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## PAYING FLORAL TRIBUTE TO BHARAT RATAN BABASAHEB DR. BHIMRAO RAMJI AMBEDKAR ON HIS MAHAPRRINIRVAN DAY

Prem Kumar Chumber

Editor-in-Chief: Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba

Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar devoted his whole life towards building an egalitarian social order in India to get rid of graded inequality and oppressive social hierarchies of low and high, pure and polluted, and Savarnas and Avarnas. He emphasized on the value of fraternity which in conjunction with equality and liberty culminates into a wholesome order of egalitarianism, peace and democracy. It is for the realization of this trinity of equality, liberty and fraternity that he termed his struggle as spiritual and not just for political power. He was of the view that political freedom without social and economic parity is shallow, and cannot help create an egalitarian, peaceful and inherently viable democratic society. In a socially segmented Indian society, a large number of so-called Shudras and Ati-Shudras who have historically been denied basic human and civil rights need to be emancipated from ignorance, chronic poverty, and trenchant disrespect so that they can be respectfully brought into the process of meaningful social, economic, political, and spiritual growth of each and every member of the society. His sole objective was to restore the lost dignity and self-respect to the millions of downtrodden in the society and to prepare them to reclaim equal rights on their own strength. He firmly believed that liberty, equality and fraternity should become the real strengths of India, which would lay the foundations of Indian democracy rooted in social democracy. For him political democracy should be based on social democracy. Social democracy in turn is dependent on equal opportunity available to all in the society free from hierarchies and hereditary claims and special privileges.

He was a practical visionary who produced voluminous of well-documented literature to put across his viewpoint on egalitarian social order. He was not an armchair scholar. He actually devoted his entire life while abdicating various opportunities to lead a rich and comfortable life. He worked with the people at the grassroots to up left them from the morass of social exclusion and terrified social and economic life. In order to awaken his people and to put across his viewpoint, Babasaheb launched many papers like Mook Nayak, Janata, Bahishkrit Bharat and Prabudh Bharat. He believed that without acquiring political power the goal of egalitarian order is next to impossible. Therefore, he founded two political parties (Labor Party of India and Scheduled Castes Federation of India) and prepared a blueprint for the third (Republican Party of India). To give a practical shape to his social vision, Babasaheb tried all possible ways to bring social reforms within Hinduism in order to make it an all-inclusive religion where the Shudras and Ati-Shudras should not suffer on account of their so-called low-birth.

He launched various satyagrahas (non-violent struggles) for the entry of lower castes (then known as depressed classes) into public places of utility and religious sites; organized common kitchen eating and advocated inter-caste marriages. When such measures failed to bring the desired results, he put forward the idea of abandoning Hindu religion. After giving it a deep thought (more than twenty years), he embraced Buddhism as a way to an egalitarian social order in India.

His people for whom he struggled throughout his life eagerly wait for the true realization of his goal. Their enthusiasm can be seen from the way they throng the Mahaparinirvan Bhoomi of their beloved Babasaheb who had died on 6th December 1956. Large crowds of people from all over the country gathered at the "Chaitya Bhoomi" (Dr. Ambedkar's memorial) at Dadar in order to pay reverence to the Messiah of downtrodden. They offered their love laced feelings by touching the "Chaitya Bhoomi" reverently. This shows his great legacy that his people carrying forward to make his dream come true. A true tribute to Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar would be to follow his footsteps towards the creation of egalitarian social order free from the bounds of pure and impure, and high-low social statuses

## Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar's Views on Social Democracy and Indian Constitution

(Lecture delivered at Dept. of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Studies, Dept. of Defence and Strategic Studies, & Strategic Culture and Security Foundation, Pune Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune University, Pune on 25 November 2024)

The raison d'être of social democracy is to revitalise the protection and promotion of the interests of lower castes, the downtrodden, minorities, and other politically and economically weaker sections of the society, in part by empowering the state administrative machinery. It emboldens the state not to confine itself to its classical task of maintenance of law and order, but rather to play a proactive role and be a harbinger of social and economic redistributive justice as well. It is in this context that the core essence of a welfare state – to meet the basic needs of people at relatively low levels of consumption of non-renewable energy resources – collides with the inimical logic of a neo-liberal market-economy. The latter unerringly leads to an unending accumulation of capital, together with a concomitant rise in social and economic inequalities, and implicitly disavows the validity of human rights and their actual realisation in real-world conditions. Conversely, social democracy thus aims at transcending the social and economic inequalities buttressed by neo-liberal market-economy regimes by bridging the gulf between 'formal validity' of rights and 'real-world efficacy of universal basic rights'.

