



# Ambedkar Times

Weekly

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**Mooknayak Anniversary Day (31 January) 103rd Bahut Bahut Mubarak!! Long Live Babasaheb's Caravan!!**

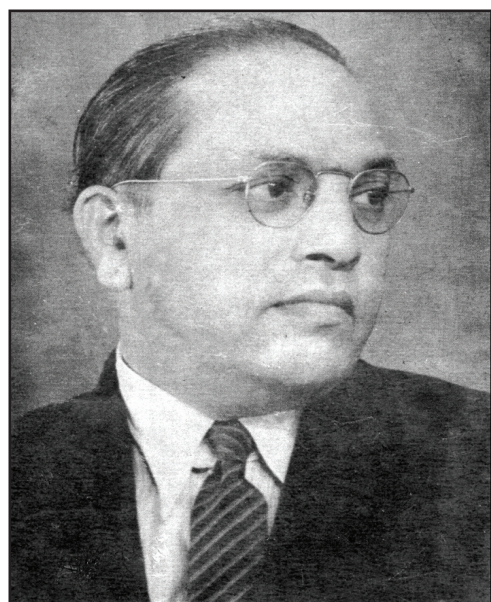
## Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and the Emergence of Dalit Consciousness

**Prem K. Chumber**  
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of Dalit political consciousness and activism in India. Unlike his various volumes of books in English, he published his newspapers in Marathi. Historically speaking, the tradition of

consciousness. Mooknayak - voice of the voiceless - was the first Marathi fortnightly that Dr. Ambedkar launched on January 31, 1920. It ran for three years before being

a tower which has several stories without a ladder or entrance. The man who is born in the lower storey cannot enter the upper story however worthy he may be and the man who is born in the upper storey cannot be driven out into the lower storey however unworthy he may be ... The alienation produced by the absence of inter-dining and inter-caste marriages has fostered the feelings of touchables and untouchables so much that these touchable and untouchable castes, though a part of Hindu society, are in reality living in worlds apart. "What Dr Ambedkar wrote hundred years ago remains a bitter truth even today. The upper caste rich houses monopolize media in India. News concerning the lives of Dalits are hardly carried in national newspapers. If at all some coverage was given, it remained highly prejudiced.



Since India's independence the surge of Dalit literature has continued to cover divergent aspects of the historically neglected domains of the so-called lower castes. In almost all states in the country various Dalit organisations have their own newspapers and journals focusing on the social, cultural, economic and political concerns of their respective communities in particular and the overall conditions of the downtrodden in the country at large. The credit for such a wide spread of the written word goes to Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and the rich journalistic legacy he left behind for his caravan to move on. The newspapers that Dr. Ambedkar started during his life-long struggle for the emancipation and empowerment of the lower castes made enormous contribution in the form of inculcating critical thinking among the different strata of the socially excluded economically marginalized and politically neglected Dalit-Bahujan samaj. Unfortunately most of the contemporary Dalit writings on Ambedkar and Dalit politics hardly focus on the rich heritage of the newspapers established by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, which at a time played a significant role in building Dalit consciousness and Dalit movement in the different parts of the country and at the national level. The newspapers founded and nurtured by Dr. Ambedkar are sources of enormous material that can throw immense light on the evolution and the growth

bringing out Dalit newspapers goes back to Satyashodhak Movement started by Jotirao Phule in Maharashtra in the late 19th century with the establishment of the first Dalit newspaper named Din Bandhu. Though some other prominent Dalit leaders such as Shivram Janba Kamble and Kisan Faguji Bansode founded newspapers primarily dedicated to Dalit cause before the arrival of Dr. Ambedkar, but they could not stir the docile mind of the centuries old socially excluded sections of the Indian society.

It was with the entry of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in the realm of journalism that a new era had dawned in the emerging history of Dalit con-

sciousness. Mooknayak - voice of the voiceless - was the first Marathi fortnightly that Dr. Ambedkar launched on January 31, 1920. It ran for three years before being closed. Later, he went on to found three more newspapers - Bahishkrut Bharat (1927-1929), Janata (1930-56), and Prabuddha Bharat (1956). He was deeply convinced that if Dalits were to rise on their own feet, they must have their distinct newspapers managed and run by their own efforts. In the editorial of the inaugural issue of Mooknayak's Dr. Ambedkar wrote that "There is no better source than the newspaper to suggest the remedy against the injustice that is being done to our people in the present and will be done in the future, and also to discuss the ways and means for our progress in the future." In the same editorial, he wrote, "The Hindu society is just like

It was to overcome such a biased state-of-the-affairs in mainstream journalism that Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar emphasized on the urgent need of having distinct Dalit Media Centres. He was of the firm view that only separate Dalit journalism could give a befitting reply to the blatant lies of the tormentors of the lower castes and empower them to fight injustice valorously.

