



Ambedkar Times *Weekly*

Editor-in-Chief: Prem Kumar Chumber

Contact: 001-916-947-8920

Fax: 916-238-1393

E-mail: chumbermedia@yahoo.com

Editors: Takshila & Kabir Chumber

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The Journey to continue:
Ambedkar Times Completes Eight Years

PAYING BACK TO SOCIETY: AMBEDKAR TIMES

Prem K. Chumber
Editor-in-Chief: Ambedkar Times

It is matter of great privilege and honor to share with the contributors, supporters, readers, and the sympathizers of the Ambedkar Times (English Weekly) that this small initiative being formally taken on March 15, 2009 has successfully completed eight years of continuance service in the memory of Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram Ji – founder President of BAMCEF, DS4 and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). It was dedicated to him and his mission for the emancipation and empowerment of the downtrodden. After reading the most valuable writings of Bodhi Sattva Bharat Ratan Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram Ji renounced the family life and devoted his entire time and energy till his last breath for the uplift of the Bahujan Samaj. The Ambedkar Times (Weekly Newspaper) has been named after the name of the messiah of the downtrodden, chief-architect of the constitution of Independent India, world reputed Social Scientist and the first Minister of Law of independent India - Bodhi Sattva Bharat Ratan Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar - to keep ourselves reminded of our immense social debut to him and the moral duty to do our best towards keeping the mission alive and sanguinely going on.

Once again, it is matter of great pleasure to put on records for me that we are grateful to all our supporters, well-wishers, sympathizers, contributors and esteemed readers for immensely helping me in keeping this initiative alive against all odds. I am confident that with the support of all of you, "Ambedkar Times" will keep on serving the community with its bold, transparent and socially valuable inputs.

Best Regards,
Prem K. Chumber

**"AMBEDKAR TIMES" AND "DESH DOABA"
FONDLY REMEMBERS SH. C.L. CHUMBER**

Adaras "Ambedkar Times" and "Desh Doaba" fondly remember Sh. C.L. Chumber, former Punjab Government Welfare Officer, founder editor of "Kaumi Udarian", Souvenir of the life and Contributions of Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia Ji, a social activist and bold journalist on his birthday who passed away silently on February 6, 2016 at his sweet home in native town Jalandhar City (Punjab). His memories will remain all times with us. It was he who advised us to designate our Punjabi Weekly as "Desh Doaba". He never hesitated to raise his voice with echo of truth as and when the situation demanded. He wanted passionately that our Samaj (Society) should walk into the footsteps of Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, Babasaheb Dr. B.R Ambedkar, and Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram Ji to fulfill their mission of building a castles society where our people should live at par with rest of the society enjoying equality and dignity.

Prem K. Chumber
Editor-In-Chief: www.ambedkartimes.com



Punjabi Language in East Punjab

There is unanimity amongst scholars the world over and also studies conducted by UNESCO that learning in one's mother tongue helps the learner to realise his/her maximum intellectual potential. It is a common sense that the best intellectual contributions made so far have been in mother tongue/s only.

Let me share with you my personal experience in Japan since September 2016. Japanese are very proud of their mother tongue. In the Ryukoku University, Kyoto, where I have been serving as ICCR Chair Visiting Professor in the Faculty of International Studies, you will find very few books in its library in any language other than Japanese. The medium of instructions is primarily Japanese. Mostly students read and write in Japanese.

In the society at large, if you do not know Japanese, you are left with no option but to struggle hard to manage learn a little bit Japanese because It was you who had to come to the terms of locals who are smug to converse in their native language. This is known to everyone that even after going through the ordeal of suffocation by the imperial designs during the two world wars and subsequently the dropping of two Atomic bombs, Japan re-emerged almost from ashes as one of top most nations in the world with vibrant world economy. Japan did all this great while sticking to its mother tongue. Those who are good in their mother tongue can also be good in any other language.

What are we doing? Forcing our brilliant minds at the tender age to learn in an ambience totally different from their cultural-linguistic context. They think in mother tongue, but compelled to learn where their innate knowledge suddenly turn futile. How can we produce original ideas in this way?

While hard learning Hinglish at my village High School at Sahri, Hoshiarpur, I was under the impression that everyone in all other countries abroad might me conversing in English. But after my short stints in Leiden Univer-

sity, The Amsterdam and Ryukoku University Japan, I am convinced that English is spoken only in two countries: UK and India!

Let us look into the ground reality in contemporary Punjab as far as the status of Punjabi language is concerned. Punjabi is taught in Government Schools from the class first onwards. But almost every village has a private so-called English Medium School where English is taught from the very beginning. Whereas in Government Schools, English is being taught from class 6th. All those who are even little bit good financially prefer to send their kids to the Private English Medium Schools. In the posh Convent Schools there is even informal dictate to converse in English only.

After the completion of the Senior Secondary School Education entry into all courses at the higher education is based on stiff competition conducted in English language. It is in this context that Punjabi language left behind. Differentiation at the level of School education discourages the proliferation of learning in the native language.