It transforms 'delegative democracy' and 'passive citizenship' into democracy with active participation and social citizenship. It aims at protecting the rights and the entitlements of the people on the margins by putting in place transparent and viable system of rules of exchange.

For a democracy to rise above the façade of formal institutional mechanisms of rule based decision-making processes and to help people at the grassroots to effectively participate in governance and seek their due share in the structures of power, it should ideally rehabilitate its members to the semblance, though not necessarily absolute replication, of a primordial state of economic and social parity. In theory, democratic polities rely on the actual and meaningful participation of citizens and their enjoyment of universal basic rights. Any sort of social and economic disability would not only coarsen such access, but would also hinder the natural flourishing of democracy as well as its long-term viable sustainability. It is against such a backdrop that social democracy helps electoral democracy to be both 'social and effective' in its overall operations; and outspreads the democratic element of the political democracy "beyond the bestowal of political rights to the creation and expansion of social rights." It emphasizes the realisation of social and economic rights in addition to civil and political rights, and guarantees social inclusiveness amidst widespread atomisation of society attendant

on the laissez faire values of the market economy.

II

Social democracy owes its origins to Western Europe. Though theoretical thinking about social democracy goes back to the early twentieth century, it was first put into practice in Europe only during the turbulent inter-war years in the form of state welfare measures,



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compromise between labour and capital, and employment security measures. This enactment was itself necessitated by the need to simmer down the social turbulence caused by the Great Depression of 1929 which had emanated in the USA but rippled outwards, reaching in particular the shores of Western Europe.

The separation of politics from economics with the evolution of

liberal market economy was an outcome of the conjunction of classical political economy notion of freedom of market and liberal philosophical notion of freedom of individual. This notion has resulted in separation of politics from economics in the name of freedom to produce and increase the accumulation of wealth. However, the notion of freedom of capitalist market has produced mass dissatisfaction among the working class people in Western Europe. At the end of World War I, Keynes advocated the need of state intervention to regulate the function of free market in order to mediate the conflict between capital and labour. Returning to the Great Depression of 1929, which had erupted in the aftermath of World War I and brought a sudden economic and political crisis in Western Europe, Negri highlighted, that in just the first four years, the gross domestic product of USA fell by 46 per cent and unemployment soared from 4 to 25 per cent. In order to save the capitalist system, Keynes favoured the comprehensive socialisation of investment. The rise of Keynesianism has given birth to the Roosevelt's New Deal – an agreement between the capitalist and working class to save the sinking ship of capitalism.

The world economic depression of 1929 and subsequently World War II, led to the realisation among the policymakers in the capitals of Europe and North America that to help safeguard the world from future shocks within and amongst

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L-R: Prof. Ronki Ram, Prof. Surendra Jondhale, & Prof. Vijay Khare (the main organiser of the academic event)

# Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar's Views on Social Democracy and Indian Constitution

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sovereign states, developmental as well as welfare measures were necessary and must be given a respectable chance to strengthen social conditions that help in deepening democratic structures within and among the states. In other words, liberal democratic regimes based on political freedom and unrestrained capital accumulation had to accommodate the interests of peoples who were pushed towards the margins, and also at the same time helping them come into the mainstream public domain under the welfare tutelage of the state. It was such introspection and enlightened self-interest, which gave rise to the welfare state and the growth of social democracy in Europe in the aftermath of World War

