



Ambedkar Times

Weekly

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DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Prem K. Chumber

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Democracy and social justice are interrelated social processes. The one is incomplete in the absence of the other. Democracy offers freedom space to realize equality and experience fraternity. Equality and fraternity are the two essential ingredients of social justice, which achieves its true form with the addition of liberty. Thus the trinity of liberty, equality and fraternity constitutes the essence of social justice and the institution of democracy provides the requisite realm for its realization. Though many scholars' boasts of ancient origins of democracy in India but it would be prudent to argue that democracy achieves its roots in the real sense of the term with the adoption of the constitution in independent India. Bodhisattva Baba Saheb Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, Chairman of Constitutional Drafting Committee, worked very hard to incorporate various provisions for the realization of social justice in the Indian society. He was of the firm views that if social and economic parity remains an elusive to the multitude of poor and historically socially excluded people in the country, then the very purpose of having parliamentary democracy would not be served efficiently. He reiterated the seminal point during his engaging discussions at various important forums within and outside the Indian parliament that for social justice to prevail in the country, India needs effective participation of the downtrodden in all the different spheres of the society.

The demand for social justice was also raised at various platforms during the freedom struggle movement in colonial India. Ad-Movements in North and South India, Justice Party in South India, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia from Punjab, Swami Achhuta Nand Ji from Uttar Pradesh, Baba Ghasi Das Ji from Madhya Pradesh, Sri Narayana Guru from Kerala raised a consistent campaign for the prevalence of social justice in the Indian society. Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia presented a number of resolutions to the British Government for the removal of untouchability and special provisions for the inclusion of socially excluded sections of the society in the public realm of power and social domain. Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia joined hands with Bodhisattva Baba Saheb Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar in his struggle for equal rights for the socially excluded people of India. When Baba Saheb Dr. Ambedkar spreaded its movement into the political agile lands of Punjab with the formation of Punjab chapter of Scheduled Castes Federation, there was a tremendous response from the grassroots. That was precisely the contributions of Ad Dharm movement which laid the foundation stone of social justice campaign in the state in the mid-1920s. But the irony of the matter is that even after more than six decades of India's independence, Dalits in the country are still subjected to various types of atrocities and social discriminations. Though the Indian state, while making the optimum use of various anti untouchability clauses of the constitution, is doing its best to bridle the monster of caste, but still is more needed to be done at the social level where the people should come forward to internalize the values of liberty, equality and fraternity in order to realize the true sense of democracy and social justice.

Conspicuous silence of political parties on OBC reservation issues in the North

June 25th, 2021 marked 90th birth anniversary of former Prime Minister V P Singh but went unnoticed for the majority of the leaders who benefitted from his politics and good will generated by him. Except for Tejasvi Yadav who remembered Singh mentioning his bold initiative to implement Mandal Commission Report, there was no other north Indian leader particularly from OBCs to remember Singh. Unlike north India, Tamilnadu's politicians across party lines respected Singh. The first tweet came in the morning from Chief Minister of Tamilnadu Mr M K Stalin writing a tweet in Tamil language and putting a photograph of V P Singh along with Dr M Karunanidhi, former chief minister of Tamilnadu.

The aim here is not to portray V P Singh as an OBC leader but the politics of parties that claim to be 'representing' the community but the issues of rights of the OBCs and why the central government today is having an easy way to bypass the interest of OBC students and government servants. Why has the issue of denial of justice to OBCs in general not become the agenda of the parties claiming to have the legacy need to be analysed as the risks are too big now when BJP has got a big chunk of votes from all the communities. Is VP Singh being ignored because the north Indian politicians do not want to associate with his 'legacy', the legacy of Mandal | Commission Report.

There is a similarity between Bihar and Tamilnadu's leadership speaking on the issue and it has been consistent since 1990. Both Karunanidhi and Lalu Prasad Yadav had been the biggest supporters of Mandal Commission Report and the then prime minister V P Singh. Mulayam Singh Yadav was on the wrong side in 1990 along with Devi Lal when they broke away with Janata Dal and formed a new political party under the leadership of late Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar.

It was said that V P Singh 'suddenly' took the decision to 'checkmate' Devi Lal's revolt against him but these are just lies spread by political opponents to counter the importance of Mandal Commission report as well as the well planned decision of the government which was part of Janata

Dal's election manifesto. V P Singh had formed a committee under the chair of Devi Lal in January 1990 for the implementation process of Mandal Commission Report but he did nothing. Ultimately, the responsibility fell on Shri Ram Vilas Paswan, who must be termed as hero of the Mandal movement that time.

Mandal made V P Singh one of the most hated politicians of our times. Political pundits, Savarna experts, students all condemned him and declared him as the biggest villain of our polity. Brahmins, Banias, Thakurs, Bhumiars, Kayasthas abused him while OBC leadership was not ready to accept his contribution. That was the irony. The question was whether VP was important or not was not the issue but Mandal and OBC issues were important.

Mandal Revolution

Mandal brought a big revolution in Indian polity. It jolted the upper caste dominance in polity and now OBC leaders got huge opportunity as they started asserting. Mandal was not merely 'job reservation' but it changed the political culture and that is why both UP and Bihar, two most important states of Hindi heartland never saw Savarna chief minister after 1989. While Bihar successfully became the political domain of the OBCs, Uttar Pradesh had a strong Dalit assertion too and hence contradictions between them and OBCs were used extraordinarily by the Hindutva forces which resulted in power gone to Yogi Adityanath.