Almost all who can afford, even those who find quite hard to send their children to the English medium schools, high fees enrol their wards in English medium schools where Punjabi is not a compulsory language subject.

A lot needs to be done, if we really want our mother tongue to survive.



Ronki Ram (Dr.)

ICCR Chair Professor of India Studies
Faculty of International Studies
Ryukoku University
Kyoto, Japan
Fellow and Shaheed Bhagat Singh
Professor of Political Science
Panjab University, Chandigarh
ronkiram@yahoo.co.in

Heritage vs Funds: Salvaging Panjab University

Ronki Ram (Dr.)

After the defeat of Raja Porus, Punjab had to wait for too long to see emerge Maharaja Ranjit Singh establishing his kingdom in 1799. Much longer before, Punjab happened to be the land of tremendous intellectual ferment. Vedas, Ashtadhyayi, Yoga-sutra, Gita, Puranas and many of the Dharmasutras were composed here on the sacred geography of Punjab. Sri Guru Granth Sahib is the latest. The Kingdom of Maharaja Ranjit Singh lasted until 1849. Since then it took one third of a century to witness something of great consequence once again in Punjab. This time it was not a kingdom of a political regime but of intellectual excellence that took shape in Punjab what came to known as Panjab University at Lahore - the Nalanda of Northwest India.

The Panjab University was established as a vibrating reminiscence of the great intellectual heritage that this region was made proud of over centuries. Within a short span of time, it became one of the very few Universities founded by the British rulers to set the wheel of modern education in motion in colonial India. Though es-

ablished to steer the process of creation and dissemination of scientific knowledge, it soon expanded its canvass to cover the most desirable task of inculcating a sense of Desh Bhakti among those who came to learn at its altar. Thus along withbeing a centre of academic excellence, it also became an informal forum of teaching patriotic cognizance. Ruchi Ram Sahni, Harkishan Lal, Lala Ram Saran Das, Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar, to name a few of its pioneer alumnus, became the torch bearer of the renaissance movement in Punjab that eventually coalesced with the rising tide of nationalism in colonial India. This is what expanded the academic mandate of the Panjab University into a larger domain of freedom movement in the country. Panjab University was thus emerged both as an academy of higher education as well as inspirational centre for the inculcation of values for the freedom of India.

Such a heritage educational Institute of higher learning rather needs to be preserved and promoted meticulously for its replication at a time when Punjab has been passing through its
(Continued on next Page)

AMBEDKARTIMES GROUP REMEMBERS

SAHIB SHRI KANSHI RAM JI

ON HIS BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

Prem Kumar Chumber

(Editor-In-Chief; Ambedkar Times)

Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram was born on March 15, 1934, in Khawas Pur village of Ropar District of Punjab (India). He was the eldest of eight siblings. He belonged to the Ramdassia (Ad Dharmi/Mulnivasi) community of the Scheduled Caste group, which is the largest group in Punjab. He was named Kanshi because after his birth the midwife placed him in a tray made of Kansa metal. His father owned some land and his uncles were in the armed forces. In Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram's own words, "I was born and brought up amongst those who sacrificed themselves but never betrayed the country..." Despite his low caste background, he earned a bachelor's degree in science from the Government College at Ropar (Punjab).

His upbringing was modest. During his education years there was nothing special about him to suggest that he would mature into great social revolutionary. It was only after he took up a government job in the western Indian state of Maharashtra that he began to be influenced by the writings and life of Baba Sahib Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar who voiced the concerns of India's low caste community and worked hard throughout his life for their empowerment. Soon after his graduation, Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram Ji joined the research staff of Kirki's Explosive Research and Development Laboratory (ERDL) in Pune 1957. While working in Pune, he quit his job after becoming involved in the famous Deena Bhan case. Shri Deena Bhan, a Rajasthani Scheduled Caste employee and senior colleague of Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram Ji was suspended. His fault was that he protested against the decision of ERDL management for the cancellation of holidays for Baba Sahib Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Lord Buddha Jayantis and their replacement by the Tilak Jayanti and one additional holiday for

Diwali. Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram Ji decided to fight against such a caste ridden and dictatorial behavior of the management. The fighter in Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram got the suspension orders of Shri Deena Bhan revoked and Dr. Ambedkar and Lord Buddha Jayantis holidays were restored.

This was the beginning of the long battle for the emancipation of

the Dalits in the country that Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram had to lead till his last breath. He resigned from his job and totally dedicated his entire life for the cause of the community. He never married nor visited his home since then. His struggle was not for the home and family. He devised a new strategy to regain the lost glory of the original (Adi) inhabitants of Bharat

(India). He gave utmost importance to the culture of work and democratic method of struggle. He also expanded the circle of the Dalits by incorporating other Backward Classes and Minorities into it.

He criticized the post-Ambedkar leadership of Dalits in India. For that he declared "Poona Pact" as the main reason. He said that "Poona Pact" made Dalits helpless. By rejecting separate electorate, Dalits were deprived of their genuine representation in legislatures. Several and various kind of Chamchas were born in the last fifty years. As and when India's so called high caste Hindu rulers felt the need of Chamchas and

when the authority of the upper castes got endangered by real and genuine Dalit leaders, Chamchas were brought to the fore in all other fields".