Thus, the concept of social democracy entered global strategic power equations in the aftermath of WWII on the one hand, and in the face of fears of an impending proliferation of state market economies modelled on the USSR archetypal of political economy and global governance on the other. In fact, the emerging confrontation between the socialist and capitalist modes of production and global governance was de facto deprioritised by the need of the capitalist-imperialist countries to confront the immediate and existential danger posed by the sudden rise of the Axis Powers: Nazi Germany, fascist Italy, and militarist Japan. The entry of social democracy in the crucial post WWII international system was a politico-strategic manoeuvre to preclude the migration of war-devastated European states into the erstwhile USSR-led Socialist bloc. It was against this backdrop that the US began the massive economic aid programme for the European states, commonly known as the Marshall Plan, in the post-World War II period. Officially known as the European Recovery Programme (ERP), it was an American initiative enacted in 1948 to provide foreign aid, but especially to Western Europe. It aimed at the reduction of interstate barriers and the economic integration of the European Continent with the purpose to rebuild industrial strength and to put an end to engulfing unemployment and poverty.

Moreover, during 1960s and 1970s new left student movement in Western Europe spread the slogan of social democracy. The dissatisfaction of the working class people with the functioning of economic system and idea that there should be a substantial citizens' participation in the government decision-making apparatus played an important part in consolidating the notion of social democracy. Social democracy, particularly in Western Europe, is thus seen as a "strategy of reform intended to make capitalism more tolerable and less ruthless."

It intends to reshape the strategies and patterns of markets in a capitalistic mode of production in ways which would help interject "social, as opposed to market, priorities in the capitalist accumulation process; the expansion of government programs of service, social insurance, and other transfers (usually called the welfare state) to reshape and

compensate for the allocations of the market; and the use of macroeconomic policy to minimize unemployment rather than inflation." Social democracy was primarily considered a necessary evil by the economic elites of the concerned countries, to ward off the surging revolt of the labour against the blatant economic exploitation, social segregation and political marginalisation ruthlessly unleashed under the capitalist/neo-liberal market-economy regime in the interwar years, and remains so till date although in a considerably atrophied form, especially in the USA and the UK after the introduction of neo-liberal policies in earnest in the 1980s and the easing of regulations giving a freer run to laissez faire market, e.g. the gradual dilution of the Glass-Steagall Act of 1932.

### III

Though political liberation from the British rule was the central theme of the Indian freedom movement, the question of freedom had never been merely a 'political' issue in colonial India. It had always been intertwined with the 'social' of the country. In other words, the question of freedom from the external/British rule was closely tied with the much larger as well as complex internal question of freedom from the oppressive caste system in the country. However, the mainstream anti-imperial stance of the Indian freedom movement failed to address the larger question of social exclusion of the vast number of downtrodden/ex-Untouchables of India who were sandwiched between the oppressive systems of domestic caste structures on the one hand, and British colonialism, on the other. The ex-Untouchables were, thus, doubly oppressed. They had no hope for any relief whatsoever from their domestic social order as it was based on the doctrine of permanent inequality in every sphere of life. Their social conditions also remained almost unchanged even during the long spell of the so-called liberal minded British rulers who probably did not like to touch the institution of caste lest it unleash revolt from within the upper caste hegemonised Indian society. On the contrary, the British rulers rather reinforced caste as it helped them in some ways in maintaining their hold over colonial India.

Since Indian society is intensely rooted in the pre-modern system of caste-based social hierarchies, it openly clashed with the liberal principles of equality and liberty. It is basically indifferent to the liberal principles of individual worth and justice, which blocked the way for the natural growth of the social democracy in the country. Though the constitution of independent India has provided ample space to the inherited institution of democracy, it has yet to overcome the subtle legacies of centuries old caste structures in the country. Caste inculcates a sense of complete alienation among those who have been condemned to live separately as 'outcastes' away from the mainland habitations of the upper castes. The goal of Political freedom of the people of India can never be accomplished in the real sense of the term until and unless the deprivations and sufferings of the large numbers of

the ex-Untouchables are removed by completely annihilating the oppressive caste system. In the words of Ambedkar, "Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy."