The forums of Ambedkar Times (www.ambedkartimes.com) and Desh Doaba (www.deshdoaba.com) sincerely pay its obeisance to Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar on the auspicious day of 31 January 2024, 103rd anniversary of the launch of Mooknayak newspaper!

## No reserved posts can be de-reserved: Education ministry clarifies on draft UGC guidelines

**New Delhi-** The Ministry of Education (MoE) on Sunday clarified that no reserved posts can be de-reserved after draft guidelines by the University Grants Commission (UGC) proposed that any vacancy reserved for SC, ST and OBC candidates can be declared unreserved if enough candidates from these categories are not available.

The 'Guidelines for Implementation of the Reservation Policy of the Government of India in Higher Education Institutes (HEIs)' are in the public domain for feedback from stakeholders. The draft guidelines have drawn flak from several quarters. The Congress alleged there is a "conspiracy" to end reservation given to SCs, STs and OBCs in posts in higher education institutions and that the Modi government is only doing "politics of symbolism" on the issues of Dalits, backward

classes and tribals.

The JNU Students' Union (JNUSU) also held a protest against it and burnt an effigy of UGC Chairman M Jagadesh Kumar. Kumar also clarified that there has been no de-reservation of reserved category positions in Central Educational Institutions (CEI) in the past and there is going to be no such de-reservation.

"Reservation in Central Educational Institutions is provided for all posts in direct recruitment in Teacher's cadre as per the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Act, 2019.

"After enactment of this Act, no reserved post is to be de-reserved. Ministry of Education has given directives to all the CEIs to fill up the vacancies strictly as per the 2019 ACT," the Ministry of Education wrote on X.

The UGC chairman also posted: "This is to clarify that there has been no de-reservation of reserved category positions in Central Educational Institutions in the past and there is going to be no such de-reservation.

"It is important for all HEIs to ensure that all backlog positions in the reserved category are filled up through concerted efforts."

According to new draft guidelines by the UGC: "A vacancy reserved for SC or ST or OBC cannot be filled by a candidate other than an SC or ST or OBC candidate, as the case may be. "However, a reserved vacancy may be declared unreserved by following the procedure of de-reservation where after, it can be filled as an unreserved vacancy."

"There is a general ban on de-reservation of reserved vacancies in

case of direct recruitment. However, in rare and exceptional cases when a vacancy in a Group A service cannot be allowed to remain vacant in public interest, the University concerned may prepare a proposal for de-reservation of the vacancy giving the following information: The proposal will be required to list -- efforts made to fill up the post; reasons why it cannot be allowed to remain vacant and justification for de-reservation.

"The proposal for de-reservation in case of Group C or D should go to the Executive Council of the University and in case of Group A or B should be submitted to the Ministry of Education, giving full details, for necessary approval. After receiving the approval, the post may be filled and reservation may be carried forward," the draft guidelines added.





## Heartiest Congratulations on "MOOKNAYAK"'s 103rd Anniversary Mooknayak Anniversary Day (31 January)

Mooknayak - Beginning of the thundering of Dalit Voice long live!!

# Supreme Council of Sri Guru Ravidass Sabhas, USA

# MOOKNAYAK (Voice of the Voiceless)

## Journalistic Legacy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar (103rd Anniversary) Congratulations

After taking a break from his academic attainments in USA and England, Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had to return to India in 1920 to fulfil his commitments to serve in the state of Maharaja of Baroda, who had financed his scholarship for studies abroad. Instead of being greeted back in his native land he had to face a hostile environment in a stratified society divided by prejudices driven by caste affiliations. Babasaheb, though educationally equipped and prepared to express his mental frustrations through his writings by starting to publish a Newspaper, could not do so because of his financial hurdles and hostile environment. It was through the generous help of Maharaja Shahu of Kolhapur who supported social transformation that Babasaheb could start a weekly paper in Marathi - "MOOKNAYAK" ( Voice of the Voiceless) on January 31st. 1920. In spite of initial block-

ades caused by other contemporary publishers belonging to do called higher caste Hindu Nationalists, Dr. Ambedkar demonstrated his journalistic acumen and capabilities through his editorials for awakening Dalit consciousness against the rigid caste divisions.

