

UNHEARD VOICES

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BIHAR

RESERVATION





Question of propriety

Recent remarks passed by Chief Justice of India Dhananjay Chandrachud on the complicated issue of extending reservation to converted people, who previously belong to Scheduled Castes, needs to be taken seriously. It needs to be taken seriously not because of the gravity of the issue, which he referred to, but because of propriety. Speaking at the Law Asia Conference in Bengaluru, Chandrachud indirectly referred to an issue, which is pending before the Supreme Court.

Justice Chandrachud was speaking on the topic - 'Identity, the individual, and the state: New paths to liberty'. During the speech Justice Chandrachud referred to his predecessor Justice Sharad Bobade, Rangnath Mishra Commission report and Sachhar Committee report. Justice Chandrachud said that Justice Bobade recognised the necessity to consider social exclusion of Christians and Muslims from the Scheduled Caste, reinforcing the urgency of addressing these issues. Clubbing together all the references in Justice Chandrachud's speech, one may fear whether the judiciary had already made up its mind to rule in favour of extending reservations to converts.

All Indian citizens, irrespective of their positions, have fundamental right to express their views. Indians are following this even before adoption of the constitution. But here is a slippery place as the said observations are made by none other than a person, who is holding a constitutional post. It is an unwritten rule in public life that one should not make any observations on sub judice matters. This is expected with the possibility of influencing the judicial process. Even the politicians are seen respecting this unwritten rule. Judiciary is not above this unwritten rule. Expression of some views by a sitting judge on a matter, which is pending before the Supreme Court, poses a serious question of propriety. The public interest litigation (PIL) on extension of reservation to converts. Serious questions can be raised whether hearing of the said PIL is merely a formality.

We refrain ourselves from passing any remarks on

the merits of the PIL topic. We believe in the probity in public life and have utter regard for the judiciary. However, we cannot run away from our responsibility if any constitutional organ is crossing its path. The Indian judiciary is one of the most respected systems in the world. It has shown rare courage in delivering revolutionary judgements. However, India had also witnessed conflict between judiciary and executive on several occasions. Academicians have also been debating on supremacy of the judiciary or Parliament for a long time. However, all must remind ourselves that India has adopted two fundamental principles - 'theory of separation of powers' and 'principle of checks and balances' in the constitution. Theory of separation of powers is included to define the role of all the bodies of state, which included Parliament, executive and judiciary. Similarly, the principle of checks and balance is incorporated to ensure that none of the three bodies becomes dominant, which would be against the core principles of democracy. However, all the three organs of the state do not miss any opportunity to establish their supremacy. Parliament and executive are constituted out of elected representatives and are accountable to the people. However, this is not the case in the judiciary. Judiciary is not elected by the people and it has its own mechanism to select the judges. In fact, selection of judges is a major point of debate among the academicians, legal fraternity and political class. Judiciary is accountable only to the constitution. But here lies the human element as interpretation of constitution varies from person to person. Judicial activism is born out of desire to establish supremacy over other organs of the state. In a few cases, it may happen to assert constitutional morality. But all these elements are driven by ideology, perception and principles of an individual, irrespective of constitutional position. Serious situation arises if any of the organ goes beyond its constitutional brief. It would be, therefore, prudent on the part of all organs of the state to respect constitutional mandate and honour follow principles of propriety.

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CONTENTS

- 04** Bihar's new reservation provision & quota
-
- 07** J & K Reservation Bill: A significant development
-
- 09** Election outcome: Withering away of caste?
-
- 15** Adapt or Lag: The Underprivileged and India's Ascent into AI
-
- 18** Aatmapamphlet: A love story unfolding against caste backdrop
-
- 20** Remembering Savitri Bai Phule
-
- 22** Sant Gadge Baba: The man in action
-
- 26** Ahilyadevi and Malharrao was pair of 'guru & shishya'
-

Appeal for financial assistance



Social Studies Foundation (SSF) is working with the prime objective of conducting social studies and research of the society in a multi-disciplinary fashion. SSF focus, however, is on those people, who have been facing discrimination and are deprived of benefits of the development and democratic process. SSF logo, thus says, "Knowledge for Empowerment".

"UNHEARD VOICES" is a small step in this direction. It provides a platform to all those people, who have to be listened to by the Indian citizens to make this country united and integral. We will raise the voice of these people fearlessly. Social Studies Foundation has currently a small set-up to carry out its objectives. We, however, need financial support from our well-wishers, who agree with our objectives. We appeal to the readers and well-wishers to donate generously to the foundation.

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Bihar's new reservation provision & quota

The provisions of the increased quotas will benefit the individuals, who are in need, in the government jobs and educational institutions thereby upholding the notion of equality. It will also introduce more measures for the uplift of socially, educationally, and economically backward sections of society. The suppressed section of the society will be able to be at par with the different communities. Hence, reducing the socio-economic disparities between them.



At the end of seventy-five years of our independence, we need to revisit the system of reservation in the larger interest of the society as a whole, as a step forward towards transformative constitutionalism.” - Justice Bela M Trivedi.

The recent issue, which is booming in Bihar regarding its extension of reservation up to 75% for OBCs, SCs, STs and EBCs in the educational institutions and government jobs, has created a room for contentious discussions regarding its validity on exceeding the cap of 50%, which has done after the results of Bihar Caste Survey in 2023. Bihar, which is the third most populous state in the country, is now the second highest in providing reservations to the backward classes. What will be more stimulating is how the court will respond to this bold step on the part of the state.

The courtroom discussions surrounding this

case should provide valuable insights into the fine line that exists between constitutional standards and social justice demands. Through this article, the author will discuss about the new changes that has been made to the reservation policy of Bihar, its history, its implications on the society, how does it will be beneficial to the weaker sections in education and government arena, how much extent it will contribute in maintaining social harmony and abridging the economic and social gap between the different communities, what are the constitutional mandates and what more modifications could be done so that the implementation becomes efficient and effective.

HISTORY OF RESERVATION IN INDIA -

In India, reservations are an affirmative action that was established during British rule. After the drafting of the Indian Constitution, one of the unique features of this constitution is 'RESERVATION' along with embracing the principles of democracy and equality. It gives historically underrepresented groups representation in politics, government



initiatives, the workforce, and educational institutions. The Indian Constitution grants the Union Government, the States and Territories of India the authority to establish reserved quotas or seats for socially and educationally backward citizens at a specific percentage in political bodies, education, employment, and promotions, among the other areas.

Here is a timeline for the same that how the reservation system in India evolved during the course of years including both the pre-independence and post-independence era-

- **1882-** The idea of reservation was introduced and founded by the William Hunter and Jyotirao Phule.

- **1902-** Chatrapati Shahu, the Maharaja of the princely state of Kolhapur, introduced reservation in favour of non-Brahmin and backward classes.

- **1918-** At the behest of several non-Brahmin organizations, criticizing Brahmin domination of administration, the Mysore Raja Nalvadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar created a committee to implement reservations for non-Brahmins in government jobs and education.

- **1921-** The first Justice Party government passed the first Communal Government Order, thereby becoming the first elected body in Indian legislative history to legislate reservations.

- **1932-** From the Round Table Conference of June, the Prime Minister of Britain, Ramsay MacDonald, proposed the Communal Award, according to which separate representation was to be provided for Muslims, Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians, and Europeans. Later, Poona Pact between M K Gandhi and B R Ambedkar reserves seats for depressed castes within Hindu electorates

- **1942-** Viceroy's Executive Council recommends 8.5 per cent reservation for Scheduled Castes in civil services. B R Ambedkar was a member of the council.

- **1951-** First amendment in constitution to legalize caste-based reservation in face of court cases against quota.

- **1979-** The Mandal Commission or the Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) Commission was established to assess the situation of the socially and educationally backward classes.

- **1980-** The commission's report recommended that a reserved quota for OBCs of 27% should apply in respect of services and public sector bodies operated by the Union Government.

- **1990-** The Mandal Commission report recommending 27% reservation to the OBCs was implemented by then Prime Minister V P Singh.

- **1992** The Supreme Court of India ruled in the Indira Sawhney Case that reservations could not exceed 50 percent, anything above which it judged would violate equal access as guaranteed by the Constitution.

- **2019-** Parliament passes Article 15 Amendment bill allowing 10 per cent quota for poor in higher

education and jobs. Bill challenged in Supreme Court.

- **2020-** Reservation in legislature was only till 1960 but it has been extended every 10 years. Latest extension was made in 2010 and is valid up to 26 January 2020.

- **2022-** Supreme Court of India in Janhit Abhiyan vs Union of India, upheld the validity of the 103rd constitutional amendment carried out to provide legal sanction carve out 10% reservation for the economically weaker sections from unreserved classes for admission in educational institutions and government jobs and held that the 50% cap on quota is not inviolable and affirmative action on economic basis may go a long way in eradicating caste-based reservation.

RESERVATION SYSTEM IN BIHAR-

Bihar has long battled for fair access to government employment and educational possibilities. The underprivileged classes particularly thought of reservations as an effective affirmative action strategy against discrimination. Bihar has an OBC quota with a sub-quota of 18% for Extremely Backward Castes (EBCs) and 3% for Backward Caste women in government positions and educational institutions. This quota was first introduced by Karpoori Thakur in 1970. In 2019, EWS reservation was introduced. The term 'economically weaker section' (EWS) refers to a subset of individuals whose household income is less than eight lakh per year and who do not fall under any of the OBC, SC, ST, or categories in which Articles 15(6) and 16(6) of the Indian Constitution were amended by the 103rd Amendment to allow 10% of the population to be reserved for the EWS group. Many state governments declared their desire to execute the 10% EWS reservations after approving the legislation.

