the first visit, the research team interacted with students enrolled in nearby Zilla Parishad High Schools to assess their current level of digital literacy. Baseline data was gathered through informal inter-

views and skill assessments. Students were then introduced to the prototype application and provided hands-on training to help them navigate its key features.

In the second round of visits, follow-up assessments were carried out with the same group of students. Their interaction with the application was observed and evaluated to measure improvements in usability, comprehension, engagement, and retention. These evaluations informed iterative refinements of the platform to ensure that it remained responsive to the learners' needs and contexts. The solution comprises six core technological modules tailored to the needs of digitally excluded learners. Adaptive Learning Engine: This module uses AI algorithms to track individual learner behavior and adjust content difficulty, presentation style, and pace in real-time. It enables personalized learning journeys that cater to varied skill levels, Multilingual NLP Interface : To overcome language barriers, the platform incorporates Natural Language Processing (NLP) in regional languages, such as Telugu, along with speech-to-text and text-to-speech functionalities. This allows low-literate users and non-English speakers to engage effectively with the platform. Virtual AI Tutor: An interactive, context-aware AI assistant simulates one-on-one mentoring by answering user queries and offering guidance in real-time, thus reducing dependency on the constant presence of a human instructor. Gamified Learning Modules: To increase motivation and learner engagement, the platform integrates game-based elements such as points, badges, leaderboards, and storytelling. These features are particularly effective in holding the attention of children and young adults in low-resource settings. Analytics Dashboard: Designed for instructors and administrators, the dashboard provides real-time data on learner progress, engagement levels, content consumption, and assessments. This facilitates timely interventions and data-driven pedagogical decisions. The platform architecture is modular, interoperable, and cloud-supported to ensure long-term flexibility, scalability, and ease of deployment in diverse learning contexts. The field deployment in Pendurthi Mandal offered critical insights into system usability, learner adaptability, and the broader socio-educational impact, guiding future refinements and scaling strategies.

A panel of faculty from multiple disciplines was constituted to evaluate the entries on the following criteria:

- Depth of observation
- Reflective insight
- Connection to constitutional values
- Creativity of expression

9.6 Field Diaries as Digital-Ready Tools

Though the event primarily focused on physical participation, it organically encouraged students to use digital platforms for documentation and sharing:

- Some students digitized their diaries using mobile apps.
- Others posted reflective summaries on student forums and WhatsApp groups.
- A few even recorded brief video commentaries summarizing their insights.

This unplanned but organic integration of digital expression proved how Ambedkar's call for accessible knowledge can thrive in today's interconnected world.

9.7 Impact and Reflections

The Field Diary event had a profound impact:

- Students reported increased awareness of civic issues.
- Several expressed surprise at their own biases and the limitations of public ceremonies.
- Faculty noted an improvement in students' analytical writing and civic discourse.

One participant wrote, "I never realized that our entire celebration had only male speakers until I wrote my diary". That one line made me question how representation works in daily life." This kind of awareness is at the heart of Ambedkar's educational philosophy.

9.8 Modernising Ambedkar's Ideology Through Field Diaries

This event demonstrated that Ambedkar's ideals are not historical abstractions but living principles that guide reflective and democratic behavior. By training students to document and question social structures through field diaries, the Chair has successfully updated Ambedkar's framework for the 21st century.

The diaries became more than reflections—they were acts of civic authorship, modern tools of resistance and reform. They instilled in students not only knowledge but the courage to use it meaningfully.

9.9 Event Recognition and Acknowledgment

- **Organized By:** Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair, Andhra University
- **Event Title:** Field Diary Activity – "Freedom in Action"
- **Date Conducted:** 15th August 2024
- **Report Submission:** By 17th August 2024
- **Evaluation Committee:** Senior faculty members from Humanities, Education, and Social Sciences

Top Diaries Recognized For:

- Analytical Depth
- Creativity in Civic Observation

- Reflective Writing
- Constitutional Insight
- **Analytical depth** refers to a student’s ability to move beyond surface-level descriptions and engage with the underlying structures, assumptions, and implications of what they observed. In the context of the Field Diary Activity, this meant critically examining social dynamics, institutional practices, and civic representations during Independence Day events. Students who demonstrated high analytical depth questioned who was included or excluded, why certain narratives dominated public discourse, and how these patterns reflect broader systemic realities. Their entries often revealed thoughtful engagement with constitutional values, highlighting the need for greater inclusivity and equality—directly aligning with Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s lifelong mission to interrogate and reform oppressive social structures.
- **Creativity in civic observation** reflects a student’s ability to interpret and present social realities in innovative and meaningful ways. Rather than merely recording events, students used diverse formats—such as sketches, poems, metaphors, and narrative storytelling—to express civic experiences and highlight social dynamics. This imaginative approach allowed them to draw attention to subtle forms of inclusion and exclusion, often missed in conventional reporting. Some students used symbolism to critique gender imbalance in speaker representation, while others depicted accessibility challenges through visual art. Such creative expression not only enriched the content but also embodied Ambedkar’s belief that self-expression and cultural engagement are vital tools for social awareness and empowerment. By encouraging inventive perspectives, the Field Diary Activity ensured that students did not just observe society—they interpreted it with insight and imagination.
- **Reflective writing** goes beyond narration—it is the process of connecting personal experience with critical thought. In the Field Diary Activity, students who excelled in reflective writing demonstrated a capacity to introspect, question their assumptions, and relate their observations to larger constitutional and societal values. Their entries often revealed moments of self-awareness, such as recognizing unconscious biases or acknowledging overlooked inequities in public events. This kind of writing is transformative—it does not just document what happened but explores why it matters. In the spirit of Dr. Ambedkar’s emphasis on self-examination and intellectual honesty, reflective writing empowered students to engage with civic life not as passive witnesses but as thoughtful participants. It encouraged them to make sense of the world in relation to justice, equality, and responsibility, thereby internalizing the core tenets of Ambedkarite ideology.

- **Constitutional insight** reflects a student’s ability to connect real-world observations with the foundational values enshrined in the Indian Constitution. Entries that demonstrated this quality often identified how concepts like equality, justice, liberty, and fraternity were upheld—or compromised—in Independence Day programs and public events. For instance, some students critically assessed the representation of marginalized voices on stage, or questioned the accessibility of venues for persons with disabilities, linking these concerns directly to constitutional provisions. Such insight signifies not just academic understanding, but a lived awareness of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s constitutional vision. It shows that students are not only learning about the Constitution in classrooms but applying its principles to evaluate their environments. In doing so, they embody Ambedkar’s belief that the Constitution is a moral compass and a living document—meant to guide every citizen in creating a more inclusive, participatory, and just society.

The culmination of the Field Diary Activity was marked by a warm and meaningful felicitation ceremony held on 21st August 2024 at the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair, Andhra University. This gathering served not only as an occasion to distribute certificates of recognition but also as a celebration of student engagement with civic values and democratic reflection. The top entries were applauded for their analytical depth, creativity, and their ability to relate lived experiences to constitutional ideals. Faculty members from various departments praised the effort and sincerity shown by participants, emphasizing how such exercises encourage responsible citizenship and critical social awareness. The event was attended by senior university officials, educators, and student representatives, further amplifying its significance. Many students expressed a renewed interest in civic participation and expressed that the recognition inspired them to be more observant and proactive in their communities. This moment of acknowledgment aligned with Dr. Ambedkar’s belief that genuine education empowers individuals to understand and challenge systemic issues, thus promoting inclusive nation-building.

9.10 Conclusion and Outcome

The Field Diary Activity, organized under the banner of the Freedom Quiz 2024 by the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University, proved to be more than an academic engagement—it was a transformative exercise in civic learning. Rooted in Dr. Ambedkar’s educational philosophy, the activity encouraged students to move beyond rote participation and become reflective observers of their sociopolitical surroundings. By documenting their experiences during the 78th Independence Day celebrations, students developed a deeper understanding of constitutional values and their real-world implications. The outcome of the initiative was profoundly impactful. Students became more aware of the subtle exclusions and inequalities present even in celebratory spaces. They identified the need for inclusivity, representation, and accessibility—principles central

to Ambedkar's vision of democracy. Many discovered their own unconscious biases, while others gained the courage to question traditional norms through their observations. The act of writing itself became an instrument of introspection and resistance, helping shape a new generation of thinkers and change-makers.