Social democracy, in fact, is the 'cornerstone' of the edifice of political democracy in India. Bhagat Singh, one of most prominent of the few forerunners of the institution of social democracy in India, also expressed the similar views, of course much earlier, in his less quoted article published under pseudonym in the June issue of Kirti 1929. He was of the firm opinion that political freedom gained from the British colonialism could not last long if failed to be accompanied by a massive social and economic reforms measures for the transformation of the rotten undertaken in the internal social set up of the country.

Thus, the story of the emergence of social democracy in India, however, is entirely different from that of Europe. Social democracy in India emerged as a response to deep-rooted caste-based social disabilities as against the economic recession of 1929 and the upheaval generated by the World War II in Europe. Unlike Europe, Social democracy in India did not emerge as a response to rabid capitalism and economic depression. Instead, it started taking shape in colonial India, as aptly argued by Manmohan Singh, former Prime Minister of India, "to liberate ourselves from centuries of misrule, from the scourge of poverty, ignorance and disease, from tyranny and bigotry, from caste prejudice and communal divisions."

The central focus of social democracy in Europe, as discussed above, was on economic equality. It aimed at securing the interests of labour in the face of rampant capitalism, whereas in India the main focus of social democracy was on social equality and deepening democracy while empowering the downtrodden to democratically come forward to struggle for their long denied human rights as enshrined in the constitution of independent India. It is in this context that the role of state affirmative action becomes noteworthy; aiming as it does at distributive justice that helps the downtrodden contributes towards strengthening the base of liberal democracy. State affirmative action aims at rescuing Indian society from the clutches of the centuries-old institution of caste and the all-pervasive social exclusion and discrimination embedded in it. It intends to empower the downtrodden in such a way that they reap the fruits of hard-earned freedom at par with the privileged twice-born. Social democracy in India thus aims at extending the constitutional democratic spirit to the social grassroots of society. It must necessarily enter the social milieu of the people and deeply nurture their inter and intra community social relations without succumbing to parochial and ascriptive values and social norms. In other words, it is the 'social' as opposed to the 'economic' that provided impetus to the rise of social democracy in India. It is in this context that the neo-liberal market-economy

and the institution of social democracy come face to face in a mutually antagonistic posture with serious implications for the sustainability of the growing sapling of liberal democracy in India.

My key argument here is that social democracy in India is different from its counterpart in Europe, which was rooted in the post-WW II strategic thinking to guard against the spread of socialism in Western Europe. In India, it aims at building an indigenous base for the restoration of an egalitarian social order that in turn facilitates internalisation of the democratic values of equality, freedom and fraternity as incorporated in the constitution. It underscores the need for demolition of discriminatory social structures and practices. Since democracy thrives on numbers in a closely contested sphere of electoral politics, the burden of tradition becomes too difficult to be avoided. Given the typical communal character of the electoral constituencies in India, caste instead of subsiding has rather come to acquire a leading role in the arithmetic of the electoral numbers game, and thus blocking the on-going process of the deepening of democracy in the country. It is further believed that instead of blunting the fangs of caste, the institution of liberal democracy has sharpened them. The subjugation of caste and other similar stultifying social forces has become an intimidatingly uphill task for the policy makers in India.

It is in this context that social democracy aims at deepening the roots of liberal democracy in India – established on the pattern of the British parliamentary setup – while facilitating the ethnically divergent and socially fragmented vast majority of rural poor to become active participants in the political process at grassroots level. In fact, the inherent contradiction between the indigenous institution of caste and the transplanted institution of democracy are what acted as stumbling blocks in the way of deepening the roots of democracy in India. It seems that these democratic processes are inherently inclined to fan traditional social divisions in an opportunistic pursuit of divergent electoral agendas. Tightening of caste boundaries are more to do with the electoral strategies than to the anachronistic social values of the institution of caste itself. This contradiction subsequently assumed the form of a tug-of-war between tradition and modernity.

Another key argument is that the entry of neo-liberal market economy in India in the 1990s has further compounded the on-going tug-of-war between tradition and modernity to the disadvantage of the latter by entrenching, albeit indirectly, oppressive caste structures in the country.