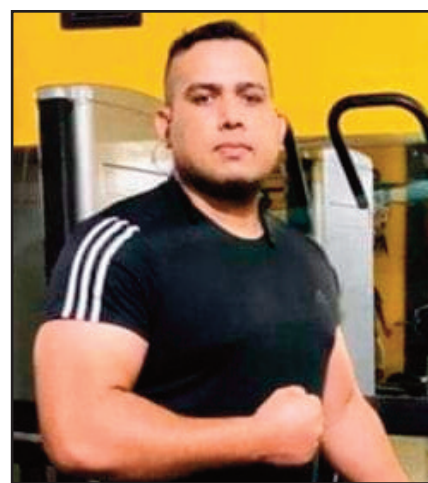
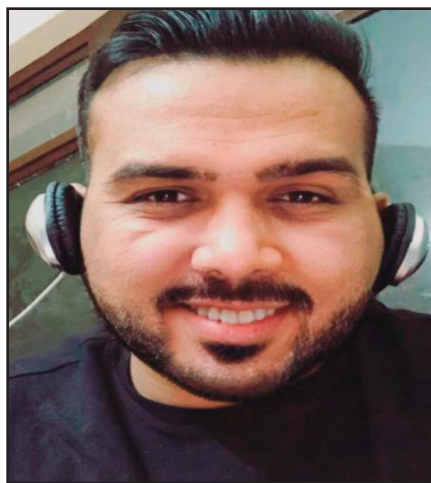
OBC reservation issue got diluted with the emergence of P V Narsimha Rao as prime minister in 1991. He depended more on Atal Bihari Vajpayee and BJP than any other senior leader of his party or former colleagues. Privatisation process began

(Contd. on next page)



Vidya Bhushan Rawat

PROMINENT PERSONALITY AWARD TO RANJIT AUJLA



This is a matter of great pride for all of us that our dear Mr. Ranjit Aujla has been selected for this year's prominent personality Award. This award is given to a person who has made more than one accomplishment in a year. Mr Aujla will be honored in Five Star Taj Hotel amidst international media, which is a matter of great pride.

Prem Kumar Chumber
Editor-In-Chief:
Ambedkar Times

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Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD



Goodie Takhar, PhD

Conspicuous silence of political parties on OBC reservation issues in the North

(Continue from page 1)

during his corrupt government and then taken forward by Atal Bihari Vajpayee. When the UPA government took over under Dr Man Mohan Singh it continued with the old process initiated by Nar-simha Rao and Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Though there was a 'National Advisory Council' formed by UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi in which a number of 'named-famed' 'activists' were included to advise her, the government continued aggressively with the privatisation process and systematic land grabbing. The only face saving that time was MN-REGA as well as later state Forest Rights Act and Right to Information Act. All these were great but in terms of jobs and land, the issues of Dalits, OBCs and Adivasis were always on the margin. HRD Minister Arjun Singh was a different man in the Ministry. He focussed on OBC reservation in higher education and thus faced a lot of pressure from the Congress party. Arjun Singh was the leader who fought within the party and outside to secularise the curriculum as well as provide reservation for OBCs. Congress never learnt its lesson from that mistake which Rajiv Gandhi made in 1990. If he had supported V P Singh instead of Chandra Shekhar, I can bet, Congress would have not become redundant as it is fast becoming because of the deep distrust of the marginalized sections.

Mandal silenced

As the UPA came back to power again in 2009, analysts 'felt' that it was the victory of MNREGA and hence Congress went aggressively on Land Acquisition issues only to face deep protests against it in different parts of the country. By the time of UPA-II, Congress's Brahminical leaders ensured that OBCs are side-lined and the reservation issue is diluted to gain 'acceptance' of the savannas. Congress was aggressive. By 2009, the Mandal leadership of most of the parties in the country had surrendered or were completely defeated though in terms of representation OBCs were the most powerful chunk yet to gain acceptance among the Savarnas these OBC leaders too were keen to let off the issue of 'reservations and agrarian reforms.

In 2011 Anna Hazare's anti-corruption plank further stole the whole issue of social justice and made it virtually meaningless as the OBC leaders were not fully prepared to counter this onslaught not merely on their rights but also on Indian constitution. Anna was promoted by 'liberals' as well as both left and right Netas who were looking for new opportunities for their age-old 'dreams' to be 'part' of the 'power'. Unfortunately, the Dalit Bahujan leaders of the country too fell prey to the RSS plant. Anna's movement had nothing to do with corruption and everything to do with derailing the social justice plank particularly reservations as most of the leaders who emerged after the protests like Arvind Kejriwal, V K Singh, Kiran Bedi and so on were known to be anti-reservation, though Kejriwal has changed the stand after becoming the chief minister of Delhi yet the fact remain that the party's main strength is middle class that hate reservations, except where they can buy the same as well as social justice.

Rise of Modi and demise of Mandal

Anna's movement was ultimately responsible for not merely the downfall of 'Congress' but the unprece-

dent 'faith' of people in Narendra Modi and BJP. Unlike Congress, BJP became 'expert' on multi-pronged strategies and hence it projected Narendra Modi as an OBC and made deep inroads among all the communities though 'cultural' linkages. The common thread built up as a 'non-Muslim' identity which actually went well with all. Among OBCs local contradictions were used, apart from putting faces from these communities such as Kushwahas, Nishads, Lodhs, Kurmis in Uttar Pradesh. It gave big importance to Ram Vilas Paswan, who was despised both by Lalu Yadav as well as Nitish Kumar resulting in his open association with the saffron party.

Modi government's policies have unambiguously reflected two clear indications: a. massive privatization b. curtailing government jobs c. backdoor entry of the Savarnas everywhere right from civil services to universities.

Since 2014, Modi government has systematically targeted NGOs, civil society Organisations which were working for land, forest, environmental issues particularly relating the rights of the Dalits and Adivasis over the natural resources. Then it targeted Universities which were vocal seeking rights of students related to reservation, fees, scholarships, libraries, better hostel facilities and so on. Important among them were JNU, Delhi University, Hyderabad Central University, JamiaMiliIslamia, Aligarh Muslim University and many others. Nobody can match demagoguery more than Narendra Modi and his government. They do the exact opposite of what they speak in public. All through his campaign Narendra Modi and BJP shouted atop about his 'OBC' status and yet all these years it clearly indicates how his government has successfully diluted the reservation issue. In each sector of our governance, it is the dominance of Savarnas and their 'rehabilitation', though they were never 'replaced' yet a few jobs to SC-ST-OBCs here or there too have been snatched away from them. To stop more and more people from the margins to come upto the top level, entries are closed. To maintain the Brahminical hegemony intact, back door entry in the name of 'professionalism' has happened and the powerful civil services did not object to it. The persistent onslaught on every institution and its autonomy has been the hallmark of the government's 'achievements' but how the Brahminical bureaucracy 'enjoyed' it can be seen in their absolute silence. Most of them have got the opportunity to fulfil their dreams.