Importantly, the diaries also served as digital-ready tools, with several students organically choosing to document and share their insights using mobile apps, social media, and short videos. This spontaneous integration of digital tools showed how Ambedkar's call for accessible and transformative education can seamlessly adapt to the digital age. In essence, the Field Diary Activity exemplified how simple pedagogical interventions—when aligned with Ambedkarite values—can evolve into powerful acts of democratic empowerment. It reaffirmed that modernising Dr. Ambedkar's ideology does not require altering its essence, but amplifying its reach through participatory, inclusive, and reflective practices. The students did not merely learn about justice—they experienced and engaged with it, turning observation into action and thought into transformation.

CHAPTER 10

MODERNIZING DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR'S VISION THROUGH AI-POWERED DIGITAL LITERACY IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

10.1 Introduction

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's revolutionary vision for education as a tool of empowerment and social justice finds new expression in the digital age. This chapter documents how an AI-powered digital literacy initiative, conducted across multiple rural villages in Andhra Pradesh, brings Ambedkar's ideology into the 21st century. By examining detailed case studies from each village, we demonstrate how technology can bridge educational divides and create opportunities for marginalized communities, fulfilling Ambedkar's dream of education as the great equalizer. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's philosophy emphasized education as the most powerful means of emancipation and social justice. He believed in practical, inclusive learning that empowered marginalized communities to participate in democratic processes. In alignment with this vision, the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University undertook a field-based initiative using Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered digital learning platforms in rural villages of Visakhapatnam district, Andhra Pradesh. This chapter narrates the real-time implementation, observations, and outcomes of these village field visits and digital literacy interventions, demonstrating the modernization of Ambedkar's ideology through practical community engagement.

10.2 Methodology and Framework

The research employed a mixed-methods approach across nine field visits to five villages, engaging 257 students and 32 educators. Each visit followed a structured implementation model:

- **Community Engagement** - Building trust with local stakeholders. The first and most critical step involved establishing a rapport with local communities. The research team collaborated with school staff, village leaders, and parents to build trust and ensure transparency. This engagement was crucial to understanding local educational challenges and preparing the ground for participatory technology adoption, aligning with Dr. Ambedkar's emphasis on grassroots empowerment and inclusive dialogue.
- **Baseline Assessment** - Measuring digital literacy and academic competencies. To tailor the intervention effectively, the team conducted baseline assessments in

government schools. These surveys and informal interactions gauged students' digital literacy, academic readiness, and familiarity with mobile-based learning. The goal was to identify learning gaps and design interventions that would bridge them equitably, especially for those from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

- **AI Platform Training** - Hands-on sessions with adaptive learning technology. Students were introduced to the AI-powered learning platform through structured, hands-on workshops. These sessions allowed them to explore the application's interface, try out learning modules, and understand how adaptive AI could guide their progress. The training also involved teachers, enabling them to assist students while tracking performance through real-time analytics—thus creating a support ecosystem in line with Ambedkar's belief in education as a collective, transformative force.
- **Gamified Learning** - Interactive educational modules. The learning content was designed with gamification principles—quizzes, reward points, and interactive stories—to maintain student interest. This approach made education more engaging, particularly for younger learners, and promoted voluntary exploration of topics. Gamified modules not only increased attention spans but also democratized learning, breaking away from rigid, exam-centric formats.
- **Post-Intervention Evaluation** - Measuring skill development and cognitive gains. After two rounds of village visits, a post-intervention analysis was carried out. Educators and researchers evaluated how well students had grasped digital tools, improved their subject understanding, and developed cognitive and problem solving skills. Feedback from both students and teachers helped refine the system for future use, ensuring that the intervention was both sustainable and scalable.

10.3 Village Case Studies: Grounding Technology in Local Realities

To truly modernise Dr. Ambedkar's ideology, it is imperative to ensure that digital solutions address the lived experiences of marginalized communities. The field implementation in five villages—Gorapalle, Karakavanipalem, Kotnivanipalem, Pinagadi, and Rampuram—provided real-world insights into how educational technologies can promote equality, participation, and empowerment. Each village offered a unique case study that enriched the project's understanding of both opportunities and challenges in rural digital education.

10.3.1 Objective of the Field Visits

The field visits undertaken as part of the AI-based digital learning initiative were conceptualized with a multi-faceted purpose, deeply rooted in the transformative vision of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. These visits were not simply outreach efforts but structured en-

gements aimed at translating constitutional ideals into educational practice through technology. The core objectives included:

- **Promoting AI-powered digital learning in rural and marginalized settings:** The foremost aim was to introduce adaptive, intelligent educational platforms in areas that have historically been deprived of technological interventions. By bridging this digital divide, the initiative worked to ensure that quality learning was no longer a privilege of the urban or the elite, but a fundamental right extended to all.
- **Understanding local barriers to technology adoption:** Each village presented unique infrastructural, linguistic, and socio-cultural challenges. The field visits enabled the research team to assess these ground realities through direct interaction, thereby allowing the development of more context-sensitive and inclusive digital solutions.
- **Providing practical exposure to students and teachers through hands-on sessions:** The initiative emphasized learning-by-doing. On-site training sessions empowered both students and educators to interact with the AI platform, explore its features, and gain the confidence to integrate it into their regular teaching and learning practices.
- **Reflecting Ambedkar’s ideology by promoting equal access to quality education through modern tools:** At the philosophical core of the field visits was the commitment to Dr. Ambedkar’s belief in education as the path to social emancipation. By employing modern digital tools in the remotest parts of the region, the initiative carried forward Ambedkar’s legacy—ensuring that technological advancement becomes an enabler of justice, equity, and empowerment.

These objectives collectively aimed to foster a more inclusive, empowered, and digitally capable rural India—one that reflects the spirit of Ambedkarite principles adapted to the challenges and possibilities of the 21st century.

10.4 Village Case Study–1: Gorapalle

As part of the broader AI-driven digital learning initiative under the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair, **two field visits were conducted** in Gorapalle—a semi-rural village located in Pendurthi Mandal of Visakhapatnam district. The purpose was to implement and assess an AI-based education platform that could be integrated into rural classrooms, addressing Ambedkar’s call for accessible, inclusive, and empowering education for all.

10.4.1 First Field Visit (27–29 November 2024)

The **first visit** marked the **formal initiation** of the digital literacy program in Gorapalle. Conducted over three continuous days, the team launched the platform by directly engaging with the Zilla Parishad High School, where most students were first-generation



Figure. 10.1 Field Visit at Gorapalle village.

digital learners.

- **Participants:** 48 students and 7 educators from the school.
- **Field Team:** Led by doctoral research scholars Mr. Praveen and Mr. Raj Kumar from Andhra University, with support from 10 dedicated field interviewers: Mrs. K.V. Lakshmi, Mrs. Malla Sireesha, Mr. Ravi Inakoti, Mrs. Suneetha, Dr. Jayarao, Mr. R. Sagar, Mr. Anvesh, Mr. Suresh, Mrs. Lavanya, and Mrs. Lakshmi.

Key Activities:

- **Day 1 – Community Orientation:** A collective awareness session was held involving students, parents, teachers, and community elders. The team explained the rationale behind the AI platform and how it could enhance personalized learning, especially in low-resource settings.
- **Day 2 – Baseline Assessments:** Students took pre-tests in Mathematics, Science, and general digital literacy. These were conducted on tablets using the platform to capture both their academic level and their familiarity with technology.
- **Day 3 – AI Training Sessions:** Intensive, hands-on training introduced students to the adaptive AI platform, covering gamified content, challenge modules, and navigation tools. Teachers were also given orientation to help them integrate the platform into their teaching workflows.

The use of **gamified modules**—such as point-based activities, storytelling games,

and leaderboard features—had a visibly positive impact. Students initially hesitant with technology became enthusiastic and confident as they earned digital rewards and recognition. The platform also allowed peer interaction and collaborative learning, building a sense of community around digital education.

