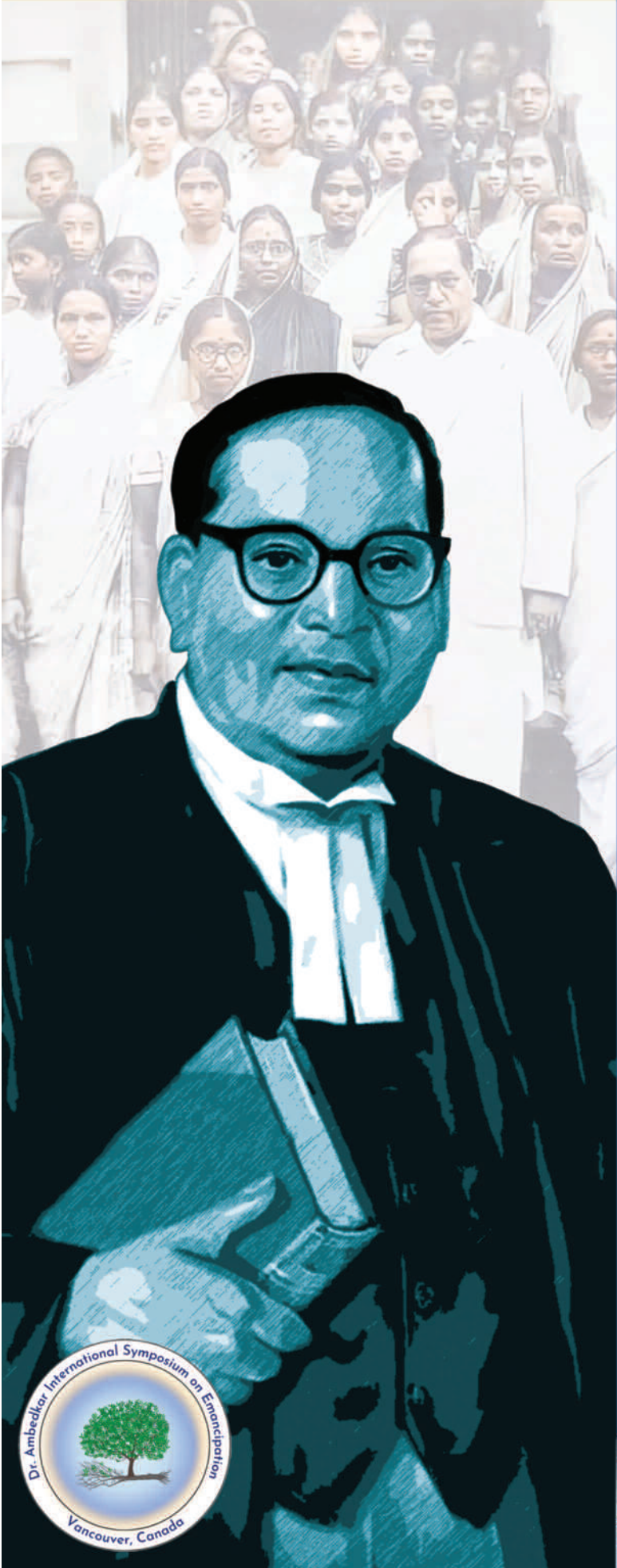


**Dr. Ambedkar International Symposium on Emancipation
April 21 to 26, 2023 | Vancouver, Canada | www.ase2023.ca**



Dalit Emancipation
Rethinking, restructing and rebranding
social, economic and political action





The editorial committee is pleased to present this souvenir edition in support of Dr. Ambedkar International Symposium. Taking on a daunting task such as publishing a magazine would not have been possible if it wasn't for the support of the editorial committee members and the steering committee members. We are grateful to our colleagues Surjit Bains, Harjinder Mal, and Harmesh Chander of the steering committee for the Dr. Ambedkar International Symposium on Emancipation. We are equally grateful to Ratan Paul, Prem Chumber, Dr. Sujata Gaurkhede, Dr. Jas Kehal, and Ashok Dass for their support and advice as the committee members for publishing the souvenir.

What is the purpose behind publishing this souvenir magazine, some may ask?

Largely, it is to capture the momentum as effectively as we can. In this spirit, we are grateful to writers for not only writing and submitting articles, but also, for making plans for attending the symposium if they are able to do so.

We are hoping the souvenir will provide opportunities to further network, exchange ideas, and put forward strategies for achieving emancipation - or at least, developing a measuring stick to measure the progress that is expected to be made on a moving forward basis.

For assessing challenges and developing strategies, the steering committee members clearly wanted to be guided by the fundamental principle of Buddhism - compassion. Therefore, we are grateful to the writers for keeping this principle in mind in their submissions. The result that we have seen from this process is the recognition that we have more in common than our differences. The article by Dr. Jas Karan Kehal highlights that in spite of various views, the fundamental teachings of Lord Buddha are not different from those of Guru Kabir, Guru Ravidass, and perhaps many other social and spiritual teachers. In her article, Manjit Bains skillfully challenges all of us to adopt Dr. Ambedkar as our mentor, and not merely, as a symbolic figure. Similarly, Dr. Sujata Gaurkhede tactfully highlights issues related to literacy and education and challenges some of our assumptions. She also touches on pressures faced by students in academic settings - some of them end up dying by suicide, or as many would see it, are "murdered by the undue pressure, harrassment, and bullying," as we have seen more recently when Dr. Pamposh lost her life, again, whatever the reasons may have been.

The planned symposium on emancipation is not the first one, nor is it the last one. We are hoping it will instigate our minds and help us to rethink, restructure, and rebrand our actions, and most importantly, the movement for emancipation.

We are grateful to all conferences and forums hosted previously, both in India as well as abroad. These forums have all instigated our minds and added fuel to our passion for winning the battle for self-respect. This added fuel helps in keeping the caravan moving forward.

In our acknowledgments, we would like to express our gratitude to our academic, community, media and business partners for their support. It is this broader support that will help us win the battle on self-respect. As Dr. Ambedkar had rightly said:

"With justice on our side I do not see how we can lose our battle....For ours is a battle not for wealth or for power. It is a battle for freedom. It is a battle for the reclamation of the human personality."

With these powerful words of inspiration, I know we will win the battle...battle for human emancipation!

Jai Birdi, co-chair

Param Kainth, co-chair

Anand Balley, Co-ordinator, Delegates Services

Credits

Title Page Design: **Rupa Ajith and Dalit Dastak**

Layout: **Jaspal Singh** ASE2023 Logo Design: **Mohini**



सत्यमेव जयते
Consul General

भारत का प्रधान कौंसलावास, वैंकोवर
CONSULATE GENERAL OF INDIA



MESSAGE

I am glad that Chetna Association of Canada and Ambedkarite International Coordination Society, in partnership with various other organizations, is hosting Dr. Ambedkar International Symposium on Emancipation on his 132nd birth anniversary. I am happy to note the objective of the Symposium which is to strategize creating more inclusive societies with equal opportunities.

I heartily congratulate the Chetna Association of Canada and Ambedkarite International Coordination Society for hosting this Symposium that will celebrate the life and contributions of Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar. I also extend my warm greetings to all the delegates participating in the Symposium.

Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the Chief Architect of Indian Constitution was a scholar par excellence, a philosopher, a visionary, an emancipator and a true nationalist. He led a number of social movements to secure human rights to the oppressed and depressed sections of the society. He stands as a symbol of struggle for social justice and recognized liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life. Dr. Ambedkar firmly believed that our political democracy must stand on the base of social democracy. His struggles gave hope to millions and his efforts to give India such an extensive Constitution can never be forgotten.

I extend my best wishes to the organizers for a successful symposium and to all participants a respectful and meaningful exchange of ideas. It is my earnest wish that the symposium leaves all participants enriched and enlightened and motivated enough to make their own efforts towards creating an inclusive, equal and just society. This would align well with the vision - *Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Prayaas* - of our Prime Minister.


Manish
Consul General

Vancouver,
31 March 2023



BRITISH
COLUMBIA



A MESSAGE FROM PREMIER DAVID EBY

As Premier of British Columbia, I would like to extend my warmest greetings to everyone attending the Dr. Ambedkar International Symposium for Emancipation and Equality Day celebrations.

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was a trailblazer for social justice and equality whose contributions to India's constitution and society have inspired countless individuals worldwide. His legacy reminds us that we all have a role to play in promoting equal rights and opportunities for everyone, regardless of people's backgrounds or circumstances. We have made tremendous progress, but there is still more work ahead. On Equality Day, I encourage all British Columbians to recommit to fighting for a more just and equitable society so we can build a better province for everyone.

The symposium and celebrations provide valuable platforms for connection and dialogue about how we can continue to build a better world. I am confident that the discussions and insights generated will go a long way toward championing and defending human rights in BC and around the world.

I wish you all the best for a productive and inspiring time together!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Eby".

HONOURABLE DAVID EBY, K.C.
PREMIER OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Community Office:

Hon. Raj Chouhan, MLA
Burnaby Edmonds
5234 Rumble Street
Burnaby, BC V5J 2B6

Legislative Office:

Hon. Raj Chouhan, MLA
Burnaby- Edmonds
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4



April 2023

GREETINGS

As the Member of the British Columbia Legislative Assembly for Burnaby Edmonds and Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, I would like to extend my warmest welcome and greetings to participants at the 2023 Dr. Ambedkar International Symposium for Emancipation in Vancouver and Equality Day.

These gatherings are excellent opportunities to share ideas and advance the work of building a more inclusive and equal society where all can live free of discrimination.

I extend my gratitude to AICS Canada and Chetna Association of Canada for their dedication and effort in bringing people together by organizing these important events.

Yours sincerely,

Hon. Raj Chouhan, MLA
Burnaby-Edmonds
Speaker



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ALBERTA

A MESSAGE FROM

HON LEELA SHARON AHEER, ECA
MLA CHESTERMERE - STRATHMORE



As the former Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women and the current Member of the Legislative Assembly for Chestermere-Strathmore, Alberta, I would like to thank everyone for attending the Dr. Ambedkar International Symposium for Emancipation and Equality Day celebrations. Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar pioneered equality, social and economic development, particularly in India's constitution, and worldwide. He encouraged many.

I work tirelessly to affirm my position as an ally within the Alberta Legislature for those seeking shelter from gender-based violence, racism, and female genital mutilation. In May of this year, my work on this matter came to fruition with The Health Professions (Protecting Women and Girls) Amendment Act, 2022, a Bill I championed in Legislature, earning Royal Assent. It is imperative that those of us in the service of our fellow Canadians work to grow our community and prioritize having a human-centered approach to governance and community building. This is how we build resilience, compassion, strength and understanding while building a better Canada.

This symposium will allow thoughtful discussion around strategies, challenges and most importantly solutions regarding social and economic development. Our quality-of-life, perspective and history is reflected in the equal treatment of all people and how we approach society. I am honored to participate in building my knowledge and capacity throughout these discussions.

HONOURABLE LEELA SHARON AHEER, ECA
MLA FOR CHESTERMERE-STRATHMORE



SHRI GURU RAVIDASS SABHA VANCOUVER

March 27, 2023

GREETINGS

On behalf of Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha (Vancouver), it is my pleasure to express our welcome to all delegates attending the Dr. Ambedkar International Symposium and the equality Day Celebrations from April 21, 2023 to December 26, 2023. We wish delegates with having meaningful and insightful dialogue and producing strategies and actions. We recall the International Dalit Conference that was hosted 2003 and it is being remembered as a great event. We hope the 2023 symposium will do the same.

We also express our gratitude to Chetna Association of Canada and the Ambedkarite International Coordination for planning this event in partnership with various academic and community partners.

Wishing for a successful and joyous events.

Sincerely,

Bill Basra, President

Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha (Vancouver)



Greetings for the Symposium and the Dr. Ambedkar Equality Day



Judge Neetu Badhan-Smith, LA County. Steering Committee for the Dr. Ambedkar International Symposium on Emancipation and the Equality Day" congratulates Judge Badhan-Smith on being the first Judge hailing from the "Ravidassia community" of the United States. Judge Badhan-Smith

is also a strong feminist. She was approached to by producers of the series, "Look What She Did", to discuss the legacy of the late Hon. Phoolan Devi. Judge Badhan-Smith described Hon. Devi as: "...a true image of human spirit that cannot be brought down". The webpage for this series states: "Judge Badhan-Smith Neetu is a Los Angeles Superior Court Judge. She previously worked at the Los Angeles County Public Defender's Office (13 years) and the Southern California Housing Rights Center (2 years). She also sits on the Board of Directors for Cornerstone Theater Company. She earned her Bachelor's Degree from UCLA, and law degree from Southwestern University School of Law". Congratulations Judge Badhan-Smith on your accomplishments and for being a role model. Also, thank you for accepting our invitation to join the symposium.

The Program in Buddhism and



THE ROBERT H. N. HO FAMILY FOUNDATION PROGRAM in Buddhism and Contemporary Society

Contemporary Society at UBC has been honored to support the Ambedkar Memorial Lecture since it began in 2017. We hope this year's symposium will allow more people to learn about Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's life and work, and to deepen their appreciation of his struggle for equality and dignity for all peoples. Dr. Ambedkar's choice to adopt Buddhism as his faith changed the face of modern Buddhism itself, an event important to practitioners, scholars, and activists alike. We welcome the opportunity to support the upcoming symposium activities and events, as well as to host a panel discussion entitled, "Contemporary Buddhism: Its Role in Strengthening Human Emancipation Globally" where we dive into Dr. Ambedkar's understanding of Buddhism outlined in his monumental publication, **The Buddha and His Dhamma** (1957). Panelists will consider how "Ambedkar's Buddhism" brings together political, social, and spiritual liberation, understanding these dimensions of human life to be fundamentally linked.

- Jessica L. Main, Director, The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Program in Buddhism and Contemporary Society, University of British Columbia

Baba Saheb Ambedkar's MESSAGE

It is an unfortunate fact that in India the political leader is placed on the same footing as the prophet. Outside India, people celebrate the birthday of their Prophets. It is only in India that the birthdays of both prophets as well as the politicians are celebrated. It is a pity that it should be so. Personally, I do not like the celebration of my birthday. I am too much of a democrat to relish man worship which I regard and respect for a leader, if he deserves them, are permissible and should be enough for both the leader and the followers. But worship of the leader is certainly not permissible. It is demoralizing to both. But suppose this is all beside the point. Once a political leader is placed on the same footing as the Prophet, he must play the role of the Prophet and give a message to his followers in same way the prophets did.

What message can I give to the Untouchables? I cannot give them a message but I can tell them a tale from Greek Mythology and point out the moral. This tale is contained in a Homeric Hymn addressed to the Greek Goddess Demeter. This hymn to Demeter relates how the great Goddess, in the Greek Goddess, in the COURSE OF HER WANDERINGS IN SEARCH OF HER DAUGHTER, CAME TO THE COURT OF Keleos. No one recognized the goddess under the borrowed form of a humble wet-nurse; and queen Metoneira entrusted to her care her latest born child the infant, Demophoon, afterwards known as Triptolemos. Every evening, behind closed doors, while the household was asleep, Demeter took little Demophoon out of his comfortable cradle and with apparent cruelty though moved in reality by great love and desirous of bringing him eventually to the state of godhood, laid the naked child on a glowing bed of embers. The child, Demeter endures the fiery charcoal he gathers strength beyond all hope glorious. But Metoneira becoming anxious, says the legend, burst suddenly one evening into the room where the experiment was being carried on and guided by her mistaken fears, thrust aside the goddess at her work of forging the superman, pushed away the embers and took away the child with the result that she saved the child but lost the superman and eventual god.

What does this tale teach? To my mind, it teaches that greatness can be achieved only by struggle and sacrifice. Neither manhood nor godhood can be obtained without going through the ordeal of fire. Fire purifies, fire strengthens. So does struggle and suffering. No down-trodden man can achieve greatness unless he is prepared for struggle and suffering. He must be ready to sacrifice the comforts and even the necessities of the present for building up his future. To use the language of the Bible for race of life all are called but only few are chosen. Why? The reason is obvious. Most-trodden men fail to achieve greatness in this race of life because they have not the courage nor the determination to sacrifice the pleasures of the present for their future can there be a better and greater message than what is contained in this legend? I can find none. It is the best and most appropriate message I can think of for the Untouchables. I am aware of their struggle and their sufferings. I am aware that in their struggle for liberty they have suffered more than I have. With all this, I can give them no other message. My message is struggle, and more struggle, sacrifice and more sacrifice. It is struggle and struggle alone without counting the sacrifice or suffering that will bring their emancipation. Nothing else will.

The untouchables must develop a collective will to rise and resist and must believe in the sacredness of their task and develop a common determination to achieve their goal. Their task is so great and purpose so noble that all untouchables should join in a prayer and say:

"Blessed are they who are alive to the duty of raising those among whom they are born. Blessed are they who vow to give the flower of their days, their strength of soul and body and their mite, to further the campaign of resistance to slavery. Blessed are they who resolve-come good, come evil, come sunshine, come tempest. Come honor come dishonor- not to stop until the untouchables have fully recovered their manhood."

Anand Bailey

Founding member, AICS

Toronto Canada

City of Burnaby



Proclamation

DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR DAY OF EQUALITY

Whereas Canada is a multicultural society that promotes freedom and equality; and

WHEREAS Concerns about inequality and inequity continue to be experienced globally and efforts to eradicate inequalities need to be supported and strengthened; and

WHEREAS Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, born in India, on April 14, 1891, in a community of Dalits (previously known as 'untouchables'), rose through the ranks and chaired the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly to make and enact the new Constitution of India; and

WHEREAS The Constitution of India, enacted in 1950, stipulates the lofty ideals of Equality, Liberty and Fraternity; and

WHEREAS The dedicated efforts and vision of Dr. Ambedkar to bring about a just social and economic order deserve to be celebrated in India and around the world.

NOW THEREFORE I, MIKE HURLEY, MAYOR OF BURNABY,
DO HEREBY PROCLAIM APRIL 14 AS

“DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR DAY OF EQUALITY”

IN THE CITY OF BURNABY.

Dated this third day
of April, 2023 A.D.

Mike Hurley
MAYOR



The State of Washington



Proclamation

WHEREAS, Washington is home to a diverse population of multiple races and ethnicities encompassing Native American, Black, Hispanic, White, Asian, Pacific Islander, and additional racial and ethnic populations. Diverse communities all over the world continue to experience systemic racism, injustices, and discrimination. The constitution of the USA and the State of Washington is committed to upholding the human rights, dignity, and equality of all Washingtonians; and

WHEREAS, April is a significant month for Dalit communities as this special month includes the birth of important Dalit leaders and social reformers such as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, who led the movement against systemic discrimination based on caste; and

WHEREAS, the life work carried out by Mahatma Jotirao Phule and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar has elevated the lives of millions of marginalized people and women across all classes of population to have a life honoring social, political, economic, and religious equity and provided them with an opportunity to live with dignity and honor in modern India and now in USA; and

WHEREAS, the work of these great social reformers is recognized for the revival of democratic principles in modern India to embrace the principles of compassion and non-violence for a society that leads to equality, liberty, justice, and fraternity; and

WHEREAS, this Month is an opportunity to remember and honor the legacy of dedication to equity, social justice, human rights, and dignity, which continues to inspire the people of Washington and across the World; and

WHEREAS, this month allows the state of Washington to participate and celebrate the liberation of emancipation of millions of marginalized people in India and join the people from this diaspora living and thriving here in Washington; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jay Inslee, Governor of the state of Washington, do hereby proclaim April 2023 as

Dalit History Month

in Washington, and I encourage all people in our state to join me in this special observance.

Signed this 27th day of March, 2023

Governor Jay Inslee





Canada
Province of British Columbia
A Proclamation

ELIZABETH THE SECOND, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom,
Canada and Her other Realms and Territories, Queen, Head of the
Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith

To all to whom these presents shall come – Greeting

WHEREAS British Columbia is a culturally diverse province comprising many peoples and communities, and

WHEREAS Indigenous people, Black people and people of colour in British Columbia continue to experience systemic racism, injustices, discrimination and hate, and the government of British Columbia is committed to addressing all forms of racism and discrimination, and

WHEREAS April is a significant month for Dalit communities, and this special month includes birth and death anniversaries of important Dalit leaders and social reformers in the movement against systemic discrimination based on caste, such as Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Jyotirao Phule, Mangu Ram Mugowalia and Sant Ram Udasi, and

WHEREAS the government of British Columbia acknowledges the strength and resiliency of the Dalit community in overcoming hardships and advocating for social justice and equality for all, and

WHEREAS Dalit History Month is an opportunity to honour, celebrate and reflect on the history, experiences and accomplishments of the Dalit community;

NOW KNOW YE THAT We do by these presents proclaim and declare that April 2022 shall be known as

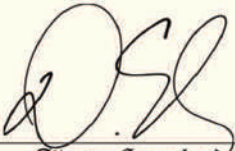
“Dalit History Month”

in the Province of British Columbia.


IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, We have caused these Our Letters to be made Patent and the Great Seal of Our Province of British Columbia to be hereunto affixed.

WITNESS, The Honourable Janet Austin, Lieutenant Governor of Our Province of British Columbia, in Our City of Victoria, in Our Province, this thirty-first day of March, two thousand twenty-two and in the seventy-first year of Our Reign.

BY COMMAND.



Attorney General and
Minister Responsible for Housing
(counter signature for the Great Seal)



Lieutenant Governor

February 13, 2023

On behalf of the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV), I send warmest congratulations to all partner institutions for cohosting the *Dr. Ambedkar International Symposium* for Emancipation and Equality Day 2023.

We are thankful for the dedication of the event planning and implementation teams helping to carry out this critically important anti-casteism work. The number of scholars, community activists, youth, and practitioners from all over the world who have come together to learn and lead change is inspiring.

We are also extremely proud of UFV's South Asian Studies Institute (SASI) for their **Caste Matters** work, fostering real and meaningful transformation on our campuses, within the Fraser Valley, and beyond.

There is much work to be done in enacting true systemic change, but it is through opportunities for dialogue and education that we will continue to move forward.

Once again, please accept UFV's heartfelt gratitude for providing such an opportunity with this symposium.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Mandigo".

Dr. James Mandigo
Acting President and Vice-Chancellor



EDUCATE, AGITATE AND ORGANIZE



Prem Kumar Chumber (Editor-In-Chief)

Ambedkar Times (English) & Desh Doaba (Punjabi)

Email : editor@ambedkartimes.com

not see how we can lose our battle. The battle to me is a matter of joy. The battle is in the fullest sense spiritual. There is nothing material or social in it. For ours is a battle, not for wealth or for power. It is a battle for freedom. It is a battle for the reclamation of human personality” (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 3rd ed. 1971, p: 351, emphasis added).

Babasaheb’s struggle for the uplift of the socially excluded was precisely spiritual in the sense that it intends to restore their lost dignity and make them equal with all the other sections of the rest of the society. For that the method he chooses was democratic-constitutional. Being educated in the oldest democracies in the world, Dr. Ambedkar imbibed the true spirit of democracy and constitutionalism. He wanted his fellow – beings and his countrymen to follow democratic ways for the peaceful resolution of all one problems including the most fatal one – the Untouchability.

In his democratic scheme of conflict resolution, education figures at the very beginning of the social struggle. Hence “educate” comes first in his three stepped slogan of educate, agitate and organize. By education Babasaheb did not mean merely certificates and degrees. For him to educate means to become aware of one’s real life conditions; to be conscious of ones surroundings; to raise objection to the inhuman existence in the society; and to ask for change for the better. “Tell the slaves he is a slave and he will revolt”, that is the real meaning of education. It is such education that will stir agitation within, leading to what Babasaheb called “agitate”. To “agitate” does not mean to organize guerrilla warfare, to do murda bad – murda bab. On the contrary, it means to become aware about ones social conditions and to seek viable steps for the eradications of the causes of the problems. Babasaheb told us that only real and true education could only make us to “agitate”.

And it is this agitation, which is within, that would ultimately help us to “organize”. The true example of which is Babasaheb himself, who after obtaining critical and rational sense through his education felt toofan within and consequently organized three political parties (Independent Labor Party, Scheduled Caste Federation and Republican Party of India) to secure Dalit human rights. Thus the real sequence of the slogan is: Educate Agitate and Organize.

Educate, Organize and Agitate is the most misquoted slogan of Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar. Its true version is: Educate Agitate and Organize. 'Organize' comes at the end. And 'Agitate is in the middle of 'Educate, 'Organize'. Babasaheb uttered these precious words at the end of his historic speech delivered at the All-India Depressed Classes Conference (July 18-19, 1942 at Nagpur), which was convened to create an All-India organization with distinct aims and purposes in co-operation with all the inter-provincial forces. It was at this very conference that a declaration was made about the formation of the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation. Below are given the exact words of the concluding part of this historic speech of Babasaheb, as cited in his ‘fascinating biography’ authored by Dhananjay Keer:

“My final words of advice to you are educate, agitate and organize; have faith in yourself. With justice on our side, I do

Read more www.ambedkartimes.com

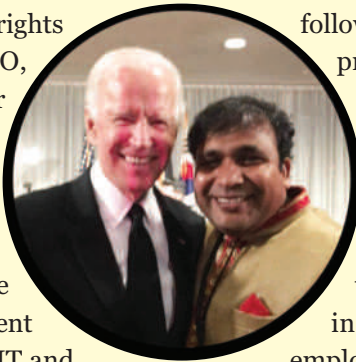


ਜ਼ਾਤੀ ਵਿਤਕਰੇ ਦੀ ਦਰਦਨਾਕ ਹੂਕ
ਸਮੇਂ ਦਾ ਬੇਬਾਕ ਸੱਚ ਤੇ ਜਾਗਣ ਦਾ ਹੋਕਾ
ਦਿੰਦਾ ਤੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਿੰਘ
ਦਾ ਨਾਟਕ :
ਲੱਛੂ ਕਬਾੜੀਆ



Team ASE2023 commend Dr. Saheb Singh for educating masses and transforming societies through theater and democratic means. Dr. Singh will be performing Lachu Kabadiya in the Vancouver area in July 2023.

Deelip Mhaske, a prominent India-born rights activist and founder of a US-based NGO, congratulates organizers of the Dr. Ambedkar International Symposium on Emancipation and Equality Day Celebrations (Vancouver, 2023) and extends his welcome to all delegates. In 2017, Mhaske "urged the UN leadership to work towards ending caste discrimination by 2030." Mhaske is President of the Foundation for Human Horizon, an IIT and Harvard Business School alumnus, highlighted the need to



follow Dalit icon Babasaheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar's principles to achieve a world free of caste. "The duty of the (world) leaders ...is to the serve citizens of the United Nations and work together to move from fear of each other, to trust in each other — trust in the values that bind us and trust in Ambedkar's principals to serve and protect humanity," said Mhaske in a statement. Mhaske is also a federal employee and a member of the President Biden White House Technology Team.

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Ambedkar Times Weekly

‘ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੁਆਬਾ’

‘ਅੰਬੇਦਕਰ ਟਾਈਮਜ਼’

ਆਨਲਾਈਨ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਲਈ ਕਲਿੱਕ ਕਰੋ:

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DALIT BAHUJAN ICONS

The steering committee for the Dr. Ambedkar International Symposium on Emancipation and Equality Day Celebrations (2023) is pleased to develop a list of seventy-five icons, heroes and heroines, who emerged from the Dalit-Bahujan ancestry and made immense contributions towards human emancipation.