In 2023, the percentage of reservations in Bihar increased from 50% to 65% along with the EWS reservation of 10% making to the total of 75% in the government jobs and educational institutions. It has been recommended to reduce the ST quota from 10% to 2%. After the bifurcation of Bihar in 2000, the majority of its tribals moved to Jharkhand, leaving less than 2% of the population tribal. Recently, the Bihar Caste Survey which was done in October, 2023 the report unfolded the states caste composition is as follows: 27.12% of the population belongs to the Other Backward Class (OBC), while 36.01% to the Extremely Backward Class (EBC). In Bihar, the population of Scheduled Tribes is 1.68%, the population of Scheduled Castes is 19.6%, and the population of General Castes is 15.5%. The research also showed that Muslims make up 17.7% of the population, while Hindus make up 81.99%.

Notwithstanding reservations, the percentage of EBCs in government employment is less than that of their population. There are almost 20.47 lakh government employees in the state of 13.07 crore people. The upper castes account for the largest share of them, with 31.3% of all employment held



by members of these groups. The number of people employed in government jobs, who belong to the backward classes is 6.21 lakh, that is, 30.33% of the total government jobs.

The EBC population of Bihar is the largest, although they only account for 22.52% of all the government sector. Hence, two bills were named as- The Bihar Reservation of Vacancies in Posts and Services (For Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes) (Amendment) Act 2023 and The Bihar (In Admission in Educational Institutions) Reservation (Amendment) Act 2023 making another landmark in the history of its reservation in the state.

After this survey's report, which is the culmination of this hike of 75% to increase the overall percentage of caste-based reservations from 50% to 65% along with 10% EWS reservation, it proposed the extension of different communities in the following way-

- Scheduled Castes (SC) -from 16% to 20%
- Scheduled Tribes (STs) -from 1% to 2%
- Extremely backward castes (EBCs)- from 18% to 25%
- Other backward classes (OBCs)- from 15% to 18%

IMPLICATIONS OF THIS POLICY- POSITIVE IMPACTS-

The provisions of the increased quotas will benefit the individuals, who are in need, in the government jobs and educational institutions thereby upholding the notion of equality. It will also introduce more measures for the uplift of socially, educationally, and economically backward sections of society. Providing hiked reservations in the educational institution also safeguards the important right of every child between the age group of 6 to 14 and that is Right to education. The suppressed section of the society will be able to be at par with the different communities. Hence, reducing the socio-economic disparities between them.

Now, many of the youths in rural areas will be able to get representation in the Government sector who, by any socio, economic, political reason, are not getting employment opportunities anywhere. Therefore, it will also be helpful in tackling the grave problem of unemployment. Last but not the least, this increment will abridge the historical injustices caused to the backward classes, consequently ensuring a sense of inclusivity in them.

NEGATIVE IMPACTS-

The reservation cap increase of 15% stands against the landmark Supreme Court judgement of Indra Sawhney & Others vs The Union of India case of 1992 which is also known as the Mandal Judgement.

While increasing the reservations to such an extent, it will eventually sacrifice merit. Maintaining equality is necessary but compromising merit will be harmful in the near future.

Through these provisions, there might be a possibility that caste-based mobilizations may take a high toll on the social harmony of the society.

The Justice Rohini Committee, which was instituted to make sure that the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in India receive reservation benefits in a more equitable manner found out that the unequal distribution of the benefits across different OBC communities of receiving 27% reservation in education institutions and Government jobs have raised concerns.

Although the Government of Bihar is trying their level best to uplift the lower strata of the society still it is difficult to ensure the proper implementation on the grass-root level.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS FOR SCs, STs and OBCs-

Article 14: Equality before law and equal protection of laws
Article 15: Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth

Article 16: Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment
Article 17: Abolition of Untouchability

Article 46: Promotion of educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Weaker sections

Article 243D: Reservation of seats for SCs and STs in every Panchayat.

Article 233T: Reservation of seats for SCs and STs in every Municipality.

Article 330: Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the House of the People

Article 332: Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assemblies of the States

Article 334: Reservation of seats and special representation to cease after [sixty years]

Article 335: Claims of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to services and posts

Article 338: National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Schedule Tribes

Article 340: Appointment of a Commission to investigate the conditions of Backward Classes

CONCLUSION AND WAY AHEAD-

The reservation system in India was introduced for a novel reason for abridging the inequalities between the backward classes and the upper ones but somewhere amid modern era, the reason lost its essence and the ones, who should actually get advantage of these provisions are being deprived of it and others are acquiring the benefits. Today, the political leaders who seeks to fulfil their interests first and welfare later, for them this affirmative action has only remained a tool to be in power. It is quite a difficult thing to say that whether reservation is solely good or bad but as long as it is used in the correct manner by upliftment of the real ones who are in serious need of this and without the compromising the actual merit, it might continue to be a part of the good in the future.

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J & K Reservation Bill: A significant development

Vijendra



The approval of the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Bill and the J&K Reorganization (Amendment) Bill marks a pivotal moment in the region's history. As these measures take effect, attention shifts to their implementation and their tangible impact on the lives of the people in Jammu and Kashmir. The journey towards a more inclusive and developed future has taken a significant stride forward, marking the beginning of a new chapter in the region's history.

In a significant turn of events, the Lok Sabha has given the nod to two groundbreaking bills that promise a brighter future for Jammu and Kashmir. The approval of the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Bill and the J and K Reorganization (Amendment) Bill marks the beginning of an era characterized by inclusive governance and a commitment to fostering balanced development.

Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Bill: The 2023 amendment to the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Bill introduces changes to the 2004 legislation, which manages job reservations and admissions to professional institutions. These reservations specifically benefit individuals from scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and socially and educationally backward classes. One significant update is the replacement of the term 'weak and underprivileged classes' with 'other backward classes' as determined by the Union





Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Moreover, the amendment eliminates the original definition of weak and underprivileged classes, signalling a shift in categorizing and addressing social and educational backwardness.

This bill stands as a beacon in the legislative landscape, aiming to enrich social justice and inclusivity across the region. It's a commitment to extend reservation benefits to the economically weaker sections, ensuring that education and employment opportunities reach a more comprehensive range of people. This legislation represents a break from the past, addressing historical imbalances and striving to create a level playing field for all sections of society. By broadening the scope of reservation, the government takes a step forward in empowering marginalized communities and nurturing a more equitable socio-economic landscape in Jammu and Kashmir.

To promise better and prosperous future for the Jammu and Kashmir, the approval of the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Bill and the J and K Reorganization (Amendment) Bill marks the beginning of an era characterized by inclusive governance and a commitment to fostering balanced development. It will be a ray of hopes for the Jammu Kashmir people.

J&K Reorganization (Amendment) Bill: The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization (Amendment) Bill of 2023 is like a fine-tuner for the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act 2019. This law reshaped the once-state into the union territories of Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh. This proposed bill aims to shake things up by increasing the total seats in the Jammu and Kashmir legislative Assembly from 107 to 114. Seven seats are set aside for scheduled caste members, and nine are reserved for legislators from scheduled tribes.

Here is an exciting twist, according to the J&K Reorganization Act, 24 assembly seats will remain vacant until the situation in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir resolves. As a result, the current adequate strength of the Assembly is 83. But hold on tight because the amendment is set on boosting that number to 90, paving the way for a more dynamic and representative legislative assembly.

Building on the foundation laid by the original reorganization in 2019, the recent amendment bill reflects the government's ongoing commitment to administrative reforms. The groundbreaking move, which saw the abrogation of Article 370 and the

bifurcation of the state into Union Territories, set the stage for a more integrated and streamlined governance structure.

This amendment bill delves into the details, addressing specific concerns and refining the administrative framework. It emphasizes the government's dedication to ensuring the reorganization process remains dynamic and responsive to the region's evolving needs. Additionally, the lieutenant governor can nominate up to two members from the Kashmiri migrant community to the Legislative Assembly, ensuring that at least one of the nominees is a woman. Furthermore, the lieutenant governor can forward one representative representing displaced persons, specifically from Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The designation `Kashmiri Migrants` pertains to individuals who moved from the Kashmir Valley or any other part of Jammu and Kashmir after November 1, 1989, and have official registration with the Relief Commissioner.

Impact on Governance: Together, these bills signal a transformative shift in the governance paradigm of Jammu and Kashmir. By extending reservation benefits and amending the reorganization framework, the government actively works towards creating an environment of inclusivity and development. The stress on economic empowerment and administrative efficiency underscores a commitment to holistic progress in the region.

Challenges and Controversies: While these legislative measures have gained widespread support for their potential to bring positive change, challenges and controversies are inevitable. Critics argue that certain aspects of the bills may need further scrutiny to ensure seamless alignment with the intended objectives.

Constructive dialogue among stakeholders is essential to address concerns and refine the legislative framework for optimal effectiveness.

Conclusion: The approval of the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Bill and the J&K Reorganization (Amendment) Bill marks a pivotal moment in the region's history. As these measures take effect, attention shifts to their implementation and their tangible impact on the lives of the people in Jammu and Kashmir. The journey towards a more inclusive and developed future has taken a significant stride forward, marking the beginning of a new chapter in the region's history. Delving into the specifics of the delimitation of Assembly constituencies in J&K, Union Home Minister Amit Shah highlighted the changes, stating that Jammu now has 43 seats, up from the previous 37. Kashmir has 47 seats, an increase from the earlier 46. These adjustments further reflect the government's commitment to ensuring fair representation and participation in the democratic process.

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Election outcome: Withering away of caste?