In MOOKNAYAK Dr. Ambedkar argued that a society which forecloses opportunities to individuals to intermix with one another was very detrimental to national unity and integration. It thus created a new platform to translate Dalit grievances into an effective, political and organizational language. Mooknayak and Bahishkrut Bharat played an important role focussed on mobilizing Dalits in India, especially in Maharashtra.

Though Dr. Ambedkar's stint as an Editor of "MOOKNAYAK" was short lived because of financial hardships as well as Babasa-

heb's departure to complete his unfinished education in London School of Economics and Gray's Inn in England, yet it definitely helped him to rise to National prominence as a Dalit leader and played an important role in setting the tone of new thinking and awareness, oriented towards mass activism among the suppressed sections of society.

On January 31st, 2024 we are arriving at an historic date commemorating the centenary of "MOOKNAYAK" which made Babasaheb a mouth-piece of his struggle for social liberation.

On behalf of Supreme Council of Sri Guru Ravidass Sabhas, USA we convey our congratulations to the entire community of Babasaheb's followers for celebrating the completion of 103rd anniversary of "MOOKNAYAK".

This commemoration bears a special significance

especially when Manuwadi thinkers in Indian subcontinent are again getting active to undo what Babasaheb labored so hard all his life to accomplish for INDEPENDENT, SOVEREIGN and SECULAR INDIA.

With best wishes

**O. P. BALLEY**  
General Secretary,  
Supreme Council of  
Sri Guru Ravidass Sabhas,  
USA





# How should the Himachal Pradesh government develop Shimla?

The Supreme Court has allowed the lifting of the ban on construction on 17 green belts of Shimla and the core area of the city imposed by the National Green Tribunal in connection with the Himachal Pradesh government's Shimla Development Plan 2041. The Supreme Court in its order has clearly addressed that under the Shimla Development Plan 2041, the Himachal Pradesh government would ensure balance between the growing needs of Shimla's population, and the protection of environment and ecology. "The Shimla Development Plan 2041 has been prepared after detailed discussions with experts and due process thereto, cannot be stalled in entirety thereby putting the entire developmental activities to standstill" the Supreme Court bench said, setting aside orders of National Green Tribunal. The apex further stated that if any citizen has a complaint that any development work would disturb the environment or ecosystem, he or she is free to challenge it.

On 16 November 2017, the National Green Tribunal completely banned any construction in the 17 green belts of Shimla and the core area of the city, and restricted construction to two and a half storeys in the entire planning area of Shimla. On 16 April 2022, the government of Himachal Pradesh approved a new plan to construct three-and-a-half-storey buildings with parking facilities near roads in an area of 22,450 hectares under the Shimla Planning Area for development in the core area and green belts and the rest of Shimla. , but the National Green Tribunal banned this plan too on 12 May 2022.

According to the National Green Tribunal, construction in environmentally sensitive areas increases the damage caused by natural calamities, which violates the principle of sustainable development that results in the loss of public interest. Therefore, the National Green Tribunal banned both the development plans of Shimla. The Supreme Court has now lifted both the bans imposed by the National Green Tribunal and allowed construction to take place.

The Shimla planning area is divided into core, non-core, green belt, and sinking areas on the basis of its topography, environment, and population bearing capacity. The core area includes parts of Mall Road, Lakkar Bazar, Jakhu hills and Summerhill, starting from Victory Tunnel. According to a Supreme Court order, only two-and-a-half storey buildings with park-

ing facilities close to a road are allowed in the core area. Only one-and-a-half storey building is allowed in the green belt area. A parking area can also be constructed if the plot is along the roads. Demolition and reconstruction of old constructed buildings is allowed, but it can be constructed in the same area as the one constructed earlier, there should be no new construction or increase in the constructed area. No tree felling is allowed in the green belt area. According to the Forest Conservation Act, no construction is allowed in the forest area without the permission of the Central government. In the rest of the planning area, permission



has been given to construct three-and-a-half storey buildings. A parking area can also be constructed if the plot is located on a motorable road.