The OBC leaders were given symbolic positions and in the rural hinterland 'empowerment' is considered a few seats to the community leaders. The whole debate of community empowerment has thus been abused by placating a few 'ambitious' leaders who would maintain complete silence on the issues related to their communities. Thus, reservation for OBCs has never been on the agenda of their leaders. Of course, for their people they will say that we will provide reservation to communities but none of them ever speak against the complete denial of justice to OBCs in the government jobs. None of them ever questioned how the civil services are being filled through backdoor entry. None of them ever raised the question of farmers' protests despite the known fact that current farmers' movements include a

large number of OBCs.

Why OBC leaders keeping quiet on the issue

The problem is that nobody wants to claim to be representative of their community. As their parties are 'state' 'regional' or 'national' parties these leaders need 'Brahminical minds' to come back to power and most of them depend on 'professional advisers', senior journalists etc., a majority of them hailing from Savanna community and suffering from highly anti reservation mindset but for power you need the outreach hence most of the leaders today take their community for granted and go out reach others. An ideal situation would have been in Uttar Pradesh that all the OBCs, Dalits, minorities, farmers and other progressive (if any) join together to fight against the oppressive system but it is a pipe dream now. Both BSP and SP are not trying to reach their communities but to the Brahmins. So Brahmins enjoy the availability of various options to them unlike Dalits and OBCs in Uttar Pradesh. So nearly 30 years after the Mandal report, the parties which benefited from it don't want to speak about it or the issues of OBCs. Hence it is not merely V P Singh which they would not like to remember to keep their BrahminBania friends happy but also forgo the issue of OBCs particularly reservation. Like in 1990, these leaders are again on the wrong side of history. That time they were responsible for the fall of V P Singh government and now they are competing with each other to 'defeat' the BJP. One does not know whether this gambit will succeed or not but if they fail, the people will never forgive them.

Can DMK and Stalin take lead to raise the issues of OBCs

It is in this context one needs to appreciate the conviction and candidness of Tamilnadu Chief Minister M K Stalin. Despite being in a strong position and having a powerful DMK cadre, Stalin ensured that all like-minded political parties are on one platform. Congress, CPI, CPI(M), VCK have been part of the alliance for the last several years. Immediately after taking over as Chief Minister of Tamilnadu, Stalin ordered withdrawal of cases against activists as well as journalists on NRC-CAA. He categorically opposed NEET and demanded that states should have their autonomy. We all know there is no reservation for OBCs in NEET and Tamilnadu has been opposing it from day one. NEET format is basically meant to provide entry to north Indian Savarnas and Tamilnadu know it well and hence opposing it. Chief minister Stalin in his first visit to Delhi and meeting with prime minister called for abolition of NEET so that the states can have their autonomy in providing reservation to OBC-SC-ST-minorities as per their population.

Tamilnadu Chief Minister has also formed an expert committee for the development of the state. Tamilnadu is the only state where reservation is beyond the 50% limit as 'ordered' by the Supreme Court. The state provides 50% reservation for OBCs which is categorized as 30% for OBCs and 20% for MBCs. The total reservation for SC-ST-OBCs in Tamilnadu is 69% and has been put under schedule IX of the constitution to protect it from getting challenged in the Supreme Court.

Tamilnadu's DMK government is the only government which has come out so categorically to speak for the rights of

the OBCs. It made unity with other Dravidian communities to fulfil the dreams of EVR Periyar. It was the first state which started the mid-day meal scheme which became extremely popular because of the good quality food provided to the children. Recent initiatives by Tamilnadu government for introducing non Brahmin priests in Tamilnadu temples as well as worship in Tamil language are powerful but being opposed by BJP and Brahminical elite which consider priesthood as their sole birth right. Unfortunately, north Indian Dalit OBC parties don't even want to take name of Periyar or DMK party because of the fear of a 'Brahminical' 'reaction'.

Look at the online campaign by various Bahujan activists against castiest slurs against Ms Mayawati but not a single politician of these parties reacted to it. Naming and shaming of castiest mindset got huge support on twitter by the Bahujan activist but the lips of Bahujan leaders remained sealed because of the risk of losing Brahmin support.

Several years ago, Adijan ideologue and dear friend M C Raj told me in an interview that just because the president of a party happens to be Dalit or OBC does not make them Dalit OBC parties as they rarely raise their issues. They can be termed as political parties headed by a Dalit or OBC leader. It is not that the Netas don't know about these facts but somewhere they lack spirit of Bahujan ideology. Most of them have grown in 'mainstream' Brahminical ideology hence using Ambedkar and Periyar radically to emancipate and liberate the Bahujan masses is not on their agenda. You cannot speak OBC-SC-ST empowerment without speaking about reservation, land redistribution, autonomy of the Adivasis on their natural resources and participation in power structure. Can you speak about the rights of the people if you have no understanding why RohitVemula got killed and why the government continues to punish JNU, Jamia, AMU and other institutions? And here comes the power of ideology. I don't say that DMK is faultless but Dravidian governments in Tamilnadu have been far better than any other governments in India for their pro people work particularly that related to the marginalized sections as well as promotion of rationalist-humanist principles.

India is at the crossroads when priestly-capitalist castes are controlling our economy and polity together which can only be countered by a humanist alternative of the Bahujan leadership which is guided by the principles of Baba Saheb Ambedkar, Jyotiba Phule, EVR Periyar and other revolutionaries. They have provided us with a social-cultural and economic model and that model is not based on hatred and prejudices but equality and fraternity. Let us hope our leaders will understand the powerful heritage of Bahujan leaders and will not shy away from speaking for the rights of the marginalized sections of our society. Modi might dominate but at the end Mandal will have the last laugh. Will our leaders ready to replay it or have they assumed under the influence of their 'Brahminical' advisers that Mandal is dead hence keep it buried so that 'others' are not 'offended'. If the north Indian leaders have no interest in Mandal or reservation issues, it is better DMK lead it from the front to expose those who take their communities for granted.