Recently held Assembly election to five states, described as the semi-final for 2024 Lok Sabha elections, has once again thrown a surprise. Election outcome has underlined the impression that Indian voters behave in a far matured way. Voters have exposed limitations of exit polls. They have also exposed those so-called political pundits, who either have no political understanding or are being driven by some elements. Political pundits need to address emerging trend – whether caste factor is withering away from Indian political landscape. As against popular perception that BJP is the party of upper caste people, BJP performance in constituencies, reserved for SCs and STs is not only remarkable but spectacular. In fact, BJP would not have won three states unless it had won reserved seats. BJP is systematically concentrating on reserved seats to establish its inclusive credentials, a reality, being neglected by anti-BJP forces. Interestingly, anti-incumbency was seen in all the states excluding Madhya Pradesh, which was ruled by BJP. How will anti-BJP forces

explain this? BJP, it seems, has shattered all the established political equations in which caste used to play a decisive factor. It is the second example in the recent past in which 'beneficiary' has played a crucial role. This necessarily means that voters are more concerned about performance instead of caste. It can also be inferred that BJP has succeeded in building and retaining its Hindu vote bank, where caste factor has a second role to play.

Diminishing role of caste factor has emerged when major political parties, including Congress, had promised caste census. It was felt that the caste census issue would play some role in political behaviour of the voters. However, it has hardly played any role. Supporters of caste census should seriously address whether voters are really tired of playing caste factor for the years. They need to introspect whether the demand for caste census is politically motivated or with the real motivation for welfare of the deprived classes. Let us have a statewide result.



Telangana



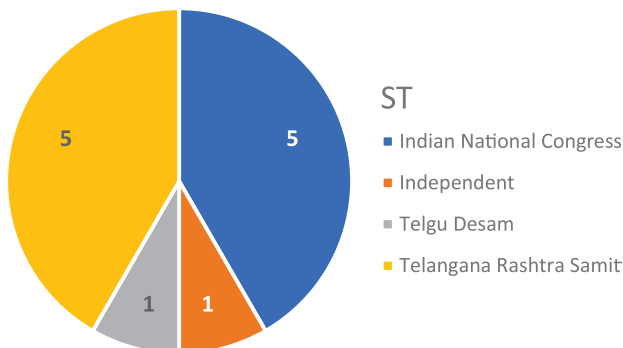
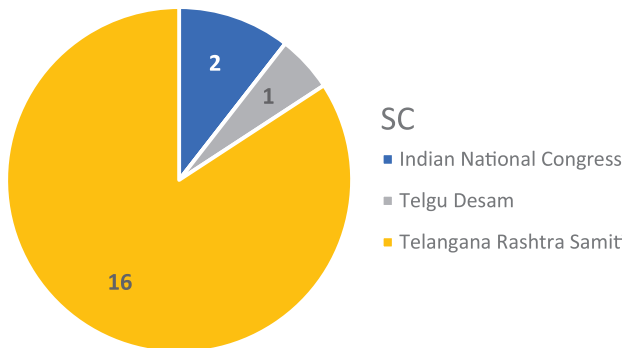
In the 2018 Telangana Assembly election, there were 19 seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and 12 seats set aside for Scheduled Tribes. Within the 19 SC reserved seats, the INC secured two, Telugu Desam secured one seat, and the Telangana Rashtra Samithi claimed victory in 16 seats. The INC won 11%, Telugu Desam grabbing 5%, and Telangana Rashtra Samithi dominating with 84% of the seats designated for SC communities. Now, shifting focus to the 12 ST reserved seats, the INC emerged victorious in five seats, an independent candidate secured one seat, Telugu Desam clinched one seat, and the Telangana Rashtra Samithi triumphed in five seats. In terms of percentages, the independent candidate and Telugu Desam each won 8%, while INC and Telangana Rashtra Samithi both secured

an equal share of 42% of the seats allocated for ST communities.

In the 2023 Telangana Assembly election, The Congress took the lead by securing victories in 14 seats, while the Bharat Rashtra Samithi held its ground with five seats. The INC grabbed 74%, and the Bharat Rashtra Samithi secured 26% of the seats meant for SC community. The 12 seats are set aside for Scheduled Tribes. It's like a story unfolding, where the INC emerged victorious in nine seats, and the Bharat Rashtra Samithi won in three seats. Breaking it down further, the INC took a significant 75%, and the Bharat Rashtra Samithi claimed a solid 25% of the seats within the ST reserved constituencies. BRS defeat in several reserved constituencies is shocking as K Chandrashekhara Rao, has projected himself as -pro-Dalit leader.

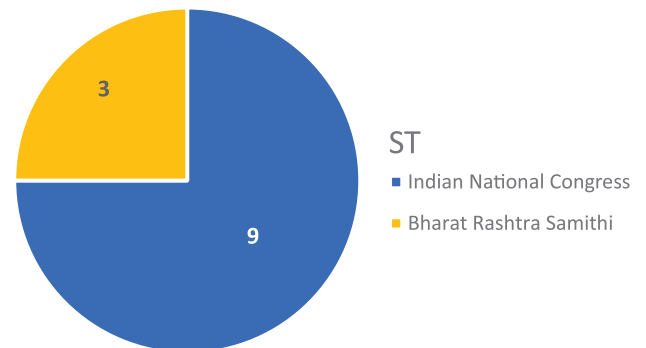
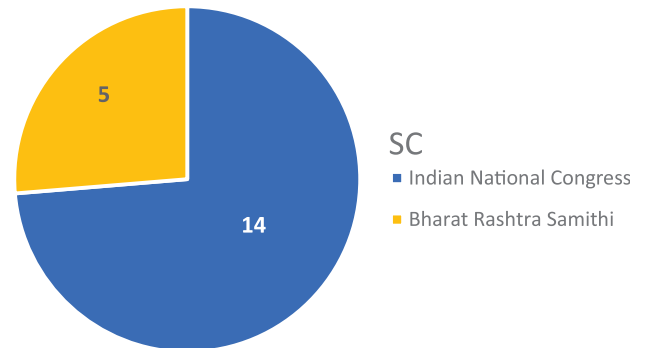
2018

Party Names	SC	ST
Indian National Congress	2	5
Independent	0	1
Telgu Desam	1	1
Telangana Rashtra Samithi	16	5
Grand Total	19	12



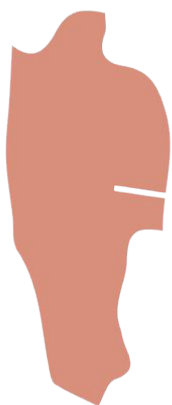
2023

Party Names	SC	ST
Indian National Congress	14	9
Bharat Rashtra Samithi	5	3
Grand Total	19	12





Mizoram

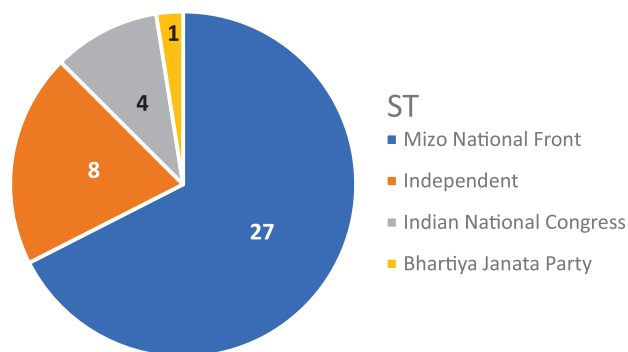


Mizoram Assembly election in 2018 has 40 seats reserved for Scheduled Tribes. The Mizo National Front emerged as the star, grabbing victory in a whopping 27 seats. The Independents, with their own unique flair, claimed eight seats while INC got four seats, and the BJP secured a single seat. The Mizo National Front swept an impressive 67.50% of the seats, Independents held their ground with 20%, INC got a solid 10%, and the BJP, with a small victory, secured 2.50% of the seats within the reserved constituency.

The 2023 Mizoram Assembly election, 40 seats are reserved for the Scheduled Tribes community. The Zoram People's Movement steps into the spotlight, clinching a whopping 27 seats. On the other hand, the Mizo National Front grabbed ten seats while the BJP secured two, and INC held onto one seat. Zoram People's Movement steals the show with an impressive 67.50%, the Mizo National Front contributes a significant 25%, INC adds a subtle touch with 2.50%, and the BJP claims 5% of the seats within the reserved constituency.

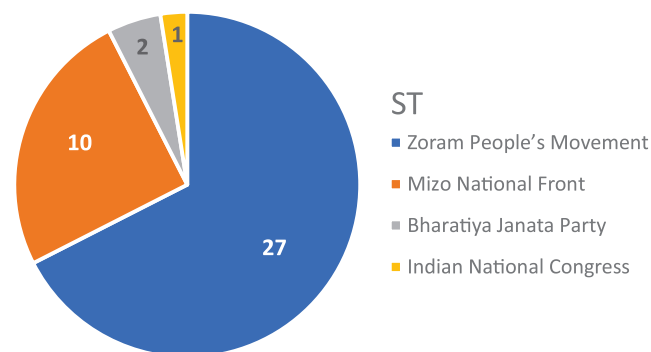
2018

Party Names	ST
Mizo National Front	27
Independent	8
Indian National Congress	4
Bhartiya Janata Party	1
Grant Total	40



2023

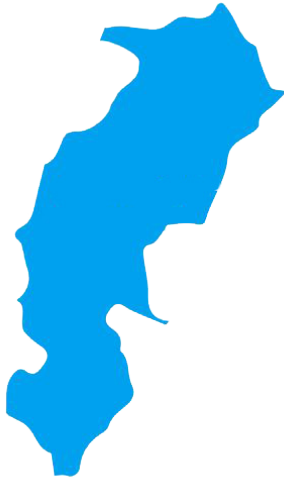
Party Names	ST
Zoram People's Movement	27
Mizo National Front	10
Bharatiya Janata Party	2
Indian National Congress	1
Grant Total	40



Mizoram
new Chief Minister
Shri. Laldumoha



Chhattisgarh



In the 2018 Chhattisgarh Assembly election, there were 29 seats reserved for Scheduled Tribes and ten seats for Scheduled Castes. Now, when it comes to the 29 seats reserved for Scheduled Tribes, the BJP managed to win three, the Congress rocked the vote and got 25, and Janta Congress Chhattisgarh took one seat. So, in simpler terms, the BJP got 10%, the INC dominated with 86%, and Janta Congress Chhattisgarh scored 4% of the seats meant for ST's.