Sixty icons on our list are no longer living among us. However, they are legends and the legacy they have left is immortal. The fifteen individuals are among us and are continuing to make a difference in "our lives".

We chose the number 75- to mark the 75 years of India's independence from British Colonialism, which resulted in India seeing a Constitution that values justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity. The order of list does not suggest any ranking as we believe contributions of all are commendable and noteworthy.

Compiling a list such as this would not have been possible without the guidance and support of Prof. Dr. Vivek Kumar, a renowned sociologist, academia, and a community organiser. We value the role and support of Professor Kumar. We appreciate Prof. Dr. Kumar for inaugurating the Dr. Ambedkar Memorial Lecture in Vancouver in 2016. Thank you Prof. Kumar for your continued support and inspiration.

It is our honour to present the following list of Dalit-Bahujan 75 "heroes and heroines":

1. Lord Gautam Buddha
2. Ananda
3. Samrat Ashok
4. Sanghamitra
5. Guru Ravidass
6. Guru Kabir
7. Guru Chokhamela
8. Guru Dadu Dayal
9. Guru Valmiki

10. Guru Ghasidass
11. Narayana Guru
12. Mahatma Jyotirao Phule
13. Mahatma Ayyankali
14. Lahuji Raghoji Salve
15. Periyar E. V. Ramasamy
16. Shahu Chhatrapati
17. Baba Saheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar
18. Manyawar Saheb kanshi Ram
19. Sant Gadge Baba
20. Jogendera Nath Mandal
21. Rettaimalai Srinivasan
22. Gopal Baba Walangkar
(also known as Gopal Krishna)
23. Giani Ditt Singh
24. Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia
25. Annabhau Sathe
26. BHAGYA REDDY VARMA
27. Bhai Nirmal Singh Ji Khalsa
28. Dr. Bhadant Anand Kausalyan
29. Heera Dom
30. Munshi Hari Prasad Tamta
31. Ayyankali
32. Bhai Jaita Ji
33. Uda Devi Pasi
34. Savitribai Phule
35. Fatima Sheikh
36. Muktabai Salve
37. Jhalkari Bai
38. Ramabai Ambedkar
39. Shantabai Dhanaji Dani
40. Gurdas Ram Alam
41. Manik Chand Jatav-vir
42. Master Makhan Kranti
43. Lalai Singh Yadav
44. Sant Ram Udasi
45. Nanakchand Rattu
46. KR Narayanan
47. Shaheed Sant Ramanand
48. DC Ahir
49. Vasant Moon
50. Prof. Gurnam Singh Mukatsar
51. Namdeo Dhasal
52. BP Mandal
53. Seth Kishan Dass
54. Om Prakash Valmiki
55. Shanti Swaroop Baudh
56. Raj Kumar Kamble

57. Lal Singh Dil
58. Harbhajan Singh Lakha
59. Narinder Biba
60. Gurdial Singh Rahi

Dalit-Bahujan heroes and heroines who are continuing to inspire the and contribute towards transforming societies:

61. Behan Kumari Mayawati ji
62. Droupadi Murmu
63. Lahori Ram Bali
64. Nandu Ram
65. Mohan Dass Naimishray
66. Adv. Dr. Santokh Lal Viridi
67. Chief Justice Balakrishnan
68. Mohan Lal Phillauria
69. Hema Dass
70. Kalpana Saroj
71. Ashok Khade
72. Shridhar Kamble
73. Vandana Katariya
74. Ashok Dass
75. Mohinder Kaur Middha

Professor Dr Vivek Kumar and the steering committee believe this list is not final as no list can ever be final. Everyone who has contributed to the social transformation, whether or not she or he is on this list, holds high regards for us.

Thank you.

Team ASE2023



Ms. Anita Huberman of Surrey Board of Trade and Jai Birdi, co-chair (ASE2023).

Kabir - Buddha's Apostle

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Without squandering words and space of this prestigious souvenir magazine for Dr. Ambedkar International symposium 2023, lets deliberate on the reason Babasaheb regarded Gautam Buddha and Saint Kabir his influencers besides Mahatma Phule. Were Buddha and Kabir of similar ideology in different era?

Rather than following life history and events of Buddha and Kabir (which has been diluted and polluted by Brahminical conspiracy), I am going to focus on their teachings and sermons so as to establish ideological connection between these two revolutionary thinkers.

As far as Buddha's philosophy is concerned, for me it is nothing else than Babasaheb's Navayana Buddhism which he reintroduced to the world in his magnum opus- The Buddha and his Dhamma. And for comparison, Kabir's dohas are self explanatory.

If Buddha propagated Madhyam Marg, Kabir stated

हृद में चले सो मानव, बेहद चले सो साध ।
हृद बेहद दोनों तजे, ताको बता अगाध ॥

The one who is confined in limitations is human, the one who roams into unlimited, is a Sadhu. The one who has dropped both limited and unlimited, unfathomable is his being and understanding.

Another straightforward one is

अति का भला न बोलना, अति की भली न चूप,
अति का भला न बरसना, अति की भली न धूप

The basics of Buddhism lie in ashtangmarg of Buddha as described by Babasaheb. Are Kabir's couplets in synchrony with Buddha's Ashtangmarg? Let's examine the eightfold path one by one:-



1. Samma Ditti (Right Views)

Samma Ditti requires a free mind and free thought.

Samma Ditti requires giving up of belief in the efficacy of rites and ceremonies, to have disbelief in the sanctity of the Shastras, abandonment of superstition and supernaturalism.

Kabir says

बेद-कितेब छाँड़ि देऊ पाँडे, ई सब मन के भरमा ॥
कहहिं कबीर सुनहु हो पाँडे, ई तुम्हरे हैं करमा ॥

मल मल धोए शरीर को, धोए न मन का मैल ।
नहाए गंगा गोमती, रहे बैल के बैल ॥

बाँहण गुरु जगत का, साधू का गुरु नाहिं ।
उरझि पुरझि करि मरि रह्या, चारिउँ बेदाँ माहिं ॥

2. Samma Sankappo (Right Thought/Attitude)

teaches that aims, aspirations, and ambitions shall be noble and praiseworthy and not ignoble and unworthy.

Kabir

कबीरा गर्व ना कीजिये, ऊंचा देख आवास ।
काल पड़ो भू लेटना, ऊपर जमसी घास ॥

Don't be so proud and vain, looking at your high mansion
Death makes one lie on bare land, and grass will grow thereon

माया मुई न मन मुवा, मरि मरि गया सरीर ।
आसा त्रिस्त्राँ ना मुई, यों कहि गया कबीर ॥

Therefore, leaving the pursuit of Maya and walking on the right Marga.

3. Samma Vacca (Right Speech)

It refers to communications that are truthful, straightforward, uplifting, and non-harmful, thus abstaining from lying, divisive speech, abusive speech, and idle chatter.

Kabir

साँच बराबरि तप नहीं, झूठ बराबर पाप ।
जाके हिरदै साँच है ताकै हृदय आप ॥

पहले शब्द पहचानिये, पीछे कीजे मोल ।
पारखी परखे रतन को, शब्द का मोल ना तोल ॥

ऐसी वाणी बोलिए, मन का आपा खोय ।
औरन को शीतल करे, आपहु शीतल होय ॥

4. Samma Kamanto (right behavior)

It teaches that every action should be founded on respect for the feelings and rights of others and course of conduct which is most in harmony with the fundamental laws of existence.

Kabir

एक बूंद एकै मल मूत्र, एक चम् एक गूदा ।
एक जोति थैं सब उत्पन्ना, कौन बाह्न कौन सूदा ॥

जाति न पूछे साधू की, पूछ लीजिये ज्ञान ।
मोल करो तलवार की, पडा रहेन दो म्यान ॥

5. Samma Ajivo.

It emphasizes livelihood based on correct action and non-exploitation and without causing injury or injustice to others.

Kabir

दिन को रोजा रहत है, राति हनत है गाय ।
यहां खून वै वंदगी, क्यों कर खुशी खोदाय ॥

करता था तो क्याँ रह्या, अब करि क्याँ पछताइ ।
बोवै पे ? बबूल का, अम्ब कहाँ तैं खाइ ॥

6. Samma Vyayamo (Right Endeavour)

It refers to intentionally directing our life energy toward the transformative path of creative and healing action that promotes wholeness and so moves us closer to conscious evolution.

Kabir

काल करे सो आज कर, आज करे सो अब ।
पल में परलय होएगी, बहुरि करेगा कब ॥

काम क्रोध मद लोभ की, जब लग घट में खान ।
कबीर मूरख पंडिता, दोनों एक समान ॥

जहाँ दया तहा धर्म है, जहाँ लोभ वहां पाप ।
जहाँ क्रोध तहा काल है, जहाँ क्षमा वहां आप ।



Mr. Mehar Malik, Secretary, Punjab Press Club, Jalandhar- key speaker, 'Constitutional freedom of speech and expression', March 5, 2023. Ambedkar Mission Society Punjab. MC- Mr. Baldev Bharadwaj

7. Samma Satti (Right Mindfulness)

calls for mindfulness and thoughtfulness. It means constant wakefulness of the mind. It means never being absent-minded and always being aware of what one is doing.

Kabir

तू कहता कागद की लेखी मैं कहता आँखिन की देखी ।
पंडित मुलां जो लिखि दीआ ॥ छडि चले हम कछू न लीआ ॥ 3 ॥

जाति न पूछे साधू की, पूछ लीजिये ज्ञान ।
मोल करो तलवार का, पडा रहने दो म्यान ॥

8. Samma-Samadhi (Right Concentration)

Meditation/Samadhi literally means "fixed, absorbed in." It entails immersing one's entire being in several levels or modes of consciousness and awareness. Samma Samadhi gives a habit to the mind to think of good, and always to think of good.

Kabir

पाहन पूजे हरि मिले, तो मैं पूजू पत्थर
याते चाकी भली जो पीस खाए संसार ॥

माला फेरत जुग भया, फिरा न मन का फेर,
कर का मनका डार दे, मन का मनका फेर ।

माटी का एक नाग बनाके, पूजे लोग लुगाया ।
जिंदा नाग जब घर में निकले, ले लाठी धमकाया

Though the topic requires elaborate explanation to deliver justice, the simple language of Kabir's dohas and the uncomplicated sermons of Buddha point to the same doctrine in a different epoch.



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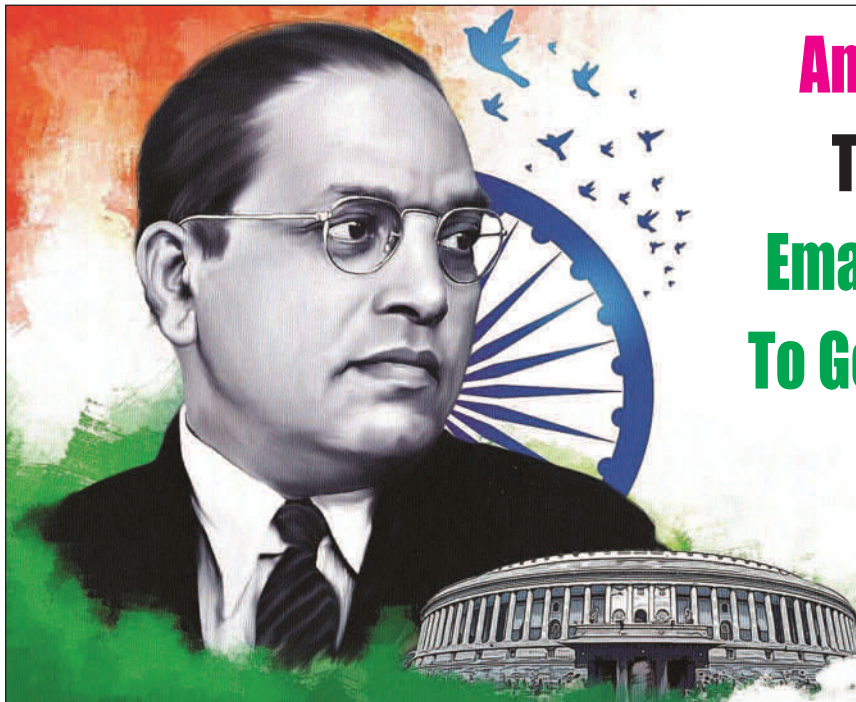
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Annihilation Of Caste Is The Only Solution for Emancipation of Bahujans To Get Equality In The Globe

Professor Dr. Gali Vinod Kumar

*Dean Faculty of Law
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First of all Jai Bheem to all my brothers and sisters from the globe on this Historical Occasion of Dr. Ambedkar International Symposium on emancipation and celebrations of 132nd Birth Anniversary of Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar as the equality day (April 14th, 2023) organizing by Chetana Association of Canada, Ambedkarite International Co.ordination Society of Canada, the primary object of the symposium and the Equality Day to enhance equality, justice, equity and inclusion to overcoming caste based atrocities and systematic discrimination in India and at the global level. It is fortunate for me to share my views, the above said issues. Annihilation of caste system is the only solution for emancipation of bahujans to get equality in the globe, no other option except the abolition of the caste system because our four fathers struggled and we are struggling since centuries till the date to defeat the obstacles of the caste inequalities and discrimination.

I am proud to say that, I am Professor from Osmania University which recognized first time in the history of India the world intellectual Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's merit recognised my university on January 12th 1953. After the resolution passed against caste discrimination by Seattle city with council on 21st February (local time) 2023 in the United States of America as 1st City in the globe by the member Kshama Sawanth sponsored resolution to establish "caste" as a protected category under the city non discrimination policy. After this resolution once again caste discrimination discussed and debated throughout of the world.

Caste discrimination is a world problem now:

Dalits are Discriminated people all over the world. Now Caste is not a internal problem of India, it is the International

problem. The entire world and UN Bodies recognized Caste Discrimination because of the crusader of Bahujans, Baba Saheb Ambedkar, the BAMCEF Movements and all other NGO's who are working against Caste Discrimination in the globe. Indian Dalits are the largest and most significant segment of the Discriminated Population of the World.

Accordingly to Historians caste system is universal. It has migrated from India only to the globe. In Southern and Eastern Africa, Maritius, Surinam, Malaysia, Karabiyan, European countries like Britain, and in Northern America most of the Caste Hindus are living. In 19th Century 33 lakh of labour were taken to Maritius, Trinidad, Jamaica, Gayana, Fiji and another. 15 lakh labours were taken to Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Burma. 172 lakh migrated to Kenya, Tanzania, 30 lakh migrated to Gulf countries. 40 lakh people migrated to America, Britain, Canada and Australia. This migration was accompanied by migration of Untouchability too. Thus Untouchability is a universal problem now. The Indian Government shows it as internal problem of India. Apartheid was a systematic form of institutionalized Racial Discrimination and segregation practiced by the Government of South Africa as its official policy since 1948. Under apartheid the Black South Africans were not allowed to participate in the political life of the country and were subjected to hundreds of repressive laws and regulations. The General Assembly of the United Nations and the Security Council have declared Apartheid as being incompatible with the United Nations Charter, termed that policy as a crime against humanity and have called on all states to take and promote action to end it. Did not India raise South Africans Apartheid issue before the world bodies and discuss it even

in its own Parliament Ignoring the South African Government's protest that Apartheid is an Internal Issue and outsiders have no right to interfere with it? India has observed the International Anti-Apartheid year 1978-79. This what Dr. Ambedkar, the most revolutionary figure in Modern India has stated about the contrast between slavery and Untouchability.

"The Romans had their slaves, the Spartans their helots, the British their villeins, the Americans their Negroes and Germans their Jews. So the Hindus have their Untouchables, but none of these can be said to have been called upon to face a fate which is worse than the fate of the untouchables. Slavery, serfdom, Villeinage have all vanished. But Untouchability still exists and bids fair to last as long as Hinduism. The Untouchable is worse off than a Jew. The sufferings of Jew are of his own Creation. Not so are the sufferings of the Black Untouchables. They are the result of cold, calculating Hinduism which is not less sure in its effect of producing misery than brute force is. The Jew is despised but not denied all opportunities to rise. Yet nobody seems to take any notice of the Untouchables much less espouse their cause."

In his anguish he has also stated:

"Indians have not written about Untouchables for they lack courage and honesty and the foreigners have avoided the subject for fear of offending the orthodox Indian Masses? If Apartheid is not the internal problem of South African Government the problem of Untouchables in India, which is far worse, cannot be the internal problem of India. If India could condemn Apartheid in the world bodies and call upon the Developed world not to maintain economic and defence relationship with racist Pretoria regime there can be reason why the problem of the Untouchables in India could be said to be an Internal problem of India and that cannot raised and discussed in the world bodies. Therefore, the reason for India refusing to accede to the optional protocol of the United Nations Organization is either that India considers that there is no violation of the Human Rights of the Untouchables in India or that it considers the problem to be so bad to be not in its interest to be discussed in world bodies. Even the super powers like U.S.A. and Britain have concentrated for discussion about Apartheid in their countries in Durban World Conference. Why is the Indian Government shying to recognize Caste Discrimination in U.N. Bodies because it is a world problem? Due to this millions of untouchables human rights are violating by the civil society not only in India, but also at the global level. In this juncture it is right time to discuss and make a law by UN Bodies to include caste discrimination as a global problem and make a law to stop the Heinous Crimes Committing by so called civil society in the name of untouchability and other caste related discriminations in India as well as at the global level.

India should recognize and ratify the caste discrimination like Racial discrimination in South Africa and other European Countries as a Heinous Crime. I was discussed this issue in the UN world conference, held at Darban City, South Africa in September 2001 as a Indian Delegate and student of Master's in Law, University College of Law, Kakatiya University, Warangal, Telangana State, India. I was participated and raised this issue in the United Nation Organizations Non Governmental Plat Forms to include the caste discrimination on par with the racial discrimination but the Govt. of India opposed strongly where there is no caste discrimination in India which they were claimed Dr. Ambedkar is a father of Indian Constitution and abolish untouchability and practicing untouchability as a crime. But the NGOs from all over the world accepted the caste discrimination on par with the racial discrimination.

Conclusion: The Government of India not recognising the caste discrimination on par with the racial discrimination by making all efforts at United Nations Organization bodies and all Dalit activities conducted at Global, National and International movements against caste discrimination and abolition of caste system in India and elsewhere in the globe. Hence I am requesting this April gathering to fight for annihilation of the caste system is the only solution for emancipation of bahunans to get equality in the globe.



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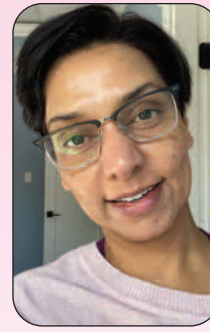
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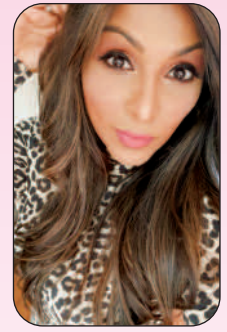
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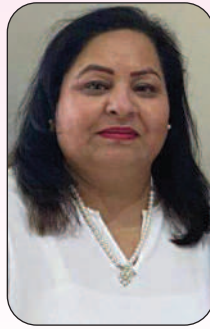
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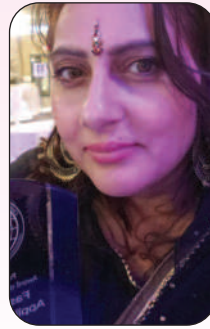
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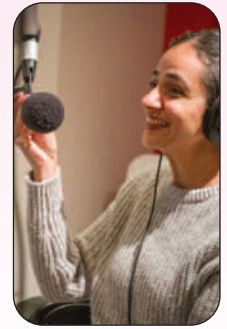
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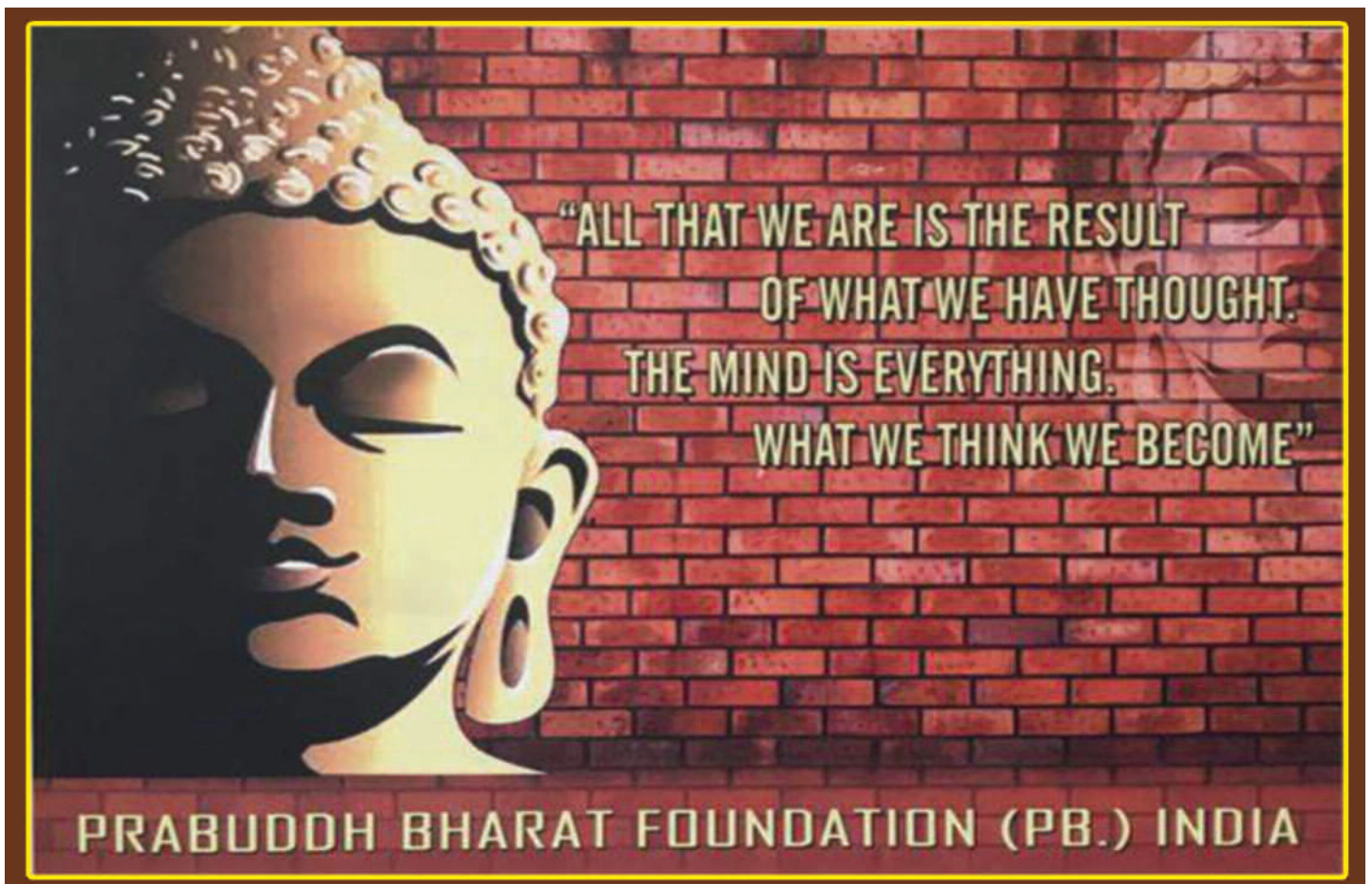
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Simran Kranti



Dr. Sharanjit Kaur Sandhra



HOW CAN BUDDHISM BE BETTER UNDERSTOOD AND INCORPORATED AT ALL LEVELS?

India is populated with eight different religions, Hindu being one of the most popular religions. However, there are also many other religions including Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and adherents of folk religions. But specifically, I will be writing about Buddhism and how neo-Buddhism is different from other practices of buddhism, and how it can be better understood. Firstly, what is neo-Buddhism and its origin? During the 1930s, after Dr. Ambedkar published multiple series of books and articles arguing that Buddhism was the only way for the Untouchables to gain equality. Afterwards he created neo-buddhism as a radical phenomenon that offered strong psychological consolar to the struggling Dalit masses. Neo-Buddhism is a socio-political movement and also a religion. Its purpose was to elevate former “untouchables” and help achieve self-respect. Furthermore, it was hoped that this would gather more people to create a powerful community to battle the ruling Brahmanical elites.

Unlike other practices, Neo-Buddhism does not accept the three main branches of buddhism which are, the Theravada, the Mahayana, or the Vajrayana instead they created a fourth yana or method of spiritual practice named Navayana. This is a kind of modernistic Enlightenment version of the Dhamma. It is known as Bhimayana after Ambedkar's first name Bhimrao, meaning "New vehicle," refers to B.R.Ambedkar's interpretation of Buddhist philosophy. Each main branch represents a different means of carrying the practitioner across the ocean of samsara to the shore of enlightenment. Moreover, Dr. Ambedkar's idea of Buddhism defies many of the main rules of Buddhism. Another thing that is different is that original Buddhism practices originated 2500 years ago while Neo-Buddhism originated in the 1950s. Also Original Buddhists believe that Arya means noble while Neo Buddhists believe that Arya is a race. It also achieves self-respect while others focus on other achievements. Neo Buddhism is also the only practice that has 22 vows. Some examples are “I do not believe in the

incarnation of God," "I shall have no faith in 'Gauri', Ganapati and other gods and goddesses of Hindus nor shall I worship them." Also original Buddhist follow books like Dhramapada, Tripatika (Pali Cannon), Sutra Pitaka, Padma Sutra while Neo Buddhists follow a book called "The Buddha and his Dharma" which was written later.

For someone, Buddhism is difficult to understand especially when you don't know what to do or speak the language used in the practices. In addition, people may think it has a complex history and system of belief. Some ways you can get a better understanding of Buddhism is by glancing at some websites related to Buddhism such as history, and what their purpose is. You could also visit some small buddhist events in Canada.

According to Google, some ways all ages can incorporate Buddhism in their daily life is to find ways to meditate sometimes, or practice Dharma at work. You can do that by trying to remember the kind heart and the motivation you cultivated in the morning which will remind yourself that you don't want to harm anybody.

Aastha Khobragade Age: 14

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Man sentenced for posting casteist offensive message online

A man has been given 18 weeks custodial sentence after posting casteist offensive message on social media. He was arrested following a Thames Valley Police investigation and was charged with an offence contrary to section 127(1)(a) and (3) of the Communications Act 2003 for sending an offensive/indecent/obscene/ menacing message/matter.

Mr Amrik Singh Bajwa posted the grossly offensive message on Tik Tok on 19 July last year. The post deliberately targeted the so called 'Chamaar' and 'Choohra' communities [described as Dalit] hurling sexual abuse, obscenities with threats of rape. In the Tik Tok message, Mr Bajwa also glorified the so-called 'Jat' community for sexually abusing Dalit women in Indian villages as a matter of pride.

Members of Bhagwan Valmik Sabha, Southall, Shri Guru Ravidas Sabha (UK and Europe), Shri Guru Ravidas Sabha, Gravesend, Sikh Federation were present outside Slough Magistrates Court during the court proceedings.

This matter first went to the Crown Prosecution Service for a charging decision but was subsequently escalated to the Attorney General for a final decision. It is perhaps the first case of its kind in the UK where Caste based slurs and sexual hate speech has been prosecuted.