The introduction of neoliberal reforms has exposed the economically and socially disadvantaged groups to the accumulation logic of globalised capital. In this tug-of-war between tradition and modernity, the institution of social democracy stands with modernity and openly confronts the forces of neo-liberal market-economy,

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# Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar's Views on Social Democracy and Indian Constitution

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which quite interestingly seem to toe the line of the primordial and ascriptive institution of caste. The free market discrimination against the poor further strengthens the existing caste fault-lines in the hierarchical social order wherein the majority of the poor belong to lower castes. Thus, it is in this crucial social context that the free market forces discriminate against the poor section of the society. Taking sides with the lower caste victims of the 'economics of market', which are mercilessly excluded from the business domain, social democracy compensates them in ensuring a respectable space in the 'politics of democracy'. In other words, social democracy aims at overcoming the primordial and ascriptive hurdles in the way of arduous but steady march of liberal democracy in India sandwiched between the 'economics of market' and the 'politics of democracy'.

#### IV

Social democracy occupies centre stage in the philosophy and praxis of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. It constitutes the core of his struggle against the historic social malady of graded inequality in India. This is what distinguished Ambedkar from the rest of the mainstream Indian freedom fighters and political thinkers who were struggling primarily for the liberation of the country (political freedom) from the yoke of British Empire. As far as Indian freedom struggle is concerned, however, the contribution of Ambedkar was second to none. Furthermore, he reiterated that the struggle for political freedom should be rooted in the social democracy, which in turn is primarily based on social emancipation and empowerment of ex-untouchables.

Thus, for Ambedkar the struggle for political freedom would not cease to exist with the historic mid-night celebrations at the Red Fort, it will rather continue uninterrupted until independent India achieves equality and fraternity, the two equally important components of the trinity mantra (liberty, equality and fraternity) aimed at liberating the people from the thraldom of ignorance, slavery and poverty. It is in this context, that the social democratic vision of Ambedkar becomes central to his post independent political discourse and praxis in the country. To strengthen liberty with equality and fraternity at its base, and to imbibe the true spirit of democracy in the country, Ambedkar devoted his entire life to the cumbersome task of annihilating caste from the social domain of Indian society. The dominant and oppressive social structures like caste and the resultant social exclusion are what he considered main stumbling blocks on the way to real freedom and social democracy in India. For democracy to survive in a country like India, it has to be rooted in social democracy. For a genuine and true democracy to emerge in India, Ambedkar gave a clarion call for the 'annihilation of caste' through constitutional

and democratic way.

Ambedkar expanded the meaning of political freedom by incorporating in its fold the less talked about issue of freedom from internal social structures of oppression and domination leading to caste based social exclusion. He assigned special importance to the principles of social democracy by championing the cause of the socially excluded sections of the Indian society. He wanted to strengthen the emerging sphere of political democracy in India by substantiating it with the institutionalisation of the less talked about phenomenon of social democracy. Ambedkar defines social democracy as "a way of life which recognizes liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life. These principles ... are not to be treated as separate items in a trinity. They form a union of trinity in the sense that to divorce one from the other is to defeat the very purpose of democracy."

Frozen in the centuries old stratified structure of caste-based social order, the principles of equality and fraternity are yet to find a clear expression and a significant space in the political democracy of independent India. Social life in India is still governed by the principle of birth-based graded inequality that tends to elevate some (upper castes) and degrades many (lower castes). Even after more than seventy-seven years of India's independence and wide spread anti-untouchability laws, the so-called outcastes continue to be subjected to repulsion and all sorts of humiliations. They have continuously been deprived of education, human rights, social status, and equal opportunities in the field of art, culture, science and technology.

It is repulsion rather than fraternity that underlined the social structure of the Indian society. Repulsion promotes social exclusion. Repulsion is one of the three main agencies (the other two are hierarchy and hereditary occupation) of caste that determine the exclusionary boundaries of Indian social structures. In the views of Ambedkar "in fact, it makes isolation of one caste from another a virtue. There is isolation in the class system. But it does not make isolation virtue nor does it prohibit social intercourse. The class system, it is true produces groups, but they are not akin to caste groups. The groups in the class system are only non-social while the castes in the caste systems are in their relations definitely and positively anti-social."