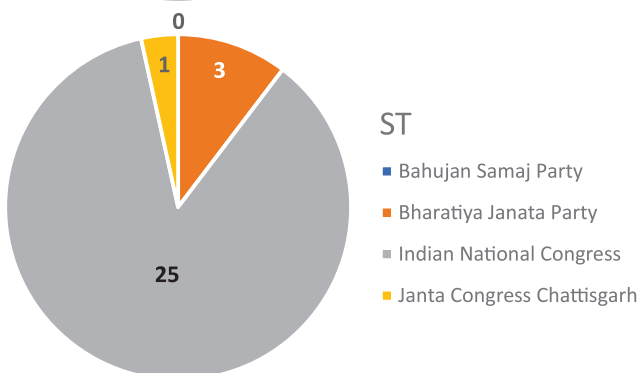
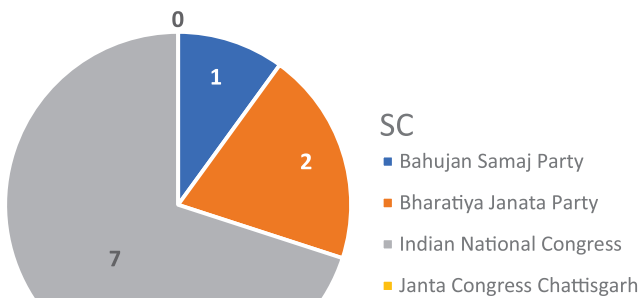
Now, shifting gears to the 10 seats reserved for Scheduled Castes, BSP nailed it with one win, BJP held its ground with two victories, and INC stole the

show with seven wins. Breaking it down further, BSP earned 10%, BJP claimed 20%, and INC swept up an impressive 70% of the seats set aside for SCs.

In the current election, 29 seats were reserved for Scheduled Tribes (ST). The BJP confidently grabbed 17 seats, the INC settled into 11, and there is one seat where the Gondvana Gantantra Party won. The BJP won 59%, the INC securing 38%, and the Gondvana Gantantra Party taking 3% of the ST reserved seats. With both the BJP and INC standing strong, each winning in five seats. It's like a balanced teeter-totter, a perfect 50-50 split between the two parties in the SC reserved constituencies.

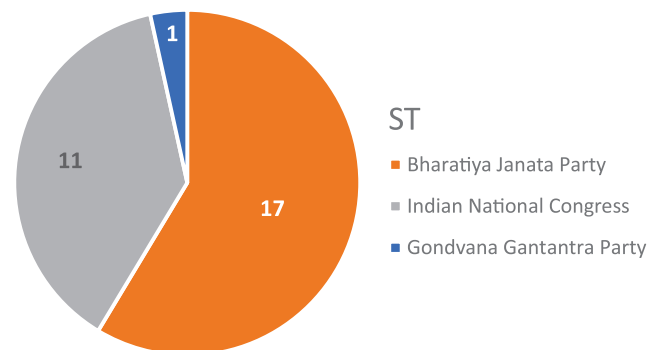
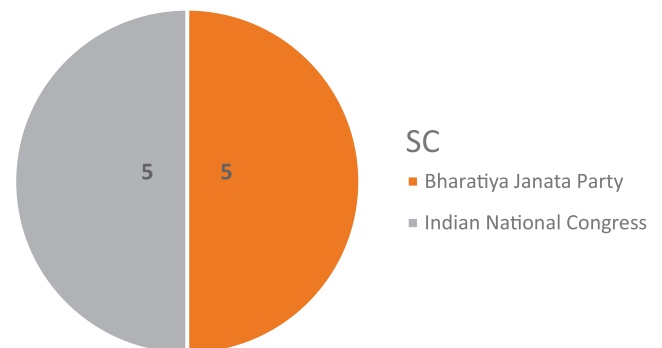
2018

Party Names	SC	ST
Bahujan Samaj Party	1	0
Bharatiya Janata Party	2	3
Indian National Congress	7	25
Janta Congress Chhattisgarh	0	1
Grant Total	10	29



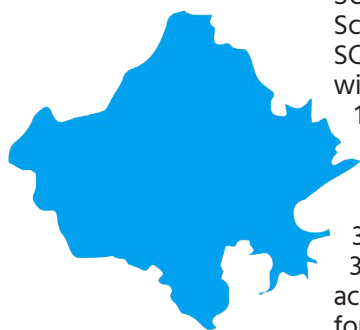
2023

Party Names	SC	ST
Bharatiya Janata Party	5	17
Indian National Congress	5	11
Gondvana Gantantra Party	0	1
Grand Total	10	29





Rajasthan



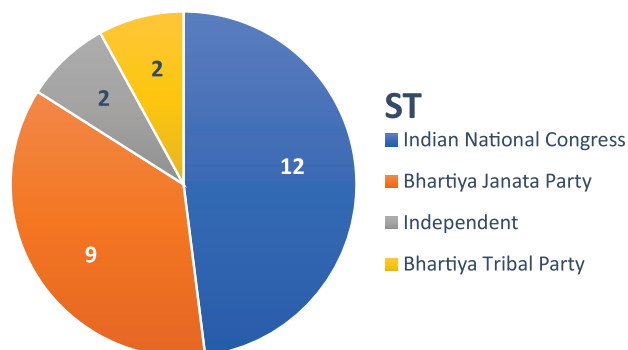
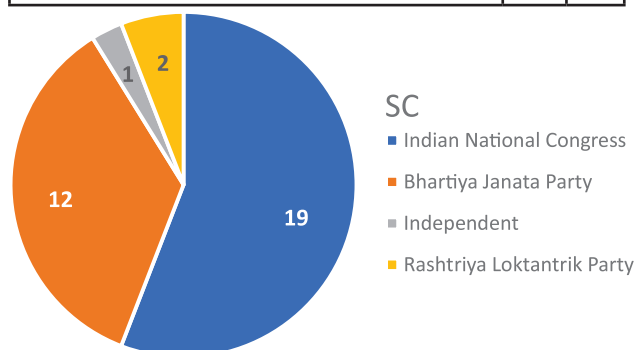
In the 2018 Rajasthan Assembly election, 34 seats were set aside for Scheduled Castes and 25 seats for Scheduled Tribes. Now, within the 34 SC reserved seats, the INC took the lead with victories in 19 seats, the BJP claimed 12, an independent candidate secured 1, and the Rashtriya Loktantrik Party celebrated wins in two seats. The INC grabbed 56%, the BJP secured 35%, the independent candidate got 3%, and the Rashtriya Loktantrik Party achieved a 6% share of the seats meant for SC community. The 25 ST reserved seats, it's like a story unfolding where the INC emerged victorious in 12 seats, the BJP claimed 9, an independent candidate secured two, and the Bhartiya Tribal Party celebrated victories in two seats. The independent candidate and Bhartiya Tribal Party each secured an 8% share,

while the INC claimed a significant 48%, and the BJP held a solid 36% of the seats designated for ST communities.

In the 2023 Rajasthan Assembly election, 34 seats were set aside for Scheduled Castes. The INC celebrated victories in 13 seats, the BJP claimed 20 seats, and an independent candidate joined the winner's circle with one seat. The INC scored 38%, the BJP took the lead with 59%, and the independent candidate secured 3% of the seats meant for SC community. The 25 seats are reserved for Scheduled Tribes. It's like a story unfolding where the INC emerged victorious in 10 seats, the BJP claimed 13 seats, and an independent candidate secured 2 seats. The INC grabbed 40%, the BJP held a solid 52%, and the independent candidate won an 8% share.

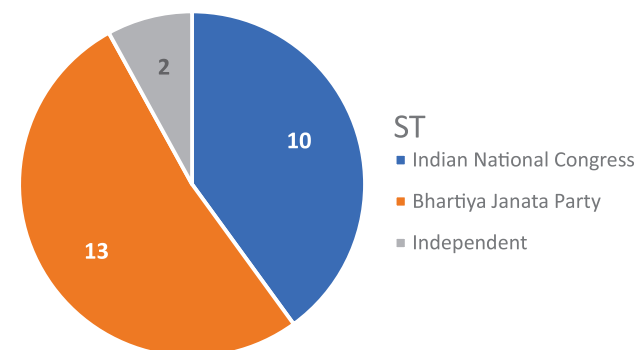
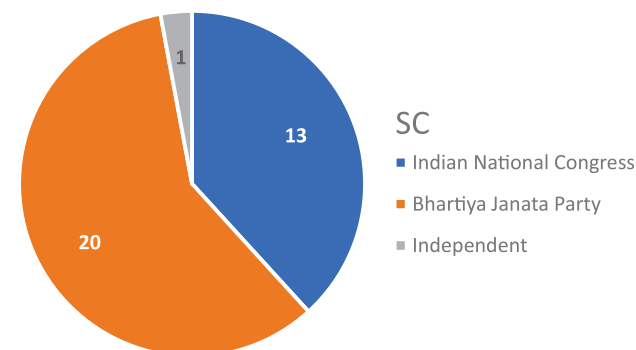
2018

Party Names	SC	ST
Indian National Congress	19	12
Bhartiya Janata Party	12	9
Independent	1	2
Bhartiya Tribal Party	0	2
Rashtriya Loktantrik Party	2	0
Grand Total	34	25



2023

Party Names	SC	ST
Indian National Congress	13	10
Bhartiya Janata Party	20	13
Independent	1	2
Grand Total	34	25





Madhya Pradesh



In the 2018 Madhya Pradesh Assembly election, there were 35 seats specifically reserved for Scheduled Castes and 47 seats designated for Scheduled Tribes. Within the 35 SC reserved seats, the INC secured victories in 17, while the BJP claimed 18 seats.