A spokesperson for Caste Watch UK said 'It was criminally reckless for Mr Amrik Singh Bajwa to post this casteist material online for others to view. It shows the contempt of one caste group for another caste group, a practice familiar in countries like India and shows signs of replication in Britain. His criminal conviction will send a strong message that such caste hate speech and abuse will not be tolerated in Britain'.



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"Education is the passport to the future" ~ Malcolm X.

Caste in academic settings is now being experienced globally. How can universities outside of India equip themselves so caste-based discrimination does not occur in academic settings? write an article of 500 words.

Gurpreet Singh

Email: Adv.gurpreet.sb@gmail.com

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With the growing trend of migration of south Asian communities to other countries in search of better education, opportunities and exposure, one thing that they have brought along with their minds and money is 'caste'. For some, emigration is a privilege and for others it is a way to escape caste. But the truth is that even thousands of miles have fallen short when it comes to outrun the ghost of caste. The perpetuation of caste, particularly in educational institutions, reflects

the lack of proper addressal of caste discrimination. Educational institutions are supposed to be just and fair spaces for learning and growth. Consciously or unconsciously, when these spaces allow any form of discrimination to perpetuate, the fundamental duty of educational institutions is violated, that is to be safe, fair and inclusive.

The effects of caste-based discrimination have been historically profound, including feelings of exclusion and marginalization, as well as barriers to academic and professional success. To address this issue in academic settings, universities must take a comprehensive and proactive approach. The first step in that direction is to raise awareness about caste-based discrimination and its consequences through education and training programs for students, faculty, and staff, as well as through public events and media campaigns. Increased understanding about the issue will result in reduced stigma and hence more inclusive and equitable space. Another crucial step is to add 'caste' to institution's anti-discriminatory policies and to develop procedures to address caste-based discrimination. Formation of a committee dedicated to this issue, as well as developing guidelines, best practices and framework for responding to incidents of caste discrimination should be included in it.

In addition to this, a support system which includes counseling services, advocacy resources, and peer support



groups be developed for the victims of caste discrimination. Another important step would be to engage with affected communities and to involve them in development of policies and programs, and decision-making groups. By doing so, universities can ensure that their efforts are informed by the experiences and perspectives of those who are actually affected by the issue. To create a culture of inclusion and diversity, dialogue and understanding among different communities be facilitated, and achievements of communities affected by caste discrimination be celebrated along the lines of 'Black History Month'. Recruitment and admission process should be fair and transparent, and adequate representation of every community must be ensured. Finally, universities should collaborate with other institutions at all levels that are already striving for a casteless society.

Preventing caste-based discrimination requires multi-faceted and sustained collective efforts. This is possible only if there is awareness about the issue and empathy towards the affected ones. Educational institutions have the duty to fulfill this strenuous task of providing a safe space for everyone to flourish to the fullest of their capacity without any fear of discrimination or bias by providing equal opportunities to every individual. Delay in adopting these measures could result in long-lasting impacts not only on affected individuals but on society.

Future of Dalits in Amritkaal

Arun Kumar

General Secretary

Federation of Ambedkarite & Buddhist Organisations, UK

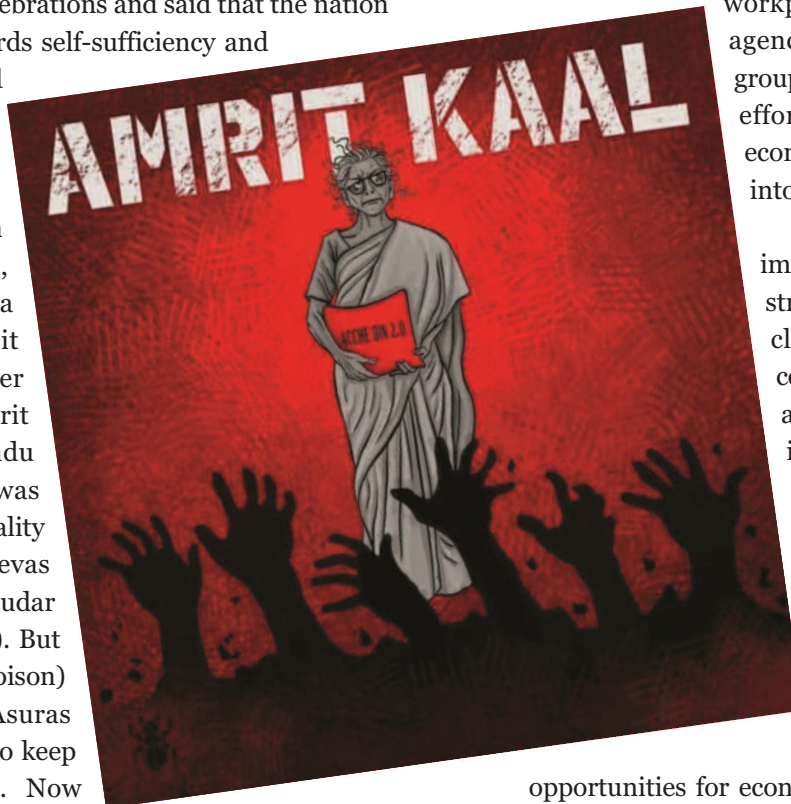
Amritkaal somehow is connected to religion. It is a Vedic term signifying a perfect time to start a new venture. Prime Minister Narendra Modi used this term during the 75th Independence Day celebrations and said that the nation would move forward towards self-sufficiency and self-reliance. This period would be a golden era of prosperity with economic growth and social justice.

In one of the talks on YouTube Channel, AmbedkarNama, Chandra Bhan Prasad, a Dalit ideologue gave another explanation of Amrit (nectar). In the Hindu mythology, Amrit was produced for the immortality and good fortune of devas (Hindu gods) during Smudar Manthan (churning of sea). But at the same time, vish (poison) was produced for Asuras (demons) either to kill or to keep them under domination. Now question arises who were Asuras.

They were nothing but aboriginal inhabitants of India and modern day Scheduled Castes/Tribes and OBCs. In the ancient times, they were fighting against oppressive gods for their basic human rights and that is why they were termed as demons. They were treated worse than animals. They were neither allowed to own property nor allowed to do any profitable work. Instead they were forced to do menial jobs and serve others. Educational rights were taken away from them. Socially they were so much degraded that even their shadow was considered polluting the caste Hindus. From ancient times this Amrit was not meant to help the marginalised communities.

It is necessary to evaluate the prospects of Dalits during the Amritkaal. The Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) are among the most socially, economically and educationally disadvantaged groups in India. They needed

special consideration for their socio-economic development. With the life long struggle of Dr Ambedkar, affirmative action was provided for the marginalized groups with representation in education, employment, government programmes, scholarships and politics. Based on constitutional provisions, central and state governments are given power to set reserved quotas or seats in colleges, workplaces and government agencies for disadvantaged groups such as Dalits. It is an effort to give them socio-economic justice and bring them into mainstream



Ambedkar recognized the importance of education in his struggle to free Dalits from the clutches of slave like conditions. He saw education as an important tool for improving the overall well-being of the oppressed and underprivileged classes. He believed that education was a moral weapon to fight against all forms of injustice, exploitation and oppression. Education also opens more venues and opportunities for economic mobility. He wanted a free and compulsory education. As a result of the education and reservation, the economic conditions of a large number of Dalits have improved. In the past seventy years a Dalit middle class has also emerged. Some of the government employees and their children have been able to set up their own small or medium businesses.

Presenting the Union budget 2022, the Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman said, "We are marking Azadi ka Mahaotsav and have entered into Amritkaal, the 25 year long lead up to India's 100 year of Independence." She further added, "The budget lays a parallel track of a blueprint for the Amritkaal, which is futuristic and inclusive, directly benefitting youth, women, farmers, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes."

Now let us see the future of Dalits in Amritkaal. It is not a hiding fact that the inflation has rocketed sky high and unemployment has gone up in recent years. Most people

affected are the marginalised who have no regular source of income and vast of them are Dalits. With the introduction of privatisation, liberalisation, globalisation and disinvestments, many government industries and public sector undertakings have already been sold off. As a result, thousands of jobs in the public sector have been lost. As there is no reservation in the private sector, Dalits have a very little chance to get employment in the private sector. Education has become a business. Private schools are mushrooming day by day. Government schools are closing down or the standard of education has gone down so low that nobody wants to send their children to these schools. Private school fees are so high that they are beyond the reach of poor and only a few middle class Dalits can afford. Most of the Dalit children end up in government schools and many drop off before or after matriculation. There is a post matric scholarship scheme run by the government of India where SC/ST students studying in the post matric classes are awarded scholarships. Under this scheme, the limit of annual income of the parents/guardians is Rs. 2.50 lakh. The income limit is so low that not many students can avail this scheme. It seems that the income limit is imposed to stop Dalit students getting higher education. Previously there was no limit of annual income for this scheme.

The total Union budget 2023-24 is Rs 49,90,842.73 crores and the total allocation for the welfare of the Scheduled Castes is Rs 1,59,126.22crores (3.1%) and for the Scheduled Tribes is Rs 1,19,509.87crores (2.31%) when the total population of SC/STs is around 25% of the whole population of India. It has been noticed in the past that most of the allocated funds lapsed as they were not spent. Despite the pressing needs for the welfare of SC/STs, significant portion of the allocated funds are diverted to other projects that are nothing to do with Dalit welfare. Dalit education is needed on priority basis. Otherwise Dalits will end up from where they started before Independence and the hard work done by our forefathers will go in vain.

For centuries, Dalits have faced discrimination, marginalisation, stigma and violence. National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reported that a Scheduled Caste person faced crime every ten minutes in India. The numbers have cumulated to a total of 50,291 registered in 2020, an increase of 9.4% from the previous year and cases against Scheduled Tribes also increased by 9.3% to a total of 8,272 in that year. According to NCRB data for 2021, there are a total of about 50,000 crimes and more than 8,000 crimes of violence against Dalit Adivasi women. However just Rs 150 crores of the budget is set aside to combat atrocities against Dalit women out of the total Rs 500crores allocated for the implementation of Prevention of Atrocities Act (PoA) and

Prevention of Civil Rights (PCR). In actual fact atrocities cases are much more in number as most of the cases go unreported. When it comes to atrocities on Dalits, efforts are made to dilute the seriousness of the violence and shield the culprits.

Dalits face a grave situation in the future. Looking at the ground reality, the ideas of social democracy and social justice appears to be withered away. The gap between rich and poor is widening and the most affected are Dalits. Based on the current scenario, it appears that the Amritkaal won't make any difference to Dalits and their socio-economic conditions will worsen further.

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VEN. BHANTE SARANAPALA

*The Urban Buddhist Monk & Global Mindfulness Meditation teacher
Founder and President of "Canada: A Mindful and Kind Nation"*

<http://www.urbanbuddhistmonk.com>

- Recipient of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms from the Government of Canada
- Recipient of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms from the Government of Canada
- Recipient of "Canada 150 Medal and Sesquicentennial Community Award" from the Government of Canada
- Recipient of Spirit Award from the Government of Ontario



Known as the "Urban Buddhist Monk", an appropriate nomenclature for a Buddhist Monk for modern times, Bhante Saranapala has been acclaimed as a consummate teacher of meditation by a growing number of seekers of spiritual and healthy life and peace of mind in North America and Europe who admire his simple and all-embracing approach in transmitting the universal message of love, kindness, compassion, understanding and wisdom. He has earned an enviable reputation as a global public speaker and a meditation master par excellence. Born in Chittagong, Bangladesh, Bhante Saranapala, after receiving both his monastic and secular education in Sri Lanka, made his way to Canada to further his studies (did his undergrad and grad studies at the University of Toronto and McMaster University) and soon addressed his mind to the noble task of spreading in the West his own tested approach to Mindfulness and Insight Meditation. Settling down in the City of Mississauga-Toronto West, he has been a monk in residence at the monastic fraternity of the West End Buddhist Temple and (Monastery) Meditation Centre for the past 23 years.

A veritable dynamo of activity at his Mississauga Buddhist Monastery, he is the Principal of its Sunday Dhamma School and the Director of its Youth Forum that conducts a Soup Kitchen Project / Sharing is Caring, now in its 16th year, in collaboration with the Toronto Downtown's Good Shepherd Centre.

Acclaimed as a Buddhist monk for the modern times by a growing band of admirers, Bhante Saranapala has earned an enviable reputation as a public speaker and a meditation teacher par excellence. Within a short period of time, his scholarly lectures expounding the Teaching of the Buddha and mindfulness and Vipassana meditation began to attract the attention of the university academic circles and the Inter-faith community of Canada. Bhante Saranapala soon became a popular guest speaker at many a prestigious parley. In

2004, he was invited to address the parliamentarians in Ottawa. In 2005 September, he was accorded the honor of officiating on behalf of all religious denominations at the induction ceremonies connected with the Order of Ontario Awards in the Ontario Legislature.

Bhante Saranapala is a recipient of Spirit Award from the Government of Ontario for his humanitarian services. In 2017 and 2018, the Government of Canada has recognized his mindfulness meditation sessions with the Canadian police and spiritual services to the different communities across Canada by granting him "Canada 150 Medal and Sesquicentennial Community Award" and "The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms." He has conducted meditation retreats to the City Counselors in Mississauga, Brampton, Toronto, the Peel Region and the Toronto District School Board Principals. His inspiring lectures at the Peel Region's District and Catholic Schools Boards' Secondary Schools have won him much praise making him one of the most sought after speakers on Buddhism.

Testimonials for the souvenir magazine as well as ase.2023.ca

"The Guru Nanak Institute of Global Studies would also like to take this opportunity to express its support for the cause and the objectives of the Dr. Ambedkar International Symposium on Emancipation and the Equality Day Celebrations". Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's contributions to the Indian society and in particular to the upliftment of the marginalized communities, have been truly remarkable and continue to inspire generations around the world. His legacy continues to have a profound impact on the country, and it is important to acknowledge and celebrate his achievements."

Mr. Gian Singh, founding members, President & CEO of the Guru Nanak Institute of Global Studies <http://www.gurunanakinstitute.ca>



I faced a lot of caste bullying in Greater Toronto schools. I found this bullying confusing; I wondered why caste mattered so much to my fellow classmates, especially since we are all Canadian.

My name is Trina Kumar and I am a college student and member of Sadan – the South Asian Dalit Adivasi Network of Canada. I was so excited that the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) made history by passing a powerful new resolution for caste equity. Introduced by caste-oppressed trustee Yalini Rajakulasingam, it speaks to the suffering of caste-oppressed kids like me in Toronto schools, and I am genuinely relieved to know that our pain will finally be recognised.

This resolution acknowledges, for the first time in Canadian legislative history, that caste discrimination exists. Now the TDSB will work with Dalit families and the Ontario Province Human Rights Commission to make sure caste discrimination in Toronto schools is addressed.

This matters to me because I faced a lot of caste bullying in Greater Toronto schools. People made

Why I Am Grateful for the Toronto School Board's Resolution on Caste

comments about my darker complexion, said I was whitewashed because I didn't follow their upper-caste rituals, and made fun of me for being a Dalit Christian. I found this bullying confusing; I wondered why caste mattered so much to my fellow classmates, especially since we are all Canadian. But the problem is that in their dominant caste homes, they are learning oppression, while in my family we are hiding in the closet. I really hated this.

I had so many experiences that brought me to tears. In the 12th grade, for example, a dominant caste boy approached me and said that I would not be sold for even a penny if I was auctioned for sex because of my dark skin and caste. It traumatised me for many days. That's how deep racism, colourism and casteism run in Greater Toronto schools. To this day I do not want to talk about this experience, and there is no way I would report this as I don't even think the teacher or the principal would understand why this is

so wrong. But this kind of discrimination is common. I know of many stories of other Dalit children who hear caste slurs thrown around the playground. Stereotypes about caste-oppressed people as criminals persist. I don't think my classmates are bigoted, but I do believe their parents need help. Through more learning, we could build an understanding between all of us.

This reminds me of a recent experience I had, when a new friend discovered at lunch that I was Dalit. We were at a restaurant and I was excited to see what she wanted. She said vegetarian, and I said "Really? I think I'm going to get turkey."

She then gave me a funny look, and said, "What?! How can you eat meat?" I said to her, "What is the problem, we all eat meat, right?" And then I realised that she didn't know I was Dalit. I came out to her, and all of sudden everything changed. She said that she did not think we could hang out anymore and that I was not worthy enough to meet her parents because they don't approve of

intercaste relationships. In fact, her sister had been beaten because she started an interfaith and intercaste relationship.

I felt embarrassed and angry that she could treat me like this. Who cares what we eat? Who cares who we worship? Shouldn't we all just be friends? But then I remembered that it is common among my dominant caste friends to be beaten by their parents if they cross caste and religious lines. In fact, many of my friends were shocked that my parents didn't beat me and let me choose who I was friends with and who I wanted to be.

This is what is happening in Toronto schools, and students like me deserve better. I really appreciated the student trustee who spoke up about this, because this decision is about making children safer. Even the fact that three trustees including Yalini got cyber-bullied and threatened tells you how serious this problem is.

I also don't appreciate dominant caste adults telling Dalit children like myself that our experience doesn't matter. They don't go to our schools. They don't face bullying, and my life and my experience are not a political football for them to work out their issues.

I want to just be free! I love being Dalit now.

And being a young Dalit in college, I know that the future is mine for the taking. I just want to make sure that while I move on from my experiences of being bullied due to caste, I am committed to organising with Sadan to make sure no one has to go through what I went through. That is why I am so grateful that the majority of the trustees listened to people like me and the families in Sadan about caste discrimination, and have let the oppressed lead.

Yes, this may make dominant caste people uncomfortable, but maybe it's

time for that. Their children are really suffering because they are not working on their casteism. Maybe if they use this motion as a time to learn, they can have better relationships with their own families and with Dalit families like mine.

I am optimistic because now that we are working with the Ontario Human Rights Commission, we can not only make a difference for Toronto kids but for all South Asian families across the province. And it all started with Yalini, who came out. The future is bright for students and families like mine, and I am grateful to the TDSB for standing with the caste equity movement.

I can't wait till we make all of Canada safer for caste oppressed people. Jai bhim!

•••

Trina Kumar is a proud student youth member of South Asian Dalit Adivasi Network. She loves working on social issues, baking, the outdoors and helping people heal from caste.



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For inclusive development, support Dalit entrepreneurs

News: Dalit entrepreneurship holds promise for the much-needed social transformation.

Many attempts have been made to transform the highly-stratified Indian society into an inclusive one. However, the expected social transformation in our Indian society remains unfulfilled, esp with regard to Dalits. Their situation has improved, but social exclusion still persists.

In this context, promoting Dalit entrepreneurship can further the much-needed social transformation.

Why the government needs to support Dalit entrepreneurship?

- **Employment opportunities:** With the dominance of a few castes over business and commerce and lack of access to capital, an individual from a marginalized section of society has limited options of employment. He can either take up a government job or continue their manual and low paying caste-based occupation.
- Supporting Dalit entrepreneurship can **improve their access to rights** while helping them fight the social hierarchies.
- **Material well-being and financial autonomy:** Entrepreneurship often results in gaining of material benefits, and the relative autonomy.

What steps are being taken by the govt?

The District Industries Centre (DIC) stipulates that to nurture entrepreneurs, the government must increase the share of goods produced by Dalits in its procurement. It has also sought to get financial institutions to amend their rules for collateral in order to ease financing for the projects of Dalit entrepreneurs.

State financial corporations have also been instructed to increase financial support to Scheduled Caste entrepreneurs.

Stand-Up India initiative, a focussed financial intervention for SC/ST entrepreneurs guarantees credit up to Rs 1 crore.

The Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation has allocated 16.2% of plots to SC entrepreneurs

The Small Industries Development Bank of India offers an additional subsidy to Dalit entrepreneurs.

What are the issues/challenges faced by Dalit entrepreneurs?

- **Artificial inaccessibility:** Despite the existence of government schemes and policies, the actual benefit is not reaching the beneficiaries due to the artificial inaccessibility created by inherent social and caste

biases.

For instance, the Stand-Up India initiative failed to deliver the expected results due to the unavailability of so-called eligible SC/ST entrepreneurship, with most of the funds lying unutilised.

- The lack of enthusiasm of loaning branches and officials towards proposals by Dalit entrepreneurs

What is the way forward?

Dalit-focussed alternate investment finance (AIF) and private equity (PE) funds are needed to create a vibrant and inclusive MSME ecosystem.

Creation of inclusivity cell in banks and lending institutions/NBFCs in order to inform, educate and foster Dalit entrepreneurship.

Formulate multiple credit guarantee trusts by raising contributions from MNCs, FDIs, portfolio investors, corporates, etc. to provide guaranteed support to the banks for them to extend credit to Dalit entrepreneurs.

A social vulnerability index can also to be introduced.

Source: This post is based on the article “For inclusive development, support Dalit entrepreneurs” published in Indian Express on 13th Nov 2021.

BC's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner



Today marks Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Equality Day. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was an Indian politician, social reformer and economist who advocated for the rights of Dalit communities and the end of systemic discrimination based on caste. Learn more about Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's work and how we can work together to end caste discrimination in B.C. at Chetna Association of Canada and Ambedkarite International Coordination Society's free events. Find events in Metro Vancouver and in Victoria from April 21 to 26 at

SFU Professor Deanna Reder wins Dr. Ambedkar Arts & Literature Award

Rebecca Saloustros

Deanna Reder, Associate Professor in the Departments of English and Indigenous Studies, has received the Chetna Association of Canada's 2021 Dr. Ambedkar Arts & Literature Award.

"I was incredibly honoured to receive this award from the Chetna Association," says Professor Reder. "They do amazing work. To think, that among their list of prizes they decided that an award for arts and literature was important. Most people don't see literary study as being on the cutting edge of changing the world, but we who do it know it is."

Established in 1999, the Chetna Association of Canada raises global awareness about caste-based issues. "Castes" are hereditary social classes in India. The Association promotes the benefits of creating casteless, respectful, and inclusive communities through dialogues, discussions, presentations, and seminars.

The lowest caste in India is called "Dalit," which literally means, "oppressed; broken." The Dalit people, like Canada's Indigenous people, have a history of creating literature that has been ignored and/or suppressed. Professor Deanna Reder first became familiar with Dalit literature as a graduate student. However, she found it almost impossible to obtain any resources.

"It's like Indigenous literatures in Canada," Reder says, "Certainly before 1992, almost no university in Canada had courses on Indigenous literatures. Maybe in the early 21st century there were courses, but still for a long time only just one or maybe two in any department."

Indigenous literatures weren't part of Canadian literary programs in the past, Reder says, because they weren't seen as important or relevant. Prior to the 1970s, literature from Great Britain was the focus.

"The '70s was all about 'Read Canada,'" she says, "But now, I think people appreciate that the land claimed by Canada doesn't just include immigrant authors, but also includes Indigenous writers."

Reder sees parallels between the evolution of Canada's literary focus and India's. Both countries have a similar history of colonization, and an education based on a British curriculum.

"They would start by beginning to read authors from India and eventually realize there are unrecognized voices in India as well," she says.

Reder also points to a history of Indigenous authors, such as Cree writers Joseph Dion and Edward Ahenakew, who tried to get manuscripts published in the early 20th century but faced many obstacles. Ultimately, they and



From left to right: Award funder Santosh Bhatti, Chetna Association General Secretary Jai Birdi, Former BC premier Ujjal Dosanjh, Deanna Reder, and SFU VP-External Joanne Curry. Photo Credit: Aziz Latha Photography

other Indigenous authors did not get published during their lifetime.

"There was really a sense that Indigenous writing wasn't that good, wasn't that relevant, and wasn't that interesting," she says. "Instead, however, there was a flourishing of non-Indigenous writers writing about Indigenous stories."

So, what opportunities are there for today's Indigenous writers? In 2017, Reder and her Department of English colleague, Professor Sophie McCall, inherited funds from a crowd-funding campaign to start the Indigenous Voices Awards. They along with colleagues across Canada, including the Department of French's new Assistant Professor Sarah Henzi, have just announced the opening of the fifth year of awards and to date have given out \$109,000.00. Among the winners of unpublished work have been SFU alumnus Smokii Sumac, who won in the first year and then won again in the second year, once his work was published. SFU has also provided jurors for the awards. This year, Métis scholar and Assistant Professor June Scudeler is judging work alongside SFU alumnus and Nisga'a poet Jordan Abel.

"The effect of the prizes has been great, but I think that also comes after a long history of people advocating for curriculum change, as well as Indigenous people entering academia, so that students have books by Indigenous authors to read, and maybe the chance to study with an Indigenous professor," she says. "Now, we need a huge infusion of Indigenous students to take over and be the next generation to make long-term change."

In 2019, Reder met someone who is helping to change the present day for Dalits. Suraj Yengde, writer of *Caste Matters*, discusses the daily discrimination Dalits face and the new reality he would like to see.

"There's a bust of Dr. Ambedkar in the Bennett Library. Every year, the Chetna Association and the community come to garland it and that's where I first met Suraj Yengde," she says. "He was a 2019 Chetna Association award winner. He's from a Dalit family and has made a lot of amazing changes and is a real role model to his generation."

A week-long International symposium and Dr. Ambedkar Equality Day, planned for April 21 to 26, 2023 - Chetna Association of Canada and Ambedkarite International Coordination Society

Venues: Lower Mainland, Victoria, Abbotsford

Events Outline:

- April 21 - 2 PM to 3:15 pm. Asian Center at University of British Columbia.

A session on "Buddhism- as envisioned by Dr. Ambedkar, and outlined in his noble book, 'Buddha and His Dhamma' ".

Panel members:

- Ven. Bhante Dr. Saranpala
- Dr. Rajratana Ambedkar
- Mr. H.L. Viridi
- Mr. Raj Kumar Oshoraj

The session will be moderated by *Dr. Jessica L. Main, Associate Professor* with The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Chair in Buddhism and Contemporary Society, Department of Asian Studies, University of British Columbia.

- April 21 - 6 PM to 7:15 PM. CK Choi Building, University of British Columbia. Session- "India's legal framework and how it enables human emancipation."

Panel members will include: LA County Judge Neetu Badhan-Smith; BC Minister Bruce Ralston; and, Alberta MLA Leela Aheer.

The session will be moderated by Adv. Lovleen Gill.

- April 21 - 7:30 pm to 9 pm. Dinner reception will be hosted at CK Choi Lounge
- April 22: 8 am to 5:30 pm Sauder Business School at University of British

Columbia, Room Number 492.

Sessions will include:

1. 8 am - 8:45 am continental breakfast
2. 9 am - 10 am

Opening and introductory remarks

3. 10:15 am - 10:45 am am

Dr. Ambedkar Manifesto and vision for the Amrit Kaal - panel members to be confirmed.

4. 10:45 am to 11 am- Mr. Harmesh Sandhi of Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha, Ontario, will gift Collected Works (Speeches and Writings) to Dr. Satwinder Bains, Director, South Asian Studies Institute at University of the Fraser Valley.

5. 11:15 am -12:30 pm

"Caste in academic settings in Canada and other jurisdictions" will provide opportunities for students and faculty to share their experiences and suggestions on addressing Caste based discrimination in academic settings. "Caste in Canada", a project co-led by Dr. Anne Murphy of UBC and Dr. Suraj Yengde will also be introduced.