IVACC MEMBERS BREAK ICE AND CALLED A MEETING

Coronavirus forced IVACC members to stay home since December 2019. It was very hard to stay home without social life. Human being by nature is a social animal. The IVACC Board of directors decided to call a meeting on Wednesday August 11, 2021 with proper precaution. Everyone attending member was encouraged to wear mask. To my surprise every one cooperated. Safety was considered as foremost. Attendance was very encouraging. Food and service by Kabab corner restaurant very satisfactory.

Our board member Dr. FirdosShiekhha neurologist has the following observation "Great to see everyone and looking healthy and happy. Stay safe. Thank to entire team IVACC. Congrats. Lakhwinder! Love to see women succeed!! Keep up the good work. Wish you all the best! Thanks for the lovely songs Punam Malhotra and Dr J P Singh. Thanks Goodie Takhar for the Covid update.

The best community service right now is to educate people to get vaccinated.

The best service for you is to wear mask, build your health and immune system. Stay happy. Laugh often. And stay connected.

Our President Miss LakhwinderKaur/
SVP/Sacramento Valley Market President

Five Star Bank

Welcomed new family members of IVACC:

- 1: Dr J P. Singh a dentist life member.
- 2: Dr. FirdosShiekh a neurologist, Life member
- 3: Gurmeet Singh Waraich, Life member.

Our Vice President Dajit Singh Sandhu introduced the guest speakers;

A. Paramprit Singh Bindra, Attorney at Law

B. Dr. Paramjit Takhar & Dr. Goodie Takhar

Vaccination information by

Family Medicine and Urgent Care Clinic Sacramento

C: Sur Sangam program by Miss Punam Malhotra & Dr. J P Singh

D: Hon. Rod Brewere, Elk Grove City Council

Meeting was ended with vote of thanks from Baldev Randhawa life member IVACC and retired Engineer.

Report & pictures by:

Sukh C. Singh- General Secretary

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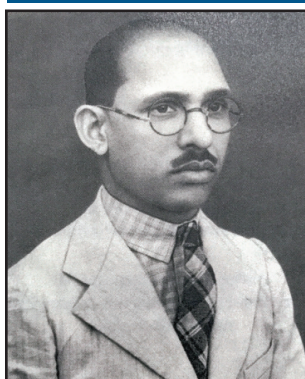
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Ishwar Das Pawar
District and Sessions Judge (Retd.)

My Struggle in Life

The Trying Moments

During the 1947 communal disturbances that broke out in the wake of the partition of the country, I was at Batala with my family. The orders of my transfer issued by the High Court remained, and still continue, floating in the air. There was complete breakdown of the means of transport and communication. My wife was in a family way, and we were expecting a baby any day. Horrible stories of an unprecedented communal holocaust were pouring in from both the countries, India and Pakistan. Under the notional division of the country, the whole of the Gurdaspur district had gone to Pakistan. So from the 15 August to the evening of 17 August, we lived in Pakistan.

In the Batala town, Muslims were a majority. Hitherto Hindus and Muslims had been living as brothers. Batala was and still is famous for its iron works. Muslims owned and ran some of the best factories. Technical hands for the iron workshops were mostly Muslims, both for the Hindu and the Muslim-run factories. There was complete cooperation on both sides. But the events that took place before and after the partition of the country had badly shaken and changed the mental attitude of both the communities. That was a precursor of the ill omens to come. The situation went into the hands of communal fanatics. People simply went mad.

Rumors were set afloat on the 16 and 17 August that the Muslims of the town had made preparations for an all-out attack on the Hindu population on the night of the 17 and that, excepting young girls who would be taken away, all other Hindus and Sikhs would be butchered. The rumors went so far as to suggest that the people would be roasted alive in boiling oil in big iron pans that had been set up. Tension and fears therefore mounted. We felt we had no escape. I had some very good Muslim friends, but how could they help us in the face of the communal frenzy?

I, with my family, was residing in Simli Mohalla in a house owned by our neighbor Christians, who were a very good people. Our house was flanked by the house of our landlord and the abadi (population) of Sikhs, who were very friendly to us. A stone's throw across the adjacent vacant lands, there was the Muslim abadi called Murghikhana.

For the past days, there used to be shouting and counter shouting of communal slogans in the night by

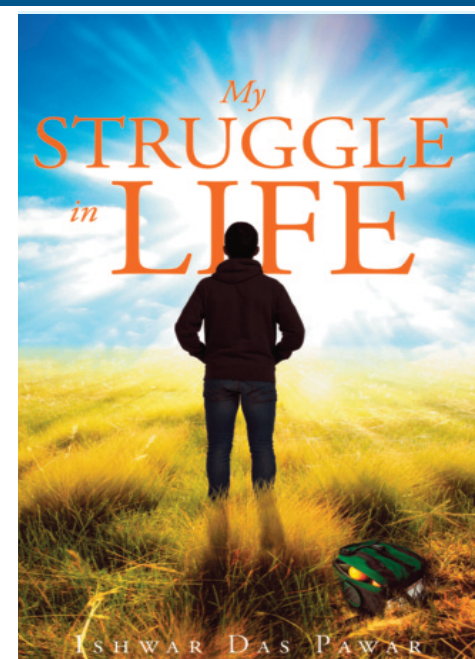
the hardcore ones of both communities. This added to our great anxiety. On hearing the shouts, we would shut our children in the bathroom and watch and wait what could happen any time. The nights were virtually sleepless. Courts were closed, and I was not expected to be at my work.