The INC won 49%, and the BJP secured a slightly higher share with 51% of the seats allocated for SC communities. Out of 47 ST reserved seats, the INC emerged victorious in 30 seats, the BJP claimed 16 seats, and an independent candidate secured one seat.

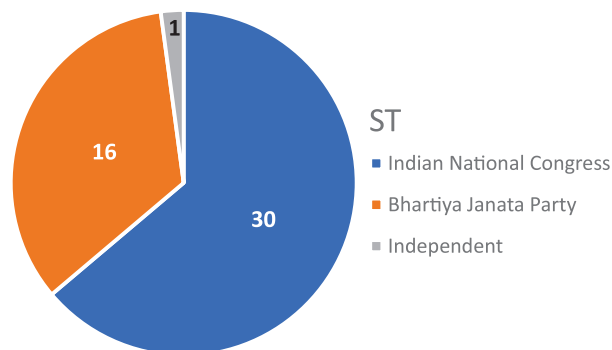
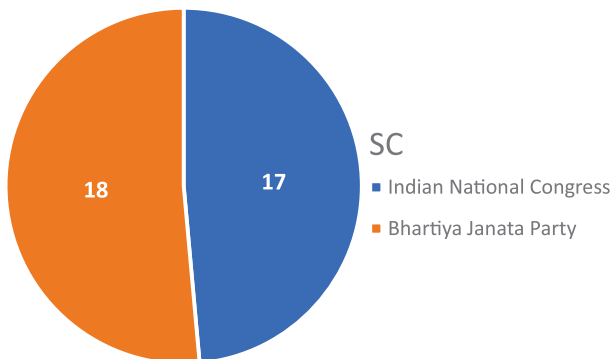
In terms of percentages, the INC dominated with 64%, the BJP secured 34%, and the independent candidate

won a modest 2% of the seats within the ST reserved constituencies.

In the 2023 Madhya Pradesh Assembly election, there were 35 seats reserved for Scheduled Castes. Within these, the INC secured victories in nine seats, while the BJP claimed a significant lead with 26 seats. The INC won 26%, and the BJP dominated with 74% of the seats designated for SC communities. Out of 47 ST reserved seats, the INC emerged victorious in 21 seats, the BJP claimed 25 seats, and the Bharat Adivasi Party secured 1 seat. In terms of percentages, the INC held a respectable 45%, the BJP secured the majority with 53%, and the Bharat Adivasi Party won a modest 2% of the seats within the ST reserved constituencies.

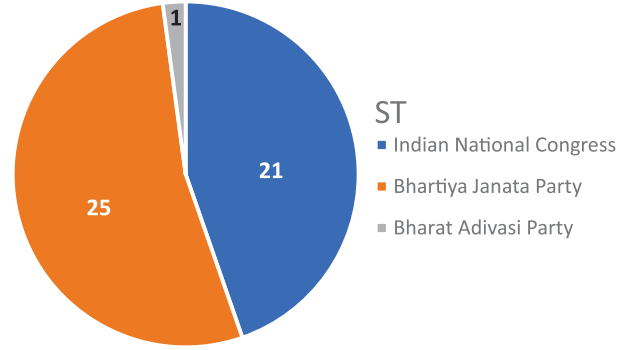
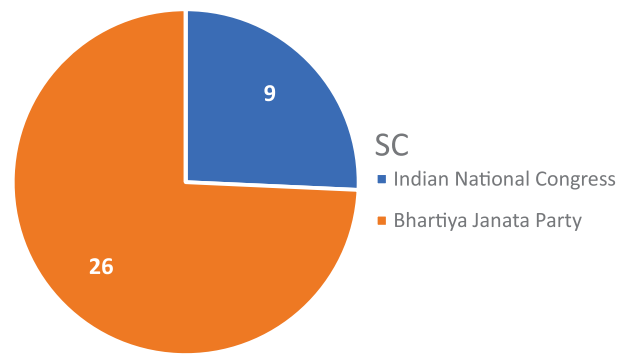
2018

Party Names	SC	ST
Indian National Congress	17	30
Bhartiya Janata Party	18	16
Independent	0	1
Grant Total	35	47



2023

Party Names	SC	ST
Indian National Congress	9	21
Bhartiya Janata Party	26	25
Bharat Adivasi Party	0	1
Grant Total	35	47





Adapt or Lag: The Underprivileged and India's Ascent into AI

Awareness campaigns and community events can demystify AI and promote its accessibility. Inclusive policies and initiatives should be implemented to ensure equal opportunities in the AI workforce, supported by skill development programs tailored for underprivileged communities. Financial assistance, mentorship, and resources should be provided to support underprivileged entrepreneurs entering the AI sector.

Dr. Sonali



Cast your memory back to 1955, the year India unboxed its first computer from the UK. It took a leisurely 30 years for these brainy contraptions to find a spot in government schools. Fast forward to 1996-97, and computers waltzed into our Marathi government-aided school, demanding a hefty Rs. 250 annual fees. But who could afford such luxury? As a few brave souls tiptoed into computer classes, I sought refuge in environmental lectures—a safe haven from the digital chaos.

Back in the day, I used to squirm in my seat when my computer-savvy buddies went on and on about the wizardry of their machines. Graduation was like

a crash course in feeling out of the loop – internet, emails, Orkut – you name it, and I was the awkward penguin in the corner pretending to know what was going on. It was not until post-graduation that I mustered the courage to face a computer head-on and created my very own email ID. Cue the confetti! Suddenly, I was plunged into a world of online wonders, still blissfully unaware of the bytes of knowledge I had missed during my pre-computer era.

Sure, the internet was a pricey playmate back then, demanding a sacrificial offering of Rs 20-50 per hour. Yet, it was a small price to pay for the instant enlightenment I could gain on any topic imaginable.



It is difficult to evaluate the degree to which I lagged others due to my delayed introduction to computers and the internet. Perhaps the speed of technological development was not too overwhelming to impede my catch-up efforts.

Today, we are in the age of AI or artificial intelligence, which means computer systems are designed to do things that usually need human smarts, like learning, problem-solving, and recognizing patterns. It is all about creating algorithms and models that help machines make decisions and handle different situations.

History of AI

The story of artificial intelligence (AI) goes way back, with ancient tales of crafted beings thought to have intelligence. People used to believe statues of Gods could answer questions or do things like humans. The idea of machines copying human thinking started with philosophers who talked about symbols and how our brains work. Even in ancient times, there was a notion of creating machines like this. But the official talks about AI started around the mid-20th century. So, AI has a long history, from old stories and beliefs to modern discussions that shaped how we think about it today. In 1950, a British mathematician and computer scientist named Alan Turing put forth the idea of a test to assess whether a machine could display intelligent behaviour indistinguishable from that of a human. This concept, now known as the Turing Test, played a crucial role in shaping the field of AI.

The term 'artificial intelligence' was coined during a workshop at Dartmouth College in 1956, where John McCarthy regarded as father of AI and others came together to explore how machines could imitate human intelligence. However, in the 1970s and 1980s, AI faced widespread criticism, leading to the 'AI winter' – a period of reduced interest, funding, and progress. Initial hype about achieving human-like intelligence resulted in unmet expectations and disappointment. Limited computing power hindered processing large datasets and training complex models, while a lack of understanding about effective machine learning fueled scepticism. Funding cuts ensued as expectations fell short, slowing progress and reducing the number of researchers. Despite challenges, the 1980s saw the emergence of expert systems like MYCIN for medical diagnosis. By 2010, AI achieved success in tasks such as image recognition and natural language processing. Today, AI is an integral part of everyday life, from virtual assistants to healthcare applications.

AI in the context of India, daily life, education and jobs:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is now a fundamental aspect of our daily existence, reshaping how we live, learn, and work. In everyday life, AI seamlessly intertwines with diverse technologies, including virtual assistants like Siri and Alexa, aiding in task management, and recommendation algorithms that

tailor personalized content on streaming platforms. Within education, AI is transforming classrooms by delivering personalized learning experiences, automating grading processes, and offering virtual tutoring support. In the job market, AI assumes a crucial role in automating routine tasks, streamlining data analysis, and fueling innovations across various industries, including healthcare, finance, and manufacturing.

While AI brings numerous benefits, it also raises concerns about privacy, data security, and ethical use of personal information. In education, challenges include equitable access, potential biases in algorithms, and the need for teachers to adapt to evolving technology. In the job market, automation by AI prompts questions about job displacement, emphasizing the importance of reskilling and upskilling. AI facilitates easy access to knowledge, content creation, and homework support. These risks and challenges are present globally, but in a country like India with unique democratic and economic challenges, a deeper introspection into AI's impact is necessary.

To foster the inclusion of underprivileged individuals in AI development and prevent them from falling behind, the government should implement comprehensive strategies. Initiatives should begin with the establishment of educational programs focused on AI skills and literacy, reaching schools and community centres in underprivileged areas.