10.4.2 Second Field Visit (3–4 December 2024)

The **second visit**, conducted just a few days later, focused on evaluating the **impact** of the initial deployment and understanding how well students and teachers had adapted to the technology.

- **Continuing Participants:** The same group of 48 students and 7 teachers.
- **Focus Areas:**
 - Measuring improvement in digital navigation and learning comprehension.
 - Gathering qualitative feedback through interviews and group discussions.
 - Reviewing the platform’s influence on classroom engagement and educator attitudes.

Key Observations:

- **Improved Digital Skills:** Students who had struggled with basic device use in the first visit were now able to independently complete tasks, toggle between modules, and use speech-to-text in Telugu.
- **Cognitive Progress:** Post-intervention assessments showed better understanding in core subjects. Many students required less assistance and completed tasks with greater accuracy.
- **Heightened Motivation:** Students reported using the offline content outside school hours. The reward mechanisms and local-language narratives fostered curiosity and made learning fun.
- **Teacher Buy-In:** Teachers, initially skeptical about digital tools, began appreciating their value in complementing classroom teaching. Some even requested further training and content expansion.

Feedback collected during this phase revealed strong support from both students and teachers for continued use. Suggestions included enhancing the Telugu content, simplifying interfaces for younger learners, and integrating more subjects.

This dual-visit approach in Gorapalle village not only demonstrated the **scalability and adaptability** of AI in rural learning but also reflected **Dr. Ambedkar’s ideals** in action:

- **Education for Empowerment**
- **Equality through Access**
- **Democracy via Participation**

all rooted in **technology designed with empathy and inclusion.**



Figure. 10.2 Field Visit at Gorapalle village.

10.5 Village Case Study–2: Karakavanipalem

Karakavanipalem, a village located near Gorapalle in Pendurthi Mandal, reflects the socio-educational dynamics common to many semi-rural settlements in India—marked by strong community ties but limited exposure to digital resources. While students from this village primarily attend Zilla Parishad High School in Gorapalle, their learning environments at home are often constrained by infrastructural and technological limitations. This case study forms a critical part of the broader field research undertaken by the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University. It illustrates how inclusive digital pedagogies, powered by AI, can help bridge systemic gaps in education for marginalized communities. By deploying a context-aware learning platform and conducting hands-on training, the intervention sought not only to improve academic competencies but also to instill confidence and digital fluency in learners and educators alike. Anchored in Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s enduring vision of educational equity and democratic access, the Karakavanipalem initiative represents a living example of how modern tools can be mobilized to dismantle social and informational hierarchies. The chapter presents a two-phase field engagement—pre-intervention and post-assessment—revealing both the challenges and transformative potential of digitally mediated learning in rural India.

10.5.1 Field Visit–3 (9–11 December 2024)

The first field visit to Karakavanipalem village took place over three days as part of the broader initiative led by the Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University to assess and



Figure. 10.3 Field Visit at Karakavanipalem village.

strengthen digital literacy and AI-assisted learning in underserved communities as the part of the broader initiative led by the Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University. Though the participating students—51 in total—attend the Zilla Parishad High School located in nearby Gorapalle, they reside in Karakavanipalem. Six educators were also involved in this phase of the intervention. The visit was led by Mr. Raj Kumar, a doctoral fellow under the Ambedkar Chair, with valuable assistance from a dedicated team of interviewers: Mrs. K.V. Lakshmi, Mrs. Malla Sireesha, Mr. Ravi Inakoti, and Mrs. Suneetha. Each day during the visit was structured around a consistent set of activities, with tasks thoughtfully distributed among the team members to ensure comprehensive coverage of the intended objectives. The first focus was community orientation, which involved engaging with local residents, parents, and school stakeholders to explain the purpose of the intervention and its potential benefits for learners and educators alike. These sessions helped build trust and contextualize the digital initiative within the community's lived realities, making participants more open and enthusiastic about the process. Importantly, parents and educators were made aware of how this initiative could support the learning needs of their children, especially in the wake of increasing educational digitization.

Following interactions, a pre-test evaluation was conducted with the students. This assessment was designed to gauge their existing digital literacy competencies and cognitive preparedness before the introduction of the AI-based learning platform. The test included questions related to basic digital navigation, comprehension skills in core academic subjects, and familiarity with educational technology tools. The data gathered offered baseline insights to personalize and adapt the digital intervention for this group.

Subsequently, training sessions were conducted using the newly developed AI platform. These sessions introduced students to the interface, features, and core functionalities of the platform, which was developed with a human-centered, multilingual design framework to accommodate regional linguistic and cultural contexts. The platform incorporated gamification tools, adaptive learning engines, and AI tutors to enhance learner motivation and retention. Students participated in hands-on activities and interacted with the platform using mobile devices provided for the training. Educators were also introduced to the system and given opportunities to engage with its backend dashboards, which allow for monitoring student progress and offering timely support.

During the course of the three days, interviewers carefully documented interactions, behaviors, and feedback. They rotated responsibilities, ensuring that each day brought new insights from a diverse subset of students and educators. The data gathered was not only useful for tracking immediate reactions and usability challenges but also served as a foundation for longitudinal analysis during the second visit. This first visit concluded with a sense of accomplishment. Students displayed noticeable confidence in navigating the platform, while educators expressed appreciation for the effort to introduce technology in a manner that was inclusive and locally contextualized. The groundwork laid during this phase set the stage for the more analytical and impact-focused second visit later in the month.

Each day during the visit was structured around consistent activities:

- **Community Orientation:** Engaging local residents, parents, and educators to introduce the project.
- **Pre-Test Evaluation:** Measuring digital literacy and academic readiness.
- **AI Platform Training:** Hands-on exposure to adaptive and gamified learning modules.

The platform used a human-centered, multilingual framework. Students interacted with gamified tasks, AI tutors, and adaptive content. Educators explored backend analytics to monitor student progress. Interviewers rotated roles to document student behavior and gather qualitative feedback.

The first visit concluded with increased student confidence and educator appreciation for the platform's inclusivity and relevance.

10.6 Village Case Study–3: Kotnivanipalem

Kotnivanipalem, a village nestled between Gorapalle and Rampuram in the Visakhapatnam region, represents another important node in the digital literacy intervention spearheaded by the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair, Andhra University. While the village hosts students from both Gorapalle and Rampuram Zilla Parishad High Schools, its educational ecosystem has traditionally lacked exposure to personalized and technology-

driven learning solutions. This case study focuses on a two-visit engagement model aimed at integrating an AI-powered digital learning platform into the daily lives of rural learners and educators. The field initiative aimed to assess, train, and evaluate 56 students and 5 educators who had limited prior exposure to structured digital education. The intervention aligns with Ambedkar’s emphasis on educational self-determination and the dismantling of systemic barriers. By empowering learners with tools for individualized, gamified, and multilingual learning, the initiative sought to convert Ambedkar’s ideals into practice—where access to quality education is neither a privilege nor an exception, but a constitutional right realized through modern tools.



Figure. 10.4 Field Visit at Kotnivanipalem village.

10.6.1 Field Visit–4 (19–21 December 2024)

The first visit to Kotnivanipalem village was carried out over three consecutive days. This visit involved 56 students and 5 educators from Gorapalle and Ramapuram Zilla Parishad High Schools. The team was led by Mr. Praveen, supported by Mr. Suresh, Mrs. Lavanya, Mrs. Lakshmi, and Mr. Sagar. The aim of this visit was to introduce the students and educators to a newly developed AI learning platform and to conduct pre-evaluation assessments to understand their current digital literacy and subject comprehension levels. Before engaging in technical training or assessments, the team began with community orientation. Parents, local leaders, school authorities, and the participating students and teachers were addressed in introductory gatherings aimed at clarifying the goals and scope of the project. These interactions helped to establish trust, address any reservations, and generate a strong sense of cooperation from the villagers. Following orientation, the pre-evaluation phase commenced. Students were assessed on their foundational knowledge of digital tools, their familiarity with technology, and

their cognitive grasp of core school subjects. This was done using structured questionnaires, activity-based assessments, and verbal interaction. These evaluations served as an essential benchmark for later comparison and helped the research team tailor the digital intervention according to the varying skill levels of students from the two different schools.