Day and night, I stayed at home with my family. But there were no moments of relief in sight. We wanted to escape to the Nurpur-Kangra side. No other escape route was possible. As good luck would have it, an inspector of the police, Nihal Singh, came and told us that they were arranging for a truck or two to take the Hindu and Sikh officers and their families out into the Kangra region. This afforded us a little solace, but we had to wait, passing anxious moments. Our Sikh neighbors frantically beseeched us to take their young girls and little children with us. We promised to render whatever help would be possible. From morning till the evening of the 17 August, all of us stood outside our houses with gazing eyes fixed toward the direction where Nihal Singh was to come from with a truck. Until 4:00 PM, there was none in sight, and our hopes were receding. Looking yonder, we saw Nihal Singh coming on foot, but there was no sign of a truck. Our hearts were throbbing. A bit heavily built, Nihal Singh was trudging on, but somewhat briskly, toward us. As he came near, his face showed mixed feelings. "Sardar Nihal Singh, what news have you brought?" asked I in a loud, quivering voice while he was still some distance away. On coming nearer, he said, "Please give me some milk to drink before I break you the good news." While one of our Sikh neighbors hastily went to his house to bring milk, the police inspector told us that we had been saved. According to him, the Gurdaspur, Batala, and Pathankot tehsils (counties) had remained within India while the rest of Gurdaspur district, mostly Shakargarh tehsil, had gone over to Pakistan. On being asked what was the source of his information, he told us that the local officers, Sher Jasjit Singh, SDM (Sub Divisional Magistrate), and Puran Singh, DSP (Deputy Superintendent of Police), were taking charge of Batala subdivision, and that they were engaged in this task in the local civil rest house. Our drowning hearts and subdued spirits went up, but we still waited for the news from the All India Radio in the 6:00 PM news bulletin. To our surprise, Delhi remained silent on the point, but more surprising was the welcome fact that the news was broadcasted by the Lahore Radio. On hearing the news from Pakistan, Hindus and Sikhs, young and old, went mad with joy. They were so

jubilant that they went up the tops of their houses, clapped, and danced. They ascended my house also and hoisted a victory and safety flag there as they did on their own houses. While our spirits went high, the Muslims were crestfallen and demoralized.

The partition of the country brought with it misery, sufferings, grief, and sorrow to millions on both sides. People lost their mental balance and indulged in most inhuman crimes. Most affected was our Punjab. The misfortune that befell the people was appalling and horribly shocking. Millions of people had to leave their ancestral hearths and homes and migrate to the other side as refugees, leaving behind everything they owned and possessed. But fortunate were those who could save their lives and the honor of their womenfolk. Countless people could not escape the carnage and butchery. Innumerable persons were maimed and crippled, and an unknown number—but very large without any doubt—were abducted, particularly young girls. Just think of those people who left behind their daughters and children and other relatives, killed or abducted. The abduction of children, young girls, and women and the disgrace and dishonor that followed leaves one dumbfounded but helpless. These gruesome and mostly cold-blooded crimes perpetrated by human beings put to shame even the beasts of the jungle. It was a terrible holocaust, almost unprecedented in the history of our country. These sufferings were not confined to any particular group or community. All suffered equally and indiscriminately. The Harijans (people from low caste) shared the tragedy in no small measure. They suffered in life, honor, and property as others did. The Harijan refugees presented a peculiar feature of the problem of rehabilitation.

About two-and-a-half lakhs (250,000) of them migrated to this side of Punjab, and they were stranded and huddled up in various refugee camps, mostly at Batala, Amritsar, Jalandhar, and Ludhiana. They stayed on and languished in these camps while others were rehabilitated. The Hindu and Sikh refugees were allotted lands, houses, shops, and factories in rural and urban areas and were compensated in trade and services as well. Mostly, the caste Hindu and Sikh refugees were shopkeepers, traders, lawyers, doctors, and service hands. They were all helped in their respective professions. They were also given grants and loans, and the agriculturists were given takavi loans (pecuniary advances to peasantry for capital expenditure) as well. That is, all the help that was possible in the circum-



stances of the case was extended to them by the government. About 90 percent of the Harijan refugees were agriculturists and had been working as tenants, farm servants, and landless laborers. Only a few of them owned land or possessed occupancy rights in land and that too in small holdings. They were therefore rightly desirous of being settled on land. With the change of the entire structure of life of the people due to their upheaval, outlook on life also underwent a radical change. They were, therefore, not inclined to go to villages in the capacity of slaves and kamins (menials) of the village proprietary body. They wanted to lead an independent life as free citizens of some status. They thought of breaking off the old and traditional shackles.

Accordingly, they demanded that they should be settled on land. It was a just demand. But the bureaucracy and the village proprietors saw in this demand impertinence and defiance of the time-honored tradition of slavery. The government declared that the policy of the East Punjab government was to allot all evacuee lands only to those refugees who were owners or occupancy tenants in West Pakistan. That, in effect, meant total exclusion of Harijan refugees from land allotment. This militated against the declared policy of the Indian National Congress that land should belong to the tiller. The opportunity for the implementation of the policy was lost. Moved by these events, Vinoba Bhave at one of the special meetings at Rajghat had this to say about the Harijan refugees: "The present conditions, however, are entirely different. This is seen in the reaction to Harijan refugees' demand for land. These sufferers from Pakistan have been told that since they were no more than hired laborers in their original homes, they have no claim to land. Land would be given only to those who possessed it in Pakistan and in exact proportion to their holdings there. This is an attempt to maintain distinctions with mathematical precision." But who cared for Bhave? He was needed only in the struggle for freedom of the country. He was no longer a man to be

(Contd. on next page)

My Struggle in Life

(Continue from page 4)

cared for and heard. Then came the government plan of dispersing the refugees living in camps. The Harijan refugees were asked to go to villages and settle there. The Batala camp refugees took a stiff and determined stand. They refused to move to villages until satisfactory arrangements had been made for their settlement. They were not prepared to revert to the old life of social outcasts and serfs. They had enough of it. They wanted to start afresh.

This created tension. It was a tussle between power and authority on the one hand and helplessness but determination on the other. The time had come when the deprived and exploited people had to fight against the same persons who had, along with others, fought for the freedom of the country. In their view, it did not mean freedom for the Harijans. This was something paradoxical. Man is not easily convinced of the justice of conceding the same rights and opportunities to others as he wants for himself.

At least three reasons were at the root of the common opposition by the bureaucracy and the public to the demands of the Harijan refugees. Firstly, Hindu and Sikh refugees who were entitled to the allotment of land would be losers to the extent of the area of land that might be allotted to the Harijan refugees. Secondly, making the Harijan refugees independent landholders would amount to according to them equal status with others. This was too bitter a pill to be swallowed by them. And lastly, but no less important, was the idea that in case Harijans were allowed an independent status by enabling them to earn their livelihood independently, it would seriously undermine, rather shatter, the

village economy in which they had played an important role but only as landless laborers of the village proprietary-body. They had been a convenient and pliable tool in the hands of their masters though it was very much against their wishes.