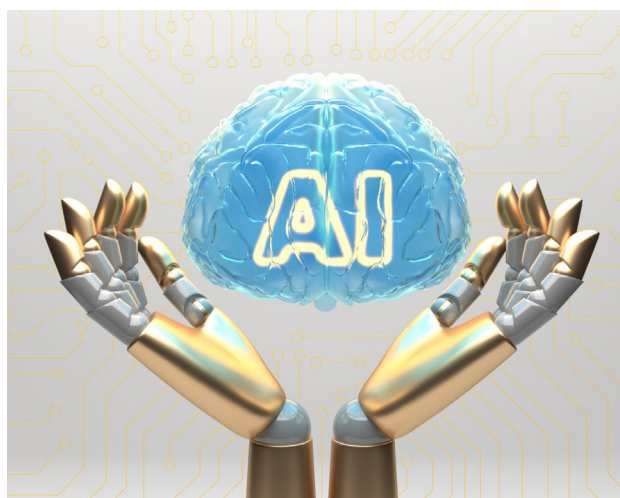
Education disparities and technological challenges in India

According to a UNICEF survey last year, 33% of girls in India drop out of school due to domestic responsibilities. The latest Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) data for 2021-22 covering 14,89,115 schools in India reveals that only 33.9% of schools have internet access. Among them, 24.2% are government schools, 53.1% are government-aided, and 59.6% are private schools.

The National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA) reports a 25% dropout rate for higher education in India, meaning one in four students who enroll in college and fail to complete their degree. According to the National Statistical Office (NSO) survey, 12.6% of students drop out of school in India, with 19.8% discontinuing education at the secondary level and 17.5% at the upper primary level. English proficiency remains a challenge for many school students in India. These statistics



underscore the unmet targets in providing basic education in the country. In the realm of employment, recent surveys highlight a notable statistic – only one in five individuals in the Indian workforce are considered ‘skilled’. This term is reserved for those engaged in occupations that demand experience and education, including individuals with college and advanced degrees who are highly trained professionals within specific fields. Recent revelations from the education ministry in December 2023 add another layer of concern. The data indicates that over the past five years, more than 8,000 students hailing from the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes, OBC, and minority communities have discontinued their education in technical institutes, including prestigious institutions such as IITs, IIMs, IIITs, NITs, and IISERs.



This revelation draws attention to the existing hurdles in providing education and foundational skill sets across the country. However, it also brings to the forefront a new imperative – the need for digitalization and adaptation to the era of Artificial Intelligence (AI). As we stand on the cusp of an AI-driven future, experts predict a transitional phase where the initial two decades may witness job displacement due to automation. Yet, in the long run, as individuals acquire and adapt new skills, this a technological shift is anticipated to foster job creation.

In the ongoing pursuit of education and gainful employment, we find ourselves traversing an extended track, further complicated by socio-economic barriers. The advent of AI has lengthened the path, intensifying the need for both individuals and the nation at large to accelerate their pace. The metaphorical race continues, urging us to run faster and smarter to overcome the challenges posed by the dynamic interplay of education, employment, and the evolving landscape of technology.

Fostering inclusive AI development:

To foster the inclusion of underprivileged individuals in AI development and prevent them from

falling behind, the government should implement comprehensive strategies. Initiatives should begin with the establishment of educational programs focused on AI skills and literacy, reaching schools and community centres in underprivileged areas. Investment in digital infrastructure is crucial to provide these communities with internet access and essential technological resources. Awareness campaigns and community events can demystify AI and promote its accessibility. Inclusive policies and initiatives should be implemented to ensure equal opportunities in the AI workforce, supported by skill development programs tailored for underprivileged communities. Financial assistance, mentorship, and resources should be provided to support underprivileged entrepreneurs entering the AI sector. Collaborations between government agencies, private companies, and non-profit organizations are essential for creating comprehensive AI development initiatives. The government should encourage technology companies to participate actively in community development projects and mentorship programs. Developing accessible AI tools and platforms, enforcing ethical guidelines, and continuous monitoring and evaluation of implemented programs are key steps in ensuring the ongoing support and empowerment of underprivileged individuals in the rapidly evolving field of AI.

Adapting AI era:

As the realm of Artificial Intelligence (AI) continues to advance, the existing skill gap undergoes further widening. However, it is important to recognize the remarkable resilience ingrained in the human spirit – a powerful force that propels individuals to adapt to the emerging norms ushered in by AI. The drive for survival, inherent in our nature, becomes a driving force behind the ongoing evolution of skills and capabilities.

In the interim, a familiar narrative unfolds, echoing a pattern witnessed during previous technological transitions. Many, myself included, may grapple with a sense of discomfort and a lack of confidence until they acquire the essential skills demanded by this new technological era. This learning curve, marked by initial hesitations and uncertainties, stands as a testament to our inherent adaptability as a species.

Looking ahead, as we navigate this transformative period, there is a possibility that AI itself could play a role in quantifying the progress made by individuals who adjust their skill sets. This futuristic prospect holds the potential to shed light on the specific areas of development, offering insights into what might have been missed during the adjustment period. In essence, the cycle of adaptation, marked by challenges and eventual mastery, reflects the indomitable human spirit in the face of technological evolution.

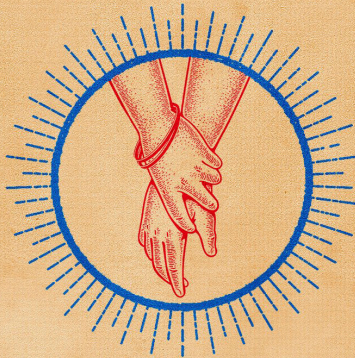
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Aatmapamphlet: A love story unfolding against caste backdrop

Aatmapamphlet is a Marathi love story, which unfolds against strong caste sensitivities. However, unlike earlier Marathi movies, it is a comic film, showing satire on society.

आत्मपॅम्पलेट



Viraj



Aatmapamphlet is a simple, beautiful but comedy love story. Director Ashish Bende made Aatmapamphlet, which is a clichéd love story of school going kids at the top but if dug deeper, it is a powerful film for adults with kids in it. The movie is self-narrated by the young protagonist on the backdrop of social political event of Indian history. Important moments in Ashish's life also mark important milestones in the nation's history.

Ashish is not a larger-than-life person; his story can't be called a biographical, autobiography, or anything of that kind, so he gives it a new, unique name, "Aatmapamphlet". The tale depicts the historic occasions of Ashish's life, a so-called lower caste boy from Dalit community in the eighties and nineties in Maharashtra, falls in love with an upper caste girl. The movie is largely based on Ashish's childhood and teenage years. It follows Ashish and his friends, who are from a variety of castes and religions. Narrator tells how his great grandmother struggled and had her education to become a teacher in school, she retired as headmaster from that school, as well as his grandparents and parents were educated and working.

Ashish and Srushti were classmates from primary school. Ashish realized love with Srushti from fourth standard when she accidentally held his hand during a school drama. It was one-sided love, which creates many humours in the story. It is pretty much an excellent master class in writing and execution.



From the beginning of the film, humours are followed by big laughter in the story. The part where Ashish and his devoted gang insist on carrying out the 'Mission Srushti' in English is one of the funniest. Ashish spends a significant portion of his waking hours watching Srushti when her school schedule changes. Meanwhile, Ashish and his family goes through family trouble when Ashish grandfather ask his son (i.e. Ashish Father) to leave the home. It happens as Ashish's father opposes the drinking of Ashish's grandfather. Ashish, his father and mother left home and moved to his maternal home. Ashish's maternal family was staunch Buddhist and opposed orthodox ideology, whereas Ashish's parents away from both of it, they were liberal, independent and wished to break the caste system.



Aatmapamphlet serves as a satirical commentary on communalism in the society but this heavy subject is beautifully balanced with the light-hearted banter amongst the group of school kids.

The film fearlessly addresses serious topics such as reservations, religion and casteism via the point of view of kids. It forces us to reflect upon our own journey growing up, as we adapt to societal norms without seeking answers to these questions which even we might have had as kids.

Best part here is the kids remain united and have their famous group hug whenever a tense situation arises, rather than falling prey to the society's views on communalism.

As his maternal aunt tried to do inter-caste marriage with a lower caste (Bhangi) boy, Ashish, with his parents, helped the couple to run away. The one-sided love and stalking of Ashish continues until class seventh. Yash (upper caste boy) classmate now comes into the Ashish path. He has one sided affection with Srushti as well. And this is the entry of the villain in the story, the narrator put it very decently and humorously. Srushti and Ashish's friendship is impacted when Borya (friend of Ashish) unintentionally causes misunderstanding in Srushti's

mind. But Ashish makes things clear and everything between them becomes normal once again. Every year at the start of school, Ashish has to sign a EBC (economically backward class) application to get exemption from school fees.

Once, everyone from Ashish class demanded EBC exemption from school fees, which is a masterpiece in movies. Students at the age of 14 know that everyone has their caste and religion. Ashish lives in a hope that he would get the opportunity to express his feelings one day. His love journey keeps the upward graph and his friends help him to maintain it.

It is hard to imagine that a romantic Marathi movie would superbly show the uselessness of existence of caste divide in society. The track of communal harmony is heart-warming. The children explain to us how caste hierarchy shows division & difference in them, at the age of 14, Ashish and his friends understand the caste system in society. Many events during the same period in his life bring him to the conclusion that every individual is different from each other and they are separated by caste hierarchy. This story is part of every kid's life who grew up in the eighties and nineties. The story is balanced between satire and commentary when it comes to caste. It is very courageous to comment on caste-based discrimination through the prism of humours. But the story keeps balance between Dalit and upper caste. Ashish's story concluded at a sweet end but it taught a loud and clear message to the society, which believes in caste system. Ashish is an ideal for those, who wish to make change in the system and create a new path for the upcoming generation, casteless society would be the identity for them. Ashish brings this change with love and not violence. In a whole movie, you will find hardly any violence and aggression. It is true the socio-political backdrop creates mischief in the minds of the audience but the narrator keeps the story on track.