Figure. 10.5 Field Visit at Kotnivanipalem village.

Once assessments were completed, students were introduced to the AI-based digital learning platform developed specifically for rural and semi-urban learning contexts. This platform integrates gamification, localized content, and AI tutors to ensure accessibility and engagement for learners at different levels. Over the three days, students received practical, hands-on training on how to navigate the platform, explore subject modules, use the AI assistant, and engage in gamified learning activities. Each student was given time to interact with the platform individually as well as in group settings, under the guidance of the research team and their educators. Educators were also given training during this visit, throughout the visit, the team of interviewers engaged in documentation and feedback collection. Each interviewer focused on a specific group of students or educators per day, ensuring the diversity of voices and experiences was captured in detail. The data gathered from this first visit served as a critical foundation for assessing student improvement and educator adaptation in the follow-up visit. The visit concluded with a reflective interaction session where students shared their experience with the platform and expressed their interest in using it more regularly. Teachers emphasized the importance of continued exposure and support if such platforms were to be integrated into daily learning. The successful completion of this first phase cre-

ated a strong base for the second visit, where the impact of this intervention would be thoroughly evaluated.

Visit Structure:

- **Orientation:** Local stakeholders were briefed on the program goals.
- **Pre-Evaluations:** Assessed digital skills and academic baseline.
- **Training Sessions:** Practical sessions on using the AI platform, featuring gamification, adaptive modules, and multilingual support.

Educators participated in specialized sessions on dashboard use. Interviewers documented experiences to support future evaluations.

The visit concluded with reflective feedback and strong interest in continued platform usage.

10.7 Follow-Up Field Visit: Karakavanipalem and Kotnivanipalem

Karakavanipalem and Kotnivanipalem were selected for follow-up visits because they represent socially and geographically marginalized rural communities where students face multi-layered barriers to digital inclusion. Though learners from these villages attend nearby Zilla Parishad High Schools, their residential environments lack reliable access to educational technology, digital devices, and structured support systems. Conducting follow-up visits in these locations was essential for two reasons:

- **To Evaluate Contextual Impact:** These villages offered a unique opportunity to study how AI-based educational tools perform in under-resourced environments, outside of formal classroom settings. This aligns with Dr. Ambedkar’s philosophy of addressing social inequities through localized, inclusive, and practical solutions.
- **To Reinforce Educational Continuity and Confidence:** Students from these areas were first-generation digital learners. Revisiting them allowed the project team to assess retention, sustained usage, and the real-life application of digital learning tools. It also ensured that the platform continued to empower them in alignment with Ambedkar’s vision of “liberty, equality, and fraternity” through education.

By choosing these two villages for the follow-up, the Ambedkar Chair reinforced its commitment to *taking technology to the last learner*—a modern expression of Ambedkar’s mission for democratizing education.

10.7.1 Field Visit–5 (27–29 December 2024)

This follow-up field visit marked the culmination of the initiative, involving 107 students and 11 educators from both villages. The aim was post-intervention evaluation and impact assessment. Led by Mr. Raj Kumar and Mr. Praveen, the team also included

Mrs. K.V. Lakshmi, Mrs. Malla Sireesha, Mr. Ravi Inakoti, Mrs. Suneetha, Mr. Anvesh, and Mr. Suresh. The primary focus of this visit was to assess the tangible learning outcomes brought about by the training and to evaluate the effectiveness of the AI platform in real educational settings. Over the three days, the team administered post-tests specifically designed to assess digital literacy improvements, cognitive comprehension in core subjects, and students' ability to apply the learning from the platform in both familiar and new scenarios. The post-evaluation framework mirrored the original pre-test, thereby enabling a comparative analysis of knowledge and skill acquisition over the course of the intervention. In addition to digital literacy metrics, the team looked closely at changes in motivation and engagement levels among the students. Observational and participatory methods were used to understand how frequently and confidently students interacted with the platform after the training period. It was found that many students had not only retained their training but had begun exploring additional features, often teaching peers who were slower to grasp certain functions. Such peer-to-peer learning was a significant secondary outcome of the intervention, speaking to the platform's accessibility and ease of adoption.

Another key area of evaluation was cognitive comprehension in core academic subjects like mathematics, science, and language arts. The AI platform included regionally contextualized quizzes and adaptive modules designed to reinforce classroom instruction. Students were tested on their grasp of these concepts, and their responses indicated a notable improvement in not just retention but also critical thinking and application. These findings suggest that the AI-enhanced learning environment may have played a role in deepening subject matter understanding. The role of educators was also examined in detail during this visit. The participating teachers had been introduced to the platform during the first phase and were now asked to provide structured feedback on their experiences with integrating it into their instructional practices. Most educators reported increased ease in tracking student progress, identifying at-risk learners early, and facilitating differentiated instruction. For many, this was their first meaningful encounter with educational technology, and the platform's user-friendly dashboard and multilingual support had played a crucial role in building their confidence. Feedback interviews were conducted with both students and educators across the three days. The interviewers rotated through scheduled slots to ensure all 107 students and 11 educators had the opportunity to share their thoughts and experiences. The enthusiastic response from the community further emphasized the importance of culturally contextualized, inclusive technological interventions for future scalability and sustainability.

Evaluation Focus:

- **Post-Tests:** Re-assessed digital literacy and cognitive gains.
- **Motivation and Engagement:** Observed student interaction with platform fea-

tures.

- **Academic Performance:** Measured improvements in core subjects.
- **Teacher Feedback:** Reviewed adoption and instructional integration.

Findings revealed higher student confidence, peer-assisted learning, and better academic comprehension. Educators appreciated dashboard insights and multilingual access. Interviews captured positive responses and community interest in sustaining such programs. These multi-village interventions reflected Ambedkar's vision: using modern technology to democratize access to quality education in marginalized settings.

10.8 Village Case Study–4: Rampuram Village

Rampuram Village became the focal point of the final phase of the AI-based digital literacy intervention conducted by the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair, Andhra University. This village, with modest infrastructure and a smaller population, offered a unique opportunity to test the adaptability and impact of digital learning tools in a semi-remote, under-resourced educational context.

10.8.1 Field Visit–6: 6-7 January 2025

The sixth field visit, carried out at Rampuram village, marked a significant phase in the AI-powered digital literacy campaign led by the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University. Rampuram, a relatively small village in terms of population and infrastructure, presented a valuable site to explore how AI-enhanced digital learning can function in semi-remote and under-resourced educational settings.

Participants: 53 students and 8 teachers from the government school in Rampuram.

Team: Doctoral fellows Mr. Raj Kumar and Mr. Praveen, assisted by field interviewers Mrs. K.V. Lakshmi, Mrs. Malla Sireesha, Mr. Ravi Inakoti, Mrs. Suneetha, Dr. Jayarao, Mr. R. Sagar, Mr. Anvesh, Mr. Suresh, Mrs. Lavanya, and Mrs. Lakshmi. The first day commenced with a structured community orientation involving students, teachers, and parents. The objective was to communicate the purpose of the AI-powered digital education platform and establish mutual expectations for the sessions to follow. The interaction also created a space for village elders and school authorities to voice their perspectives on technology in rural education, which added valuable context to the research. Once orientation was complete, the students were taken through a round of pre-evaluation tasks. These were designed to assess their current digital literacy, subject comprehension, and ability to engage with educational tools. The assessment methods were both formal and observational—ranging from direct written evaluations to monitored interaction with trial digital modules. Teachers too were engaged in pre-assessments to understand their exposure to technology and comfort in integrating it into their teaching methods.



Figure. 10.6 Field Visit at Rampuram village.