The session will be moderated by Dr. Priti Narayan, Director with Center for India and South Asia Research at University of British Columbia. Panel members will include:

- Mr. Prem Pariyar, alumni, California State University, East Bay
- Mr. Gurpreet Singh, Cambrian College
- Ms. Simran Pachar, University of British Columbia



Mr. Manish Kumar, University of British Columbia Okanagan

Ms. Mitali Madhusamita, University of British Columbia

Ms. Vipasna Nangal, University of Calgary

Dr. Satwinder Bains, Director, South Asian Studies Institute, University of the Fraser Valley

Note: This session will be tributed to Dr. Pamposh, Rohith Vemula, and others who experienced extreme caste-oppression in academic settings and lost their lives.

6. 1:30 pm - 2:45 pm

"Caste and entrepreneurship" - entrepreneurs will discuss how they are leveraging opportunities to enhance inclusion through entrepreneurship both in Canada and India.

Panel members will include:

Mr. Barjinder Bhatti, Fast Track Appliances; Mr. Manjit Kainth, Sterling Recruitment; and, Ashok Dass, Dalit Dastak.

Moderator: Mrs. Punam Balley, World Financial Group.

7. 3:00 PM - 4:15 pm

"Women and Youth Empowerment"- a panel discussion highlighting women and youth spearheading discussions on caste oppression and strategies moving forward.

Mrs. Manjit Bains, chair, Women Empowerment Committee of Chetna; Judge Neetu Badhan-Smith, and Ms. Seema Mahi, Ph.D. Candidate) will be on the panel.

The session will open with a theatrical performance by Ms. Simran Kranti.



Moderator: Ms. Meera Estrada, Toronto-based journalist

8. 4:30 PM - 5:30 pm

Dr. Rita Dhamoon of University of Victoria and her team of volunteers will present a summary report and draft resolutions, strategies, and actions. Moderator - To be announced.

- April 22: 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm Dinner reception (by registration only please) - CK Choi Building, UBC
- April 23: 11 am - 1 pm.

Delegates are welcome to attend the congregation at Shri Guru Ravidass Community Center, 7271 Gilley Avenue, Burnaby.

Note: Construction at the site may cause some inconvenience or delays so everyone's patience is appreciated.



- April 23: 5 pm to 11 pm - a gala reception to celebrate Dr. Ambedkar Birth Anniversary as 'Equality Day' will be hosted at Fraserview Banquet Hall in Vancouver. Dr. Priti Narayan will share a summary of resolutions and strategies drafted.

- April 24, 1 pm to 3 pm
Equality Day Celebrations, WAC at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby.

Along with theatrical performance by Simran Kranti, City of Burnaby will be honoured for being the first city in North America to proclaim April 14- Dr. B.R. Day of Equality in Burnaby.

- April 25 - A short visit by community representatives and delegates to the BC Legislature.

- April 25- Team ASE2023 will visit UVic at 2:30 pm and Celebrate Equality.

- April 26- 1 PM to 3 PM
Equality Day Celebrations at the University of Fraser Valley in Abbotsford.

A discussion will be on partnership opportunities for enhancing inclusion and preventing discrimination at the campus. Engagement opportunities to ensure representation of the "caste diversity or caste matters" will also be discussed.

As some of the information is subject to change, people are encouraged to visit www.ase2023.ca regularly.

Why a symposium in Vancouver, Canada?

Some may wonder why the Dr. Ambedkar International Symposium is taking place in Canada?

"Metropolitan cities of Canada are now evolving and have a stronger visibility of the South Asian populations. Similar to what is being reported in other jurisdictions, incidents of caste-based oppression are surfacing. A need to assess and develop proactive measures is critical for preventing caste-based discrimination and providing safer



DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR DAY OF EQUALITY IN BURNABY, BC, CANADA

Venue: WAC Bennett Library, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby Campus

Time: 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM

Agenda:

PART 1:

Thakore Room - Greetings and Performances

1:00 PM - Refreshments and Networking

1:15 PM - Land Acknowledgements

1:20- Welcome and Opening Remarks - Dr. Gwen Bird, University Librarian and Dean of Libraries, SFU

1:30 PM - Theatrical Performance by Ms. Kranti Simran, International Student.

1:40 PM - greetings from the Consul General, Mr. Manish, Consulate General of India (Vancouver)

1:50 PM - Greetings from Dr. Joanne Curry, Vice President, External Relations, SFU

1:55 PM - greetings from Dr. Rajratana Ambekar, President of the Buddhist Society of India, and great grand nephew of Baba Saheb Dr. Ambedkar.

2:05 PM- The felicitation ceremony of the City of Burnaby for being the first city to proclaim April 14- Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Day of Equality in Burnaby.

2:10 PM Greetings and acceptance message from Deputy Mayor, Sav Dhaliwal

2:15 PM - Acknowledgement of sponsors, Surjit Bains, Treasurer for Chetna and the ASE2023

PART 2:

Main Floor - garlanding ceremony

2:30 pm: Garlanding and floret tribute of the Bust of Dr. Ambedkar by:

Consul General Mr. Manish

Dr. Rajratana Ambekar

Dr. Deputy Mayor, Councillor Sav Dhaliwal plus councillors

Dr. Gwen Bird

Dr. Joanne Curry

Others

Adjournment at 3 pm

places are critically needed in Canada", says Birdi.

In the lower mainland of British Columbia, there is already a strong foundation and partnerships created with academic, community, media, and other organizations.

City of Burnaby was the first city in Canada to proclaim April 14- Dr. Ambedkar Day of Equality. Similarly, the Province of British Columbia was the first provincial or state level government to proclaim Dr. Ambedkar Day of Equality and April - Dalit History Month. Presentations to local cities and BC Human Rights Commission on the need to assess caste situation and take appropriate actions have also already been made. Legal cases were presented before the BC Human Rights Tribunal, and recently, the tribunal found the incident of caste oppression was valid and penalised the offenders close to ten thousand dollars to cover a portion of legal costs.

Gratitude and acknowledgement:

The steering committee is very grateful to all for the support and advice received and look forward to having a meaningful and respectful dialogue, and developing strategies to move forward together and enhance respectful and inclusive communities.

The steering committee acknowledges financial and in-



kind support of Academic partners and community & media sponsors.

*I wish the organizers of
Dr. Ambedkar International
Symposium a great success.*

...

Manohar Lal Mahey

President

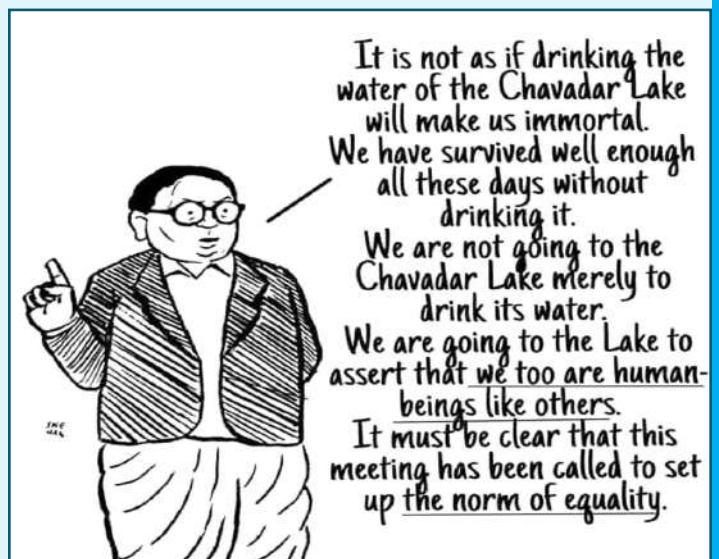
**VIGILANT BROTHERHOOD
INTERNATIONAL**



2003 International Dalit Conference in Vancouver, Canada



**SAMMY TOORA, POWERLIFTING CHAMPION
WITH HIS FAVORITE STAR, GULSHAN GROVER**



Buddhism of Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar

Prof. Arun Gautam

In Buddhism, nirvana, a state of enlightenment, is the highest state that someone can attain. It is the state of perfect happiness and peace meaning a person's individual desires and suffering go away. It is used to refer to the extinction/ release of desire, hatred, and ignorance and, ultimately, of suffering and rebirth by following 'The Eightfold Path' consisting of eight practices- right view, right resolve, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right Samadhi.

In this light, the voluntary poverty and emotional control of the traditional bhikkhu could never offer a viable ideal for communities locked in systemic poverty.

On classical interpretation of the sangha, Baba Saheb Dr. Ambedkar took refuse in triratna and finally converted to Buddhism, 2500 years after the day of Buddha-hood/ enlightenment of the Buddha on October 14, 1956, Nagpur, the land of Nagas and Nagarjun for removal of social, religious, economic, political, educational, ... disabilities to bring changes in the lives of the aboriginals/untouchables / Dalit- Bahujans. After taking tri-ratna and panchsheel, he initiated / administered the oath of tri-ratna, panchsheel, and 22 vows to half a million people for the first time in the history of the world. In the propagation of religion and daily procedure / rituals, the grihastha / laity had the same rights as the bhikkhus and bhikkhunis.

Baba Saheb Dr. Ambedkar's 22 vows administered to all new converts after Three Jewels and Five Precepts. On converting to Buddhism, Ambedkar made 22 vows, and asked his 600,000 supporters to do the same. After

receiving lay ordination, he gave Dhamma diksha to his followers. After 14 October 1956 at Nagpur, Baba Saheb Dr. Ambedkar performed another mass religious conversion ceremony the next day at Chandrapur.

These 22 vows are the guidelines of the social revolution that motivates human instincts, and demonstrate both the social movement aspect of Navayana Buddhism and shows its core deviation from earlier sects of Buddhism .

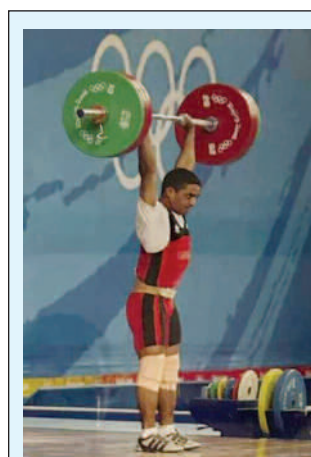
'I will accept and follow the teachings of the Buddha. I will keep my people away from the different opinions of Hinayana and Mahayana, two religious orders. Our Buddhism is a Neo-Buddhism, Navayana'. B.R. Ambedkar, October 14, 1956, Dikshabhoomi, Nagpur

Dr. Ambedkar studied Buddhist texts and wrote The Buddha and His Dhamma which is the primary doctrine of those who follow Navayana Buddhism. Ambedkar's text on Navayana states that this was what the true Buddha believed and taught...Buddha and Karl Marx; and. Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Ancient India are the other two books written by Ambedkar on Buddhism to understand. Baba Saheb Dr. Ambedkar states Navayana to be atheist.

Dr. Babsaheb Ambedkar became Bodhisattva. He researched and showed our roots; and taught us how Navayana /Buddhism is in accord with science, and is based on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity, and does not glorify poverty. It guides the people to a Buddhist way of life with self respect and dignity in which freedom, public morality and social mobility will be followed. So, Navayana / Buddha's teachings are necessary to be included in the syllabus of all levels of education from primary to the University level; and to be taught to shape the students as good human beings.



Members of Shri 108 Sant Sarwan Dass Charitable Trust with Mr. Balbir Chand of New York



JASVIR SINGH, Canadian Olympian, participated in the weightlifting category, Olympics held in 2008 in Beijing, China. Singh came in 12. In 2008, Singh also participated in Pan America championship and earned Gold Medal.

Congratulations to Mr. Singh.

The Buddha - Knowledgeable - One. The Doctor - Knowledgeable Too.

Zile Singh

IFS (Retd.)



The Chetna Association, Canada and Ambedkar International Coordination Society are organizing Dr. Ambedkar International Symposium on Emancipation and Equality Day Celebrations on April 22-23, 2023. The event coincides with the conclusion of "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav - 75 Years of Indian Independence" and the beginning of a vision- "Amrit Kaal", culminating at the 100th year of Indian Independence in 2047; 25 years hence.

When we talk of the Buddha and the Doctor, religion, reality, and rationality come rushing to an awakened mind. Defining religion is often difficult. An adequate definition lies in the understanding that "religions are systems or structures consisting of specific kinds of beliefs and practices; belief and practices that are related to superhuman beings". The superhuman being or beings, whether male, female, or androgynous do things, ordinary mortals cannot and are "known for miraculous deeds and powers that set them apart from humans". The Buddhist philosophy is evidently clear that the Buddha was not a superhuman miraculous man, nor a deity to be worshiped. He said that through practice of discipline and austerity he has acquired some knowledge. He can only share his knowledge and experience. He said, "Don't be a blind follower." But 'AapDipoBhav' - be your own light. He never assumed to be the final authority nor a God.

Keeping the above in view, Buddhism is not a religion, but a reality and a rationality of Life. It is called the principle of "cause and effect" - a 100% rationality. It is based on his four noble truths, i.e., Life is suffering, (ii) There is a cause of suffering, (iii) The cause is our desires, and (iv) By controlling, (not killing) the desires one can be free from suffering. The scope of desires is vast. The desire to live is one of the most essential and aspired for by all. We need not kill but control the desires. He specifically mentioned to control the following five desires; (i) to kill, (ii) to steal, (iii) to lie, (iv) sexual misconduct, and (v) intoxication. In order to control desires, he preached the noble eight-fold path: right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. Rightfulness leads to rationality. Right means bring right results. Whether we are believers, nonbelievers, agnostics, or atheists, we are concerned with how to put our lives together and with what will make life worth living. Over

the time, Buddha's followers have created several sects engaged in rites, rituals, and idol worship. Religion, a purely personal matter has become an organized institution to control and even to exploit masses.

Dr. Ambedkar and the Buddha lived 2500 years apart in diametrically different situations. The former was an 'untouchable'; the latter a 'prince'. Still, the aim of both was the same - 'to liberate life'. Like his Master, (the Buddha), Baba Saheb "Doctor" B.R. Ambedkar, from his childhood witnessed the futility of life for a section of society. He struggled tirelessly like the Buddha to carve out a noble path to emancipate the lives of millions of people who were suffering under servitude, dehumanization, and graded inequality for centuries. He did it not by preaching like the Buddha, but by legislation in the form of "Abolition of Untouchability". Untouchability is now a nonbailable crime under the Indian Penal Code. Today, untouchability is on the wane, but caste is gaining ground. There is a caste within a caste. Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, the soul of the Indian Constitution, can be an emancipatory path for them, if enacted in letter and spirit. Instead of going to Buddhism, Dhamam and Sangham sharnam, the Doctor's Sermon was to take shelter in "Education, Organization and Agitation". Ambedkar stressed on scientific temper, rationality, and reality. Both struggled to 'cultivate an awakened mind'. The Buddha abandoned his kingdom, so did the Doctor by resigning his ministerial post in Nehru's cabinet.

Unfortunately, like the Buddha's noble teachings, Doctor's sermon also has fallen on deaf ears. Instead of following his idealism of education, organization and agitation, his followers have idolized him. The Buddha was against idol worship. "Hero Worship" was abhorrent to the Doctor. Like the Buddha's followers, Doctor's followers also are disorganized. Due to the onslaughts of the Hindus, the Buddhists fled from India and spread globally. Atrocities at home and greener pastures abroad are alluring Ambedkarites to migrate. Through such Symposia our efforts should be to emancipate human mind. Equality cannot be enforced by legislation or by celebration. It can be cultivated by an awakened mind. Human mind needs an awakening. Any religion or sect, born in India, including the Neo-Buddhism can hardly wipe out the scar of caste. It is not surprising that even the neo-Buddhists are a caste by themselves.

To grab power is easy; cleansing of mind is difficult. "If you believe in a respectable life, you must believe in self-help, which is the best help."

- Dr. Ambedkar.

"The Buddha and his Dhamma"

Dr Amritpal Kaur

Dental Surgeon, Private Practitioner,

Writer on Ambedkarism, Buddhism and Feminism,

Founding Member National Council of Women Leaders (NCWL).

In the volume 58 of the magazine "Maha Bodhi" published in May 1950, Babasaheb wrote:-

"The duty of a Buddhist is not only to be a good Buddhist, his duty is also to spread Buddhism. He must believe that spreading Buddhism is serving mankind. "

The credit for replanting the Bodhi tree in the soil of India goes to Dr B.R Ambedkar, the father of modern India. The Buddhist revivalist movement in India began in 1891 with the arrival of a young SriLankan Buddhist Anagarika Dharampal and gained momentum through many devotees like Mahavira, Dharmaranda Kosambi, Rahul Sankritiyan, Jagdish Kashyap and Dharmarakshita. But Dr Ambedkar created history on 14 October 1956 by converting himself and his wife to Buddhism along with half a million of his followers.

Ambedkar's status is not only equal to those Acaryas (foregoing) like Asang, Vasubandhu, Nagarjuna, Ding-Naga, and Dharmakirti, but much more as the above said Acaryas had not confronted modern science like Ambedkar. They had the privilege of sitting in the four walls of the Viharas and could easily afford to undertake intellectual blending.

But for Ambedkar, it was not merely an intellectual exercise, but he was to make Dhamma an integral part of the day to day life of the millions of his followers. The Acaryas had to face only the Hindu / Vedic religion but Ambedkar had to encounter the great philosophies and religions of the world, which were unknown to these Acaryas.

But prior to that it is more important to understand the Dhamma of Buddha in the context of the history of India. Baba Sahib not only revived Buddhism in India, but also extricated the definition of Dhamma from the purview of idealism and gave it a realistic form so that the Dhamma could be used for social change (socially engaged Buddhism).

The essential reinterpretation of the Dhamma by Baba Sahib (Navyana / Neo-Buddhism) was a presentation as a solution to three problems existing in the Indian society:-

1. BRAHMANISM, which was (and is) the dominant exploiting system of Indian society.

2. MARXISM, which was the main social ideology standing against this exploiting system.

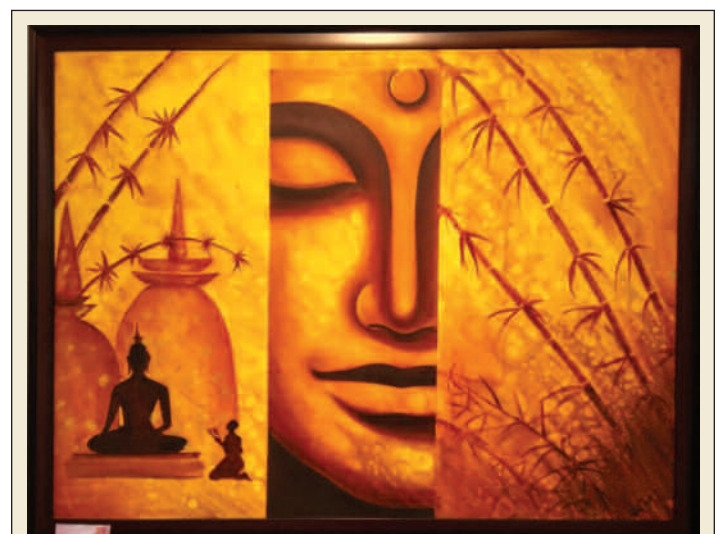
3. All the prevailing SCHOOLS Of BUDDHISM like Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana.

Dr Ambedkar was a democrat through and through and he enriched the concept of democracy by linking liberty, equality and fraternity together as an associated mode of living. Committed as he was to the realisation of social

democracy, he rightly decided to go back to Buddhism: a religion of rationality and secular ethics. He strove to give a new turn to existing archaic cultural values based on unproductive spiritualism and idealism and converted idealism into practicability and metaphysics into physicality through his magnum opus "The Buddha and his Dhamma ".

He brought back Buddhism from the dark caves of pessimism and led it towards the high reaches of optimism; he activated the Buddhists to change their sad plight and freed Buddhism from the monopoly of the secluded

recluses. In this way, he succeeded in re-making Buddhism as a household article of faith. He restored to Buddhism the lost glory of a living faith....



RETREAT TO PEACE: Repose in Self by grace of Divine. Divinity means peace & Peace is ultimate retreat. *Artist: Rupa Ajith*

DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR ON EDUCATION

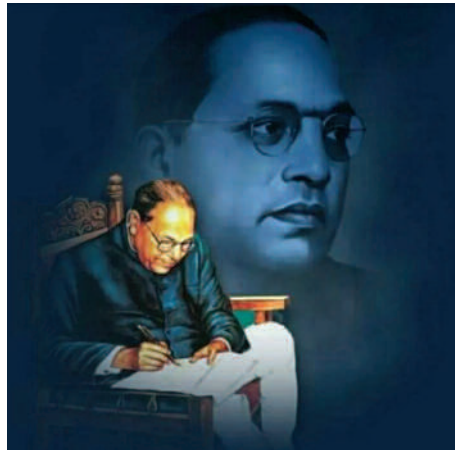
Dr. Sujata H. Gaurkhede

Assistant Professor, Department of
History R.T.M. Nagpur University, India
Email: sujatagaurkhede86@gmail.com

"Education is something which ought to be brought within the reach of every one". In Pre-independence Indian Society was based on Chaturvarna system. Education was not allowed in Lower caste Peoples in India. But Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar realized the important of education hence he emphasized on the education. That time his Educational Thoughts are very objective.

I want to explain the ways of his educational development, what are the resources required for the applicant in society. Why He needs the education for the Indians? Because backward peoples didn't get the opportunity in economical sources and social equality. British didn't get the chance for officer of any administrative department only became peon and clerk their education was not for development and Self-sufficient.

Mahatma Jyotiba Phule's efforts of provided education to men & women's in backward class for their progress. Dr. Ambedkar followed the path of him due to genuine situation. Babasaheb's thought of enlightenment brought about

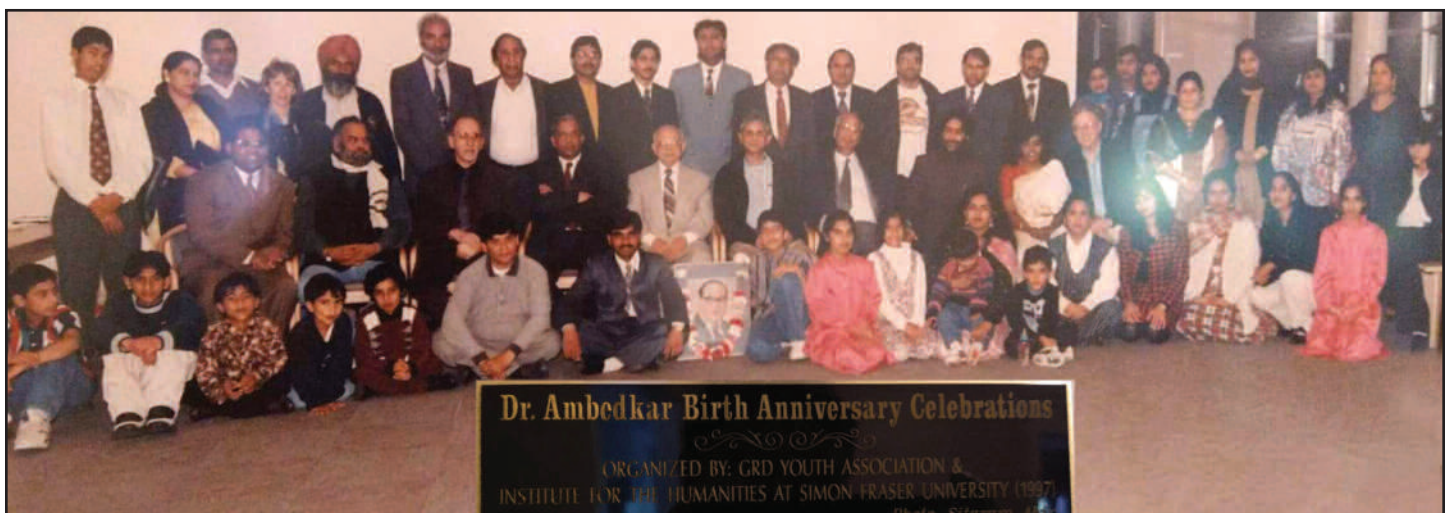


transformation in the Dalit society of the country. Imparting science based education to students is the need of the hour. Only then the new generation of the country will not believe in superstitions and outdated customs and will become intellectuals. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was excellent educationist and known as the 'World's Most Talented Man' and 'Symbol of Knowledge'.

Babasaheb continued to strive for the education of all Indians along with untouchables and women. He established the Peoples Education Society for the education of the underprivileged and downtrodden community. The young generation of the country will definitely get inspiration from his educational thinking. His educational thinking is the

energy center of the transformational movement at such a difficult time when there was an attempt to turn back the clock through constitutional review and Brahminization of education at the central level in the country. His education will give a new consciousness to the young generation when there is a counter-revolutionary atmosphere in the country when reactionary, communal and bigoted forces are aggressively picking up and believed that the revolution will be aligned. He said "Education is the tigress milk after getting education definitely will growl." Education is a Brain Tonic in a depressed life it make life happy and successful. Dr. Ambedkar wanted freedom for development this value was to be taken from education. Education is what makes a person aware without education man is mere animal. 'Get educated, Make a movement and get organized'. Its purpose is to moralize and socialize the society. Education is the corner stone of progress & upliftment. Its lead awareness and social conciseness of provide for more responsible leadership of the nation.

Education is the third eye of man which gives him insight motto and teaches him how to act righteously. Dr.



Dr. Ambedkar Birth Anniversary Celebrations (1997) at Simon Fraser University. Photo- Sitaram Ahir.

Ambedkar himself example of what education could do to the under-privileged section of the society it's not only a layer for their social mobility but also opens the doors for their modernization.

He persistent that government should give special facilities to the backward class students at the same time his opinion that the backward classes should make their progress themselves. But in 21st century worst condition to create by sawarna (Brahman) to dominate the backward classes intelligent students they demoralized by them for example Rohit Vemula was an Indian PhD scholar at the University of Hyderabad.

The University stopped paying his monthly stipend. Thus suicide of Dalit students sparks rage over caste discrimination in Indian University. Another example is Dr. Payal Tadvi, 26 year old gynaecologist was pursuing her post graduate in Mumbai and would

have become the first doctor from her community. It's so difficult for the Adivasis to come up. Payal had committed suicide of harassment by college seniors who subjected her to casteist slurs and other forms of caste violence. Day by day such type incident increases.

Dr. Ambedkar Thought on Empowerment of Women's Education. While advocating the freedom of women who wanted to change the society, He tried to improve the status of women by advocating the equality of men and women in the constitution through various conferences, through his writings. When girl is given education, the whole family gets educated.

Babasaheb opined that women's are very important in the society and woman means culture. He regretted that women, who are a major part of the society, have been neglected for centuries. Progress of women means progress of society. He was sure that

women in our society have no salvation without education. By writing the great book Buddha and his Dhamma. Dr. Babasaheb showed women a new direction of conduct. Its good impact that our Indian backward class women hon'ble Droupadi Murmu become a President of India. So, Dr. Ambedkar dreams is fulfil about backward women. It's a proud moments for us.

Today's education system totally change compare to Dr. B.R. Ambedker ideology. Too much fees taken by Private School and Colleges. Poor and backward peoples not afford it. Hence lack of money many intelligent students far away from good education and progress.

In government school education quality decrease due to ignorance of government. So, Education problem is the biggest problem of India. Indian government followed the educational thoughts of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar for the progress of Nation.