The Supreme Court has given permission to the Himachal Pradesh government to construct buildings in the core area. Only two-and-a-half storey buildings can be built in this area, but now a big problem may arise for the Himachal Pradesh government, what to do with the buildings that are already more than two-and-a-half storeys. Some multi-storied hotels and residential buildings are also built in this core area. Will the rest of these hotels and residential buildings be demolished, keeping only two and a half floors? Apart from these, what will the government do about the buildings that are built near seasonal drains or in landslide zones with a slope of more than 45 degrees? Many buildings in Shimla do not meet environmental norms, which may pose problems for the government of Himachal Pradesh regarding the implementation of the Shimla Development Plan Vision-2041.

Development of any state lags behind due to non-approval of development works. Although the Supreme

Court has given a commendable decision by removing the restrictions imposed by the National Green Tribunal on the implementation of the Shimla Development Plan Vision-2041, time will tell how the Himachal Pradesh government develops Shimla now. Himachal Pradesh is a hilly, earthquake-prone, forested, and snowy state. Here, it is necessary to take the opinion of geologists, environmental experts, and local people before any kind of development. Development works in hilly areas require cutting forests and breaking of mountains. By breaking the mountains or overcutting them, their balance is disturbed and they begin to

slide down, the land begins to erode due to the absence of forests. Any kind of construction in places prone to erosion, landslides and sinking zones can be dangerous. In the months of July and August in 2023, landslides in Summerhill and Krishna Nagar in the core area of Shimla caused massive destruction. According to a report by the Geological Survey of India, Himachal Pradesh has 17,120 places where landslides can occur and 1,357 of them are from Shimla alone.

According to the National Green Tribunal, buildings should not be constructed on slopes of more than 45 degrees in hilly areas, but at present, in some areas of Shimla, buildings are constructed on slopes of 70 to 75 degrees.

The Himachal Pradesh government is developing the city of Shimla to attract more tourists. Tourists come to Shimla for its natural beauty and cool temperature. Why will the tourists come to Shimla if the green tall trees here are cut down and converted into a concrete jungle, and the temperature here which is already rising rapidly due to the development activities of the state government?

The population of Shimla in 2011 was 1,69,578 which is estimated to be 2,32,000 in 2023. According to Shimla Development Plan 2041, it is estimated to be 6.52 lakh by 2041. Therefore, the Himachal Pradesh government has prepared this development plan keeping in view the growth in population of Shimla in the near future and keeping in mind to fulfill its needs. The city of Shimla was established by the Britishers as the summer capital of India in 1864 during the British rule. The city could only support 16,000 people, but now its population has grown 14.5 times of the population for which the city was established.

The government of Himachal Pradesh has to consider that the natural resources of Shimla and the mountains here will be able to bear the weight of such a large population in the coming time. The devastation caused by heavy rains and landslides in 2023 has clearly shown that Shimla cannot bear the burden of more population. If heavy rainfall can cause so much destruction, the Himachal Pradesh government also has to keep in mind that Shimla falls in seismic zone, what will happen to Shimla in case of an earthquake.

If the Himachal Pradesh government wants to really develop Shimla, instead of more constructions, development of counter magnets and satellite towns, it should provide facilities to the traditional villages here and help keep them beautiful and clean. Instead of converting the green belts into concrete jungles, connect them with the ridge, mall road etc. through footpaths, make the roads and footpaths below the mall road and the ridge passable.

In accordance with the opinion of geologists and environmental experts, the development of hilly areas should be in accordance with the topography of the mountains, and the ground conditions. The development plan of Shimla city is also modeled on the pattern of urban development taking place in the plains which may be detrimental to the hilly areas. Himachal Pradesh should be developed on the lines of their own slogan 'Har Ghar Kuchh Kehta Hai'.