In his "The Chamcha Age", a well-argued and polemical tirade against the pseudo Dalit leaders, Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram Ji sharpen the contradiction for the legitimate acquisition of political power by the

downtrodden in electoral democracy in India. In, the Chamcha Age, "he focused very much on the Poona Pact which was a point of a rather decisive Gandhian victory over Dr. Ambedkar after a long duel between the two at the Round Table Conference". In the mid-1960s, Sahib Kanshi Ram Ji began to organize Dalit government em-

ployees to fight against what he saw as the deeply entrenched prejudice of higher caste peoples. It was around this time that he decided that he would not marry and dedicate his life to the cause of Dalit improvement. Finally he decided play a crucial role in the politics of the country.

The result was, Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram Ji launched his first organization on December 6th, 1978: All India Backward (SC, ST, OBC) and Minority Communities' Employees' Federation, popularly known as BAMCEF. Three years later, on December 6th 1981, Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram Ji founded another organization: DS-4 (Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sangharsh-

Samiti) and on April 14th, 1984, Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram Ji announced the formation of the Bahujan Samaj Party (the Common Man's Party). As a politician, he became very popular among his people, who found a new hope and vision in his style of functioning and sincerity. Suddenly he became a national figure. He was a master strategist and a meticulous organizer. He used his strengths to carve out a niche for Dalits. This was done by deploying an often combative and aggressive strategy, with virulent attacks on other political parties which he claimed only represented the interests of higher caste Hindus. He was sharply different from other politicians of the mainstream. He used to communicate before he spoke.

In 1996 Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram Ji elected to the Lok Sabha from the Hoshiarpur constituency, from where 50 years ago Great Ghadri Baba Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia Ji founder of the "Ad Dharm Movement" had been returned to the Punjab assembly in 1946. Interestingly, it was at Hoshiarpur, the strong hold of "Ad Dharm" that the BSP celebrated the 75th year of the "Ad Dharm Movement" on February 18th, 2001. On this occasion Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram Ji exhorted the Bahujan Samaj to follow the principles of the "Ad Dharm Movement" of which the BSP has now become the torch-bearer.

He was one of the few great leaders of Independent India who actually expanded the limits of Dalit politics. His political vision was never confined to Scheduled Castes only, as is often thought about him. All of the political organizations he founded were meant for the downtrodden of all sorts – SC, ST, OBC and Minorities.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that he was the one who took a lead in making Indian democracy more competitive and practically open to the Dalit-Bahujan Samaj.



Heritage vs Funds: Salvaging Panjab University

most challenging time. Imagine Lahore and Chandigarh without the glamour of Panjab University. Panjab University is not merely a university. It represents the rich and vast essence of the land of five rivers. It was born (14, October 1882) just a short while after the birth of 'The Tribune' on February 1881. In fact, 'The Tribune' and Panjab University are the two most essential all pervasive identities of Punjab. They epitomize the rich intellectual heritage of the Northwest India. 'The Tribune' along with Panjab University played a major role in the modernization

process of Punjab. Began as a weekly, it soon transformed into a nationalist daily of huge importance and power. 'The Hindu' of Madras was the only other worthwhile newspaper of its time to be owned by an Indian. Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia, the founder of 'The Tribune,' played a prominent role in the setting up of the Panjab University while making hefty donation to Anjuman-i-Punjab.

Alas, the Panjab University is currently in news not for its great heritage but for the lack of adequate financial support to be made available by India in whose service it never

looked back since the day of its establishment. Can a nation afford to turn its eyes away from those of its most essential institutions that stood with it during the days of its struggle? What message the Central Government sends to the society at large while neglecting the most productive and cherished heritage University in the region?

Let us not forget the fact that Panjab University is the only University among the first few universities that was raised with the money collected by the people of the region themselves. And this was the indige-

nous character of the Panjab University that stimulated it to play an important role in the generation of Punjabi renaissance and national freedom struggle. Now at the crucial hour of its financial crisis, it is legitimate to ask for justice to be done to this most prominent centre of higher learning in Punjab whose rich contribution in freedom struggle, defending the borders or making India free from food shortage need not be mentioned. If Panjab University is left alone to suffer, in the long run the same will turn into the accumulated sufferings of the State of Punjab.

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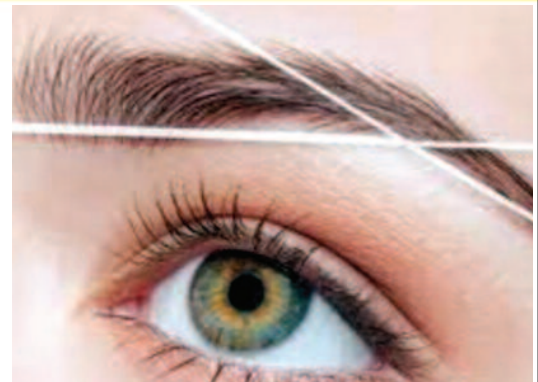
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