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How Dalit entrepreneurs fight caste with capital

Tauseef Shahidi

Credit: livemint.com

"I become suspicious when I get something easily," says Riki Biswas, co-founder of Pointo—an electric vehicle service company, in Kolkata. The entrepreneur has embraced the everyday struggle of running a startup: from learning to smoke bidis to bond with e-rickshaw drivers, to avoiding brawls with local thugs and choosing to build an asset-light company. Not all of Biswas's troubles, however, are work-related.

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As a member of the Dalit community, the 28-year-old acutely feels the lack of capital that flows from family or community networks. "That kind of support—like among the Marwaris —would have come in handy when my father had a heart attack and I was short on cash," he says.

As a member of the Dalit community, the 28-year-old acutely feels the lack of capital that flows from family or community networks. "That kind of support—like among the Marwaris —would have come in handy when my father had a heart attack and I was short on cash," he says.

Biswas's case exemplifies the extra mile Dalit entrepreneurs have to go to do business. But, on balance, does capital trump caste? Yes, and no.

Statistics say that after 75 years of independence, Dalits have not attained

Capitalism and urbanization ought to have loosened shackles of caste. But caste affiliations determine business dealings, even if the outcomes turn out to be suboptimal.



Nitin Mehandia, Munmun Biswas and Riki Biswas are heralding change in their communities.

a proportionate share in Indian capitalism. Only 11.2% of non-agricultural proprietary establishments are owned by Scheduled Castes (SCs), shows data from the sixth economic census 2013. This is significantly lower than their share of 16.6% in India's total population, according to census 2011. Even this is largely on account of their concentration in relatively smaller firms.

The National Sample Survey (NSS) 73rd round on micro, small and medium enterprises conducted in 2015-16 show that SCs owned 12.5% of micro enterprises, which drastically reduced to 5.5% for small, and less than 0.01% for medium enterprises. Poorer wealth levels in the community, with their share being higher in lower wealth deciles, constrain their ability to take risks.

"Only those among us who have got the 'business bug', or are 'mad', can take a risk without any safety net," says 38-year-old Nitin Mehandia, who runs a modular furniture company based out of Gurugram. "I quit my job and took the plunge with ₹7,000 as seed money.

People talk of 'calculated risk' these days, but the question of any calculation only arises when you have some capital to begin with," says Mehandia.

He worked for an auto parts company before taking a leap of faith in 2009. He started off as a labour contractor for piecemeal jobs like plumbing, electricals and carpentry in bigger residential and commercial contracts. Gradually, he started focusing on the furniture part, and founded his company Universal Pride Interior Pvt Ltd in 2015, which had a turnover of over ₹7 crore in 2021-22, and employs about 45 workers. It boasts of having the likes of Indiabulls, Emaar, Spaze and Godrej as its clients.

Biswas started executing solar power projects shortly after his graduation in 2016 and ran an e-bike company at his alma mater Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Guwahati. He has now on-boarded over 2,000 electric three-wheelers and employs 22 people.

In an ideal world, capitalism and urbanization ought to have loosened

shackles of caste. But a research paper in 2019 suggested caste affiliations determine business dealings, even if the outcomes turn out to be suboptimal.

Mehandia and Biswas's experiences suggest it is not so. "I struck my first residential project deal with one Mr Pathak, who visited me in a low-grade, blue-collar colony," says Mehandia. "He had his faith in me despite the shabby state of my office." Now, most of his clients, many "upper-caste", are aware that he comes from a scheduled caste (SC) community. Biswas has not experienced caste being broached on the business table, and enjoys credit facility with both Marwaris and Punjabis.

"Tagging any of our fabric commemorating Dalit patterns or design will not strategically be sound or feasible till people become more inclusive," says 42-year-old Munmun Biswas, who founded Indiloom in 2017. Her factory currently employs 50 people, and manufactures digital printed fabrics for some well-known brands in the fashion industry. Aspiring to build a FabIndia-like brand, she cites the controversy over calling Diwali as Jashn-e-Riwaaz last year to make her point.

State support has proved to be useful for Dalit entrepreneurs. The government of India endowed a special venture capital fund for SCs in 2014-15, which currently has a corpus of ₹616 crore. Out of it, ₹450 crore has already been sanctioned to 120 companies with at least 51% shareholding by SC entrepreneurs. Munmun also received ₹1.5 crore, with a repayment period of 10 years and at an interest rate of 4%, under this fund in 2019. She plans to raise another ₹3 crore later this year for opening a larger factory.

But government money alone cannot sustain the drive within the community.

Some Dalit entrepreneurs are

Role of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Toward Women Empowerment in India



Chanchal Mall & Harjinder Mall

Founder Members of AICS, Canada

Jai Bheem to All.

On this 132nd Ambedkar Jayanti, let us pledge to stand against discrimination and fight against inequality. Let's bow to the hard-work and sacrifices of the father of Indian Constitution, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. He taught us to dedicate our lives for making lives of others better.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was a fighter for the dignity of women and depressed people. He is known as champion of human rights. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar has contributed immensely for the emancipation and empowerment of women. Being a pioneer of social equality and justice, Babasaab always worked for the women empowerment. Babasaab wished that everybody should be treated equally irrespective of caste, creed, gender and religion. His main goal of the life was to make a society based on social justice. That is why he started working for the liberation of women and their rights. He realized the gender inequality among the Indian society and raised his voice to include them in the modern society.

Dr. Ambedkar has given equal status to women as men by providing many provisions in the Indian constitution. This resulted in the strengthening and upliftment the position of women. He strongly raised voice against the evils that are prevailing in the society. He spread awareness among women and inspired them to fight against the unjust social practices prevalent in the society. Due to the endeavors of Babasaheb, women are equally sharing the role of contributor in all - around developments in modern India. His contribution gives strength to women to fight against unlawful, unjust in the society and a hope to have a dignified life in the society.

In end this message, we want to say that, let us learn from Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the spirit of self confidence and the determination to fight against the wrong, not only women, all the people of India should be thankful to him because of his tremendous and everlasting steps of developmental works. Let us celebrate his birthday with a promise to live fearless.

raising money through private capital. Biswas is able to tap into his IIT alumni network, which is not the case with others. With \$38.5 billion, India saw the third highest amount of VC investments in the world, after the US and China, in 2021. The Dalit Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

has been trying to identify private VC firms or investors to especially cater to Dalit entrepreneurs, says Munmun, who heads its eastern region chapter. Easier fund access will be critical for Dalit startups to turn into a FabIndia, IKEA or Uber. Hopefully, we will not take 75 years to get there.



Educational Spaces Become Death Traps For Dalit Students?

Despite various judgments upholding the legitimacy of reservations, academic institutions have not fully complied with this constitutional obligation, indicating a failure on the part of the state not only to fulfil a constitutional obligation but also to utilise a key instrument to uplift the most disadvantaged sections of society, writes Virendra Kumar.

Virendra Kumar

Credit: outlookindia.com

The recent increase of suicides among Dalit students in higher educational institutions has once again drawn attention towards caste-based discrimination in such spaces. While the country last year celebrated 75th year of Independence and the government is busy promoting catchy phrases such as Amrit Kal, Dalit and adivasi students are driven to suicides or drop out of these academic institutions due to the oppression they face.

The problem of discrimination was often raised in the Parliament, such as an incident at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) last year in which a faculty member allegedly gave SC/ST/OBC students lower marks in

the PhD entrance viva exam, causing them to fail. After much outcry, the JNU administration was compelled to release an official notification. This case is just one example of discrimination in one of the country's most prestigious institutions.

In academic institutions, caste discrimination is a harsh reality and young Dalits are facing oppression from the so-called savarnas and others. In the past one month, three student-suicides have shocked us. The biggest irony is that all the three victims were from Dalit backgrounds.

The first of these three cases was that of Darshan Solanki, a B Tech student at IIT Bombay. The next case was of Dr Preethi, a scheduled tribe (ST) student from Hyderabad who died by suicide after being subjected to

ragging. The third case was also of a medical student. Scheduled caste MBBS student Pamposh died by suicide in a hostel room of a medical college in Amritsar, Punjab. These incidents are the signs of increasing hatred towards the emerging anti-caste narratives in the campuses across the nation.

The above evidence does not require any further research or enquiry. These cases are not the first. Numerous instances have confirmed that Dalit students are discriminated against, leading to feelings of alienation or exclusion which further force them to drop out, or die by suicide. Even the University Grants Commission (UGC) has acknowledged this problem in this regard and from time to time, it has formed many

committees and given guidelines for the redressal.

In 2012, UGC came up with regulations for the promotion of equity in higher educational institutions, which paved the way for establishing an Equal Opportunity Cell and Anti-Discrimination Officer in academic institutions. Under the vision of UGC 2012 regulation, it prohibited discrimination, harassment, unfavourable treatment, and victimisation based on caste, creed, religion, language, ethnicity, gender and disabilities to maintain equity.

Let's go by the definition of equity – opportunity and entitlements for the equal enjoyment of all legitimate rights. Government data itself exposes that the situation on the ground contradicts this definition of equity.

Prof. Sukhdeo Thorat, the former chairman of UGC, submitted a report in 2007 that highlighted caste-based discrimination against medical students from SC/ST backgrounds at AIIMS Delhi. The report described issues such as differential treatment in academic institutions, hostel segregation, social segregation in games and cultural events, and ragging with serious caste overtones. Similarly, the Mungekar Committee headed by former Rajya Sabha MP Mungekar found a pattern of discrimination in Vardman Medical College –also known as Safdarjung hospital– in 2012. The panel discovered that SC students had failed en masse in physiology papers, causing a nationwide controversy. The allegations were found to be correct and the accused staff members, including the principal of the medical college, were subsequently suspended from service.

Philosophical roots of caste oppression

The caste system always bears on

people's minds in their day-to-day interactions irrespective of their educational or social status and its imprints can be found in the conduct of even professional groups like teachers, engineers, doctors, or even government officials. Noted sociologist MN Srinivas has said that caste is broadly and tacitly accepted by all – including those most vocal in condemning it– to the extent that everywhere it is the unit of social action.

In his famous work, Gopal Guru, a renowned social scientist, commented that caste oppression or discrimination leads to a sense of humiliation, a kind of mental hurt to the dignity of the discriminated individual. In Hindu philosophy, the social oppression of the caste system originates from the karma theory, which does not leave any scope to challenge it through logical arguments. The humiliation caused by caste oppression is not just physical but also mental and psychological, leaving permanent scars on the victim's heart. Guru further adds that humiliation completely arrests the growth of moral insights.

Drawing from the aforementioned philosophical insights, it can be inferred that suicides in higher education institutions are not regular suicides. These victims are not ordinary people. The victims were in higher educational institutions by overcoming significant barriers to reach that level and it is only when they lose all hope of receiving justice from society and other institutions that they resort to extreme acts like suicide.

Assessment of state intervention

Based on government data and reports, it appears that the efficacy of state action in implementing the affirmative policies has proved to be very weak in producing desired social

change, resulting in the traditional caste structure of the society remaining unchanged with very slow upward mobility of the oppressed castes.

Similarly, higher educational institutions are not immune to discriminatory sociocultural practices as confirmed by media reports of caste discrimination experienced by lower caste individuals in universities and colleges. Noted Dalit expert and sociologist Prof. Vivek Kumar in a seminar said, "We talk about casteism, but a majority of the Indian people relate caste discrimination with untouchability, but, in modern times, forms of discrimination have changed. Those who control the power structure of the society create hurdles so that those who are at the margins could not reach or intermingle with mainstream society."

In other words, not giving proper representation in fields which control the country and society is casteism. Prof. Kumar gave seven types of power centres that control power: 1) Judiciary; 2) Polity; 3) Bureaucracy; 4) University; 5) Industry; 6) Civil society, 7) Media. As per his argument, casteism in the country cannot be eliminated without proper representation in all these fields.

As a researcher on a similar topic, I found respondents sharing similar views. Some added that asserting constitutional rights promised in the Indian Constitution often result in being labelled as casteist. But who are the true culprits of casteism? Everyone is aware of the answer to the question. The true culprits of casteism are those who have benefitted from the hierarchical Hindu social order and do not want to relinquish their privileges. They demoralise assertive youth with social connections and create an environment where victims lose hope of positive change, accepting their fate as destiny and are driven to suicide.

If you ask an educated Dalit about the reasons for their community's backwardness, the immediate response would likely be Manusmriti. Many scholars have also written that the codification of Manusmriti led to the exclusion of Dalits from education and property ownership. Many will say as the enrichment of the upper castes came at the cost of Dalit, so there is a moral and legal ground for compensation. Makers of the Constitution realised this and they created the provisions in the form of reservation, which is a positive discrimination. Reservation in our society is always a matter of controversy, and educational institutions are also not spared from it. Logically, Dalits argue in favour of reservation and say it is a long overdue social debt that upper castes owe to the untouchables, but upper caste youth think in other ways and make fun of Dalits' presence in universities.

The debate around merit is just one aspect of this problem. Additionally, data shows that reserved seats often go unfilled even at the enrollment stage. Following this, we can reach to the conclusion that despite various court judgments upholding the legitimacy of reservations, academic institutions have not fully complied with this constitutional obligation, indicating a failure on the part of the state not only to fulfil a constitutional obligation but also to utilise a key instrument to uplift the most disadvantaged sections of society.

To conclude the article, I would like to highlight a statement made by Dr BR Ambedkar — caste intercepts every aspect of life. It is ubiquitous within the learning process. It creates distinctions among students and deprives them of equal opportunities to learn. The remedial measures against caste discrimination in higher

“Let's keep Dr. B. R. Ambedkar as our mentor not just a symbol”

“Cultivation of mind should be the ultimate aim of human existence. Great person is different from an eminent one in that he/she ready to be a servant of the society.”-Bharat Ratna Babasaheb Dr.B.R.Ambedkar.

Manjit Bains

*Chair of Women's Empowerment
Committee Chetna Association of Canada*

The kind of mentor Dr. B.R Ambedkar was, he was one who not only stood against inequalities, but also drafted the framework of the Indian Constitution in order to provide equality to every Indian. He was a great economist, educationist, politician, a champion of human rights, and an emancipator for the untouchables and women, for whom he taught to hold their head high and live life like a lion. We need to keep practicing the teachings that we have learnt from our mentor in order to stand against inequalities and injustices. Equality is something which matters not only in India but all across the globe, as inequalities based on income, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, class, ethnicity, and religion continue to persist across the world. In addition to all of this, inequalities based on the so-called caste system are more dangerous in the Indian community. This discrimination that is based on the pointless standard of the imposed caste system is now not only limited to India, this discrimination is now spreading to where ever people with a Hindu mindset are migrating. Examples of this are happening in academic settings and job settings outside of India. Dr. Ambedkar placed equal rights for women in the Indian

constitution. Dr. Ambedkar believed and said many times that, “when a man educates a family develops, and when a woman educates a nation develops.” According to Dr. Ambedkar, the progress of a community can be measured by the degree of progress which women have achieved in that community. When Dr. Ambedkar denounced Hinduism, its customs and traditions, he declared that from that moment forward he would strive for the spread of equality among human beings, and embraced Buddhism on October 14, 1956 with approximately 600,000 followers. Dr. Ambedkar revived Buddhism in India and his conversion to Buddhism is deeply significant for millions of people in India.

Dr. Ambedkar's logo “Educate, Organize, Agitate” empowers us and reveals the best way to fight against the evils of social hierarchy. To create harmony in our social system, Dr. Ambedkar emphasized and preambled the Indian constitution based on Equality, Liberty, Justice and Fraternity.

Being Indian and followers of Dr. Ambedkar, it is our responsibility to propagate his teachings, because discrimination based on the so-called caste system is increasing daily in Indian communities living throughout the world. We need to get together in order to stop all kinds of discrimination, creating a harmonious society.

education appear completely insufficient and impotent. There is a need for radical social reforms in academic institutions and all stakeholders involved must be sensitised to eliminate biases and

prejudices.

•••

(Virendra Kumar is a PhD scholar at the School of Liberal Studies at Dr BR Ambedkar University, Delhi. Views expressed are personal opinions of the author.)

Ashok Kumar (Ashok Das)

Indian media is actually like a chameleon. Especially on issues related to caste and Dalits. It has been a racist of the highest order. And this is not happening in today's era, but it is happening since the time when Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was publishing the newspaper "Harijan" and Bal Gangadhar Tilak was publishing "Kesari". These people were talking about various issues through their newspapers, enumerating all the problems, but remained silent on ending untouchability and giving rights to Dalits. This was the reason that on January 31, 1920, Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar had to bring out the fortnightly newspaper 'Mooknayak'. And when Babasaheb wanted to advertise in Tilak's newspaper Kesari regarding the publication of 'Mooknayak', Tilak flatly refused to advertise even after taking money.

When we are talking about the question of caste and media, it has to be seen in many ways. For example, how does the media serve the question of caste? Does the media campaign for the rights of marginalized groups? And the most important question is whether the marginalized groups have a stake in the media institutions?

Coming to the first question. Some headlines are often seen in the Indian media - such as "the rape of a Dalit woman". "Dalit is beaten". When the Dalit touched the pot, they broke his hand et cetera... et cetera, but have you read or heard such headlines that Rajput girl raped, Brahmin girl raped, Brahmin or Rajput beaten up. Have you ever thought why this happens?

I believe that the media wants to scare Dalits by telling them their caste in case of harassment. The media tells that if you do not listen to us, try to match us, then what will we do with you. Because the people sitting inside



the media are the ones whose caste people attack the deprived society. And the media which is hell-bent on intimidating the Dalits, it is less likely to campaign for the rights and rights of the underprivileged. Instead of calling such people goons and casteists, the media calls them "domineering".

On the other hand, the same media does not tell the caste of Hima Das on making the world record. The caste of Deepika Kumari, who excelled in archery. Moreover, the boxer who won the medal in Olympics does not tell the caste of Mary Kom. Means, if there is rape, then she is daughter of Dalit and if she wins a medal, then she is daughter of the country. This is the true face of media.

And this happens because the participation of the marginalized sections in media groups is not there even after 75 years of independence. In the last two decades, many surveys have been conducted regarding the share of the deprived sections in the media. The result remains the same. According to the latest report by Oxfam India and Newslandry, 90 percent of the top positions in print, TV and digital media are occupied by upper caste groups. No Dalit or tribal

community member is leading the mainstream media in India. And because of this they are not even able to say their words. The report also shows that every three out of five articles in Hindi and English newspapers are written by general caste writers, while SC, ST or OBCs contribute only one out of five articles.

According to the report, out of 121 top positions, which include editor-in-chief, managing editor, executive editor, bureau chief, input/output editor, in the newspapers, TV channels, news websites and magazines covered in the survey, 106 are held by members of upper castes. While five are held by OBCs and six by members of minority communities. The same is the case with debates on TV channels. Even if the issue is of Dalits, from the anchor to the participants in that debate, most of them are non-Dalits. Under the pressure of social media, the media has started showing some news related to the deprived society so that it can show itself liberal, but its basic character is still the same. Casteist and Manuwadi.

...

Ashok Das is a Journalist. He is founder of Dalit Dastak. Dalit Dastak is a monthly magazine, website and YouTube channel.

DR. AMBEDKAR: SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SOCIAL CHANGE

ABSTRACT

Dr Ambedkar made it his life's mission to alter the social, political, cultural, religious, and economic arrangements of India and its people and ushered a new era of social transformation to reconstruct society based on universally accepted principles of equity, fairness, and justice. This paper is a brief exploration of some of these topics.

Dr. Rajratna Ambedkar

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Mgmt., M.B.A. Finance, Ph.D. Finance)
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Born in 1891, Dr Ambedkar experienced the 'pains and burdens' of Caste and Untouchability on account of his birth. Very early in his life, he addressed himself to social reform but soon realised that *'the path of social reform like the path to heaven at any rate in India, is strewn with many difficulties. Social reform in India has few friends and many critics'*.

He concluded the futility of appeals for divine intervention for the removal of 'pains and burdens' in human society. As a young man, he adopted a 'radical' approach of 'direct action' by organising protests and marches for basic right to drink water from public wells: right to access roads; right of temple entry; access to education; to be free from social boycotts; to be free from deprivation and destitution and human 'slavery' on account of untouchability.

How to instil a 'sense of justice' and escape from the 'thralldom of caste and Untouchability' became Dr Ambedkar's mission of life.

Social Change

The 'radical' Dr Ambedkar Orchestrated the burning of the Manu

BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Dr. Rajratna Ambedkar is a Social Activist, thinker and writer. He is currently President of The Buddhist Society of India founded by Late Bodhisatva Babasahab Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. He is also the Great Grand Nephew of Dr. Ambedkar. He has completed his studies from Mumbai University. He has presented various papers at United Nation's conferences on Buddhism, UNDV. He has been elected as a Standing Committee Secretary of The World Fellowship of Buddhist – a consortium of 128 Buddhist Countries.

Also, he has been working as India's President for OFMI (Organization Of Minorities of India) representing issues of Minorities of India at various levels, Filed petition against CAA and NRC at Supreme Court, petition for Buddhist at Supreme Court of India, petition against use of Electronic Voting Machines at International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, USA., and many more.

Dr. Rajratna Ambedkar, President, The Buddhist Society of India.



Smriti by the Untouchables at Mahad in 1927. An event which has the same significance and importance in the history of the emancipation of the Untouchables which the Fall of Bastille had in the liberation of the masses in France and Europe. However, Dr Ambedkar was a firm believer in peaceful and constitutional methods to bring about social, economic, political and cultural change.

Dr Ambedkar was a scholar, a lawyer, an educationist, a constitutionalist, a social reformer as well as a leveller. Peace was essential for such a man both in individual and social relationships. If he had followed the path of violence, he could have done nothing for the downtrodden communities. He believed in the reformation of the mind and the heart of the people, and in later life, he sincerely and faithfully, followed what the Buddha taught, viz that hatred does not cease by hatred, it ceases by love.

He had deep faith in social reform, social change, but not in revenge. It can be seen in his own words: 'Had my mind been seized with hatred and revenge, I would have brought disaster upon this land in less than five years.

His verdict on Inter-caste

Marriages as the 'solvent of caste' 26 he acknowledged but he questioned how inter-caste marriages could be brought about on a mass scale!

Castes cannot be abolished by inter-caste dinners or stray instances of inter-caste marriages. The Caste is a state of mind. It is a disease of the mind. The teachings of the Hindu religion are the root cause of this disease. We practise the casteism, we observe the Untouchability, because we are asked to do so by the Hindu religion in which we live.

Caste is ever ready to take advantage of the helplessness of man and insist upon complete conformity to its code in letter and in spirit. A caste can easily organise itself into a conspiracy to make the life of a reformer a hell ... caste in the hands of the orthodox has been a powerful weapon for persecuting the reforms and for killing all reform.

He experienced the wrath and hate from orthodox sections of Hindus throughout his life when he challenged the obscurantist forces of his time.

Ideal Society

Dr Ambedkar writes that my ideal is a society based on Liberty, Equality

and Fraternity.

An ideal society should be mobile, should be full of channels for conveying a change taking place in one part to other parts. In an ideal society there should be many interests consciously communicated and shared. There should be varied and free points of contact with other modes of association. In other words there should be social endosmosis. This is fraternity, which is only another name for democracy. Democracy is not merely a form of Government. It is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. It is essentially an attitude of respect and reverence towards fellowmen.

Towards Buddhism

Using the Social message of the Buddha he ushered in a new era of social transformation. He dispensed with the 'dead wood' that had contaminated Buddhism over the centuries and brought the message of the Buddha alive and relevant to modern times. His book *The Buddha and his Dhamma* is a wake up call to all Buddhists everywhere to spread the message of the Buddha - a task he was to dedicate himself to in his final years!

Dr Ambedkar offers original insights into the social message of the Buddha. His interpretation of Buddhism represents a challenge to commonly accepted views on Karma and Re-birth. Dr Ambedkar applied tests to judge a religion:

1. Society must have either the sanction of law or the sanction of morality to hold it together. Without either society is sure to go to pieces.
2. He says that in all societies law plays a very small part. It is intended to keep the minority within the range of social discipline.

3. The majority is left and has to be left to sustain its social life by the postulates and sanction of morality. Religion in the sense of morality, must therefore, remain the governing principle in every society.

4. Religion must be in accord with science. Religion is bound to lose its respect and therefore become the subject of ridicule and thereby not merely lose its force as a governing principle of life but might in course of time disintegrate and lapse if it is not in accord with science. In other words, religion if it is to function, must be in accord with reason which is merely another name for science

5. That religion as a code of social morality, must recognise the fundamental tenets of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Unless a religion recognise these fundamental principles of social life religion will be doomed.

6. That religion must not sanctify or ennoble poverty. Renunciation of riches by those who have it may be a blessed state but poverty can never be. To declare poverty to be a blessed state is to pervert religion, to perpetuate vice, crime to consent to make earth a living hell.

Social Philosophy

In a talk broadcast on All India Radio, October 3, 1954

Positively, my Social Philosophy, may be said to be enshrined in three words: Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Let no one, however, say that I have borrowed my philosophy from the French-Revolution. I have not. My philosophy has roots in religion and not in political science. I have derived them from the teachings of my Master, the Buddha. In his philosophy, liberty and equality had a

place; but he added that unlimited liberty destroyed equality, and absolute equality left no room for liberty. In His Philosophy, law had a place only as a safeguard against the breaches of liberty and equality; but He did not believe that law can be a guarantee for breaches of liberty or equality. He gave the highest place to fraternity as the only real safeguard against the denial of liberty or equality or fraternity which was another name for brotherhood or humanity, which was again another name for religion. Law is secular, which anybody may break while fraternity or religion is sacred which everybody must respect.

Dr Ambedkar remained at the forefront of the social, cultural economic and political transformation of India during the closing decades of British Rule. After Independence in 1947, Dr Ambedkar played a uniquely significant role till his death in 1956 in laying the foundation of modern India.

Dr Ambedkar made outstanding contributions as economist, sociologist, anthropologist, educationist, journalist, as an authority on comparative Religion, as policy-maker and administrator, and as a parliamentarian, besides being a jurist who became the Principal Architect of the Indian Constitution.

The Preamble of India's Constitution enshrines principles of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity and Justice. The constitution incorporates Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles to provide guidelines to successive governments of all shades to devise policies to promote, social and economic democracy for all.

On 14th October 1956, an epoch-making event occurred at Nagpur, India when Dr Ambedkar embraced Buddhism with millions of his followers. By this act a social revolution was unleashed on Indian soil.

Greetings for the Symposium and the Dr. Ambedkar Equality Day



Nirmala Birdi and Manjit Bains - with BC's Speaker Raj Chouhan and Education Minister Rachna Singh - Hari Sharma Foundation Event.

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B.C. TRIBUNAL ORDERS \$9,755 PAYOUT TO TAXI DRIVER OVER CASTE-BASED DISCRIMINATION

The decision says Manoj Bhangu, an immigrant from Punjab in India, was discriminated against by two co-workers on the basis of his ancestry, place of origin, and race.



The British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal has ordered that a taxi driver be paid more than \$9,000 in compensation because his caste was insulted during a physical altercation at a staff Christmas party.

The tribunal's March 15 decision said Manoj Bhangu, an immigrant from Punjab in India, was discriminated against by two co-workers on the basis of his ancestry, place of origin and race.