In recent years, there were many movies made in the Marathi industry, which loudly spoke against the caste system, Nagraj Manjule is one of the creative directors, who brings this issue. His super hit Sairat and Fandry are based on caste hierarchy and love story. Sairat was the case of honour killing, where upper caste families killed both as boy hails from lower caste background. Sairat had a painful end with violence. Whereas in Fandry, the protagonist decided to rebel against the society, which opposes the fundamental rights of humans. Ashish chose a different path which hoped to bring change. It was Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar and Veer Savarkar, who strongly believe that inter-caste marriages are the only and effective solution to establish casteless society.

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Remembering Savitri Bai Phule

One of the most underrated women, whose recognition got layered under the achievements of her husband and is majorly remembered as the wife of a social reformer rather than being recognized by her workings is Savitri Bai Phule, wife of Jyotirao Phule. The couple had made an incredible contribution towards the upliftment of socially backward, including women and their educational rights.

Indu Priyadarshini



Go, Get Education
Be self-reliant, be industrious
Work, gather wisdom and riches
All gets lost without knowledge
We become animal without wisdom
Sit idle no more, go, get education
End misery of the oppressed and forsaken
You've got a golden chance to learn
So, learn and break the chains of caste
Throw away the Brahman's scriptures fast
- SAVITRI BAI PHULE

Every female in India, having education today and excelling in every other field through education, is indebted to her. Her work also includes campaigning against untouchability and work to abolish caste and gender-based discrimination.

EARLY LIFE

Savitri Bai Phule was born on January 3, 1830 in Naigaon village in Maharashtra. She was born in the Mali community, which was then considered to be

socially backward, and provided no education for females. She got married at the age of 9 to Jyotiba Phule, who was 13 years old and was studying in third class. She was the youngest daughter of Lakshmi and Khandoji Nevase Patil. She had three siblings. Savitri was once caught red-handed by her father when she was taking glances at an English language book. She was told that only upper-caste men could have the right to education. She is resolute herself that she will learn to read and write no matter what happens. Later she was encouraged to study by her husband Jyotirao Phule, who believed strongly in female education to remove social inequalities. They didn't have children of their own. They adopted a child, Yashwantrao from a Brahmin widow.

HER EDUCATION

She enrolled herself in two teacher's training programs- an American missionary, Cynthia Farrar, in Ahmednagar and at a Normal school in Pune. She then went on to become the first woman headmistress of



school in India and the first ever woman-teacher in the nation. Her birthday is observed as BALIKA DIN in Maharashtra.

SAVITRI BAI PHULE AND EDUCATION

The Phule couple had chosen education as a tool to enhance the conditions of people from socially backward classes. Though women were considered to be incapable of education, she promoted education to eliminate such a notion.

She had dedicated her time to educating women to encourage social transformation. Meanwhile, in 1849, she became the first female educator in India. She taught girls at Maharawada in Pune. She met Sagunabai Kshirsagar there, who was a teacher and a committed feminist. Both Savitribai and Sagunabai got connected over their belief in education for women and them along with Jyotirao Phule established their school for girls at Bhidewada in 1848. The curriculum consists of Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.



Though there was so much oppression for her work, she didn't give up on her persuasion in providing education to women. Her work was even considered to be a sin under the Brahmana texts. When she walked out of the school, the people would throw stones, dung, and verbal abuse at her. She would always carry an extra sari so that she could change into it after reaching the school. As a result of the opposition to their work, Jyotirao Phule and his wife were asked to leave his parent's house in 1849. The couple went to live with his friend Usman Sheikh and his sister Fatima Begum Sheikh. Fatima was also trained alongside Savitri Bai, who became the first female Muslim teacher in India. The same year they established a school in Usman's home.

By 1851, the couple had established three schools for girls in Pune, with approximately 150 students. In 1852, the British Government recognized their work and declared her to be the best teacher in Maharashtra state. The couple had established an education society titled, "The Society for Promoting the Education of Mahars, Mangs and Etc.", which opened 18 schools over their lifetime. The couple also opened a night-school for women and children from the working-class community.

SAVITRI BAI AND GENDER EQUALITY

In 1852, they started MAHILA SEVA MANDAL, an organization which focused on raising awareness of women's rights and to encourage women in recognizing their human rights. Through the Mandal, Savitri Bai organized a successful barer strike which was against the practice of showing widow's heads. On September 24, 1873, the couple had set up SATYA SHODAK SAMAJ, with a motive to bring social equality and, is a platform which was open to all, irrespective of their caste, religion or class hierarchies. They also started Satya Shodak Marriage where the marrying couple has to take a pledge to promote education and equality. Widow re-marriage was also encouraged, and also awareness programs against dowry. For the people who had no access to public drinking water facilities, well was dug in their courtyard. The feminist has also set up Mahila Seva Mandali to raise awareness among women against child marriage, female feticide and sati system.

BALYATA PRATIBANDAK GRUHA was set up to address the problems faced by widows who were often sexually exploited and also those pregnant widows, who suffered physical abuse and humiliation. It is the care centre for the protection of pregnant widows and rape victims. The house could also take care of the exploited Brahman widows and to nurture their children. She also encouraged people to adopt those children who were born out of sexual abuse.

DEATH OF JYOTIRAO PHULE

Jyotirao Phule died in 1890. Savitri Bai had set a new precedent by lighting her husband's pyre, amidst all opposition. Later, Savitri Bai carried forward the work of the organization Satya Shodak Samaj and also chaired the annual session held at Saswad in 1893. When plague hit Pune in 1897, she opened a hospital in Vanavadi and Ghorpadi with the help of her son, Yashwant. The radiant woman had left her last breath on March 10, 1897 while serving others.

About Savitri Bai in the words of Jyotirao Phule in an interview given to Dnyanodaya, a Christian missionary periodical: "It did occur to me that the improvement that comes about in a child due to the mother is very important and good. So those who are concerned with the happiness and welfare of this country should definitely pay attention to the condition of women and make every effort to impart knowledge to them if they want the country to progress. With this thought, I started the school for girls first. But my caste brethren did not like that I was educating girls and my own father threw us out of the house. Nobody was ready to give space for the school nor did we have money to build it. People were not willing to send their children to school but Lahuji Ragh Raut Mang and Ranba Mahar convinced their caste brethren about the benefits of getting educated.

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Kirtan, a popular form of traditional Marathi discourse, was his favourite tool to educate and awaken the people. He generously used to refer to Doha's by Sant Kabir during his discourse. Gadge Baba used to call himself as a disciple of Sant Tukaram Maharaj. At the same time, he, however, asked the masses not to consider him as 'Guru'.

Sant Gadge Baba: The man in action

Dr. Chandrakanta

Sant Gadge Baba was the great hero of 19th and 20th century and was known for his lifelong social services and upliftment of untouchables and socially and educationally backwards. He was truly a Sant in letter and spirit, who tirelessly worked for the helpless and poor of the society.

Baba Gadge was born on February 23, 1876 in Surji village, Anjan Tehsil, in Amravati district in Maharashtra into a very poor family that belonged to the Dhobi caste. His mother - Sakhubai and father was Jhingraji. Baba Gadge's full name was Devidas Debuji Jhingraji Janorkar. His parents affectionately used to call him Debu. He always kept an earthen pot-like utensil with him. He consumed food and drank water from it. In Marathi, an earthen pot is called "Gadge" and thus many people started calling him Gadge Maharaj or Gadge Baba. Later, he became famous as Sant Gadge Maharaj.

He was married in 1892. Gadge Baba was a social revolutionary on all accounts. He was mainly focused on action. In his daughter's naming ceremony, Gadge

Baba set a new precedent for his community. Taking a break from the tradition, he served vegetarian food and sweets instead of nonvegetarian food and liquor. Gadge Maharaj was always prompt in offering a helping hand to anybody in need in the village. He believed in a philosophy that self-action is better than preaching. Thus, he mutely set an example before the villagers that everyone should work together on projects that benefit all and serve the community.

A champion of cleanliness

Sant Gadge was a man with simplicity. He used to wear torn clothes, a woollen blanket and a broken pot (Gadge) in his hand. He wished to see villages free from dirt and clean. He was seen cleaning the village with a broom all the time. He used to do this whenever he used to enter the village. He strived to inculcate the importance of hygiene and cleanliness among the masses. He was of the strong view that superstitions were the origin of various social ills. He was of the view that eradications of



superstitions would lead to social transformation. He used to work as a labourer. Gadge Baba believed in community sharing. Later it became the foundation of his teaching. He emphasized on – give food to the hungry, give shelter to the needy and protect the environment.



His sermons were evolved around simple teachings like do not steal, do not loan, stay away from addiction, do not kill animals in the name of religion and God, do not follow caste discrimination and untouchability. He used to tell the people that God resides in human beings and not in stone idol.

Gadge Baba used to travel, carrying his trademark broom. He used to tell villagers not to welcome him unless he had finished his cleaning. People used to donate money generously and Gadge Baba built a network of educational institutions, hospitals, animal shelters and dharmshala out of it.

Kirtan, a popular form of traditional Marathi discourse, was his favourite tool to educate and awaken the people. He generously used to refer to Doha's by Sant Kabir during his discourse. Gadge Baba used to call himself as a disciple of Sant Tukaram Maharaj. At the same time, he, however, asked the masses not to consider him as 'Guru'.