The caste-based principle of repulsion, thus, generated mutual antagonism within the society that ultimately squeezed the required space for the deepening of social democracy in the country. The roots of democracy are to be searched in the fabric of social relationship/associated living (Chand 2005). Since caste thrives on mutual repulsion and complete rejection of fraternity, it

goes against the norms of associated form of living that affects the machinery of the state by making public opinion impossible (Mungekar 2006:1). It introduces segregation in the society, and generates jealousy and antipathy among the socially segregated inmates of the society. On the completion of the Draft Constitution (25 November 1949), Ambedkar sounded a grave warning in his famous address in the Constituent assembly: "On the 26th January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of one man one vote and one vote one value. In our social and economic life, we shall, by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man one value. How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which this Assembly has so labouriously built up."

It seems that the Indian state has accorded some heed to the prophetic warning of Ambedkar. Independent India opted for a mixed economy model of development and introduced the system of reservation for the downtrodden in government jobs, education institutions and legislature. Legal provisions for reducing the enormous gap between the rich/upper and the poor/lower castes have been incorporated in the law book of the land. The preamble of the constitution clearly spells out the objectives of securing "to all its citizens JUSTICE, social, economic and political" as well as "EQUALITY of status and of opportunity".

The social democratic vision, nurtured during the freedom struggle as well as drafting of the constitution under the stewardship of Ambedkar, got further reflected in the Resolution adopted by the Government of India for the creation of the Planning Commission in March 1950. The Resolution clearly defined the scope of the work of the Planning Commission in the following terms: "The Constitution of India has guaranteed certain Fundamental Rights to the citizens of India and enunciated certain Directive Principles of State Policy, in particular, that the State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all the institutions of the national life, and shall direct its policy towards securing, among other things –

(a) that the citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an ad-

equate means of livelihood;

(b) that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good; and

(c) that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment." Thus, an all-inclusive vision of development and an egalitarian social order underlined the basic spirit of the constitution as well as the ambitious Five-Year Planning projects of the Planning Commission of India. To translate the ideals of the founding fathers, a number of special provisions are incorporated in the constitution and the Resolution for the creation of the Planning Commission. State affirmative action is the most prominent among them. It aimed at overcoming historic caste-based social exclusion and oppression. Along with reservations in education, employment and legislature, rural development programme, public distribution system, public health programmes, cooperatives, the Right to Education Act, mid-day meals programme, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, the Food Security Act, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana, Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen (SBM-G); Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY-LPG); Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY); Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY); Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY); Ayushman Bharat – Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-ABJAY); Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP); Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY); Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) and Prime Minister Street Vendor's Atmanirbhar Nidhi (PM-SVANidh) are a few among many significant central government welfare measures to promote social democracy in India.

Yet another important measure towards the formation of social democracy has been a series of attempts, under the Directive Principles of state policy, to democratise and decentralise governance and the devolution of authority from the centre to the grass-roots (panchayati raj institutions). Thus, the constitution of India, as aptly argued by Manmohan Singh, former Prime Minister of India, is "a unique social charter – the boldest statement ever of social democracy." Whether these varied measures have been able to facilitate the growth of social democracy in India or not, is a matter of contention (Desai 2010:10). Nevertheless, the incorporation of such measures in the constitution is a vindication enough that the founding fathers of Independent India wanted to deepen the roots of liberal democracy while placing it on firm foundation of social democracy. However, the adoption of neo-liberal reforms in the country in 1991 dampens its social welfare spirit.



Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD

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Goodie Takhar, PhD

# Ambedkar Times Forum Congratulates

Sh. Parasuram Wadekar (President), Dipakraj Dharmaji Mhaske (Secretary)



Sh. Parasuram Wadekar  
President  
Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar  
cultural Festival Committee, Pune



Sh. Parasuram Wadekar Felicitating  
Prof. (Dr.) Ronki Ram



Dipakraj Dharmaji Mhaske  
Secretary  
Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar  
cultural Festival Committee, Pune

Ambedkar Times Forum Congratulates Sh. Parasuram Wadekar and Sh. Dipakraj Dharmaji Mhaske, President and Secretary respectively of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar cultural Festival Committee Pune, for organizing 'One-day Indian Constitution Thought Conference' entitled "75 Years of Indian Constitution, Development and Progress" 'dedicated to the 75th Indian Constitution Day' at Balgharva Rangmandir, Pune on November 26, 2024.

In the two technical sessions of the conference

Justice AbhayTipse (Retd.), Mr. Sudhakar Suradkar (Retd.DIG), Former Prof. S. Jondhale, Prof. (Dr.) Ronki Ram, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Chair Prof, Panjab University, Chandigarh, Mr. Irfan Engineer, Mrs Nisha Shiburkar, H.B.P. Shyamsundar Maharaj Sonar, H.B.P. Dnayaneshwar Wable Maharaj, Adv. Ulhas Bapat, Adv. Diksha Wadekar, and Sh. Lakshmi kant Deshmukh presented their engaging thoughts on the role and importance of the Indian Constitution for deepening democracy, law

and order, and overall development of India. The technical sessions were followed by a poetry session (presided over by Mr. Prakash Ghodke, and Sumit Gunwant, & participated by Anjali Kulkarni, Veera Rathod, Deva Jhinjad, Swapnil Choudhary, Sagar Kakade, and JityaJaali) and musical cultural programme devoted to the Indian Constitution Day.

**Prem Kumar Chumber**  
Editor-in-Chief "Ambedkar Times"

## Source Courtesy: The Indian Quarterly Register Being a Quarterly Journal of Indian Public Affairs In matters Political, Social and Economic, etc. Volume-II, July-Dec. 1928, Numbers III & IV

### The Indian Statutory Commission The Depressed Classes' Deputation Page No.126

Before the Conference met, a contingent of 500 members of the depressed classes' men from various parts of the Punjab, had arrived – all red-turbaned and dressed in white – and wished to meet Sir John Simon. Sir John's time being fully occupied, he was unable to witness the demonstration but received a small deputation of six of them led by Mr. Rajah.

Sir John Simon received the deputation's address and assured them that though he could not hear them publicly, he was giving his best consideration to their case and that Mr. Rajah was there giving all the facts and figures and devotedly representing the cause of the

depressed classes.

The depressed classes deputation, said in the course of their memorial that they belonged to an ancient race which ruled India about 5000 years ago, prior to the invasion of India by the Aryans. The Aryans, whose present descendants were called high class Hindus, had all along been treating them with the most inhuman brutality, so that their unlucky community, numerically large as it was, is now little more than a mere name. In spite of the fact that there were some highly-educated and capable men in their community, they were not given any honourable status in society nor the right of ownership or anything. They had not even the right to safeguard their individual lives.

This deplorable condition of

the mute millions of the depressed community was due to the horrible treatment meted out to them by high-class Hindus in consequence of the pronouncements of the ancient Aryans, which were embodied in the Manu Smriti and a lot of other Hindu scriptures of that ilk.

The deputationists next stated that they did not wish to be called Hindus but 'Addharmis' and in the next census they should describe themselves as 'Addharmis'. They did not want Swaraj in India under present conditions, as it would mean practically a monopoly by caste Hindus.

They enumerated their demands as follows:

Necessary arrangements for the better education of Addharmis (untouchable) boys and girls; sepa-

rate representation in all public bodies and the Legislature; a share in all public services, including the police, civil and military; a Minister in every province; equal rights of using all District Board public wells with other communities; equal rights of ownership of any property – dwelling houses and common fields – with other communities and proscription of the Manu Smriti and all such Hindu scriptures in which contemptuous references are made to the race and community. References to the community by the term of Shudra, the memorial urges, should be strictly forbidden. Land in the new colonies should be distributed just as it is done in the case of other communities.

- Neeraj Paul

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