Tribunal adjudicator Sonya Pighin said brothers Inderjit and Avninder Dhillon used a caste-based slur against Bhangu during the brawl at the B.C. firm's 2018 party and ordered that they pay him \$9,755.81 in compensation.

Pighin said in the decision that although she couldn't conclude the brothers regarded Bhangu as their inferior, he had nevertheless proven his "protected characteristics" were a factor in the adverse psychological impacts he suffered.

The slur referred to a subgroup of the Dalit caste, Pighin said in the ruling, citing a submitted report that Dalits were traditionally "given demeaning names and jobs to ensure they realized their lowest position in society."

She ruled that the relative position in the caste system of the person who uttered the slur did not matter; what mattered was whether that person belonged to the slurred caste.

"It is the use of the slur by a person who is not a member of the slur caste that gives the use of the slur the insulting or humiliating connotation," read the ruling.

She said Bhangu provided uncontested evidence that he experienced shock and embarrassment after the incident and described it as difficult for him to explain to his children what happened.



"He also found it very difficult to go to work and interact with his colleagues who had observed the events at the staff party because he felt insulted and humiliated in front of them and being around them reminded him of what had happened," Pighin wrote in the decision.

Pighin ordered Inderjit and Avninder to jointly pay \$3,755.81 to Bhangu for expenses he incurred in relation to the discrimination and also ordered the brothers to pay another \$6,000 to compensate for the injury to his "dignity, feelings and self-respect."

The decision also said that the insult reminded Bhangu of caste discrimination he suffered while growing up in India, which was part of the reason he moved to Canada.

Pighin said that although the discrimination Bhangu suffered during the altercation was brief, its impact was exacerbated because it involved violence.

"Mr. Bhangu was not in a position of powerlessness in relation to the respondents. However, his history of

caste-based discrimination in India intensified the severity of the impact he experienced regarding the discrimination," read the decision.

Pighin ordered Inderjit and Avninder to jointly pay \$3,755.81 to Bhangu for expenses he incurred in relation to the discrimination and also ordered the brothers to pay another \$6,000 to compensate for the injury to his "dignity, feelings and self-respect."

India's caste system dividing Hindus was officially abolished in 1950, but the social hierarchy still pervades many aspects of life there.

The system divided Hindus into four main categories, deciding what jobs they could do and who they could marry.

Bhangu accused a third person of using the slur, but the complaint was dismissed.

Why are we still talking about caste discrimination in the United Kingdom?

Santosh Dass MBE



In May 2022 we welcomed in London the Election of Labour Party's Councillor Mrs Mohinder Kaur Midha as the new mayor of Ealing for 2022/23. The historical significance of this appointment is Midha, a well-educated woman from Punjab, is the first woman of Dalit descent to be elected mayor in the United Kingdom (UK). She's broken the glass ceiling with hard work serving the community in Southall, West London with an inordinate supply of good humour. When I tweeted about Midha's appointment as a matter of pride, I was pulled up by some on social media questioning why I was even talking about caste in the UK. The ground reality is the much of the South Asian diaspora still identify with caste in varying degrees.

Campaigners have been raising awareness of the existence of caste and caste-based discrimination in Britain for over four decades now. As early as 1976, around the same time as Mrs Midha arrived in Britain, Ambedkarites in Bedfordshire, England, protested on the streets in outrage in response to an article about religions in the *Bedfordshire Times* in which a British journalist Liz Brown described 'Untouchables' as 'sub-humans'. Imagine being described in such a dehumanising way! Ambedkarites protesting, some of whom who had been featured in Brown's article, believed her use of the words 'sub-humans' might have been influenced by the local so-called high caste Hindu shop-owner who was also quoted extensively in the article. This protest sent a clear signal the Indian diaspora would not tolerate Untouchability in Britain they had left it behind in India - or so they hoped. Untouchability had already been abolished as part of the India's Constitution spearheaded by Dr. Bhimrao R. Ambedkar.

To those who argue there is no caste in the UK now, I direct them to the register of charities for England and Wales. There you will find charities registered under caste names - Brahmin, Jat, Valmik, Ravidassia, and Ramgarhia. Similarly there are temples and Gurdwaras around Britain with similar names. Recent TV documentaries and newspaper articles confirm people still identify with caste. The Sikh Report 2018 found that nearly 50 per cent of the British Sikh respondents believed in the caste system and 13 per cent consider it very important.

In the last two decades, non-government organisations, including the Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance (ACDA), the Dalit Solidarity Network UK, and Government-commissioned research have established definitive evidence of caste and of caste-based discrimination in Britain. We have equality laws that protect against racial, disability, and gender discrimination for example. Caste -based discrimination is no different to these

forms of discrimination and it is only right the Labour Party Government, after listening to the voices of victims, in April 2010, added a legal power in Section 9(5) of the Equality Act 2010 on Caste discrimination that could make Caste a protected characteristic under Race.¹ In the absence of the then Conservative Government's progress on implementing the 2010 law, the UK Parliament agreed in April 2013, to make it a legal duty on Government to implement the law.² The 2010, and 2013, legal amendments to the UK Equality law were agreed following sound evidence of caste discrimination in the UK documented in a number of Government-commissioned, and independent reports on research into this area.³

The Conservative Government, that has been in power in the UK since May 2010 (part of the time 2010-2015, in coalition with the Liberal Democrats) is believed to be influenced by the strong Hindu anti-caste law lobby; votes to stay in power; and their ambitions to secure a good post BREXIT trade deal with India. The Hindu Groups anti caste law lobby trot out the usual lines, as they are doing now in the USA i.e. there is no caste discrimination; not enough cases; it's unacceptable if it happens but a law is not necessary. So in spite of the evidence, the UK Government announced in July 2018, that existing equality law (under Race, ethnic origins) already provides legal redress against Caste discrimination and harassment in the UK and they would repeal the caste law duty. Government based their decision on one case law- the *Tirkey v. Chandhok* Employment Tribunal - and a flawed consultation that should have been about how to implement the 2010 law without unintended consequences, but instead became a consultation on whether the law should be implemented at all. The UK's independent Equalities and Human Rights Commission continues to support the case for the law.⁴ In the same July 2018 announcement, the Government promised to clarify the legal provision in Government guidance on Caste and the Equality Act to employers, service providers, and education institutions. Nearly five years later we are still waiting.

Since 2018, there have been three Employment Tribunal (ET) legal cases that had a caste element to them that the ACDA has been involved with. Two (one in England, and one in Scotland) settled out of court and will therefore never count as case law. One case did go to court in 2019 - the ET in *Ms A Agarwal and Mr R Meshram v Tata Consultancy Services Ltd and Others*.⁵ This found there was constructive redundancy in the case of Mr Meshram who had claimed caste discrimination to be a factor in his mistreatment and redundancy. There is another ET currently being heard.

The yet to be implemented 2010 Caste law has however, had a measure of success on an issue surrounding culture and

heritage in the UK. At the Ambedkar Museum London Public Inquiry (PI) hearing in 2019 against Camden Council's rejection of a planning permission to turn the 10 King Henry's Road, London NW3 memorial (where Dr Ambedkar lived in 1920s) into a museum, the Inspector factored in the adverse impact on the Dalit groups of an unfavourable outcome in his decision making. I was part of the project team's planning for the PI hearing and was able to build in the absence of a regulatory impact assessment by Camden Council when it made its decision to reject the application. Mr K L Williams, the Inspector at the PI, agreed the groups particularly affected by the museum not being approved would be 'all people of Indian origin, particularly the Dalits, together with Buddhists' in his favourable decision.⁶

The National Health Service, in England has also been affected by caste. In 2020, the ACDA⁷ challenged a large NHS hospital Trust's guidance published on the Chaplaincy section of their website about treating a Hindu patient. ACDA's issue was the words 'Harijan', 'Untouchable', 'low Caste' and the lumping together "menstruating women and mourners" and Dalits as "ritually unclean and therefore untouchable". The NHS Trust concerned swiftly removed the guidance from their website. But how many more documents are there in Britain, and elsewhere, where the institutionalization of caste and Untouchability has crept in?

Internationally, Twitter⁸, YouTube⁹ and Facebook¹⁰ recognise Caste related hate speech as being unacceptable and say so openly in their guidance. In 2020, the ACDA, Ambedkarites, and the Ravidassia community saw the successful prosecution of a Sikh man who had produced and posted a video that referred to Guru Ravidass and the Dalit community in an offensive way on *TikTok*. The man received a twelve-week suspended prison sentence with conditions attached for five years. The absence of clarity on caste law meant there is no reference to caste discrimination or harassment on the charge sheet and prosecution sheet for this case. On 15 March 2023, like in the 2020 case, police charged Amrik Singh Bajwa with a similar offence after months of complaints to the police by individuals and organisations including the Guru Ravidass Sabha and the ACDA. Bajwa's *TikTok* post again was highly toxic and casteist in content. Bajwa is due in court on 4 April 2023.

In a Global world can you expect a person traveling from Mumbai to miraculously leave their caste and descent behind when they board a plane to Manchester, England? The recent Cisco caste discrimination case in the California, and one in Canada, and those in the UK demonstrate caste has travelled to parts of the world with the Indian diaspora. With that comes the potential for caste discrimination and exploitation unless caste is annihilated. Progress is being made in the United States with the 'Seattle Law' successfully introduced by the

brilliant Kshama Sawant, that has seen Seattle Council become the first US city to add caste to its list of categories protected against caste discrimination. Progress is beginning to be made in California and Canada. We need to progress in the UK too. We even have law ready and waiting for implementation that sadly some sections with the ear of the Government, fear and resist robustly! All best wishes and a Jai Bhim to the Chetna Association of Canada and Ambedkarite Internal Coordination Society for a very successful International symposium and Dr Ambedkar Equality Day from 21 to 26 2023.

Santosh Dass MBE, is Chair of the Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance and President of the Federation of Ambedkarite and Buddhist Organisations UK. She is based in London. Her co-edited and co-authored book 'Ambedkar in London' (Hurst Publishers) 2022 includes a chapter on the campaign to outlaw caste discrimination in Britain. In 2018, she gave the 2nd Annual Dr B. R. Ambedkar Memorial lecture at the British Columbia University and Surry University

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“Ambedkar Times” and “Desh Doaba” Weeklies congratulate!!!



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L to R: SURJIT MOMI, LALI MOMI, PREM SODHI MOMI, HARMINDER MOMI, RAJINDER MOMI



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“Ambedkar Times” and “Desh Doaba” Weeklies congratulate Chetna Association of Canada and Ambedkarite International Coordination Society for arranging to organize week-long International Symposium and Dr. Ambedkar Equality Day (April 21 to 26, 2023) I, Prem Kumar Chumber, along with Momi Brothers (Bakersfield), Kashmiri Bhatia (Gilroy), Amardeep Chahal (King City) and Raj Guru (Fresno) send our best wishes for the grand success of this forthcoming great missionary event!! www.ambedkartimes.com

Dalit Movement and Dalit International Conferences

The dalit movement now presents an even greater diversity than before and dalit women, who remain triply exploited on the basis of caste, class and gender, largely remain outside the movement's fold.

Vivek Kumar

Yet another dalit international conference was recently organised in Vancouver, Canada, during May 16-18, 2003, with the help of dalit diaspora settled in different parts of the world. This is the fourth such conference organised by the dalit diaspora since 1998. The first one was organised in Malaysia, by Dalit International Organisation during October 10-11, 1998. It was followed by a two-day international conference on dalit human rights in London during September 16-17, 2000 by Voice of Dalit International (VODI). VODI organised another international dalit conference in India during February 19-20, 2003 assessing the status of dalit and international developmental aid. Besides dalits have also participated in the world conference against racism, held in Durban between August 28 to September 7. The dalit diaspora that remained invisible till few years' back has all of a sudden become visible. Today we are aware that it is present in big numbers in Canada, Malaysia, south Asia, South Africa, West Indies, Germany, UK, US and many other countries.

Three factors have contributed positively in making the dalit diaspora visible. One, the increased communication facility by the information revolution, as an integral part of the process of globalisation, through computers and internet services. Log on to www.ambedkar.org, www.gururavidassabha.org, etc, and you can find all about them. Two, the strengthening of civil society with the NGOs, both at the international and national level and



their keenness to take interest in the issues related to dalits and other marginalised sections. And finally, the intervention of United Nation Human Rights to Commission, World Bank, and other international and national institutions for maintenance of human rights of dalit and other deprived sections.

Against this backdrop, based on the issues discussed in these dalit international conferences, we can have an objective assessment of present nature, scope, successes and failures suffered by the dalit movement. We can also list challenges faced by the dalit movement, which have emerged out of these conferences to assess the direction of 21st century dalit movement.

Challenges for the Movement

Faced with the atrocities within the Hindu social order, at the very outset dalits in India face a challenge whether to remain within the Hindu folds or convert to Buddhism or to any other religion. The dalit leadership has failed to give any clear-cut direction to their followers especially in the wake of legislation passed by the different state governments in India. Further the dalit movement today faces a challenge from the communal forces on which

the conferences have only showed their concerns without coming out with a strategy to counter it.

The second challenge for the dalits, which has emerged out of these conferences, is how to face the onslaught of the processes of globalisation, privatisation, liberalisation, information revolution, etc. It is a fact that the rolling back of the state in every sphere, is making reservations for dalits under article 335 of the Indian Constitution redundant. On the other hand, with the coming of MNCs the demand for management, engineering, computer application degree holders is increasing, which dalits cannot supply. It is not because they do not have merit rather because they were late starters in the realm of education. Secondly, technical education is still very expensive which most dalits can't afford.

There are two paths suggested by the dalits to tackle the aforesaid problem. One, capture political power by forming an independent party and implement the dalit agenda. This is being mooted on the basis that the Constitution gives dalits rights at par with other masses including right to vote. The only effort, which dalits have to make, is to get these rights implemented in letter and spirit, which

is possible by forming a government only. But the irony is that dalits on their own do not have numbers to form a government. So they have to enter in alliance with some other political force, and it is difficult for them to find a suitable ally, at least till now. The other path is that of diversity in supplier, dealership, and recruitment. The recruitment diversity will extend in private sector as well, which is now restricted only in the government and public undertakings. Here, one can argue that if the rights enshrined in the Constitution were not fulfilled in last 52 years who can take the guarantee of the private sector. Together this is the challenge number three faced by the dalit movement.

How to bring the diverse facets of dalit movements in a state of dialogue is another challenge of the dalit movement. Today the dalit movement has diversified its nature and scope. There is the dalit political and socio-

religious reform movement, movement of dalit bureaucracy, dalit intellectual movement, which includes number of magazines, journals, internet magazines and sites, conferences like dalit Sahitya Sammelan and dalit history conference, etc. Today we also have an international dalit organisation led by dalit diaspora who are trying to raise the issues confronting the dalits. They have taken up the matters concerning dalits with World Bank, IMF, and UNHRC and MNC directly suggesting to them way and means to take favourable steps to safeguard the rights of the dalits.

Another challenge for dalit movement is how to bring the dalit women in its fold. Generally it is argued that though the dalit women are triply exploited on the bases of caste, class and gender yet she enjoys greater gender equality in comparison to general caste women. Even then dalit women and their issues are

absent from the dalit movement.

To spread the dalit movement in regions like, Orissa, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Bihar, to name just a few, and creating consciousness among the different castes, other than the 'mahars' and 'chamars', who are not aware of the dalit assertion is a bigger challenge confronting the dalit movement. The international conferences have been successful in creating greater visibility to the plight of dalits at the international level yet it has to address the challenges faced the dalit movement back home. Unless the dalit leadership is prepared to face all these challenges earnestly, the movement's development will be crippled.

Some of the challenges Prof. Dr. Vivek Kumar highlighted twenty years ago, continue to remain. It highlights why we need to rethink, re-strategize, and rebrand the movement of Dalit Emancipation-Team ASE (2023)



Dr. Priti Narayan (Director, Center for India and South Asia Research at UBC with Mr. Param Kainth, co-chair for the Dr. Ambedkar symposium. March 30, 2023.

Dave Birdi, was the first Indo-Canadian to be elected as a councillor in Fort St. James, BC. Dave welcomes all delegates and congratulates organizers for hosting the symposium.



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CASTE in Canada

Interview of Surjit and Manjit Bains by Dr. Anne Murphy

By Dr. Anne Murphy (UBC) & Dr. Suraj Yengde (Oxford), Co-Primary Investigators

The "Caste in Canada" project - funded by a "Partnership Engage" grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, with additional support from the Work Learn program at UBC and an anonymous donor to the UBC Department of History - brings together the stories of fourteen Canadians whose diverse and complex experiences have been impacted by caste discrimination.

Background

South Asian migration and settlement abroad have taken remarkably diverse forms over the last 250 years. Be it South Asian labour to work across the British Empire, or more recent voluntary migration to the West, there is not one story to tell about how, why, and when South Asians began to travel and settle outside of South Asia. The 120-year-long history of South Asians in Canada is also strikingly diverse, representing the complexities of the Canadian relationship with the British Empire and with India in the colonial period

(up to decolonization in 1947), and the dynamics of the formation of the multicultural state today.

The diversity of gender, religion, ethnicity, region and language among South Asians adds complicated layers to the story of South Asian story of migration to Canada. However, all too often, what continues to be omitted in the stories we hear and read about is the experience of caste. Caste sits at the center of the aforementioned diversities, marking communities and individuals, across religions and regions. Yet it has remained obfuscated in most immigrant/Indian Diaspora stories and, in general, Dalit experiences in Canada have become conflated with a collective Sikh/South Asian/Punjabi/Indo-Canadian/"East-Indian" history that excludes Dalit perspectives. With an aim to correct this, Dr. Anne Murphy and Dr. Suraj Yengde partnered with the Chetna Association of Canada to initiate the first-ever caste-centric investigation of diasporic South Asian experience and histories in Canada, with a focus on British Columbia. This is but one of many steps necessary to work towards eradicating caste-based ideologies and practices within the Diaspora, which is the committed goal of the

organizations and individuals associated with this project.

Context and Connections

At the dawn of the early twentieth century, migrants from Punjab took passage across cold waters in an arduous journey to a new land. As they left the shores of their homeland, they also left behind their families and loved ones. No one knew what to expect. Many are unaware that some of these early South Asian settlers in Canada came from Dalit communities: those deemed to be "low" in the hierarchy of the caste system. Yet, these individuals too carried with them a hope of greater opportunity - as well as the promise of a dignified life that had previously been denied to them, owing to their "lower caste" origins.

These Punjabis landed on the shores of Vancouver Island in Victoria, BC, a gateway to the promised land for tired and persecuted Dalits, as it was for so many other Punjabis. Among the 5000 or so early South Asian settlers from 1904-1908, were Mr. Maiya Ram Mehmi and Esaar Aheer, the first Dalit immigrants to Canada, arriving on Nov 14, 1906. Mehmi came from Mothada Kalan, Jalandhar, Punjab and Esaar from the village Lagheri, Hoshiarpur,

Punjab. Both men became friends on the ship "Tartar," and were inseparable throughout their voyage from Calcutta via Hong Kong to Vancouver.

Over the years, Mr. Mehmi later brought over his two sons, Lakha Ram and Bhagtu Ram. They would go on to sponsor other members of their families, including nephews and cousins, as the immigration policies of Canada allowed. The Mehmi family would not only support their own families but many other Dalits that emigrated, as they knew the struggle and challenges that laid ahead for them?racist white society was expected, but also the cruel caste discrimination that was still prevalent in the Diaspora, which most did not expect upon arriving on foreign soil.

The first Gurdwara on Vancouver Island was built in Victoria, BC in 1912. The entire South Asian community came together for this, and Maiya Ram Mehmi was a part of the collective that brought this to fruition. Yet, at that time (as now), the pan-Canadian Gurudwara leadership was in the hands of the Jatt community, which was and is the dominant caste within the Sikh community in India as well as Canada. How do we understand Mr. Mehmi's role in the Gurdwara, and his experience of caste identity in Canada? How did caste impact his life, as a Canadian? At this time that we initiated the "Caste in Canada" project, we did not have the resources available to understand his story, as well as the stories of many other South Asians who have come to Canada in the decades since the arrival of the first South Asian Settlers. Migrant stories have not received adequate attention through the lens of Dalit Canadian lived realities, which have been marked by prejudice, exclusion and discrimination. By pursuing a project

that investigates the complexity of identities that comprise the South Asian Canadian community, we significantly enhance our understanding of South Asian Canadian experience overall, and of how caste dynamics play out in Canadian society.

The Dalit story is therefore an international one, spread out over 124 countries of the South Asian Diaspora; it is also a Canadian story. By documenting the stories of Dalit Canadians and underscoring their importance, our project seeks not only to create a new historical archive, but also to offer an opportunity to understand the significance of caste for a transnational community today, and enable greater understanding and appreciation of the way caste operates in people's lives. By paying greater attention to oral histories and community stories, we invite the public into the production and dissemination of knowledge. This project documents and disseminates the Dalit community's aspirations, values and ethics, to provide the opportunity for the community to understand and assert its own story. We look forward to sharing the project with the participants in the April 2023 Dr. B. R. Ambedkar International Symposium for Emancipation in the coming few months, to draw attention to the way caste shapes South Asian diasporic experience and histories, and what

must be done to stop caste bias and discrimination.

Community Partnership

This project emerges out of an established partnership between the University of British Columbia, and particularly its Centre for India and South Asia Research and Department of History, and the core Partners and Collaborators in the project. For five years, the Centre has been a co-sponsor of the annual Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Memorial Lecture, in collaboration with the Department of Asian Studies and Buddhism and Contemporary Society Program at UBC, the Dr. Hari Sharma Foundation, the Humanities Institute at Simon Fraser University, and Chetna Association of Canada. (<https://cisar.iar.ubc.ca/events/ambedkar-lecture/>) The Ambedkar lecture brings a scholar/activist to the lower mainland every year to deliver a series of lectures and engage with the public. In addition, the Centre for India and South Asia Research hosted a public event entitled "Caste in Canada" in association with a day-long workshop held as a pre-conference event for the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences at UBC in June 2019. (<https://cisar.iar.ubc.ca/events/event/caste-in-canada/>), and a series of events since then. These events have developed a strong commitment to addressing issues related to caste in the Canadian context, and provide the basis for our work on this project.



Dr. Suraj Yengde- delivering a lecture on why and how "Caste Matters" - Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU) Surrey, Canada. Thanks to Dr. Ranbir Johal for coordinating and facilitating the lecture and panel discussion.

Honoring Dr. Sunera Thobani



On April 5, I had a pleasure to attend the "Celebration of Dr. Sunera Thobani's Induction to the Royal Society of Canada".

Dr. Thobani is a remarkable scholar and activist who championed anti-racism and feminism. Congratulations Dr. Thobani on your success and best wishes as you undertake new responsibilities with the Royal Society of Canada.

With Dr. Thobani's passion for inclusion and track record, community has even greater expectations of her. One such expectation is that Dr. Thobani will instigate further research on overcoming barriers for inclusion for students, staff, and scholars facing caste-based barriers and oppression.

It was also pleasure to see Dr. Sadhu Binning and hear his poem, "The Rebellious Sita"!

Best wishes Dr. Thobani.

Jai Birdi, General Secretary

Chetna Association of Canada



Award presentation ceremony - Chetna Association of Canada received award from Hari Sharma Foundation (HSF). Also in the photo is Mr. Harinder Mahil, one of the founders of HSF and former BC Human Rights Commissioner.



Manjit Bains and Nirmala Birdi- with award Chetna Association of Canada received from Hari Sharma Foundation (2023).



"Dr. B.R. Ambedkar belongs not just to India but to the humanity and all tyrannized people everywhere on earth"

Ramdas Athawale

Union Minister of State for Social Justice

Greetings for the Symposium and the Dr. Ambedkar Equality Day



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Resolutions of 1st World Dalit Convention, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 1998

1st WORLD DALIT CONVENTION

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Held on 10th & 11th October 1998

Organised By The Dalit International Organisation

Sponsored By The Indian Progressive Front, Malaysia

Declaration

We the Dalits of different parts of the world assembled here in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on 10th & 11th October 1998 for the First World Convention, do hereby solemnly and sincerely declare that we dedicate ourselves wholly for the blessed unity of the Dalit community throughout the world and would solidly stand united to struggle relentlessly for better and brighter future, dignity and respect of Dalits and other down-trodden communities.

Resolution 1

(a) This convention has recognized the initiatives towards the full development of the Dalit community throughout the world but deeply regrets the flagrant violations of Human Rights such as caste discrimination and atrocities committed on Dalits in India and other parts of the world. And India being the main culprit, innocent women and children face untold sufferings in their day-to-day life.

Therefore this convention unanimously resolves to urge the United Nations to immediately appoint "Special Rapporteurs" to commence investigation into this Human Rights violation and also take appropriate measures to affect the implementation of fundamental 'Human Rights' instrument for Dalits in India and other parts of the world.

(b) This convention also appeals to the United Nations to regard this problem seriously as it affects the lives and future of 300 million Dalits throughout India and the world who are facing a fate far worse than South African or



From L to R H'ble Mr Kanshi Ramji, founder President of BSP, H'ble Mr M.G.Pandithan, Senator, Malaysia, Mr RM VILAS Paswan Minister of Government of India, H'ble Mrs Phoolan Deviji, Member of Parliament & Popularly known as Bandit Queen, Mr K. Panjamurti, Irganuzing Secretary, at Malaysia Convention-1998

American Apartheid.

Resolution 2

(a) This convention takes a serious view on the prevailing situation in India especially in most states where blatant violations of Human Rights and atrocities are day-to-day affairs of Dalits especially innocent women and children are persistently being kept under bonded labour to caste Hindu landlords.

Therefore this convention urges the Central and State Governments of India to immediately arrest the situation and also bring to book those culprits who are responsible for the heinous crimes committed on Dalit people.

(b) This convention acknowledges that innocent Dalits are being constantly harassed and victimized through criminal proceedings during frequent caste clashes in several parts of India.

This convention, therefore, urges that respective State Governments take appropriate measures and ensure that unbiased police action is taken and justice maintained.

(c) This convention therefore also urges the central and State Governments of India to safeguard all the rights provided for in the constitution especially the Reservation Quotas to SC/ST people at all levels including Police, Armed Forces, Judiciary and also immediately fill up all vacant places without any further delay.

(d) This convention urges the Indian Government to supervise

The strict implementation of the Reservation Rights at Local, State, and Federal levels including Police and Armed Forces and also give judicial and punitive powers to the National Commission for the welfare of SC/ST communities so that commission can play a meaningful and effective role.



From L to R Mr Rajkumar Kamble, Mr N.G. Pandithan, Senator of Malaysia, & founder of Dalit International Organisation & Chairman, Convention, Mr K.R. Narayananji, then H'ble President of India, Mr Pravin Gangurde & Mr Pravin Nikhade at President House, New Delhi.



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Dear Brother, Mr. Jai Birdiji,

NamoBuddhay ! Jaibhim !

Thank you for your kind message & update on organising "DR. AMBEDKR INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM FOR EMANCIPATION AND EQUALITY DAY", during celebration of Birth Anniversary of Dr. BhimraoRamajiAmbedkar from April 21 to 26 at Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

2. I am proud to know that you are one of the organisers on behalf of ChetnaAssociation,Canada.

3. Earlier, with sincere efforts of all of you, the Government of Canada has recognized Birth Anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar as "Equally Day" which is a proud historic movement. Congratulations!!!

