



Sikkim University *Chronicle*

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VII Foundaton Day Celebration



On July 2, 2014, Sikkim University completed its seven years of coming into being. In the seven years, the university has grown with 29 academic departments, now under six schools. Functioning out of rented premises, the university has established itself into the hub of higher education in the State as well as in the region. Vice Chancellor, Prof. T.B.Subba, in his address on the occasion of the VII Foundation Day, spelt out the achievements during the past year and among those was the BCI approval to the Department of Law and the substantial increase in the enrolment of students in the university. He sent out an appeal to the State Government, through the Guest of Honour for the occasion, Shri. Shri R.B.Subba, Minister for Human Resources and Development, Government of Sikkim, for ensuring that the University campus at Yangang came up at the earliest.

Shri Subba, in turn, assured all possible help from the State Government in this regard and underscored the role of this university in the development and access to higher education for the people of the state.

A thought provoking lecture by Sunanda K Dutta Ray, on "The 'Near Abroad' concept for big countries like the US, Russia, China and India" was the highlight of the afternoon. The veteran journalist and scholar dealt with the long history of India's Foreign Policy priorities vis a vis the nations in the region and traced how the nation, after independence, had worked its relationship with its neighbours while at the same time negotiating its approach to the developed nations.

He touched upon the importance of the invitation to heads of governments in the neighbourhood during the swearing in ceremony of Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently and stressed the need for addressing socio-economic and developmental issues within to take forward the initiative. Shri Dutta Ray's address was followed by an intense discussion with a range of questions raised from the floor.

The lecture session was followed by a short interregnum when the university website: <http://www.cus.ac.in/> was launched. This new website, an outcome of the untiring work of our Website Management Team for almost a year now, has been developed in a content management system platform technology called Joomla, facilitates categorising the website on the basis of its content types. All contents fed into the website fall under certain categories thereby considerably increasing the ease of browsing by the end users as well as the backend management team.

And thereafter was a cultural fete. It began with performances by students and teachers from the university, Odissi dance performance by Mrs. K.Pattanaik and her troupe from New Delhi and the Mantra Band from Darjeeling regaling the audience till late into the evening.



Editorial Board

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Darjeeling Tea: Do tea workers brew/sip its real taste?

An article by Tikendra Kumar Chhetry, Ph.D Scholar,
Department of Peace and Conflict Studies

*"...Don't expect more than that you have. Do not
scare of anything and live with it; your life can-
not be worse than the worst you are living..."*

These lines from Maxim Gorky's 'Mother,' depicting the plight of the oppressed in his own times, is as relevant now insofar as the condition that the tea garden workers of Darjeeling is concerned. In my recent visit of some of the tea gardens in Darjeeling, I could recall some characters from Gorky's book that I read few years back. Indeed, the ways and apparatuses of oppression are different.

At present, the tea garden workers of Darjeeling are facing two major problems. One is the gradual closing down of the gardens. The first three Tea Estates were established at Tukvar in 1852. Today, there are only eighty two tea estates in Darjeeling. These Tea Gardens are mainly located in the Sadar, Darjeeling and Kurseong subdivisions. Only four gardens exist in Kalimpong.

A number of those that came up in Chongtung, Singtam, Putuk, Pesok, Ringtang-va, Takvaar,

Rangeet, etc., do not exist any longer. The owners might have some cause to justify their closure; but the impact of such closing down of gardens on the garden workers have been overlooked and ignored. No initiative, so far, has been taken to rehabilitate the leaf plucking perpetual workers' families. The ownership of hugely extended land that falls under closed gardens is still unchanged. The concerned authorities have not cared to even propose that the land is distributed among the workers now rendered jobless.

And the second of the problems is the low level of wages to the workers who still work in gardens which are still functioning. It is periodically reported in local (Hindi, Nepali, Bengali and English) dailies that the tea produced at Stanthal, Ambte, Singel, Tharbu and other gardens are normally sold at a price of Rs. 12000-16000/- per Kg. But the wage that is paid to the workers, who sweat to produce such quality tea, is very low.

A recent report of Alem Lama reflects this fact vividly. The report divides a year into productive working days (April to November) and non-productive or dry working days (December to March). According to the report, excluding the days of non-productive months, Sundays and other

Editor's Note

July 2014 was indeed an eventful month for the University. The VII Foundation Day on July 2 was marked by a lecture by veteran journalist, Sunanda-K Dutta Ray followed by a cultural evening that comprised of music, dance and a rock show. The function was also graced by Shri R.B.Subba, Minister for Human Resources and Development, Government of Sikkim.

July 2014 also marked the last month of the academic year 2013-14 and conduct of end-semester examinations, evaluation of the answer scripts and finalising the results kept the teachers busy. The results were declared on July 28, 2014; this was a couple of days ahead of the schedule! The office of the CoE managed this.

July 2014 was also the time for finalisation of admissions for 2014-15. All the 29 departments were

buzzing with activity. And the university now has at least 800 more students. And this warranted finding new space. Two new hostels: One for the boys and another for the girls have come up. A number of departments have had to move to new premises; some to buildings located as far as Kazi Road.

A new website, in a content management system platform technology called Joomla, was inaugurated on the occasion of our foundation day: <http://www.cus.ac.in/> is our new website.

On behalf of the editorial board, I extend a hearty welcome to our new students and a productive and useful year ahead to them and our old students.

Dr. V.Krishna Ananth
(on behalf of the editorial board)



registered (national and local) holidays, the total number of productive (leaf plucking) days is 197. At a minimum weight, a worker plucks 8 Kg of green leaves (less than 8 Kg causes the reduction in daily wage) per day working minimum 8 hours in a day.