In order to persuade the Harijan refugees to leave their camps and settle in villages, the authorities used every method: argument, appeal, intimidation, and threat; but all those efforts failed. The Harijan refugees saw through the game that was being played to sacrifice their interests to help the so-called high-caste landlords. Even objectionable and undesirable methods were used to achieve this objective. Their rations were stopped, batons were brandished, butt ends and even bullets were quite in evidence. To cap all this, undesirable elements were encouraged to enter the camps and molest and disgrace the inmates of the camps. They were pointedly told that, in case they insisted in their stern attitude, they would be pushed back to Pakistan as they were proving a menace to free India. It was free India for them but not for the Harijans. Then came last phase of the bureaucratic campaign against the Harijan refugees! Motor trucks and trains were pressed into service to carry them from the camps. But where? This was for the authorities to decide, and these people had no say in the matter. They must get into the waiting vehicles. But they were not willing to be taken to unknown destinations. They were therefore subjected to all sorts of excesses. Children, women, and old men were made a special target of molestation and humiliation. Police batons were employed to turn them out of the camps. When some of the women of

the camp refused to get into the vehicles on the ground that their husbands were not there and they could not go without them, they were shamelessly told by the officials that they would be provided with new husbands at the new places. Various methods were also used to falsely implicate the leaders of the "disloyal" refugees. The situation went from bad to worse. Therefore, to successfully deal with the situation, a Harijan person in authority rushed down from Simla to use his influence with these recalcitrant Harijan refugees to agree to settle in villages. He made forceful speeches to prove that they were entirely in the wrong. Therefore, he strongly advised them to go to the villages and settle there without any further delay. Earlier at a conference held at Ambala, he had made a pointed reference to the demand of the Harijans for allotment of land and declared that those who owned no land in Pakistan were not entitled to land here. He added that those who were encouraging them to make a demand for land were their enemies as also the enemies of India. It was really sad to hear our own representative speak in that strain. It was conveniently forgotten that the declared policy of the All-India Congress was that the land belonged to the tiller. On the other hand, the Harijans had their friends and well-wishers also among the non-Harijans. Notable among them were Rameshwari Nehru, Mohan Lal of the Harijan Sevak Sangh, and Shewakram Karamchand. They did everything possible to support the Harijan refugees in their demand for land. They were certainly not the enemies of the Harijan refugees or of India. Those who dared voice the grievances of these sufferers were dubbed as communists in order to silence them.

The situation prevailing in our Punjab was disappointing, to say the least. The Harijan refugees were no match for the combined front of the bureaucrats and those with vested interests. These poor and helpless people finding themselves in a tight corner in their own state turned their eyes toward Delhi. Their representatives approached some of the central ministers including Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Jairamdas Daulatram, Babu Jagjivan Ram, and Neogi and apprised them of their difficulties and grievances with particular reference to the demand for land. Dr. Rajindra Prasad, the then Congress President, was also approached. Even Jawaharlal Nehru was fully posted with what was happening to the Harijan refugees in Punjab. All of them were said to be very sympathetic and promised all possible assistance in the matter. As a result of

these efforts, it came to be believed at one time that Harijan refugees would be allotted at least three lakh acres of land. According to an estimate about fifty thousand families of Harijan refugees needed to be settled on land. Five lakh acres of land was demanded for this purpose on the basis of an average holding of ten acres per family.

The Muslims who migrated to Pakistan left behind in our Punjab fifty-two lakh acres of land as disclosed by the then development minister Giani Kartar Singh in a conference held on 22 January 1949. So it was a perfectly justified demand that out of this land measuring fifty-two lakh acres, five lakh acres should be given to Harijan refugees. It was less than 10 percent of the land available. The Delhi assurances raised high hopes. But later in a meeting of the emergency committee of the Punjab cabinet, it was said to have been found that one lakh (one lakh is equal to 100,000) acres of land had already been allotted to the Harijan refugees, and it was decided to allot another 75,000 acres to them. Thus it will be seen that all the loud talk in Punjab and Delhi proved to be much ado about nothing. The Harijan refugees failed to get justice. All this showed beyond any doubt that the Punjab Congress government intended to rehabilitate and establish once again landlordism, which had been uprooted notwithstanding the Congress pledge to abolish zamindara (landlordship), jagirdari (feudal land ownership), and landlordism and give land to the tiller.

In other states, much was being done in this regard, but our Punjab stuck to its old guns, safeguarding and preserving the old system of vested interests in which Harijans could never find a place of status and honor. The events, unhappy though they were, had afforded a unique opportunity to the government and the people to do some justice to the Harijans, but it was spurned and was consequently missed. Even in the allotment of houses, shops, and factories, and in the matter of grants and loans, the Harijans were shabbily treated. But the wheel of authority rolled on. The Harijans had, to all intents and purposes, lost the battle for a better deal and better life, but their struggle laid a strong foundation for the future. Just causes cannot be crushed with force and violence. Ultimately, force and violence used unjustly recoil on the heads of the perpetrators. The Harijans shall achieve success in their just cause one day, which may not be far off.

Change of Name

I, Guriqbal Singh Dhanju
s/o Ranjit Singh

Currently Resident of:
3661 W Shields Ave, Apt 255,
Fresno, CA-93722, U.S.A.

Now I have changed my name

From: **Guriqbal Singh Dhanju**
To: **Guriqbal Singh**

All concerned Kindly note it.

BAHUJAN DRAVIDA PARTY'S STATE OFFICE BEARERS MEETING

Bahujan Dravida Party - Tamil Nadu Unit State Office bearers meeting was held at Madurai on August 22, 2021. The National President Mr. Jeevan Kumar Malla attended as a mentor to conduct political leadership training to the state office bearers.

Mr. Malla addressed the office bearers warning them about Bahujan Dravida Party aims and objectives being extremely high. The task of propagating an Ideology which has been crushed time and again by the people who have maintained a Vertical Social System would be a Herculean task in itself. Our Ideology which will lead to a Horizontal Social Order would require consisting of honest leadership in both The National as well as State levels. The ultimate aim of Bahujan Dravida Party is to Govern India at the Centre to represent Bahujan Dravida Population by a Thumping Majority. The objec-

tive of Bahujan Dravida Party is to capture the Parliament of India.