4. I am planning to attend and participate in this historical series of events and interactive discussions. It shall be my pleasure to attend this function & meet you all to get further enlightenment on various issues in the process, being an Ambedkarite & Buddhist.

5. With due respect to all concerned, I wish to submit that The Right to Equality, in nutshell, with Indian context, is as enshrined in Articles of Indian Constitution, may be pointed out under the following five heads :

(1) Equality before the law (Art. 14);

(2) Prohibition of discrimination on ground only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth (Art. 15);

(3) Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment (Art.16);

(4) Abolition of untouchability (Art.17) &

(5) Abolition of titles (Art.18).

(6) Based on Caste Systems, the benefits of Reservation in employments and other Scheme of concessions etc. meant for Scheduled Caste & Scheduled Tribes are extended to the members who profess HINDU OR SIKH OR BUDDHIST RELIGION and as such no member professing any other Religion can be deemed to be a member of Scheduled Caste or Tribe in India as enshrined in the Article-16(4) of Indian Constitution.

7. The Gautam Buddha was the first person to propound the concept of equality between human beings, including gender equality. He not only propounded but also practiced this concept of equality of admitting people i.e. men and women of all castes in his Sangha : Sariputra and Moggalan were Brahmins, Anand and Devdatta were Kshatriya, Bhallik and Tapassu were Vaishya and Upali was

Shudra (Barber Community).

8. American Constitution, contrary to Indian Constitution, does not incorporate the concept of Equality in the preamble to American Constitution in contravention to the truth that "all men are created equal" enunciated in Declaration of (American) Independence on 04th July, 1776.

9. Dr. Ambedkar's emphasis an equality is clearly evident from following:

(a) Among all the fundamental rights in Indian Constitution, equality (Article 14) comes first. This indicates Dr. Ambedkar's priority for right to equality among the fundamental rights and

(b) Initiating millions of his followers to Buddhism on 14th October, 1956 at DikshaBhumi, Nagpur, Maharashtra State of India. He gave them 22 vows. Out of these 22 vows, three vows i.e. No.9,10, and 19 deal with equality asunder :

Vow No.9 : I shall believe in the equality of Man;

Vow No.10 : I shall endeavor to establish equality &

Vow No.11:I renounce Hinduism which disfavors humanity and impedes, the advancement and development of humanity because it is based on inequality and adopt Buddhism as my religion.

10. Dr. Ambedkar, a passionate democrat, loved the trinity Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. But he preferred EQUALITY to Liberty. He proclaimed the "Annihilation of Caste" as his life's Mission in order to create a society based on EQUALITY.

11. I am very much grateful to the dedicated services of Mr. Mike Hurley, H'ble Mayor, City of Burnaby, BC., Canada, Dhamma Waves, Canada, Ambedkar International Mission Society (AIMS), Canada and its founder, late Mr. RajkumarKamble, Ambedkar International Coordination Society (AICS), Chetna Association of Canada, Simon Frazer University and University of British Columbia in the process of struggle of Equality.

12. Incidentally, on 24th April, 2023 also happens to be the 96th Birth Anniversary of a true Ambedkarite, late Adv. Bhagwan Das ji, an author of popular book : "Main Bhangi Hun", the history of the Bhangi Community and the story of the Untouchable Caste. At the age of 29, he used to work with Dr. BabasahebAmbedkar as a Research Assistant. My humble Tribute to H'ble late Adv. Bhagwan Das ji. You may kindly take cognizance of same on 24.04.2023 in his honour.

13. I am sharing some of the photographs related to late Mr. RajkumarKambleji, AdvBhagwanDasji, and H'ble Member of Parliament (1999 to 2001), Mrs. Phoolan Devi ji, popularly known as the Bandit Queen who fought for the equality and made history, and H'ble President of India (1997 to 2002), late Mr. K.R.Narayananji, in context, with First World Dalit Convention, Kaula Lumpur, Malaysia (1998) which may be useful to you.

In gratitude,
SabakaMangalHo !

The Theme Of The Convention

"A Vision Of India In The 21st Century As Envisaged By Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar.

Based On Liberty, Equality, Fraternity And Social Justice."



It is the most useful and fruitful idea that the Global Ambedkarite Convention 2022 is conceived to be convened in London the centre of the globe and of the learning for great men like Marx, Milton, Middleton and men of Ambedkarite calibre. 2022 GLOBAL CONVENTION TEAM is now carrying a load of a legacy of holding global conventions triply blessed by Ambedkarite spirit, Buddha's Bahujan Hitaya Wheel and the pulse of the contemporary world. This team can do a miracle by bringing this convention to the daylight and making known to the world that it is incomplete unless the Bodhisattva Ambedkar is carried in its hands, head and heart.

When Dr Ambedkar presented his paper at the Pacific Relations Conference in Quebec he exhorted the world and told that the western and eastern hemispheres should not go by the heresy and propaganda of the ruling party and squander their grant-in-aid on such gullible premises but they should come and see the reality and decide whether the arm-chair upper-caste man's lip service can deliver the masses of grass-root level and faces of inhuman suffering to the shore of peace, prosperity and perfection and before it is too late they should adopt and accept the sons of the soil, the declared challenger of the evil, the pauper and half-hungry untouchable as worthy of its support, sympathy and sacrifice as the most convincing and invincible victor for humanity transformable into the social fraternity of man's pursuit of life, liberty and happiness.

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ਗੰ ਭੀਰ ਰੂਪ ਨਾਲ ਦੋ ਬਿਮਾਰ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ, ਹਸਪਤਾਲ ਦੇ ਇੱਕ ਹੀ ਕਮਰੇ 'ਚ ਭਰਤੀ ਸੀ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਇੱਕ ਨੂੰ ਹਰ ਰੋਜ਼ ਦੁਪਹਿਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੱਕ ਘੰਟੇ ਤੱਕ ਆਪਣੇ ਬਿਸਤਰੇ ਉੱਤੇ ਬੈਠਣ ਦੀ ਇਜਾਜ਼ਤ ਸੀ। ਉਸਦੇ ਬੈੱਡ ਕੋਲ ਕਮਰੇ ਦੀ ਇਕਲੌਤੀ ਖਿੜਕੀ ਸੀ। ਦੂਜੇ ਮਰੀਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਬੈਠਣ ਦੀ ਇਜਾਜ਼ਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਉਸਨੂੰ ਚੌਂਕੀ ਘੰਟੇ ਪਿੱਠ ਭਰ ਸਿੱਧੇ ਲੇਟਣਾ ਪੈਂਦਾ ਸੀ।

ਦੋਨਾਂ ਸਾਥੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਬਿਸਤਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਅੰਧੀ ਕੰਧ ਸੀ, ਜਿਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਦੂਸਰਾ ਖਿੜਕੀ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਦੇਖ ਸਕਦਾ ਸੀ। ਦੋਨੋਂ ਸਾਥੀ ਘੰਟਿਆਂ ਬੱਧੀ ਆਪਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੱਲਾਂ-ਬਾਤਾਂ ਕਰਦੇ। ਆਪਣੇ ਘਰ, ਪਰਿਵਾਰ, ਨੌਕਰੀ, ਕਾਰੋਬਾਰ, ਸੈਰ ਸਪਾਟੇ ਆਦਿ ਵਿਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਉੱਤੇ। ਹਰ ਦੁਪਹਿਰ ਨੂੰ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਜਦੋਂ ਰੋਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਦੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਬੈਠਦਾ ਸੀ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਾਥੀ ਨੂੰ ਦੱਸਦਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਖਿੜਕੀ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਕੀ ਕੁੱਝ ਦਿਖਾਈ ਦੇ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ। ਦੂਸਰੇ ਮਰੀਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਦਿਨ ਰਾਤ ਇੱਕੋ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੇਟਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਕਾਫੀ ਥਕਾਵਟ ਅਤੇ ਤਕਲੀਫ਼ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਸੀ। ਪਰ ਜਦੋਂ ਉਸਦਾ ਸਾਥੀ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਖਿੜਕੀ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਦੇ ਨਜ਼ਾਰਿਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਦੱਸਦਾ ਤਾਂ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਉਹ ਇੱਕ ਘੰਟਾ ਕਾਫੀ ਰੋਮਾਂਚਕ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਬਾਹਰਲੀ ਰੰਗੀਨ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਹਲਚਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਕਾਫੀ ਊਰਜਾ ਮਿਲਦੀ ਤੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਉਸਦਾ ਨਜ਼ਰੀਆ ਸਕਾਰਾਤਮਕ ਅਤੇ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਵਰਧਕ ਹੁੰਦਾ।

ਖਿੜਕੀ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਇੱਕ ਹਰਿਆ ਭਰਿਆ ਪਾਰਕ ਦਿਖਾਈ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਸੀ, ਜਿਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੱਕ ਸਾਡ ਤੇ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਝੀਲ ਵੀ ਸੀ। ਝੀਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਬੱਤਖਾਂ ਤੈਰਦੀਆਂ ਸੀ। ਝੀਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਬੱਚੇ ਕਾਗਜ਼ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਿਸ਼ਤੀਆਂ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ ਤੈਰਾਦੇ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਹੱਸਦੇ ਖੇਡਦੇ ਸੀ। ਪਾਰਕ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਜੋੜੇ ਬਾਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਾਹਾਂ ਪਾ ਕੇ ਰੰਗ-ਬਿਰੰਗੇ ਫੁੱਲਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਿਆਰੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਘੁੰਮਦੇ ਸੀ। ਫੁੱਲਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਭੋਰੇ ਅਤੇ ਦਰੱਖਤਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਪੰਛੀ ਚਹਿਚਹਾਉਂਦੇ ਸੀ। ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਦਾ ਮਨਮੋਹਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ ਵੀ ਦਿਖਾਈ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਜਦੋਂ ਖਿੜਕੀ ਦੇ ਕੋਲ ਬੈਠਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਮਰੀਜ਼ ਵਿਸਤਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਬਾਹਰਲੀ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਵਰਣਨ ਸੁਣਾਉਂਦਾ ਸੀ ਤਾਂ ਕਮਰੇ ਦੇ ਦੂਸਰੀ ਤਰਫ਼ ਲੇਟਿਆ ਉਸਦਾ ਸਾਥੀ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਬੰਦ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਲਪਨਾ

ਕਰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਇੱਕ ਦੁਪਹਿਰ ਖਿੜਕੀ ਕੋਲ ਬੈਠੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਨੇ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਗੁਜ਼ਰ ਰਹੀ ਪਰੇਡ ਦਾ ਵਰਣਨ ਕੀਤਾ। ਹਾਲਾਂਕਿ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਢੋਲ ਢਮੱਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਬੈਂਡ ਵਾਜ਼ੇ ਦੀ ਅਵਾਜ਼ ਤਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੁਣਾਈ ਦੇ ਰਹੀ ਸੀ ਪ੍ਰੰਤੂ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਮਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਰਾ ਨਜ਼ਾਰਾ ਦੇਖ ਸਕਦਾ ਸੀ। ਜ਼ੋਕਰ ਨੱਚ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ, ਰੰਗੀਨ ਗੁਬਾਰੇ ਹਵਾ 'ਚ ਉੱਡ ਰਹੇ

ਹਨ, ਸੁੰਦਰ ਕਾਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਘੋੜੇ ਬੋਝੀਆਂ ਚੱਲ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਨ, ਪਰੇਡ 'ਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਚਿਹਰੇ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਨਾਲ ਖਿੜੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ। ਦਿਨ ਗੁਜ਼ਰਦੇ ਗਏ। ਜਿਹੜਾ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਖਿੜਕੀ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਦੇਖ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਕਦਾ ਸੀ, ਉਸਦੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਉਹ ਸਭ ਦੇਖਣ ਅਤੇ ਮਾਨਣ ਦੀ ਇੱਛਾ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਦਿਨ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਦਿਨ ਤੀਬਰ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਗਈ। ਜਿਸ ਕਾਰਣ ਉਸਦੀ ਸਿਹਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਦਿਨ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਦਿਨ ਸੁਧਾਰ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ।

ਇੱਕ ਸਵੇਰ ਜਦੋਂ ਨਰਸ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਕਮਰੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਈ ਤਾਂ ਉਸਨੇ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਕਿ ਖਿੜਕੀ ਦੇ ਨਜ਼ਦੀਕ ਵਾਲਾ ਮਰੀਜ਼ ਨੀਂਦ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੀ ਮਰ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਜਦੋਂ ਉਸਦੀ ਮ੍ਰਿਤਕ ਦੇਹ ਨੂੰ ਉਸ ਬੈੱਡ ਤੋਂ ਹਟਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਦੂਸਰਾ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਜੋ ਕਾਫੀ ਸਮੇਂ ਤੋਂ ਉਸ ਬੈੱਡ 'ਤੇ ਬੈਠ ਕੇ ਬਾਹਰਲੇ ਨਜ਼ਾਰੇ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਦੇਖਣ ਦੀ ਖ਼ਵਾਹਿਸ਼ ਰੱਖਦਾ ਸੀ, ਨੇ ਨਰਸ ਨੂੰ ਉਸ ਬੈੱਡ 'ਤੇ ਲਿਟਾਣ ਦੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਇੱਛਾ ਜ਼ਾਹਿਰ ਕੀਤੀ। ਨਰਸ ਨੇ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਉਸ ਬੈੱਡ 'ਤੇ ਲਿਟਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਤੇ ਆਪ ਬਾਹਰ ਚਲੀ ਗਈ। ਕਚੀਚੀ ਵੱਟ ਕੇ ਹੌਲੀ ਹੌਲੀ ਕੋਹਣੀ ਦੇ ਬਲ ਉਹ ਉੱਠਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਖਿੜਕੀ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰਲੀ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੇਖ ਸਕੇ ਤੇ ਖੁਸ਼ ਹੋ ਸਕੇ। ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲ ਨਾਲ ਉਹ ਬੈਠਿਆ ਤੇ ਖਿੜਕੀ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਵੇਖਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਇੱਕ ਪੁਰਾਣੀ ਤੇ ਬਦਹਾਲ ਦੀਵਾਰ ਦਿਖਾਈ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਉਸਨੇ ਘੰਟੀ ਵਜਾ ਕੇ ਨਰਸ ਨੂੰ ਸੱਦਿਆ ਤੇ ਪੁੱਛਿਆ, “ਮੇਰਾ ਸਾਥੀ ਹਰ ਦਿਨ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਬਾਹਰਲੀ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਵਰਣਨ ਸੁਣਾਉਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਉਸਨੇ ਉਹ ਸਭ ਨਜ਼ਾਰੇ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਦੇਖੇ ਹੋਣਗੇ? ਜਦਕਿ ਖਿੜਕੀ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਇਹ ਖ਼ਸਤਾ ਹਾਲਤ ਦੀਵਾਰ ਹੈ, ਮੈਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਇੰਨੇ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨਜ਼ਾਰਿਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਇੰਨੇ ਵਿਸਤਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਕਿਉਂ ਦੱਸਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ?”

ਨਰਸ ਨੇ ਜਵਾਬ ਦਿੱਤਾ, “ਓ ਹੋ . . . ਕੀ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਪਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਤੁਹਾਡਾ ਸਾਥੀ ਅੰਨਾਂ ਸੀ। ਉਹ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਦੀਵਾਰ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਦੇਖ ਸਕਦਾ ਸੀ।” ਫਿਰ ਉਸਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ, “ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਉਹ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹਿਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ।”

ਸਾਥੀਓ ! ਅੰਨੇ ਹੋਣ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਬੁਰੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਿਹੜੀ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ? ਮੇਰਾ ਤਾਂ ਇਹੀ ਜਵਾਬ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ ਕਿ “ਅੱਖਾਂ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਵੀ ਸੁਪਨੇ ਨਾ ਵੇਖਣਾ।” ਆਪਣੀ

ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਦੀ ਕਲਪਨਾ ਅਤੇ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ ਜੇਕਰ ਸਾਡੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਮਾਨਸਿਕ ਗੁਲਾਮੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਜੜਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਹਿਰਾਈ ਦਾ ਅੰਦਾਜ਼ਾ ਸਹਿਜੇ ਹੀ ਲਗਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੋਈ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਨਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਊਰਜਾ ਅਤੇ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹ, ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਹੇਠਲੇ ਪੱਧਰ 'ਤੇ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਾਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਕਿਸੇ ਨੇ ਆਖਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ “ਸੁਪਨਾ ਉਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਜੋ ਅਸੀਂ ਬੰਦ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਵੇਖਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਸੁਪਨਾ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਅਸੀਂ ਖੁੱਲੀਆਂ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਵੇਖਦੇ ਹਾਂ।”

ਬਾਬਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਡਾ: ਅੰਬੇਡਕਰ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਤਮਾਮ ਮਹਾਂਪੁਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਖੁੱਲੀਆਂ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਇੱਕ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਵੇਖਿਆ ਸੀ। ਗੁਰੂ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ ਨੇ ਉਸਦਾ ਵਰਣਨ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ :-

ਐਸਾ ਚਾਹੁੰ ਰਾਜ ਮੈਂ, ਜਹਾਂ ਮਿਲੈ ਸਭਨ ਕੋ ਅੰਨ।

ਛੋਟ ਬੜੇ ਸਭ ਸਮ ਵਸੇ, ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਰਹੇ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਨ।

ਇਹਨਾਂ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ, ਆਰਥਿਕ ਬਰਾਬਰੀ ਦਾ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਸਾਡੇ ਝਲਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਬਾਬਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਡਾ: ਅੰਬੇਡਕਰ ਨੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਪਣੀ ਜੱਦੋ ਜਹਿਦ ਦਾ ਅੰਤਮ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਸਮਾਨਤਾ, ਸੁਤੰਤਰਤਾ, ਭਾਈਚਾਰਾ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਆਂ ਅਧਾਰਤ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਦਾ ਨਿਰਮਾਣ ਕਰਨਾ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਹੈ। ਅਛੂਤ ਜਾਤੀ 'ਚ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਏ ਇੱਕ ਸਧਾਰਨ ਬੱਚੇ ਨੂੰ ਬਾਬਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਡਾ: ਅੰਬੇਡਕਰ, ਭਾਰਤ ਰਤਨ, ਯੁੱਗ ਪੁਰਸ਼, ਦਬਾਏ ਤੇ ਸਤਾਏ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦਾ ਮਸੀਹਾ, ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰ ਨਿਰਮਾਤਾ, ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਰਤਨ, ਮਹਾਨ ਕ੍ਰਾਂਤੀਕਾਰੀ, ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨ ਨਿਰਮਾਤਾ, ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰ, ਅਰਥ ਸ਼ਾਸਤਰੀ, ਕਾਨੂੰਨਦਾਨ, ਪੱਤਰਕਾਰ, ਬੈਰਿਸਟਰ, ਰਾਜਨੇਤਾ, ਬੋਧੀਸ਼ਤਵ, ਸਾਹਿਤਕਾਰ ਆਦਿ ਕਿੰਨੇ ਹੀ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਣ ਲਗਾਏ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹੋ ਜਿਹੀ ਮਹਾਨ ਸ਼ਖ਼ਸੀਅਤ ਨਿਰਮਾਣ ਦੀ ਬੁਨਿਆਦ ਰੱਖਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਡੀ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਕਿਸਦੀ ਹੈ? ਮੇਰੇ ਮੁਤਾਬਕ ਮੁੱਖ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਅਜਿਹੀਆਂ ਤਿੰਨ ਸ਼ਖ਼ਸੀਅਤਾਂ ਹਨ ਜਿੰਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਐਹੋ ਜਿਹੇ ਮਹਾਂਪੁਰਸ਼ ਦਾ ਨਿਰਮਾਣ ਕਰਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਹਿਮ ਰੋਲ ਅਦਾ ਕੀਤਾ, ਉਹ ਹਨ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਿਤਾ ਜੀ ਸੂਬੇਦਾਰ ਰਾਮ ਜੀ ਸਕਪਾਲ, ਛਤਰਪਤੀ ਸ਼ਾਹੂ ਜੀ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ ਅਤੇ ਸਇਆ ਜੀ ਰਾਓ ਗਾਇਕਵਾੜ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਵਿੱਦਿਆ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਦੇ ਅਵਸਰ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਤਸਾਹਨ (ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹ) ਦੀ ਵਜਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੀ ਭੀਮ ਰਾਓ ਅੰਬੇਡਕਰ, ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦੇ ਮਾਨਵ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਨੰਬਰ ਦੀ ਮਹਾਨ ਸ਼ਖ਼ਸੀਅਤ ਘੋਸ਼ਿਤ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ। ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੀ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਦੇ ਬਖੇੜਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਤਰਾਸ਼ਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਹਿਮ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਨਿਭਾਈ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਬਖੇੜਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਬਜਾਏ ਉਹ ਹੋਰ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਗਏ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਦੇ

ਸਤਾਏ ਕਰੋੜਾਂ ਲੋਕ ਬਖੇੜੇ ਖਾ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ। ਪਰੰਤੂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਕਿੰਨਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਵਰਣ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ, ਜਾਤੀ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ, ਉਚ ਨੀਚ ਦੀ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ, ਅੰਤਿਆਚਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ੋਸ਼ਣ ਅਧਾਰਤ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੀ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਨੂੰ ਖ਼ਤਮ ਕਰਕੇ, ਨਵੀਂ ਅਤੇ ਨਰੋਈ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਨਿਰਮਾਣ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਵੇਖਿਆ? ਉਹ ਵਿਰਲੇ ਹੀ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਜਿਹੜੇ ਐਹੋ ਜਿਹਾ ਮਹਾਨ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਵੇਖਦੇ ਹਨ ਤੇ ਉਸ ਸੁਪਨੇ ਨੂੰ ਸੱਚ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਹ ਦੇ ਪੂਰਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਲਗਾ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਉਹ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਹਰ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਊਰਜਾ ਦਾ ਸਾਧਨ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਿਸੇ ਸੁਪਨੇ ਦੀ ਕੀਮਤ ਉਸਦੇ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਊਰਜਾ ਅਤੇ ਦਿਸ਼ਾ ਤੋਂ ਤੈਅ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜਦੋਂ ਲੀਡਰ ਕੋਲ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਇੱਕ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਉੱਤੇ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਸਦੇ ਸਾਥੀ ਵੀ ਇਸੇ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਨਾਲ ਲਵਰੇਜ਼ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਲੋਕ ਵੀ ਅੱਗੇ ਆ ਕੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਤੁਰ ਪੈਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਲੀਡਰ ਦਾ ਸੁਪਨਾ, ਉਸਦੀ ਕਲਪਨਾ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਰ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਨੂੰ ਵਧਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਦੂਰ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਹੀ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਅੱਗੇ ਵਧਣ ਅਤੇ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਕਾਬਿਲ ਬਣਾਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜਿਹੜਾ ਲੀਡਰ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਕਾਬਲੀਅਤ ਜਾਂ ਸਮਰੱਥਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਰੱਖਦਾ, ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਉਸ ਉੱਪਰ ਹਾਵੀ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਜਿਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਹ ਨਾਂਅ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਲੀਡਰ ਰਹਿ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਹ ਵਾਪਰ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਕੇਵਲ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕਿਰਿਆ ਕਰਨ ਜੋਗਾ ਹੀ ਰਹਿ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਿੰਨ ਕੋਲ ਕੋਈ ਕਿਰਿਆ ਨਹੀਂ, ਕੇਵਲ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕਿਰਿਆ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਉਹ ਲੀਡਰ ਜਾਂ ਲੀਡਰਸ਼ਿਪ ਕਦੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਕ੍ਰਾਂਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਜਨਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਦੇ ਸਕਦੀ।

ਸੱਚੇ ਤੇ ਕਾਬਿਲ ਲੀਡਰ ਲਈ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਦਾ ਨਿਰਮਾਣ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਸੁਪਨਾ, ਇੱਕ ਜਨੂੰਨ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕੀ ਸੁਪਨਾ, ਲੀਡਰ ਨੂੰ ਬਣਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਾਂ ਫਿਰ ਲੀਡਰ, ਸੁਪਨੇ ਨੂੰ ਬਣਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ? ਮੇਰੇ ਖਿਆਲ 'ਚ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਿਸਨੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਗਵਾ ਲਿਆ ਸਮਝੋ ਉਸਨੇ ਲੀਡਰਸ਼ਿਪ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਤਾਕਤ ਵੀ ਗਵਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਜਦੋਂ ਵੱਡੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਧਾਰਨ ਲੋਕ ਆਪਣੇ ਸੁਪਨੇ ਨੂੰ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਲੀਡਰ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਸੰਵੇਦਨਸ਼ੀਲ, ਇਮਾਨਦਾਰ, ਮਿਹਨਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ ਸੰਕਲਪਿਤ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਉਹ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਇੱਕ ਅੰਦੋਲਨ ਦਾ ਰੂਪ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਮ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਚਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਲੋਕ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ :-

1. ਕੁੱਝ ਲੋਕ ਕਦੇ ਕੋਈ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਵੇਖਦੇ। ਉਹ ਇੱਧਰ ਉੱਧਰ ਭਟਕਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਲੋਕ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ।

2. ਕੁੱਝ ਲੋਕ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਤਾਂ ਵੇਖਦੇ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਆਪਣੇ ਬਲਬੂਤੇ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਾ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਯਤਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦੇ। ਉਹ ਅਨੁਆਈ (ਪੈਰੋਕਾਰ) ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ।

3. ਕੁੱਝ ਲੋਕ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਵੇਖਦੇ ਹਨ, ਉਸਦੀ ਪੂਰਤੀ ਲਈ ਯਤਨ ਵੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਉਹ ਉੱਦਮੀ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ।

4. ਕੁੱਝ ਲੋਕ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਵੇਖਦੇ ਹਨ, ਉਸਦੀ ਪੂਰਤੀ ਲਈ ਹਰ ਕੀਮਤ 'ਤੇ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ ਸੰਕਲਪਿਤ ਹਨ ਤੇ ਉਹੀ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਦੂਸਰਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਦਿਖਾ ਕੇ, ਉਸਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਰਗਾ ਬਣਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਉਹ ਲੀਡਰ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਚੰਗਾ ਲੀਡਰ, ਅਧਿਆਪਕ ਜਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੌਣ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ? ਜੋ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮੇਰਾ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਜਾਂ ਸ਼ਗਿਰਦ, ਮੇਰੇ ਤੋਂ ਉੱਪਰਲੇ ਮੁਕਾਮ 'ਤੇ ਪਹੁੰਚੇ। ਜਦੋਂ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਉੱਗਲ ਉੱਪਰ ਚੁੱਕ ਕੇ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ "ਉਹ ਵੇਖੋ, ਮੈਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਦਾ ਮਾਣ ਅਤੇ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮੇਰਾ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਅੱਜ ਮੇਰੇ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਉੱਪਰ ਚਲਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਪੀੜਤ ਸਮਾਜ ਦਾ ਅੰਦੋਲਨ, ਲੀਡਰਸ਼ਿਪ ਪੱਖੋਂ ਅੱਜ ਕਿਸ ਮੁਕਾਮ 'ਤੇ ਖੜਾ ਹੈ? ਕੀ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਿਸੇ ਅੰਦੋਲਨ ਨੂੰ ਸਫਲ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਕਿ ਮੇਰੇ ਸ਼ਗਿਰਦ ਜਾਂ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਮੇਰੇ ਤੋਂ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦੂਜੇ, ਤੀਜੇ, ਚੌਥੇ ਦਰਜੇ 'ਤੇ ਹੀ ਰਹਿਣ? ਮੇਰੇ ਤੋਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਤਾਂ ਦੂਰ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ, ਮੇਰੇ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਉਣੇ ਚਾਹੀਦੇ।

ਬਾਬਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਡਾ: ਅੰਬੇਡਕਰ ਨੇ ਕੀ ਸੋਚ ਕੇ ਕੁੱਝ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਅਤੇ ਉੱਚ ਵਿੱਦਿਆ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਭੇਜਿਆ ਸੀ? ਕਾਰਣ ਅਤੇ ਮਕਸਦ ਇਹੀ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ ਕਿ ਜਿਹੋ ਜਿਹੀ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਦੀ ਉਹ ਕਲਪਨਾ ਜਾਂ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਵੇਖਦੇ ਸਨ ਉਸਦੀ ਪੂਰਤੀ ਲਈ ਇੱਕ ਅੰਬੇਡਕਰ ਕਾਫ਼ੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਵਰਗੇ ਕਈ ਅੰਬੇਡਕਰ ਚਾਹੀਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਵੱਖਰੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਉਮੀਦ ਉੱਤੇ ਖਰੇ ਉੱਤਰੇ ਜਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ। ਪਰ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਤਾਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਪੂਰੀ ਇਮਾਨਦਾਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਇਹ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ।

ਲੀਡਰਸ਼ਿਪ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਣ ਹੀ ਦੇਸ਼ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਉੱਪਰ ਉੱਠਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਾਂ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਡਿੱਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਜੇਕਰ ਅੱਜ ਕੁੱਝ ਪਾਖੰਡੀ ਲੋਕ ਮਹਾਨ ਆਦਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਰਕੇ, ਮਹਾਨ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਦਾ ਭਾਵਨਾਤਮਕ ਅਤੇ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਸ਼ੋਸ਼ਣ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਬਾਬਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਅੰਬੇਡਕਰ ਦਾ ਬੈਨਰ/ਬੋਰਡ ਲਗਾ ਕੇ ਦੁਕਾਨਦਾਰੀਆਂ ਚਲਾਈਆਂ ਜਾ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਦੁਕਾਨਦਾਰਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਜ਼ਬਰਦਸਤ ਮੁਕਾਬਲਾ ਹੈ। ਬਾਬਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੂੰ ਇੱਕ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਬਜ਼ਾਰ ਦੀ ਵਸਤੂ ਬਣਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਬਾਬਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੂੰ ਕਿੱਤੇ/ਕਾਰੋਬਾਰ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ 'ਚ ਅਪਣਾਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਫਿਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ 'ਜੇ ਅੰਬੇਡਕਰ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਸਾਡੀ ਦੁਕਾਨ ਤੋਂ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ, ਉਹੀ ਅਸਲੀ ਹੈ। ਗੁਆਂਢੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਦੁਕਾਨ 'ਤੇ ਨਕਲੀ ਹੈ। ਅਕਸਰ ਹੀ ਸੁਣਨ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਫਲਾਣਾ ਲੀਡਰ ਪਿਛਲੇ ਕਈ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਬੜੀ ਇਮਾਨਦਾਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਕਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ, ਹੁਣ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਵਿਕ ਗਿਆ? ਮੇਰਾ ਮੰਨਣਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਮਾਨਦਾਰ ਆਦਮੀ ਕਦੇ ਵਿਕਦਾ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ, ਜਿਹੜਾ ਵਿਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਹ ਕਦੇ ਇਮਾਨਦਾਰ ਸੀ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਉਸਨੇ ਤਾਂ ਇੰਨੇ ਸਾਲ ਇਮਾਨਦਾਰ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਕੇਵਲ ਨਾਟਕ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ। ਜੋ ਸਮਾਂ ਆਉਣ 'ਤੇ ਉਜਾਗਰ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਸਵੈਮਾਨੀ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਭੁੱਖਾ ਤਾਂ ਰਹਿ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਗੋਬਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਖਾ ਸਕਦਾ। ਇਮਾਨਦਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਨਾਟਕ ਉਹੀ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸਦਾ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਨਿੱਜੀ ਹਿਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੂਰਤੀ ਲਈ ਹੋਵੇ। ਉਹ ਗੱਲ ਤਾਂ ਮਹਾਂਪੁਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੁਪਨੇ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਕੰਮ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਿੱਜੀ ਸੁਪਨੇ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀ ਹਰ ਸਮੱਸਿਆ ਦਾ ਹੱਲ ਕੱਢਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਸਮਾਜ ਦਾ ਬੁੱਧੀਜੀਵੀ ਵਰਗ ਇਮਾਨਦਾਰ, ਨਿਰਪੱਖ ਅਤੇ ਉਸਾਰੂ ਹੋਵੇ।

ਸਾਡਾ ਇੱਕ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਹੋਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਇੱਕ ਸੁਪਨਵਾਦੀ ਹੋਣਾ, ਦੋਵਾਂ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਹੁਤ ਅੰਤਰ ਹੈ। ਸੁਪਨਵਾਦੀ ਕੇਵਲ ਸੁਪਨੇ ਵੇਖਦਾ ਹੈ, ਉਸਦੀ ਪੂਰਤੀ ਲਈ ਕਰਦਾ ਕੁੱਝ ਨਹੀਂ। ਜਿਸਦੇ ਕੋਲ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਅੰਦਰੂਨੀ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਤੋਂ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਮਿਲਦੀ ਹੈ ਨਾ ਕਿ ਬਾਹਰਲੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਸਥਿਤੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ। ਜਿਸਦੇ ਕੋਲ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਹ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲਾਂ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਵੀ ਚਲਦਾ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਅੱਗੇ ਵਧਦਾ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜੋ ਕੇਵਲ ਸੁਪਨੇ ਵੇਖਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਹ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲਾਂ ਆਉਣ 'ਤੇ ਮੈਦਾਨ ਛੱਡ ਕੇ ਭੱਜ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।



ਗੁਰੂ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਬੇਗਮਪੁਰੇ ਦਾ ਫਲਸਫਾ

ਪ੍ਰਿਆ ਬੈਂਸ

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ਮਜ਼ਹਬ, ਜਾਤ, ਧਰਮ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਹੋਵੇ ਪਰ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਹੀ ਸਾਂਝੀਵਾਲਤਾ ਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਸਮਿਆਂ 'ਚ ਆਏ ਸੰਤ-ਮਹਾਤਮਾ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਬਾਣੀ-ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਜ਼ਰੀਏ, ਆਮ ਲੋਕਾਈ ਨੂੰ ਦਵੈਤ, ਝੂਠੇ ਕਰਮ-ਕਾਂਢਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਕੱਢ ਕੇ ਉਸ ਅਸਲ ਪਰਮ-ਸੱਚ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜਨ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਸਭ ਦਾ ਇਹੀ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕੁਰੀਤੀਆਂ, ਘ੍ਰਿਣਾਂ ਆਦਿ ਸਭ ਦਾ ਨਾਸ਼ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਕ ਸੱਭਿਅਕ ਮਨੁੱਖ, ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀ ਸਿਰਜਣਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਸੀ। ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਜੇਕਰ ਕਿ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ 14ਵੀਂ ਤੋਂ 17ਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦਾ ਸਮਾਂ ਭਾਰਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਖਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਉੱਤਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਮੱਧ ਭਾਰਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਭਗਤੀ ਲਹਿਰ ਦਾ ਦੌਰ ਸੀ।

ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਏ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਸੰਤਾਂ ਨੇ ਇੱਕ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੀ ਭਗਤੀ ਦੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਕੀਤਾ। ਇਸ ਲਹਿਰ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਜੀ, ਸੂਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ, ਮੀਰਾ ਬਾਈ ਜੀ, ਭਗਤ ਨਾਮਦੇਵ ਜੀ, ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਭਗਤ ਕਬੀਰ ਸਨ ਜਿਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕ ਯਤਨਾਂ ਸਦਕਾ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਕ੍ਰਾਂਤੀ ਲਿਆਂਦੀ। ਜੇਕਰ ਕਿ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਜੀ, ਭਗਤ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਬੁੱਧ-ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਫਲਸਫੇ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਰੀਏ ਤਾਂ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਵੱਖਰਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਤਿੰਨੋਂ ਹੀ ਇਕ-ਦੂਸਰੇ ਦਾ ਪੱਖ ਪੂਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਸਿਰਜਣਾ ਦੀ ਕਲਪਨਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਦਵੈਤ, ਅਗਿਆਨਤਾ ਤੋਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕ ਸੂਝ ਨਾਲ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਹੋਵੇ।

ਗੁਰੂ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਫਲਸਫੇ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਰੀਏ ਤਾਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਬੇਗਮਪੁਰਾ ਦੀ ਧਾਰਨਾ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਿਸਦਾ ਅਰਥ ਹੈ “ਦੁੱਖ ਰਹਿਤ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ”। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਵਿਤਕਰੇ ਅਤੇ ਅਸਮਾਨਤਾ ਦੀ ਅਣਹੋਂਦ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਇੱਕ ਯੂਟੋਪੀਅਨ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦਾ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਦੇਖਿਆ। ਗੁਰੂ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਜਾਤ-ਪਾਤ ਦੇ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਸਦਭਾਵਨਾ, ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਨਤਾ ਦੀ ਵਕਾਲਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਚੇਲਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਾਜਪੂਤ ਰਾਜਕੁਮਾਰੀ ਮੀਰਾਬਾਈ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਸੀ। ਗੁਰੂ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਕਿਰਤ ਦੀ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ 'ਤੇ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਉਸਨੇ ਜਾਤ ਦੇ ਮੌਜੂਦਾ ਅਮਾਨਵੀ ਤਰਕ ਦੀ ਆਲੋਚਨਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਆਪਣੇ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ (ਚਮਾਰ ਚਮੜੇ ਦੇ ਰੰਗਦਾਰ ਸਨ) ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨ 'ਤੇ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ।

ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਗੱਲ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਪਰਮ ਬੁੱਧੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਨਹੀਂ

ਬਲਕਿ ਆਪਣੀ ਨਿਮਰਤਾ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਰੱਖਦੇ ਸਨ। ਉਹ ਸਮਾਨਤਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਰੱਖਦਾ ਸੀ। ਉਹ ਆਮ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਇਕ ਰਹੱਸਵਾਦੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਦਾ ਵਰਣਨ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਸੁਹਜ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕਰਦੇ, ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਅਨੇਕ ਅਤੇ ਇਕ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੱਚਾਈਆਂ ਇਕਮੁੱਠ ਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਭਗਤੀ ਲਹਿਰ ਦੇ ਨਿਰਗੁਣ ਫਲਸਫੇ ਦਾ ਹਵਾਲਾ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਗੁਰੂ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਉੱਤਰੀ ਭਾਰਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਭਗਤੀ ਲਹਿਰ ਦੀ ਇੱਕ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖ ਹਸਤੀ ਹੈ, ਖਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਨਿਰਗੁਣ ਸੰਪ੍ਰਦਾਇ ਜਾਂ ਸੰਤ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਵਿੱਚ। ਭਾਵੇਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਰੱਬ ਦੀ ਭਗਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਤਾਪ ਦੇ ਸੰਦਰਭਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਭਰੀ ਹੋਈ ਪਰ ਇਹ “ਇੱਕ ਬਿਹਤਰ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀ ਉਮੀਦ ਅਤੇ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਨਾਮ 'ਤੇ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਸ਼ੋਸ਼ਣ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ, ਸੱਤਾਧਾਰੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਬੇਇਨਸਾਫੀ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਲੜਾਈ” ਲਈ ਵੀ ਜਗ੍ਹਾ ਬਣਾਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਭਗਤ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਭਗਤੀ ਲਹਿਰ ਦਾ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਕ੍ਰਾਂਤੀਕਾਰੀ ਸੰਤ ਵੀ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇੱਕ ਨੀਵੀਂ ਜਾਤੀ ਦੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਪਲਿਆ-ਪੋਸਣ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਰੂੜੀਵਾਦੀ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੱਥੋਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਅਪਮਾਨ ਦਾ ਸਾਹਮਣਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਪਿਆ। ਭਗਤ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ ਇੱਕ ਮਹਾਨ ਰਹੱਸਵਾਦੀ ਕਵੀ ਸੀ। ਉਹਨਾ ਆਪਣੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਕੀਤਾ। ਉਹਨਾ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਸਿੱਧੀ ਅਤੇ ਆਮ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝ ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਸੀ। ਆਪ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਸੱਚ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਤੱਖ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਾਵਾ ਅਤੇ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਹੈ, ਆਪ ਸ਼ੁੱਧਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਸਾਢੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਰੱਖਦੇ ਸੀ। ਉਹ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਸਲਿਮ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਝੂਠੇ ਰੀਤੀ-ਰਿਵਾਜਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਅੰਧ-ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਸਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਆਤਮਾ ਦੇ ਸੰਸਕਰਨ ਨਾਲ ਕੋਈ ਸਬੰਧ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਅਸਲੀਅਤ ਤੋਂ ਅਣਜਾਣ ਹਨ।

ਆਪ ਨੇ ਵਿਅੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਮੁੱਲਾ ਦੀ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਗਰੀਬ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਦਿਲ ਜਿੱਤ ਲਏ ਜੋ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਸ਼ੋਸ਼ਣ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰ ਸਨ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਕਿ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਕੇਵਲ ਸੰਸਕਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਨਾਲ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ। ਇਹ ਸੱਚ ਅਤੇ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕਤਾ ਦੇ ਮਾਰਗ 'ਤੇ ਚੱਲਣ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਭਵ ਹੈ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਮੂਰਤੀ ਪੂਜਾ ਦੀ ਆਲੋਚਨਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਮੰਨਦੇ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਤਿੰਨਾਂ ਜਗਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਾਰੀ ਦੌਲਤ ਹਿਰਦੇ ਦੀ ਚੰਗਿਆਈ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੱਸਦੀ ਹੈ। ਦਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਮਾਫੀ ਰੂਹਾਨੀ ਆਤਮਾ ਦੇ ਗਹਿਣੇ ਹਨ, ਜੋ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਜੀਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣਾ ਸਮਝਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦੇ ਕੰਮਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਿਸ਼ਕਾਮ ਰਹਿ ਕੇ ਧਰਮ

ਦੀ ਕਮਾਈ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਅਮਰਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੀ ਸੱਚੀ ਭਗਤੀ ਹਿਰਦੇ ਦੇ ਅੰਦਰੋਂ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਨਾ ਕਿ ਮੂੰਹੋਂ ਉਚਾਰਨ ਨਾਲ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਚਲਿਤ ਜਾਤੀ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਦੀ ਆਲੋਚਨਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਜੇਕਰ ਮੇਰੀਆਂ ਰਗਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਖੂਨ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ ਕਿਸੇ ਉੱਚ ਜਾਤੀ ਦੇ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਦੀਆਂ ਰਗਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਦੁੱਧ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਜਨਮ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਨ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਛੋਟਾ ਜਾਂ ਵੱਡਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ।

“ਸੰਤਨ ਜਾਤ ਨ ਪੁਛੋ ਨਿਰਗੁਣਿਆ”

ਬੁੱਧ ਧਰਮ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਡੇ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਇੱਕ ਹੈ। ਬੋਧੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਮੰਨਣਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੁੱਖਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਭਰਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ ; ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੁੱਖਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਪੁਨਰ ਜਨਮ ਦਾ ਇੱਕ ਚੱਕਰ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਜੇ ਕੋਈ ਗਿਆਨ ਦੀ ਅਵਸਥਾ (ਨਿਰਵਾਣ) ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਚੱਕਰ ਤੋਂ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਲਈ ਬਚਣਾ ਸੰਭਵ ਹੈ। ਸਿਧਾਰਥ ਗੌਤਮ ਗਿਆਨ ਦੀ ਇਸ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਤੱਕ ਪਹੁੰਚਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸਨੂੰ ਬੁੱਧ ਵਜੋਂ ਜਾਣਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਬੋਧੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਕਿਸਮ ਦੇ ਦੇਵਤੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਨਹੀਂ

ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਬੁੱਧ ਨੇ ਚਾਰ ਨੋਬਲ ਸੱਚਾਈਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਸਿਖਾਇਆ। ਪਹਿਲੀ ਸੱਚਾਈ ਨੂੰ “ਦੁੱਖ (ਦੁੱਖ)” ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਸਿਖਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਹਰ ਕੋਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਨਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਦੁਖੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਦੂਸਰਾ ਸੱਚ ਹੈ “ਦੁੱਖ ਦਾ ਮੂਲ (ਸਮੁਦਯਾ)”। ਇਹ ਦੱਸਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਾਰੇ ਦੁੱਖ ਇੱਛਾ (ਤਨਹਾ) ਤੋਂ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਤੀਸਰਾ ਸੱਚ ਹੈ “ਦੁੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਮਾਪਤੀ (ਨਿਰੋਧ)” ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਦੁੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਰੋਕਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਗਿਆਨ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਸੰਭਵ ਹੈ। ਚੌਥਾ ਸੱਚ, “ਦੁੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਮਾਪਤੀ ਦਾ ਮਾਰਗ (ਮੈਗਾ)” ਮੱਧ ਮਾਰਗ ਬਾਰੇ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਕਿ ਗਿਆਨ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਕਦਮ ਹੈ। ਬੋਧੀ ਚਿੰਤਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਿਮੰਡ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ, ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ, ਗਿਆਨ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ, ਤਰਕ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ, ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ, ਓਨਟੋਲੋਜੀ, ਵਰਤਾਰੇ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ, ਮਨ ਦਾ ਫਲਸਫਾ, ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਫਿਲਾਸਫੀ ਵਿਭਿੰਨ ਵਿਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ।

ਜੇ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਅਸੀਂ ਕਹਿ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਭਗਤ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਬੁੱਧ ਧਰਮ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਿੱਖਿਆਵਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਇੰਝ ਕਹਿ ਲਈਏ ਕਿ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਫਲਸਫੇ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਅੰਤਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਤਿੰਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਕ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਇਕੋ ਹੀ ਗੱਲ ਵੱਲ ਇਸ਼ਾਰਾ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ -- ਉਹ ਹੈ ਆਪਣੇ ਰੋਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਜ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਉਸ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੀ ਬੰਦਗੀ, ਉਸਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਵਿਚ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਹੀ ਲੀਨ ਰਹਿਣਾ ਹੈ।



ਸਾਡੀ ਧੀ

ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਦੀ ਧਰਤੀ ਉੱਤੇ ਹੋਇਆ ਦੇਖੋ ਕੀ ਵੇ ਲੋਕੋ ਜਾਤ ਪਾਤ ਦੇ ਕੋਹੜ ਨੇ ਸਾਥੋਂ ਖੋਹ ਲਈ ਸਾਡੀ ਧੀ ਵੇ ਲੋਕੋ।

ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਾਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਸੁਣਿਆ ਬਹੁਤ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਔਰਤ ਦੀ ਪੱਤ ਲਈ ਲੜਦੇ ਸੀ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਕਥਾ ਪੁਰਾਣੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੀ ਮਾਰ ਕੇ ਟੰਗਤੀ ਪੱਖੋ ਉੱਤੇ ਨਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਮੂੰਹ ਨਿੱਕਲੀ ਚੋਂ ਸੀ ਵੇ ਲੋਕੋ ਜਾਤ ਪਾਤ ਦੇ ਕੋਹੜ ਨੇ ਸਾਥੋਂ ਖੋਹ ਲਈ ਸਾਡੀ ਧੀ ਵੇ ਲੋਕੋ।

ਸੀ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਬੜਾ ਗੁਨਾਹ ਉਸਦਾ ਓਹਦਾ ਜਾਤੀ ਤੋਂ ਚਮਿਆਰ ਹੋਣਾ ਓਹਦੀ ਖੁਦ ਦੀ ਜਿੰਦ ਦਾ ਖੋ ਬਣਿਆ ਓਹਦਾ ਹੱਦੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਹੁਸ਼ਿਆਰ ਹੋਣਾ ਕੋਟੇ ਵਾਲੀ ਆਖ ਚਿੜਾਉਂਦੇ ਸੀ ਉਹ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਪੜ੍ਹ ਲਿਖ ਗਈ ਫ੍ਰੀ ਵੇ ਲੋਕੋ ਜਾਤ ਪਾਤ ਦੇ ਕੋਹੜ ਨੇ ਸਾਥੋਂ ਖੋਹ ਲਈ ਸਾਡੀ ਧੀ ਵੇ ਲੋਕੋ।

ਜੇ ਕਿਤੇ ਸੂਟ ਨਵਾਂ ਸਿਲਵਾ ਲੈਂਦੀ ਓਹਨੂੰ ਤਾਹਨੇ ਮਿਹਣੇ ਕੱਸਦੇ ਸੀ ਓਹਨੂੰ ਨੀਵਾਂ ਆਖ ਚਿੜਾਉਂਦੇ ਸੀ ਓਹਦੀ ਜਾਤ ਦਾ ਨਾ ਲੈ ਹੱਸਦੇ ਸੀ ਗਈ ਲੱਗਦਾ ਮੁੱਕ ਹੱਦ ਸਹਿਣੇ ਦੀ ਗਈ ਜ਼ਹਿਰ ਪਿਆਲਾ ਪੀ ਵੇ ਲੋਕੋ ਜਾਤ ਪਾਤ ਦੇ ਕੋਹੜ ਨੇ ਸਾਥੋਂ ਖੋਹ ਲਈ ਸਾਡੀ ਧੀ ਵੇ ਲੋਕੋ।

ਮੈਨੂੰ ਗੰਗੜਾ ਰੋਸ ਹੈ ਧਰਮੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਮਜ਼ਲੂਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੱਕ ਵਿੱਚ ਬੋਲਦੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਲੱਗਦਾ ਦਬਾਅ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਏ ਤਾਹੀਂ ਚੁੱਪ ਨੇ ਉਹ ਮੂੰਹ ਖੋਲ੍ਹਦੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ, ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰਕ, ਕਮੇਟੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਬੱਸ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੀ ਹੀ ਹੀ ਵੇ ਲੋਕੋ ਜਾਤ ਪਾਤ ਦੇ ਕੋਹੜ ਨੇ ਸਾਥੋਂ ਖੋਹ ਲਈ ਸਾਡੀ ਧੀ ਵੇ ਲੋਕੋ।



ਰਾਜਬੀਰ ਗੰਗੜ
ਬਲਾਲੋਂ (ਯੂ.ਐਸ.ਏ.)

ਬਹੁਜਨ ਮਹਾਪੁਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਦਾ ਅੰਦੋਲਨ ਜਾਰੀ ਰੱਖਣਾ ਬੇਹੱਦ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ

ਸਤਿਕਾਰਯੋਗ ਵੀਰੋ, ਜੈ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ, ਜੈ ਭੀਮ,

ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਫਤਿਹ,

ਜਿਹੜੀਆਂ ਕੌਮਾਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਮਹਾਪੁਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਦਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਉਹ ਕੌਮਾਂ ਗੁਲਾਮੀ, ਬੇਵਸੀ ਦੀ ਜਿੰਦਗੀ ਬਸਰ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਗੁਰੂ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ, ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਮਦੇਵ ਜੀ, ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ, ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਤੋਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਮੁਖ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਜਾਤ ਪਾਤ, ਉੱਚ ਨੀਚ, ਰੰਗ ਭੇਦ ਤੋਂ ਉਪਰ ਉੱਠ ਕੇ ਸਮਤਾ ਸਮਾਨਤਾ ਤੇ ਭਾਈਚਾਰਕ ਸਾਂਝ ਤੇ ਅਧਾਰਿਤ ਬੇਗਮਪੁਰਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਰਾਜ ਦੀ ਹਾਮੀ ਭਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਹੀ ਲੜੀ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਤ ਦੇ ਅਧਾਰਿਤ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਤੋਂ ਵਾਝੇ, ਸ਼ੋਸ਼ਿਤ ਸਮਾਜ, ਗੁਲਾਮੀ ਦੀ ਜਿੰਦਗੀ ਬਸਰ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ, ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਪੱਧਰ ਨੂੰ ਉਚਾ ਚੁੱਕਣ ਲਈ ਸਮੇ ਸਮੇ ਤੇ ਮਹਾਪੁਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਅੰਦੋਲਨ ਦਾ ਬਿਗੁਲ ਵਜਾਇਆ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪੈਰੀਅਰ ਰਾਮਾ ਸੁਆਮੀ, ਸ਼ਾਹੂ ਜੀ, ਜੋਤੀਵਾ ਫੂਲੇ, ਡਾ. ਅੰਬੇਡਕਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕਾਂਸ਼ੀ ਰਾਮ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਭਰ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਸ਼ਾਮਿਲ ਹੈ ਮਹਾਪੁਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਪਰਿਵਰਤਨ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਅੰਦੋਲਨ ਦੇ ਤਹਿਤ 'ਮਾਨਿਸ ਕਿ ਜਾਤ ਸਭੈ ਏਕੇ ਪਹਿਚਾਣ ਬੋ' ਦਾ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ ਜਨ ਮਾਨਿਸ ਤੱਕ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਨਿਰੰਤਰ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਜਾਰੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਦਾ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਬੇਗਮਪੁਰਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਰਾਜ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਲਈ ਬਹੁਜਨ ਮਹਾਪੁਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਅੰਦੋਲਨ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਰੀ ਰੱਖਣਾ ਅਤਿ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ, ਨਹੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਕੌਮ ਦੇ ਗਦਾਰ, ਭਵੀਸ਼ਨ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਮਨੂੰ ਦੀ ਗੁਲਾਮੀ ਕਰਕੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਦਾ ਘਾਣ ਕਰਵਾਉਂਦੇ ਰਹਿਣਗੇ।

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