The central component of this visit was the practical training on the AI platform. With hands-on sessions spread across the two days, students explored the platform’s subject modules, learned how to interact with AI-guided quizzes, and participated in gamified learning environments. The training was differentiated in real-time, with volunteers providing additional support to students who were unfamiliar with tablets or digital interfaces. The students, many of whom had not previously worked on any personal digital device, showed curiosity, resilience, and enthusiasm once the learning curve began to flatten. Teachers, meanwhile noted the potential of such digital tools to streamline remedial teaching and reinforce conceptual understanding. Throughout the visit, the interviewer team collected data on learner behavior, technological adaptability, and verbal feedback through structured and semi-structured interviews. Students were observed both in one-on-one and group settings, providing insight into how they navigated collaborative and independent digital learning scenarios. By the end of the visit, there was a visible shift in how both students and teachers viewed technology—not as a novelty or external imposition, but as a potential daily tool in the learning journey. This shift laid the groundwork for the second visit, which was intended to evaluate the long-term impact and real-time application of the skills introduced in this phase.

Activities and Observations:

- **Community Orientation:** Held with teachers, parents, and students to explain the goals of AI integration and gather local insights on rural education and technology.

- **Pre-evaluations:** Digital literacy and subject-based evaluations using both written and digital methods to benchmark student capabilities and teacher readiness.
- **Hands-on AI Training:** Students explored AI modules, gamified learning, and interactive tools with differentiated guidance. Teachers received exposure to dashboards for tracking student progress.
- **Engagement Levels:** Students—many handling digital tools for the first time, demonstrated curiosity and adaptability. Teachers appreciated the potential for remedial and personalized learning.

The visit laid the foundation for evaluating the long-term educational transformation enabled by digital platforms.

10.8.2 Field Visit–7: 21st and 22nd January 2025

The concluding visit to Rampuram focused on measuring outcomes, evaluating platform adoption, and gathering community reflections on the intervention. Unlike the more formative nature of the first visit, the second phase leaned heavily on post assessment strategies. Students underwent a comprehensive set of post-tests to measure their development across multiple dimensions—digital literacy skills, comprehension in core academic subjects, their level of motivation, and capacity to engage with technology meaningfully. These evaluations were carefully designed to mirror the pre-tests, allowing for direct comparison and measurable insights. The research team observed that students had grown notably more confident in navigating the digital learning platform. Their interactions were smoother, more intentional, and in many cases, exploratory. Several students who had struggled to complete a module in the initial visit were now completing tasks with minimal assistance. A key area of focus in this round was the emotional and motivational dimension. Through one-on-one interviews and group feedback sessions, students were asked to reflect on their learning journey, their comfort with the platform, and how it influenced their approach to studying. The teaching staff also participated in detailed discussions and structured interviews. Educators provided honest reflections on how the platform influenced classroom dynamics. While some admitted they were still adjusting to the dashboard and its features, most agreed that it had simplified aspects of lesson planning and student assessment. Teachers appreciated that they could monitor performance trends and personalize teaching accordingly, something that traditional teaching methods didn't allow for so easily.

Further, the team explored the theme of educator adoption of technology—how far teachers were integrating digital tools beyond this specific intervention. Feedback collection was done extensively during this visit. Interviewers took time to speak individually with students from different grades and learning levels. They were asked to comment on the utility of the platform, the support they received, and their future interest in continuing digital learning. The insights were candid and often touching—one

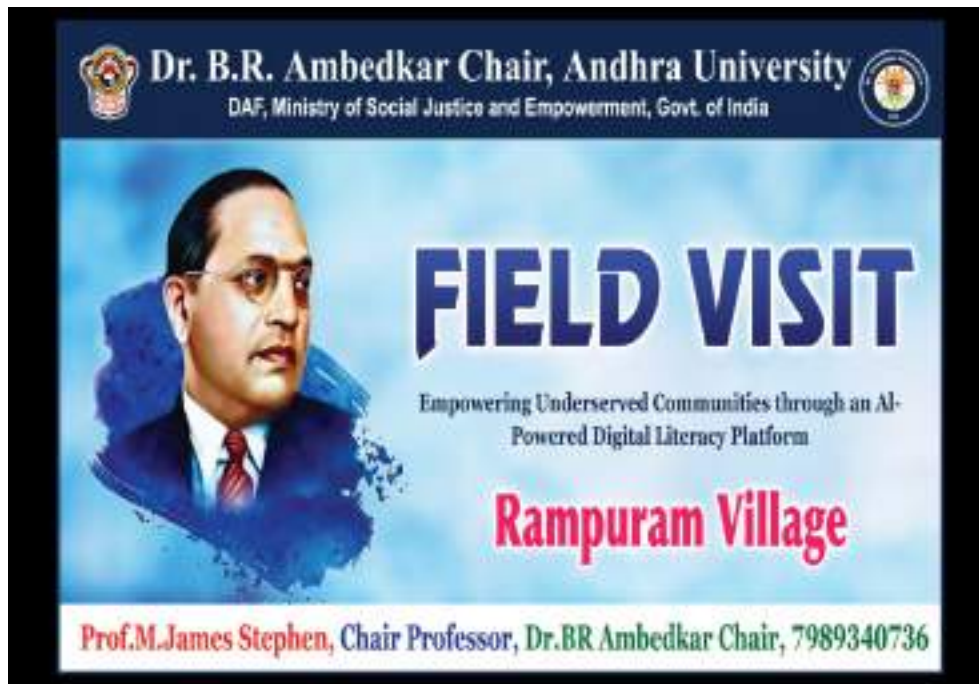


Figure. 10.7 Field Visit at Rampuram village.

student mentioned he had taught his younger sibling how to use a tablet using what he learned during the first visit, showing a ripple effect of digital literacy within families. The visit culminated in a community feedback event, where school authorities, teachers, parents, and members of the research team gathered to share findings, impressions, and possibilities for future collaboration. The event helped solidify the intervention's outcomes in the eyes of the community and opened up conversations around sustaining such technological initiatives in small government schools.

Evaluation Components:

- **Post-tests:** Mirrored the earlier evaluations to assess improvements in digital literacy, cognitive skills, and motivation.
- **Confidence and Fluency:** Students demonstrated improved navigation, with many now guiding peers and exploring advanced platform features.
- **Teacher Insights:** Teachers reported better ability to personalize teaching and monitor performance. Despite initial hesitance, adoption of the platform showed strong promise.
- **Feedback Mechanism:** Structured interviews with students and teachers revealed a positive shift in attitudes toward digital education. One student shared how he taught his sibling to use a tablet—an organic indicator of community impact.

Community Event: The visit ended with a community feedback session attended by

school authorities, teachers, parents, and the Ambedkar Chair team. The event validated the intervention's outcomes and initiated conversations on sustaining such programs within the public education system. These visits to Rampuram highlight how technology, when humanized and localized, can become a vehicle for equity—resonating deeply with Ambedkar's dream of inclusive, transformative education for all.

10.9 Village Case Study – 5: Pinagadi Village

Pinagadi village, located near an engineering college on the outskirts of Visakhapatnam, presented a unique landscape for the AI-powered digital literacy intervention conducted by the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair, Andhra University. Despite its proximity to urban educational institutions, the school-going children of Pinagadi primarily depended on government schools situated in nearby villages such as Rampuram and Pendurthi. This dual character—semi-urban in environment but rural in educational access—made Pinagadi an ideal site to assess the adaptability and impact of AI-based learning tools in transitioning communities.

10.9.1 Field Visit – 8: Pinagadi Village (3–5 February 2025)

The first phase of the digital literacy intervention in **Pinagadi Village** was carried out over three days, from the 3rd to 5th of February 2025. Pinagadi, while geographically close to an engineering college, represents a transitional educational setting where many children still lack direct access to digital learning resources. The selected participants for this intervention were **49 students and 6 educators**, all of whom reside in Pinagadi but attend government schools in surrounding villages such as Rampuram and Pendurthi.