Further President Mr. Jeevan Malla enlightened the Tamilnadu State Office Bearers of how to achieve such lofty aims and objectives of Bahujan Dravida Party. For this he said they would need to strengthen the organizing capabilities of the Party. A very strong system will be needed to organize a mass scale movement which will mobilize the majority of masses forming a Bahujan Dravida Fraternity across the Country from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and Gujrat to Arunachal Pradesh. Bahujan Dravida Party needs to reach out to a humongous population of India consisting of nothing less than 100 crore of people. This can be achievable only when we have in place a strong system that works. A system which will be result oriented. This system will require induc-

tion into Bahujan Dravida Party members from various streams of professions like writers, speakers, painters, poets, singers, journalists, lawyers, engineers, doctors and volunteers intellectually of high caliber. They will be like organic seeds of fraternity awakening the Sleeping Giants. Awakening the Giants called The Bahujans & the Dravidians. Bahujan Dravida Party will need Intellectuals to compose an engine to accelerate the Bahujan Dravida Socio-Political caravan against all odds to roll into the Parliament with an unstoppable power. Finally President Mr. Jeevan Kumar having energized the participants told them go to the field to identify the organic seeds, the Bahujans and Dravidian Intellectuals who will readily shoulder the responsibility to strengthen the Organisation structure at grass root level.

President Mr. Jeevan Malla

announced "MISSION of 2024" to be the year of creating History by capturing Power at the centre.

Later Mr. Malla told the gathering to let the writing on the walls of India be:-

"COME LET US CARVE OUR OWN BAHUJAN DRAVIDA HISTORY".

President Mr. Jeevan Malla asked the party workers to go and write this slogan in your village side and town side walls. Then Mr. Malla announced Mr. K. rkaiPalanichamyKudumber as a State President of Tamilnadu Unit MannarMaharajan was relieved from his State President Post and was appointed as South India Commander of Kanshiram Kafila. Finally Mr. Prabhakar ended the meeting with vote of thanks to the all the participants.

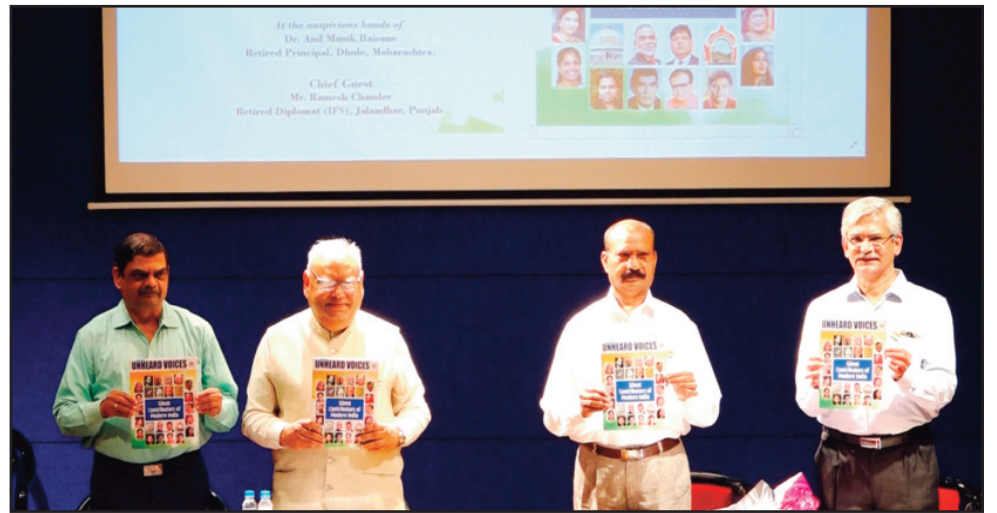
Ashok Kumar Saket
National Spokesperson Bahujan
Dravida Party, New Delhi



A Memorable Trip to Pune

In my last blog, I gave some glimpses of my trip to Pune on August 13-15 and promised to write a detailed report of my memorable trip to Pune. I visited Pune on the kind invitation of Social Studies Foundation (SSF), a newly floated outfit to engage itself in study and research on matters of interest and concern to the 'discriminated and depressed' segments of the society and create a 'positive narrative' for the empowerment and progress with the motto "Knowledge for Empowerment. It will not be out of place to thank my friend Dr. Varinder Garg of Chandigarh who referred and introduced me to SSF. The main purpose of the visit was to release the special issue – Silent Con-

tributors of Modern India - of the newly launched mouthpiece of the SSF "The Unheard Voices" and speak on the theme 'Role and contribution of depressed classes in the freedom struggle and nation building' to celebrate the 75th anniversary of our Independence. I accepted the kind invitation of SSF and reached Pune, a historical and cosmopolitan city of the Peshwas and builders of modern India like Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Bal Gangadhar Tilak among others in the morning of August 13. Jitendra Pawar of SSF, well placed professional and businessman, received me at the airport called Lohagaon, a military airbase also used as a civil airport in the outskirts of Pune, a city of more than 32 lakh habitants, second only to Mumbai in the state of Maharashtra.



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Jitendra suggested taking a quick breakfast in a 70 years old and famous South Indian restaurant 'Vaishali' in the heart of the town before checking into the Hotel Centro

(Sweet Prantha with added sprinkling of pure ghee, Mutton curry with Bakhadi (millet tandoori roti) among others over several meals. I found that many of the traditional dishes were similar as we have in rural Punjab.