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# Journalistic Legacy of Babasaheb Ambedkar



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**Editor-in-Chief** of the esteemed Desh-Doaba and the Ambedkar Times, Prem Chumber, brought to my notice, an obscure facet of Babasaheb Ambedkar's persona, his love and recognition of the intent and efficacy of media and press in generating public awareness and debate which are essential for the larger interests of a healthy polity and society. The mention was in view of the forthcoming anniversary of Babasaheb's first media outfit "The Mooknayak" – Leader of the Dumb, falling on January 31. The Mooknayak was started in January, 1920 by the visionary leader. I thought of writing this piece with a view to touch upon the cursory information available on the journalistic fervor of Babasaheb Ambedkar, not as an expert but as a layman.

It goes without saying that Dr. Ambedkar was one of the best read intellectuals of his times and remains so even today. His liberal education and interaction in the developed countries of both Europe and the Americas helped in fully recognizing the potent role of media and press to shape and set a meaningful public discourse particularly with regard to his agenda and vision to address the amelioration of socially and economically weaker sections of the society based on the lofty ideals of equality, liberty and justice. The first step in this regard came with the launch of the Mooknayak on January 31, 1920 on his return

from abroad. This endeavor could not last long and was closed after about three years. The reasons were obvious – lack of financial resources and Babasaheb's on and off educational pursuits abroad. Later, he founded three more newspapers – Bahishkrut Bharat (1927-1929), Janata (1930-56), and Prabuddha Bharat (1956). He was directly involved in the editorial management of the first

two newspapers, Mooknayak and Bahishkrut Bharat. From 1930 onwards, he delegated the task to his most important colleagues, such as, Devrao Naik, B. R. Kadrekar, G.N. Sahastra buddhe, R.D. Bhandare, and B.C. Kamble. Interestingly, just to register that Babasaheb's approach to address the ills of the society was not narrow; Devrao Naik, B. R. Kadrekar and G.N. Sahastrabuddh were not Dalits.

The newspapers associated with Ambedkar are repositories of vast information on the history of Dalit political activism which was, unfortunately, completely ignored by his opponents and Babasaheb's contribution to free and fair journalism never got due appreciation. S.N. Sahu who was the Press Secretary to President K.R. Narayanan rightly wrote in an article in the Tribune "His journalism was the journalism



of regeneration and reconstruction to unchain the exploited and uplift the excluded. The very titles of the newspapers he established testify to his passion and ardour for journalism for social justice and regeneration. The titles, such as the Mooknayak (Leader of the Dumb), Bahiskrit Bharat (Excluded India), Samata (Equality), Prabuddha Bharat (Enlightened India) and Janata (People) brought out his vision and the content of his editorials flowed from his action which aimed at progressive social transformation".

Babasaheb Ambedkar was one of the votaries of free and fair media. He stipulated all the lofty ideals of freedom of thought and expression in the constitution of India. But later he realized that the media was increasingly becoming a tool of the rich and powerful and bemoaned "Corporate control of media was the bane of our times" and said "Journalism in India was once a profession. It has now become a trade. It has not more moral function than the manufacture of soap. It does not regard itself as the responsible adviser of the public." It is a matter of regret that media in India is increasingly succumbing to the dictates of the money bags and vested political forces. The journalistic legacy of Babasaheb Ambedkar is a potent one to

address the socio-economic issues to transform and reform the society. To prove this I quote from one of his articles published in the Mooknayak and as quoted by Dr B. P. Mahesh Chandra Guru is professor in the Department of Communication and Journalism, University of Mysore "It was not enough for India to be an independent country. She must guarantee equal status in matters religious, social, economic and political, to all classes, offering every man an opportunity to rise in the scale of life and creating conditions favourable to his advancement. There did not exist such a despicable man who, continued the voice in the article, would object to the statement that if the Brahmins were justified in their attack upon and opposition to the unjust power of the British government, the depressed classes would be justified a hundred times more in their opposition to the rule of the Brahmins in case the transfer of power took place. The article asserted that if the protection of the British were withdrawn, those who condescended to look at the untouchables would trample upon them. In another article Ambedkar wrote that the Swaraj in which there were no fundamental rights guaranteed for the depressed classes would not be a Swaraj but a new form of slavery. "Unfortunately, these issues are still alive and required to be addressed head on both by the society and polity.

With this, I conclude with the hope that Babasaheb's potent legacy would ultimately prevail and set the desired standards for the Indian media to be a free and fair organ as the fourth estate of the democratic edifice so laboriously stipulated and visualized by our forefathers.



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