Team Involved:

- **Doctoral Fellows (Ambedkar Chair, Andhra University):** Mr. Raj Kumar and Mr. Praveen
- **Interviewers and Facilitators:** Mrs. K.V. Lakshmi, Mrs. Malla Sireesha, Mr. Ravi Inakoti, Mrs. Suneetha, Dr. Jayarao, Mr. R. Sagar, Mr. Anvesh, Mr. Suresh, Mrs. Lavanya, and Mrs. Lakshmi

The visit began with an introductory session aimed at orienting the community and students toward the goals of the AI-powered learning platform. Given the village's proximity to higher educational institutions, many parents and local stakeholders expressed curiosity about the digital education tools and how they might improve learning outcomes for children studying in external schools. Following orientation, the students underwent pre-test assessments to evaluate their current understanding of digital tools, core academic subjects, and general comprehension. Despite attending schools outside the village, most of the students demonstrated a sense of ownership and enthusiasm when working with the devices provided for the program. Hands-on training sessions

followed the assessments, where students were taught how to navigate the digital interface, engage with subject content, and participate in gamified learning modules. The team also conducted observational studies and informal interviews throughout the visit to better understand the students' adaptability and engagement patterns.



Figure. 10.8 Field Visit at Pinagadi Village.

Day-wise Activities:

- **Day 1: Community Orientation** – A structured orientation session was held involving students, parents, local stakeholders, and educators. The goals, features, and long-term benefits of the AI-powered learning platform were explained. Due to the proximity to higher education institutions, local interest in the program was notably high, with parents asking how such tools could support their children's education.
- **Day 2: Pre-Test Assessment** – Students underwent structured assessments focused on digital literacy, subject knowledge (Math, Science, and Language), and familiarity with digital platforms. Students worked with the tablets provided and were observed for digital fluency, comprehension, and engagement.
- **Day 3: Platform Training and Gamified Learning** – Intensive hands-on training was given on navigating the AI interface, using speech-to-text tools, and accessing personalized learning modules. Students engaged with gamified content and adaptive learning engines, which boosted their participation and confidence. Informal interviews and behavior observations were conducted to capture qualitative data for post-analysis.

The visit ended on a positive note, with most students showing eagerness to explore the platform further, and teachers acknowledging its potential in enhancing classroom instruction.

10.9.2 Field Visit – 9: Pinagadi Village (13–14 February 2025)

The follow-up visit to Pinagadi Village took place on the **13th and 14th of February 2025**. This phase was intended to evaluate the impact of the earlier training and assess the retention, application, and scalability of the digital literacy program.

Participants: Same 49 students and 6 educators who participated in first visit

Team Involved: This initiative was facilitated by the team of doctoral fellows and researchers under the Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University. As with previous visits, the leadership and facilitation team included Mr. Raj Kumar and Mr. Praveen, supported by the full team of interviewers—Mrs. K.V. Lakshmi, Mrs. Malla Sireesha, Mr. Ravi Inakoti, Mrs. Suneetha, Dr. Jayarao, Mr. R. Sagar, Mr. Anvesh, Mr. Suresh, Mrs. Lavanya, and Mrs. Lakshmi. The team brought a balanced mix of experience, energy, and academic rigor to the sessions.



Figure. 10.9 Field Visit at Pinagadi village.

Students underwent post-assessments to evaluate their improvement in digital literacy, understanding of academic content, and confidence in using the AI platform. Compared to the initial visit, there was a clear and measurable increase in the students' ability to navigate the platform independently. Many were able to complete exercises with accuracy and showed greater willingness to explore new content within the digital

modules. Feedback from the educators indicated a growing interest in integrating technology into their own teaching practices, especially after witnessing the engagement levels of their students. Some of the teachers had even begun discussing among themselves how to extend the use of digital content beyond this pilot initiative, suggesting the potential for long-term impact. Throughout the second visit, individual interviews and group discussions were conducted with both students and teachers. These conversations revealed a high level of satisfaction with the program, as well as valuable insights into the limitations students face when they attend schools located outside their home village. Many expressed a desire to have such digital learning opportunities made available more frequently and locally. Despite being a smaller and somewhat transitional village in terms of its educational infrastructure, Pinagadi proved to be a highly responsive site. The intervention demonstrated that with consistent exposure and guided support, students from even peripheral educational settings can benefit meaningfully from AI-driven learning. The sessions concluded with words of encouragement from the facilitators, and many students left with a newfound sense of excitement about digital education and their ability to thrive within it.

Activities and Observations:

- **Post-Assessments:** Structured post-tests were administered, mirroring the pre-assessment framework to evaluate growth in digital literacy, cognitive understanding, and subject-specific knowledge. Students displayed increased confidence in navigating the AI platform independently.
- **Digital Fluency and Peer Learning:** Students demonstrated curiosity and initiative, often exploring new content and assisting peers who needed help—a strong indicator of ownership and sustained interest.
- **Educator Feedback:** Teachers expressed a growing inclination to incorporate digital tools in their regular teaching. They initiated discussions among themselves about adopting similar platforms more widely in their schools.
- **Student Reflections:** Interviews and group feedback sessions were held, where students shared their learning journey, digital experiences, and how the program changed their approach to education.
- **Closing Observations:** Despite being a village on the edge of urbanization, Pinagadi proved to be a fertile ground for digital adoption. The positive transformation in both students and educators reflected the scalability of Ambedkarite digital learning in semi-urban settings.

The intervention concluded with motivation from the facilitators and a strengthened relationship between the university team and the village education ecosystem.

10.10 Daily Activities and Observations

Each day of the field intervention program was systematically structured to maximize student engagement and gather meaningful data. The core daily activities included:

- **Community Orientation:** Introducing students, parents, and educators to the goals of the initiative.
- **Pre-Test Evaluations:** Assessing baseline knowledge in digital literacy and core subjects.
- **Training Sessions Using the AI Platform:** Hands-on usage of tablets and AI-powered learning tools.
- **Gamification Rounds:** Subject content was delivered in a game-based format to increase motivation.
- **Feedback Interviews:** Direct interactions with students and educators to collect qualitative observations.

10.10.1 Learning Domains Observed

- Digital Literacy Skills
- Cognitive Comprehension in Core Subjects (Mathematics, Science, English)
- Motivation and Engagement
- Educator Adoption of Technology

Total Participants

- Students: 257 (Age group 10–18 years)
- Educators: 32

10.11 Data Collection

To evaluate the effectiveness of the digital learning intervention and measure changes in learner outcomes, a structured questionnaire was developed and administered during both pre-intervention and post-intervention phases.

10.11.1 Core Domains Covered in the Questionnaire

1. **Digital Literacy Skills:** Students' ability to use mobile/tablets and educational apps independently.
2. **Comprehension and Cognitive Gains:** Self-reported improvements in Mathematics, Science, and English.
3. **Confidence and Engagement:** Comfort and interest in digital learning environments.

4. **Educator Adoption (From Student Perspective):** Impressions of teacher involvement.
5. **Infrastructure and Access:** Device availability, internet connectivity, and educational proximity.

The tool included 30 questions and was designed to enable comparative analysis across time. A mix of question types—multiple choice, Yes/No, Likert scale, and short answers—was employed.

10.11.2 Pre-Intervention Questionnaire (Sample)

1. Name of the Student
2. Class/Grade
3. School Name
4. Village Name
5. Can you switch on a mobile/tablet on your own? (Yes/No)
6. Have you ever used any learning app or website before? (Yes/No)
7. Can you open and explore educational videos or games without help? (Yes/No)
8. How often do you use mobile/tablets for studying? (Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Often / Daily)
9. How confident are you in using educational apps? (1-5 Likert)
10. Can you search for lessons or topics online independently? (Yes/No)
11. Which subjects do you find most difficult? (Math, Science, English, None)
12. Do you face difficulty understanding lessons in Math? (Yes/No)
13. Do you face difficulty understanding lessons in Science? (Yes/No)
14. Do you face difficulty understanding lessons in English? (Yes/No)
15. Have you ever learned from digital sources before (videos, apps)? (Yes/No)
16. Are you interested in using a phone or tablet for studies? (Yes/No)
17. Rate your interest in digital learning (games/videos). (1-5 Likert)
18. How comfortable are you asking questions in digital class? (1-5 Likert)
19. Do you have a digital device at home? (Yes/No)
20. Do you have internet access at home? (Always / Sometimes / Rarely / Never)
21. Have you missed online classes due to internet issues? (Yes/No)
22. How far is your school from home? (Less than 1 km / 1–2 km / More than 2 km)
23. Do you think digital tools will help you in learning? (Yes/No)

