

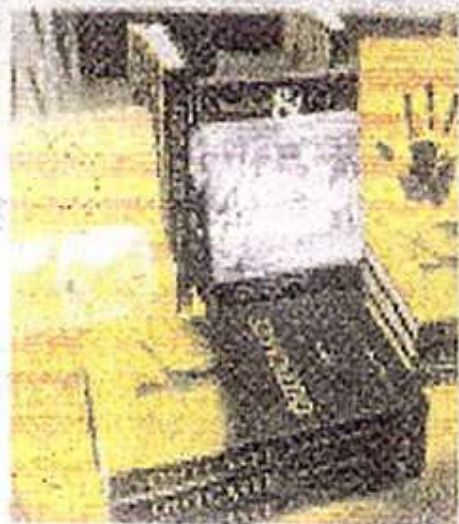
Voices of the excluded

IT was a remarkable occasion for more than one reason. Not only were the first books of Navayana – a publishing house for Dalit Literature – released here but also the author of the recently published *Outcaste: A Memoir*, Narendra Jadhav, who released the books, opened a discussion on it.

Penguin Books India and Landmark, in association with Navayana, organised a panel discussion at the Landmark retail bookstore at Spencer Plaza. The four books released are: *Touchable Tales (on publishing and reading Dalit literature)*, *Post-modernism and Religious Fundamentalism: A Scientific Rebuttal to Hindu Science* by Meera Nanda, *Ambedkar: Autobiographical Notes* and *Brahmins & Cricket: Lagaan's Millennial Purana and Other Myths*, which comprises two articles by S Anand on cricket's caste, dealing with the film *Lagaan*, nationalism and Dalit exclusion.

Besides the author, the panelists in the discussion were Editor in Chief of The

On November 5, after a panel discussion on *Outcaste: A Memoir*, books published by Navayana, a publishing house of Dalit literature, were released



Hindu N Ram, writer P Sivakami and poet Kanimozhi. A huge crowd had gathered at the Landmark, Spencer Plaza, where the discussion was held.

According to Jadhav, presently the head of the Eco-

nomic Research of the Reserve Bank of India, his book, written in the first person, is based on diaries and first-hand sources and is a biographical sketch of his father, Damu.

It is a story of human endeavour and integrity. It narrates how his father travels from a small village in Maharashtra to Mumbai in order to escape prosecution. In spite of being illiterate and his supposed low-caste, Damu proves himself in various jobs. His children go on to become very successful.

Although the author was hard-pressed for time and was going through a countdown, during the discussion, to board a flight, he answered the many queries of the panelists.

Not many people present there had read the book. However, according to Navayana, the readership for Dalit Literature is immense although it is ignored by the mainstream publishing industry. The French translation of *Outcaste: A Memoir* has already sold 20,000 copies.

– Express Features

