



Dr Narendra Dabholkar Memorial Lecture: Cultivation of Scientific Temper

Speaker:

Ms Mukta Dabholkar and Shri Prashant Potdar

Date / Time:

October 24, 2013 - 2:00pm - 4:00pm

Venue:

10th Floor, Pixel A, Azim Premji University

Abstract:

About Dr Narendra Dabholkar:

Dr Narendra Dabholkar (November 1, 1945 – August 20, 2013) was killed while taking his morning walk in Pune. In 1989, along with like-minded colleagues, he had founded Maharashtra Andhshradha Nirmulan Samiti (MANS) or Committee for Eradication of Blind Faith. MANS is a people's movement with 200 units across urban and rural Maharashtra as also some outside, like in Goa and in Belgaum (Karnataka). This organization has been the subject of research by Johannes Quack in a book entitled *Disenchanted India: Organized Rationalism and Criticism of Religion in India* (Oxford University Press, New York, 2012). Trained as a doctor, Dr Dabholkar had participated in the movement 'one village – one source of drinking water' of Baba Adhav and he was jailed for participation in the movement to rename the Marathwada University after Dr BR Ambedkar. He also founded 'Saamaajik Kritadnyataa Nidhee' (or Social Gratitude Fund) – a trust to express gratitude to deserving social workers by offering financial support to them.

When his life was suddenly snuffed out by assassins, Dr Dabholkar was only performing a fundamental duty enjoined by article 51 A of Indian constitution, viz. to develop scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform. This murder raised fears about the rampant growth of crime in our society and how shall social activists protect their freedoms, life and liberty. The public outrage that this murder aroused also gave us a wake-up call to revive the flagging tempo for building scientific temper and a rational society through a social movement. The Maharashtra government has helped Dr Dabholkar's dream to see rationality triumph by promulgating an ordinance "Maharashtra Prevention and Eradication of Human Sacrifice and other Inhuman, Evil and Aghori Practices and Black Magic", sadly after his murder.

About the Lecture-cum-demo:

The lecture-cum-demo will begin by recounting the legacy of social reformers and saints. It shall illustrate how MANS has started a social movement for the eradication of superstition, promotion of scientific temper and the development of rationality. There shall also be a demo on the need for basing our actions and daily lives on reason. The talk shall emphasize the role of scientific temper in the larger social context

A Note on the Speaker:

Ms Mukta Dabholkar is a Lawyer with a keen interest in education. Besides a LL.B., Ms Dabholkar has done a MA (Elementary Education) from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. She has been active in making Panchayati Raj more meaningful but she also has a special interest in School Management Committees and the reading abilities of students.

Shri Prashant Potdar has a M.Com. He is the Secretary to MANS. He is also the State Organiser of Vaidnyanik Janiva Prakalp.