Hence total amount of green leaves a worker pluck in a year is (197 multiplied by 8) 1576 Kg. It is popularly known that 4 Kg of green leaves make 1 Kg tea. Now 1576 divided by 4 equals to 394. Hence, the amount of total tea in a year prepared from the leaves that is plucked by a worker is 394 Kg, means a worker produced total of 394 Kg of solid tea in a year at a minimum quantity. Keeping the price variation aside, if Rs, 2000/- per Kg is maintained as minimum price, it means that a normal worker works

for solid tea which amounts Rs. 7,88,000/- yearly.

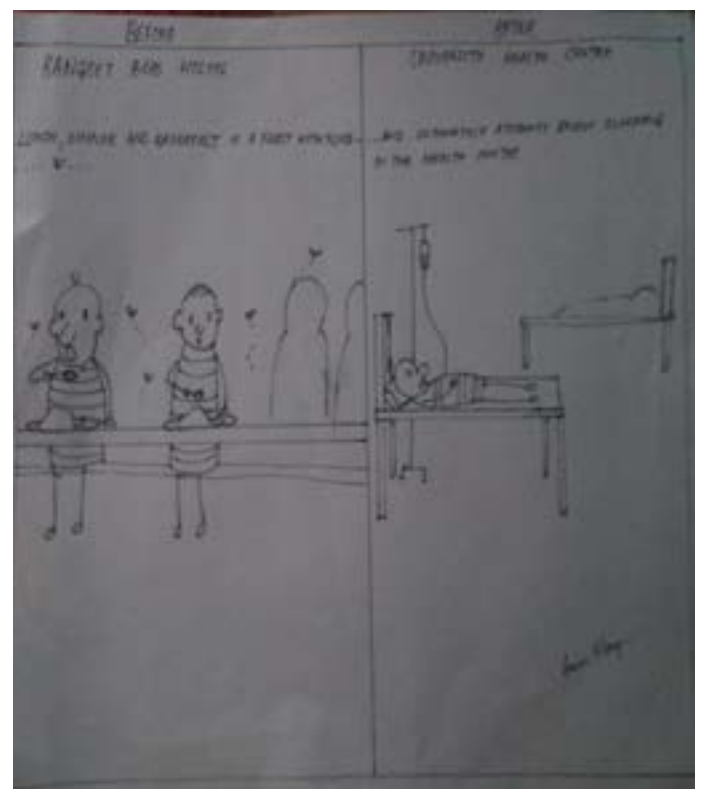
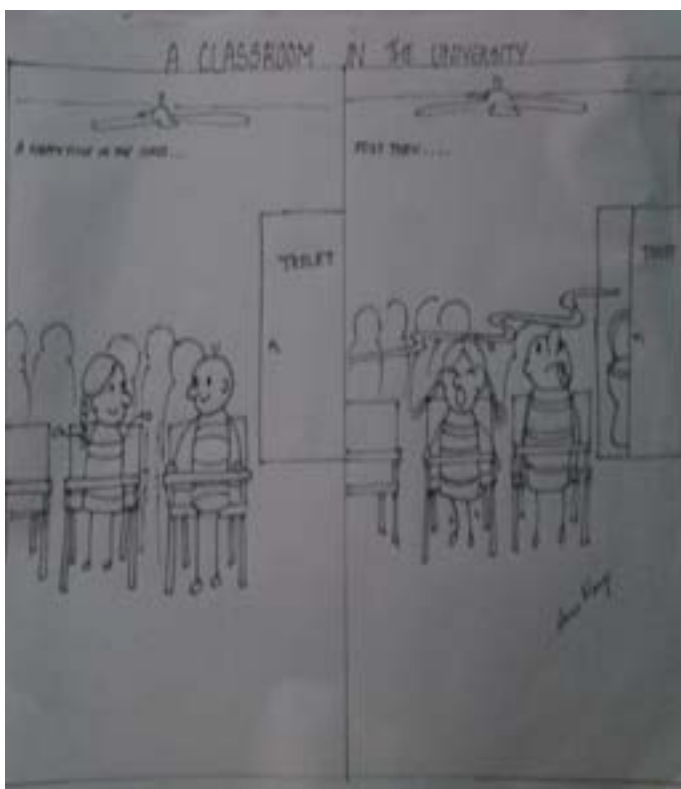
Contrary to it, a worker gets Rs. 90 as daily wage which is considerably lesser than the daily wage that a MGNREGA labour receives. Dividing the total bonus received in a year, Rs. 30 could be added on daily wage. Rs. 90 plus Rs. 30 equals to Rs. 120/-, an amount of daily wage a worker receives. It means a tea worker of Darjeeling receives Rs. 37560/- at the maximum in a year. Statistical figures show that how the tea workers of Darjeeling are exploited and disregarded to harvest the maximum surplus value by the garden authorities. Consequently, it has been reported that formers workers of closed gardens are suffering from severe starvation, malnutrition of their tender children.

Publication

Dr.V.Krishna Ananth, Associate Professor, Department of History
Politics in the Times of Churning - A Journalist's Perception, Daya Publication, Madurai, ISBN: 9788192219011

Dr.Krishnendu Dutta, Assistant Professor, Department of Music
Andhbadyer Bollipi Vabna ISBN 978-81-924455-8-8
Tablakoshi, Asian Publication, Kolkotta. ISBN 978-93-84105-00-6

Cartoon Corner





Picture Gallery