10.11.3 Post-Intervention Questionnaire (Sample)

1. Name of the Student
2. Class/Grade
3. School Name
4. Village Name
5. Can you now use a mobile/tablet for studies without help? (Yes/No)
6. Can you navigate educational apps independently? (Yes/No)
7. Can you switch between subjects on the app? (Yes/No)
8. Confidence in digital tools (1-5 Likert)
9. Did you enjoy using the AI-powered app? (Yes/No)
10. Did your subject understanding improve using the platform? (Yes/No)
11. Math understanding improved (1-5 Likert)
12. Science understanding improved (1-5 Likert)
13. English understanding improved (1-5 Likert)
14. Can you explain concepts to others now? (Yes/No)
15. Do you feel confident using digital tools post-training? (1-5 Likert)
16. Are you more interested in digital learning now? (Yes/No)
17. Do you want to continue learning through such apps? (Yes/No)
18. Was gamification engaging? (1-5 Likert)
19. Did you participate actively? (Yes/No)
20. Did the app work with your village internet? (Yes/No)
21. Was the experience smooth despite limited data? (Yes/No)
22. Any technical issues? (Yes/No)
23. Would you recommend this tool to others? (Yes/No)

10.12 Outcomes and Impact

- Successfully bridged the digital divide in underserved communities.
- Improved student comprehension in core academic subjects.
- Boosted confidence and motivation among learners.
- Enabled data-driven teaching for educators.
- Validated the feasibility of hybrid offline-online AI education platforms.

10.13 Comparative Analysis and Key Findings

The comparative analysis across the five villages—Gorapalle, Karakavanipalem, Kotnivanipalem, Rampuram, and Pinagadi—offered crucial insights into how socio geographic and infrastructural contexts influence the adoption and impact of AI-based educational interventions. While all villages exhibited marked improvements in digital literacy, cognitive performance, and teacher engagement, certain unique patterns emerged. Pinagadi, with its proximity to urban institutions, demonstrated the highest digital skill gains (81%) and educator adoption (96%), indicating strong receptiveness in hybrid rural-urban settings. Karakavanipalem and Kotnivanipalem, both characterized by linguistic and infrastructural diversity, showed promising results through localized strategies like multilingual content and community leadership. Gorapalle excelled in gamified learning engagement, while Rampuram, though more remote, revealed notable adaptability and motivation. These findings underscore the importance of tailoring digital education interventions to the specific socio-cultural contexts of each community, reaffirming the value of inclusive, localized approaches inspired by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s vision for equitable education.

Table 10.1 Village-wise Comparative Analysis

Village	Digital Skill Improvement	Cognitive Gains	Educator Adoption	Unique Contribution
Gorapalle	76% increase	62% overall	94% positive	Gamification model
Karakavanipalem	78% (bottom quartile)	70% in STEM	88% adoption	Multilingual approach
Kotnivanipalem	72% average	65% overall	82% adoption	Community leadership
Rampuram	68% increase	58% overall	90% positive	Remote adaptation
Pinagadi	81% increase	75% overall	96% adoption	Urban-rural hybrid

10.14 Acknowledgments

This work was supported by the Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, in partnership with Andhra University. Special recognition goes to the field researchers, educators, and students who made this transformative work possible.

CHAPTER 11

MODERNISING DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR'S IDEOLOGY: THE INTERSECTION OF SOCIAL WORK AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE DIGITAL AGE

11.1 Introduction

The ideology of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has long been a beacon for social justice, equality, and human rights. In the contemporary era, the rapid advancement of technology presents an unprecedented opportunity to modernise and amplify Ambedkar's vision. The "Dialogue on Social Work and Technology: Exploring the Digital Age," held on 19th August 2024 at Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, marked a significant milestone in this endeavour. Organised by the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University in collaboration with the National Institute of Social Work and Sciences (NISWAS), Bhubaneswar, the event underscored the transformative potential of integrating technology with social work to address pressing societal challenges. This chapter delves into the key themes, insights, and outcomes of the dialogue, highlighting how Ambedkar's ideas can be revitalised through technological innovation. The "Dialogue on Social Work and Technology: Exploring the Digital Age" was a groundbreaking inter-chair collaborative program organised by the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University in partnership with the National Institute of Social Work and Sciences (NISWS), Bhubaneswar. The event served as a platform to explore the intersection of social work and technology, with the aim of harnessing technological advancements to address social challenges more effectively. The dialogue was enriched by the participation of esteemed scholars and experts from both fields, providing deep insights and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration.

11.2 Objectives of the Dialogue

The dialogue was designed with several pivotal objectives:

- **Exploring Ambedkar's Ideas in Social Work:** Revisiting Ambedkar's principles of social justice and their relevance to contemporary social work, particularly in combating social exclusion and promoting human rights.
- **Integrating Technology in Social Work:** Examining how digital tools can enhance the efficacy of social work interventions, especially for marginalised communities.
- **Encouraging Interdisciplinary Collaboration:** Fostering partnerships between social work and engineering technology to develop innovative, sustainable solu-



Figure. 11.1 Event poster: Dialogue on Social Work and Technology: Exploring the Digital Age.

tions.

- **Engaging the Academic Community:** Providing a platform for students and scholars to contribute to the discourse and gain insights from leading experts.

These objectives align seamlessly with the broader theme of modernising Ambedkar’s ideology, demonstrating how his vision can be adapted to meet the needs of the digital age.

11.3 Program Overview

The program featured a series of sessions, including keynote addresses, panel discussions, and interactive QandA sessions, all focused on the intersection of social work and technology.

11.3.1 Inaugural Session

The event commenced with an opening address by Prof. M.James Stephen, Chair Professor of the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University. He emphasized the importance of integrating technology with social work to address contemporary challenges more effectively. Prof. Sashmi Nayak, the Ambedkar Chair Professor in Social Work at the National Institute of Social Work and Sciences, Bhubaneswar, delivered the keynote address. Prof. Nayak’s extensive research on education, social exclusion, and human rights has made significant contributions to the field. She highlighted how Ambedkar’s ideas can be applied to modern social work practices, particularly in engaging with socially excluded and marginalized communities in Orissa.

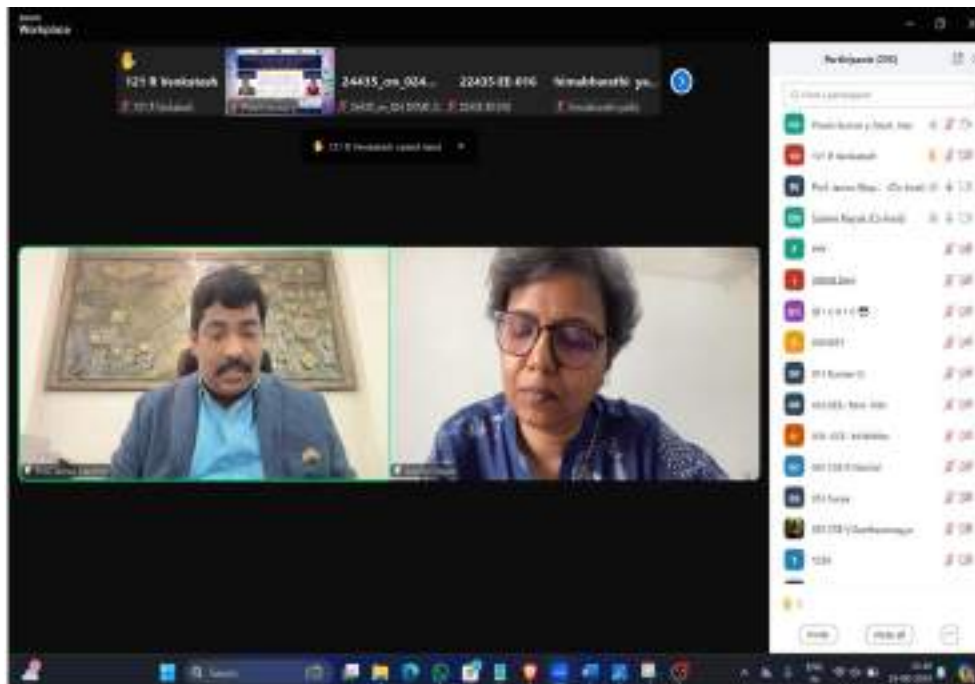


Figure. 11.2 Keynote address Prof. Sashmi Nayak, the Ambedkar Chair Professor in Social Work at the National Institute of Social Work and Sciences.

