

Press Release

On May,26,2023, the University of Ladakh organised a lecture on "Contribution of tribal heroes in the freedom struggle of India" under the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav at the Leh campus. The event was graced by Guest speaker Shri Vaibhav Ji, Coordinator, National Commission for Scheduled Tribe, Madhya Pradesh, In House speaker Dr Rinchen Dolma, Assistant Professor, Department History, University of Ladakh, along with Shri Gopal, Principal Bhartiya Vidya Niketan School, Leh, Shri Parmeet, Director Ladakh Phandey Tsogspa, Mr Rishikesh, social worker and Students from BVNS. Dr Jigmat Dachen, Dean of Student Welfare, UoL, formally welcomed and addressed the speakers and participants regarding the event. Students of Bhartiya Vidya Niketan School Choglamsar also presented a patriotic song.

The first speaker Sh. Vaibhav Ji mentioned the various tribal freedom fighters that fought during India's independence. He mentioned that there are many Tribal Freedom Fighters who fought against the Britishers but they were unknown and there are no writings available regarding their stories. He talked about Tilka Majhi, who was an Indian freedom fighter and the first Adivasi leader from Santal Community. Tilka manjhi led the first organized rebellion against the British in 1772 and the revolt was against the exploitation of Tribal resources in the wake of the famine in Santhal Parganas. He also mentioned that Manjhi was finally caught by Britishers in 1784 and he was tied to the tail of a horse and dragged to the collector's residence at Bhagalpur, Bihar. There his lacerated body was hung from a Banyan tree. He also talked about Phulo and Jhano Murmu sisters who were from the Santhal tribe and they led one of the first and fiercest rebellions against the British colonizers in 1855-56. Later he also mentioned Birsa Munda who was a tribal freedom fighter and folk hero who belongs to the Munda tribe. During British Raj, he spearheaded a tribal religious millenarian movement that arose in the Bengal Presidency in the late 19 century. Sh. Vaibhav Ji also stressed that there is a need to include the stories of tribal heroes in the textbooks and also encouraged the faculty members to conduct research on these tribal heroes.

After that, a short video on the role of National Commission for Scheduled Tribes was played.

Our second speaker Dr Rinchen Dolma in her lecture mentioned the contribution of the Late Abdul Sattar, the Lone Freedom Fighter from Ladakh. Abdul Sattar had done frequent business trips to places like Lahore, Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Delhi, Kolkata etc, and he was inspired by the ongoing freedom struggle movement. He wrote many articles for Urdu daily and his writings showed that he was very much dejected by the system of forced labour and gross assessment of land revenue for compulsory revenue realisation of land produce, which was prevalent during the period. His writings were meant to make people realise the importance of just rule, freedom and independence. Dr Rinchen also tells about the visits of Abdul Sattar to Delhi where he met Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Azad, Ambedkar, Dr. Zakir Hussain and other freedom fighters. After returning from Delhi, he continued writing articles which were believed to be the cause of instigating many other people from Ladakh against the Government. She

further mentioned that in 1938, FIR was launched in his name and he was imprisoned for six months in Skardu Jail. In 1942-43, he again visited Kashmir, where he was advised by Sheikh Abdullah to continue his struggle against the British. She further mentioned that people of Ladakh who have shown resistance to government policies were met with stringent responses. She further added that Munshi Sattar was the only person available in that period with a political mindset who also participated in Freedom Struggle, so he was given the task of choosing someone who could lead the party and who also had credibility and enjoyed public confidence and respect. So, he chose Kushok Bakula Rinpoche, and he suggested Sheikh Abdullah approach Rinpoche through Pandit Nehru and on the insistence of Pandit Nehru, Rinpoche Bakula agreed to lead NC in Ladakh.

At last Mr. Sonam Gysto, AP, Physical Education presented a vote of thanks which was followed by the National Anthem.



