

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF ODISHA, KORAPUT

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Contributions of Tribal Leaders in the Freedom Movement needs to be highlighted – Experts on Concluding Programme of Janjatiya Gaurav Divas on the occasion of the Birth Anniversary of Birsa Munda

As part of the 75th Year of Independence 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' the week long celebrations to celebrate and commemorate glorious history of tribal people, culture and achievements in Central University of Odisha started from 15 November 2021 on the occasion of Janjatiya Gaurav Divas, the birth anniversary of Bhagwan Birsa Munda concluded on 22 November 2021 in a befitting manner by organizing a programme through blended mode. Prof. (Dr.) A.B. Ota, Director-cum-Special Secretary, SCSTRTI and Honorary Professor of the Dept. of Anthropology, CUO and Prof. Panchanan Mohanty, Professor & Head, Institute of Applied Sciences & Humanities, GLA University Mathura and Honorary Professor of the Tribal Chair, CUO will spoke on the occasion as the Chief Guest and Chief Speaker respectively. Prof. Sharat Kumar Palita, Vice-Chancellor I/c. of the CUO presided over the programme and highlighted various contributions of tribal leaders during the freedom struggle particularly the contribution of Bhagaban Birsa Munda. He expressed satisfaction over the weeklong celebration of Janjatiya Gaurav Divas organised at the University. Dr. Srinivas B. Kotnak, Assistant Professor of Anthropology delivered the welcome address and gave a brief note about the programme.

Prof. Ota highlighted various initiatives of the Central and State Government in respect of naming important places/institutions on the name of great tribal freedom fighters of the country. Various documentary films are being produced and books are being published in different languages. While describing the life and contributions of Birsha Munda he said " Birsa Munda was the great religious leader, tribal hero. He started a millennium movement during British Colonial rule. He reformed tribal society and protected the land of tribals". He also highlighted the contributions of Shahid Laxman Nayak, a brave freedom fighter of Odisha and said " Shahid Laxman Nayak is the Gandhi of Malkangiri". He focused on tribal heritage and monuments of Odisha and stressed for their preservation that are identified by UNESCO.

Prof. Mohanty highlighted the tribal culture and languages. He said "the Odisha is a most interesting state where tribal culture, traditions and languages are reflected. Most of the Dravidian languages are tribal languages and Odia language is closer to the Dravidian language". He opined that Lord Jagannath of Odisha is the God of tribals and many of the rituals performed in the temple are similar with the tribal culture. Most of the Deities/Goddesses in the villages of Odisha are Dravidian in nature. While speaking on the rich tribal language of Odisha he said "In Odisha there are 24 tribal languages and 74 tribal dialects. Tribal language contributed immensely to form modern Indian languages".

An essay competition on 'Birsa Munda, Modern Education and Contemporary relevance in Developmental Context' in Odia, Hindi and English languages was conducted during the week under the supervision of Dr. Ramendra Kumar Parhi, DSW I/c. Prof. Palita, the VC I/c. announced the name of the winners of the competition on the Programme. Dr. Phagunath Bhoi, Public Relation Officer of the University coordinated the programme and extended the vote of thanks. Students, faculty members and staff of the University attended the programme at large.

Dr. Phagunath Bhoi, Public Relations Officer