11.3.2 Panel Discussions

The dialogue featured several panel discussions, including:

- **Relevance of Ambedkar’s Ideas to Social Work in the Digital Age:** Led by Prof. Sashmi Nayak, this discussion explored how Ambedkar’s vision of social justice can be realized through the use of technology in social work. Prof. Nayak shared her insights on addressing social exclusion through technology, emphasizing the need for a human-centered approach in digital strategies for social work.
- **Amalgamating Technology with Social Needs:** Prof. M. James Stephen shared insights from his research on integrating technology with social needs, focusing on how digital tools can be effectively used to address issues such as poverty, inequality, and access to resources. His expertise in blending technological solutions with social work practices offered a unique perspective on the potential of digital transformation in this field.

11.4 Role of Engineering Students in Social Work

One of the key discussions during the dialogue centered around the role of engineering students in social work and how their technical skills can be applied to address social issues. The following points were highlighted:

- **Applying Technical Skills to Social Issues:** Engineering students can apply their

problem-solving skills and technical knowledge to develop innovative solutions for social problems. For example, they can design low-cost technologies that improve access to clean water, energy, or healthcare for marginalized communities.

- **Designing Sustainable Solutions:** Engineering students have a vital role in designing and implementing sustainable solutions that address the long-term needs of marginalized communities. By working closely with social workers, they can ensure that these solutions are culturally appropriate and meet the specific needs of the communities they serve.
- **Enhancing Social Responsibility and Ethical Awareness:** Involvement in social work can enhance the social responsibility and ethical awareness of engineering students. By understanding the social impact of their technologies, they can design solutions that are not only effective but also equitable and just.
- **Aligning Engineering Projects with Social Work Goals:** Engineering projects can be aligned with the goals of social work to promote community well-being. For instance, projects that focus on improving infrastructure in underdeveloped areas can be guided by the principles of social justice, ensuring that the benefits are shared by all members of the community.
- **Understanding Social Impact:** It is crucial for engineering students to understand the social impact of the technologies they develop. By considering the broader social implications of their work, they can contribute to creating a more inclusive and equitable society.
- **Empathy and Social Consciousness:** Involvement in social work during their studies can help engineering students become more empathetic and socially-conscious professionals. This experience prepares them to consider the human element in their technical work, leading to more holistic and impactful solutions.
- **Collaborating with Social Workers:** Engineering students can greatly benefit from collaborating with social workers on interdisciplinary projects. Such collaborations can lead to innovative solutions that address real-world problems more effectively, combining technical expertise with a deep understanding of social issues.
- **Contributing to Disaster Relief and Recovery:** Engineering students can play a crucial role in disaster relief and recovery efforts by applying their technical skills to design and implement solutions that support affected communities. This

includes developing technologies for early warning systems, emergency shelters, and efficient resource distribution.

- **Considering Social and Cultural Dimensions:** When working on projects, engineering students should consider the social and cultural dimensions of the communities they serve. This understanding ensures that their solutions are not only technically sound but also culturally sensitive and acceptable.
- **Preparation for Leadership in Social Innovation:** Engagement in social work prepares engineering students for leadership roles in social innovation and sustainable development. By working on projects that address social needs, they develop the skills and mindset required to lead initiatives that create positive social change.
- **Opportunities for Volunteering and Internships:** Numerous opportunities exist for engineering students to volunteer or intern in social work settings. These experiences can enhance their education by providing practical insights into the challenges faced by marginalized communities and the role of technology in addressing these challenges.
- **Supporting Non-Profits and NGOs:** Engineering students can use their problemsolving skills to support non-profits, NGOs, and other organizations dedicated to social work. By developing technological solutions that enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of these organizations, they can make a significant contribution to social good.

11.5 Key Themes and Discussions

The field-based digital literacy initiative revealed several recurring themes that are essential for scaling and sustaining AI-based educational interventions in rural India. Foremost among these was the critical role of community engagement—early orientation sessions with parents, educators, and local leaders significantly increased acceptance and participation. Another dominant theme was digital curiosity and adaptability among first-generation learners, many of whom overcame initial hesitation to confidently engage with gamified and AI-powered learning platforms. The infrastructure gap, especially in remote villages, emerged as a consistent challenge, highlighting the need for offline-compatible and multilingual educational tools. Teacher involvement varied across sites, underlining the importance of continuous educator training and support to ensure lasting impact. The interplay between motivation, digital confidence, and cognitive improvement emerged as a powerful dynamic, particularly when the learning

experience was interactive and contextually relevant. These discussions point to the necessity of a holistic approach—technological, pedagogical, and social—to effectively bridge the digital divide in education.

11.5.1 Relevance of Ambedkar’s Ideas in the Digital Age

Prof. Sashmi Nayak, Ambedkar Chair Professor at NISWAS, Bhubaneswar, delivered a keynote address emphasising the enduring relevance of Ambedkar’s ideas. She highlighted how his focus on education, social inclusion, and human rights can guide the use of technology in social work. For instance, digital platforms can be leveraged to provide education and resources to Dalit and other marginalised communities, thereby addressing systemic exclusion. Prof. Nayak’s research underscored the importance of a human-centred approach in designing technological solutions, ensuring they are accessible and equitable.

11.5.2 Technology as a Tool for Social Justice

Prof. M. James Stephen, Chair Professor of the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair at Andhra University, explored the amalgamation of technology with social needs. His insights revealed how digital tools—such as mobile applications for healthcare, AI-driven platforms for legal aid, and low-cost innovations for clean water—can empower marginalised groups. Prof. Stephen’s work exemplifies how Ambedkar’s vision of social equity can be realised through technological innovation.

11.5.3 Role of Engineering Students in Social Work

A standout discussion centred on the role of engineering students in advancing social work goals. Key points included:

- **Applying Technical Skills:** Engineering students can design solutions like low-cost sanitation systems or renewable energy projects tailored for underserved communities.
- **Sustainable and Culturally Sensitive Solutions:** Collaboration with social workers ensures that technological interventions are sustainable and culturally appropriate.
- **Ethical Awareness and Social Responsibility:** Exposure to social work cultivates empathy and a sense of responsibility among engineering students, encouraging them to prioritise social impact in their projects.
- **Disaster Relief and Recovery:** Engineering students can contribute to disaster management through innovations like early warning systems and resilient infrastructure.

These discussions highlighted the transformative potential of interdisciplinary collaboration, a cornerstone of modernising Ambedkar’s ideology.

11.6 Student Engagement and Interdisciplinary Collaboration

The dialogue witnessed enthusiastic participation from 500 students, both in-person and online. Interactive QandA sessions revealed a growing interest among young professionals in merging technology with social justice. Engineering students, in particular, expressed eagerness to align their projects with social work principles, reflecting a shift towards more socially conscious innovation.

Key Contributions and Insights:

- **Prof. Sashmi Nayak's Research:** Her work on education and social exclusion provided a framework for using technology to bridge gaps in access and opportunity.
- **Prof. M. James Stephen's Expertise:** His practical insights into digital tools demonstrated how technology can be harnessed to meet social needs effectively.
- **Bridging Disciplines:** The dialogue laid the groundwork for future collaborations between social studies and engineering, a critical step in modernising Ambedkar's vision.

11.7 Conclusion

The “Dialogue on Social Work and Technology” exemplified how Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's ideology can be revitalised in the digital era. By integrating technology with social work, we can address contemporary challenges—such as inequality, exclusion, and lack of access—more effectively. The event underscored the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration, ethical innovation, and student engagement in driving social change. As we move forward, modernising Ambedkar's ideology through technology will not only honour his legacy but also create a more inclusive and equitable society. This chapter serves as a call to action for academics, technologists, and social workers to unite in this transformative endeavour, ensuring that Ambedkar's vision continues to inspire and guide us in the digital age.

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