With a view to use my time profitably while in Pune, I had suggested to my hosts to fix engagements/visits to some of the places/persons I would like to visit along with the main programme of the SSF on August 14 which included; Ambedkar Museum and Memorial, Jyotiba Phule Memorial, Dalit Chamber of Commerce, Aga Khan Palace and my interest in joining them at the Independence Day celebrations etc. My SSF hosts imaginatively could get two important slots for me:-

Visit to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Museum and Memorial at the Symbiosis Society – My visit to this important landmark on the map of Pune in the afternoon of August

13 was a rewarding experience. Director of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Museum and Memorial, Smt. Sanjivani Majumdar personally received and conducted me to the iconic landmark spread over 2 acres of prime land in the heart of the city. The foundation stone of the memorial was laid on April 14, 1990 by the then CM Sharad Pawar and finally inaugurated on November 26, 1996 by President K.R. Narayanan. The premises is called "Prerana Bhumi" which hosts Museum, Memorial and Library in the name of the greatest son of India, Babasaheb Ambedkar at one place with – 280 artifacts, 190 photos and 490 rare books and manuscripts donated by the wife of Babasaheb, Dr.

and equality in India to the foreigners well as Indian students so as to inspire them when they return to their own h o m e

land." On my return from Pune, I was further humbled by an e-mail message of Pro Vice Chancellor of Symbiosis International University, Dr. Vidya Yervadekar offering me to join them as visiting faculty at their Sym-



Ramesh Chander
Ambassador - I.F.S. (Retired)
91-99885-10940

biosis School of International Studies. Thanks Dr. Vidya Yervadekar.

Independence Day Celebrations at Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics – I joined the students and faculty of Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics on the 75th Independence Day Celebrations on August 15, an auspicious and joyous occasion. I did not know that a big honour was to fall on me. On reaching the congregation, after a brief courtesy call on Prof. Rajas Parchure, RBI Professor of Finance of the Institute, Prof. Parchure humbled me a great deal by declaring me as the Guest of Honour on the occasion and invited me to garland the statue of Gopal Krishna Gokhale and hoist the Tricolour. Frankly, I and may be my SSF hosts who arranged the visit did not expect this. The solemn ceremony concluded with joint singing of Jana Gana Mana followed by snacks and hot masala tea. Thanks Prof. Rajas Parchure and his colleagues and my

(Contd. on next page)

A Memorable Trip to Pune

(Continue from page 7)

SSF hosts, Vijendra Sonawane and Avinash Mulye. It may be appropriate to mention for the benefit of my readers that Pune is the 'Hub of IT' after Bangaluru besides esteemed institutions like Pune University, Gokhale Institute, Fergusson College and University, Symbiosis Group of Institutes, Television and Film Institute among others are located in the beautiful city and is rightly called as the 'Oxford of the East'. Convener of Samajik Samarashtha Chapter of the RSS, Ravendra Kirkole came to my place of stay for a courtesy meeting to welcome me to Pune. It was nice of him. I found Ravendra a calm and quiet personality with easy demeanor. He compelled me to think that, perhaps, that was the reason why RSS was holding a unique status in the society at large. The Swayamsevak are fully dedicated and well trained to carry forward their agenda, one may or may not agree with that. Ravendra Kirkole left me impressed with his simplicity. In the evening of August 13, my host Pramod Gosavi took me to the esteemed Pune University's well kept and maintained campus, a green lung of the city for a quick detour before the dinner to relish Marathi food.

SSF function to release the

special issue of the "Unheard Voices" on August 14 – The SSF function to release the special issue of the Unheard Voices was held on August 14 on the eve of the 75th anniversary of our Independence Day at a prestigious venue of the auditorium of Decan Education Society of Pune, an educational wing of the RSS. It was a well arranged programme. One of the Directors of SSF, Pramod Gosavi in his introductory presentation explained the purposes for which the SSSF was launched and added that the outfit would engage and involve the intellectuals and academics to create 'a positive narrative' on the role and contribution of our brethren belonging to the depressed and marginalized sections of the society. It will work as a 'think tank' in this regard. Dr. Anil Baisane, an eminent historian and academic with more than 75 books to his credit released the special issue of the Unheard Voices – Silent Contributors of Modern India. Earlier, the Chief Editor of the E-Magazine, Vijendra Sonawane explained the purpose and rationale of starting the Unheard Voices to give impetus to the information needs of the marginalized segments of the society. He informed that the magazine which was formally launched on April 14, 2021 was received well by the dis-

cerning readers. Dr. Anil Baisane, while speaking on the theme 'Role and Contribution of depressed classes in the freedom movement and nation building, gave an excellent and informative analysis from its historical perspective and said that it was unfortunate that the role played by the heroes belonging to the weaker sections of the society did not get any place in the history books and justify his assertion with reference to the role and contribution of Raja Nayak among others. I as the Chair of the Session congratulated the SSF for bringing out the Unheard Voices and its special issue on 'Silent Contributors of Modern India' the cover page of which adorns the photos of the contemporary icons of dalit communities in various spheres of life headed by none else but Babasaheb Ambedkar. Referring to the Mooknayak published by Baasaheb Ambedkar himself in the year 1920, I said that the Unheard Voice will try to fill the vacuum in providing much needed voice to voiceless. Speaking on the theme of the talk, I recalled the role of the Veeranganas including Jhalkari Bai, Adviser of Rani Laxmi Bai in the First War of Independence in 1857 and Kuyili, Brave Commander of Velu Nachirar in 1780, Uda Devi, Helen Savitari, Udham Singh, the

warriors of Bhima-Koregaon, Chamar Regiment, Virsa Munda among others. The pioneer role of Babasaheb Ambedkar, Gadri Baba Babu Manguaram Mugowalia, Joginder Nath Mandal, Babu Jagjivan Ram, D. Sanjivaya, Dadasaheb B.K. Gaiwad, Babu Kanshi Ram, President KR Narayanan, Justice K.G. Balakrishnan cannot be ignored and I added that the history will take note of their role and contribution in the run up to Independence in 1947 from the colonial rule but also in the development and progress of the country. The function, which was steered by Jitendra Pawar as the Master of Ceremonies, was concluded with the vote of thanks by Director of SSF, Hari Sowani. It was a satisfying and fulfilling experience to meet so many of the elite society of Pune at the function.

During my to and fro journey to Chandigarh to catch up with Pune, I enjoyed the hospitality of Sushil and Lovely Sheemar, my fellow Bootan-Mandians, at their spacious and elegant villa in the "The Foothills" of Shivalik Range in the New Chandigarh – a serene and peaceful place to live which is the heavenly abode of senior retired and serving IAS, PCS elite and Judges. Both Sushil and Lovely and also their son Akun were totally caring and kind, as always.



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