He was not only a great Sant but a great social reformer. Gadge Baba belonged to the tradition of Sant Kabir and Raidas. His writings show that he was deeply influenced by these two medieval poets. Gadge Maharaj often relies on these two poets during his public discourse.

Gadge Baba represents the rich and great tradition of spirituality in Maharashtra. Prominent Marathi writer Acharya Atre described Gadge Baba

as the 'Maharashtra model of socialism'. He was contemporary to Dr B R Ambedkar. He was deeply impressed by efforts taken by Dr Ambedkar for the work he had undertaken. Dr Ambedkar always stayed away from all kinds of 'sadhus' and 'babas' but he was always in touch with Gadge Baba. In fact, they had discussions on social issues on several occasions. Dr Ambedkar described him as the 'greatest servant of the people after Mahatma Phule'. Dr M.L. Shahare writes, "Gadge Baba met Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar many times. He was very impressed by the personality and works of Dr. Ambedkar. Gadge Baba had donated the building of his hostel at Pandharpur to the People's Education Society founded by Dr Ambedkar. Gadge Baba fought against social injustice all his life and worked tirelessly towards spreading awareness of equality and justice. Social work and service to humanity were his religion. He kept away from rituals, idol worship and hollow traditions. He considered the caste system and untouchability to be irreligious and despicable. He believed that these were the interpolations of Brahmanical elements in the religious tradition and were aimed at serving their interests without the welfare and service of needy and deprived people. He used to urge the people to keep away from blind faith and religious superstitions".

Like most of our Sants, Gadge Baba had no formal education. He learnt to read and write on his own. It was probably due to the influence of Dr. Ambedkar laid great emphasis on education – so much so that he used to say that even if it comes at the cost of the plate in which one eats food, one should not hesitate in getting an education. "You can always eat from your hands but without education, life is incomplete." He used to cite the example of Dr. Ambedkar while urging the people to get educated.

Gadge Baba founded more than 100 institutions, including 31 educational institutions. Later, the government formed a trust to preserve these institutions. He was liberated from the caste as he was an enlightened person. He started hostels for the poor people at various places He encouraged the youths from backward classes to get education. His friendship with Dr. Ambedkar was an example of deep trust and love for each other. Dr. Ambedkar also loved Baba and his work, and there are instances when Dr. Ambedkar not only visited Baba's hostels but also supported them with money. Gadge Baba also regarded Dr. Ambedkar as a living God.

Gadge Baba advocated the unity of the human race, love, and care for other human beings. However, this was not a theoretical teaching as he was an action-oriented person. He did not merely use brooms to clean villages but tried to clean the minds of the people.

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Dalit Entrepreneurship and Artificial intelligence

In the dynamic landscape of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning, the spotlight shines brightly on the significance of Dalit entrepreneurship. Inspired by the teachings of Babasaheb Ambedkar, the emphasis on self-well-being and shaping one's destiny becomes particularly crucial in navigating the challenges and opportunities presented by AI. Recently, Google's innovative AI-powered note-taking application, Notebook, has further underscored the transformative impact of AI on various aspects of our lives, offering advanced capabilities in document management.

At the grassroots level, Dalits grapple with economic challenges, with 36% of rural Dalits classified as poor and only 13% of SC men engaged in regular salaried work despite affirmative programs. The urgency lies in empowering young Dalits to



acquire diverse skills, not only to foster economic independence but also to act as a preemptive strike against potential job losses due to AI advancements.

Government plays a pivotal role in empowering Dalits, especially in education. The alarming dropout rates among Dalit students—74% of Dalit boys and 71% of Dalit girls usually drop out of primary and secondary school—underscore the imperative need for intervention. Incentive schemes, such as free textbooks and hostel accommodations, break down barriers of poverty and discrimination, making education more inclusive and motivation-driven.

Moving beyond education, the scarcity of Dalit entrepreneurs in India is apparent, with many still tethered to traditional occupations. Discrimination, historical landlessness, and limited access to formal sector contacts impede the growth of Dalit businesses. Initiatives like social impact funds and grassroots cooperatives for traditional crafts aim to address financing issues and provide sustainable livelihoods, laying the groundwork for a more robust entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The stagnation in Dalit business presence, at 9.8% in 2005, underscores the need to empower small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Expanding the Public Procurement Policy's mandate to allocate 20% from SME businesses as part of the Stand-Up India campaign could significantly bolster Dalit suppliers. The convergence of Dalit capitalism and

SME empowerment is opportune, marking a holistic approach to entrepreneurship in the era of AI.

Dalit entrepreneurship's urgency is accentuated by AI's pervasive impact across various job sectors. Automation and AI technologies are reshaping industries, leading to job displacements across the spectrum. According to a World Economic Forum report, by 2025, machines and algorithms are projected to perform more current work tasks than human workers in various industries, further intensifying the need for diversified skill sets and entrepreneurial endeavors.

Recognizing the need for Dalits to acquire essential skills becomes pivotal in this rapidly evolving job landscape. In the AI age, certain skills remain relevant and crucial. Skills such as barbering, electronics repair, real estate management, and engaging in the food and Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry offer sustainable entrepreneurship opportunities. These skills align with the market's demands and create opportunities for self-employment and business ownership.

As society navigates technological advancements and societal transformation, embracing Dalit entrepreneurship is not just a choice but a necessity for a more inclusive and equitable future. A report by McKinsey & Company highlights that fostering diversity and inclusion in the workplace, including entrepreneurship, contributes to improved financial performance and innovation.

The recent innovation by Google, the AI-powered note-taking application Notebook, stands as a testament to the transformative capabilities of AI. This tool, featuring the new Gemini Pro AI model, redefines document management and note-taking, showcasing the potential for AI to revolutionize various aspects of our daily lives.

Empowering Dalits through entrepreneurship, with a keen focus on acquiring essential skills in the age of AI, is both a social responsibility and a strategic move. It is an investment in harnessing the untapped potential of a significant part of the population. As we stand at the crossroads of progress, creating opportunities for Dalits is about building a future where everyone can thrive in the dynamic and evolving landscape of the AI era. This journey is not just about business; it is about creating a more inclusive and prosperous society that benefits from the richness of diversity and innovation.

Those who believe 'one life is not enough' to undertake different tasks should reflect on the life of Dr. Ambedkar. Why did Dr. Ambedkar study law, economics, finance, **(On page 25)**



Murmu unveils Dr. Ambedkar statue Supreme Court

New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu marked Constitution Day, 26th Nov. 23 by unveiling a statue of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar within the Supreme Court premises. The ceremony witnessed Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud and Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal paying their respects to the architect of the Indian Constitution by folding hands and offering flowers to the imposing 7-feet tall sculpture.

Following the unveiling, President Murmu and CJI Chandrachud participated in a tree plantation initiative, symbolizing a commitment to environmental sustainability. The event garnered the presence of several judges from the top court. Constitution Day, observed on November 26, since 2015, commemorates the adoption of the Constitution of India by the Constituent Assembly in 1949. Prior to 2015, this day was celebrated as Law Day, emphasizing the pivotal role of the constitution in shaping India's legal framework.

Allegations against IITs for profiling students by rank and caste in job placements

An alumnus from IIT-Kanpur has raised serious concerns, accusing premier IITs of engaging in discriminatory practices during job placements. Dheeraj Singh, who recently established the Global IIT SC/ST Alumni Support Group, filed a formal complaint with both the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) and the department of higher education.

Singh, in his complaint, highlighted the mandatory disclosure of caste category details at IIT-Bombay and the additional requirement for JEE (Advanced) ranks at IIT-Delhi. He argues that this information, facilitated for recruiters seeking such data, could be used to discriminate against SC/ST students in the private sector. The complaint not only questions the relevance of JEE ranks in assessing cumulative grade point averages but also suggests that private sector companies might discriminate against students based on their category and JEE rank data. While some IIT professors claim that caste details are disclosed only to Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) with quotas, the complaint insists that category and JEE ranks should not be disclosed to recruiting companies unless they offer reservation benefits.

An expert working with educational institutes emphasizes the need for transparency when seeking sensitive data, and the NCSC member, Anju Bala, has stated that notices will be issued to the institutions involved. The NCSC will conduct an investigation, providing both parties an opportunity to present their perspectives before reaching a decision.

Crime against SC and ST increasing in country: NCRB data

A total of 57,582 cases were registered for committing crimes against Scheduled Castes (SCs), showing an increase of 13.1 per cent over 2021 (50,900 cases). The crime rate registered showed an increase from 25.3 per cent in 2021 to 28.6 per cent in 2022. In crime, head-wise cases, the highest number of cases (18,428, 32.0 per cent) were registered under simple hurt followed by cases under Criminal Intimidation with 9.2 per cent (5,274 cases) and SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act with 8.2 per cent (4,703 cases).

A total of 10,064 cases were registered for committing crimes against Scheduled Tribes (STs), showing an increase of 14.3 per cent over 2021 (8,802 cases). The crime rate registered increased from 8.4 in 2021 to 9.6 in 2022. In crime, head-wise cases, the highest number of cases (2,826 cases, 28.1 per cent) were registered under simple hurt (2,826 cases), followed by rape with 13.4 per cent (1,347 cases) and assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty with 10.2 per cent (1,022 cases).


*Compiled by Prajvalant.
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Dalit Entrepreneurship and Artificial intelligence

(From page 24) social science, public policy, and everything else in a lifetime? The answer lies in Dr. Ambedkar's foresight, knowing that after 5000 years of oppression, his time for retribution had come. Thus, he decided to take revenge on time by immersing himself in reading. How many books can one read and write in one lifetime? It is unimaginable, yet

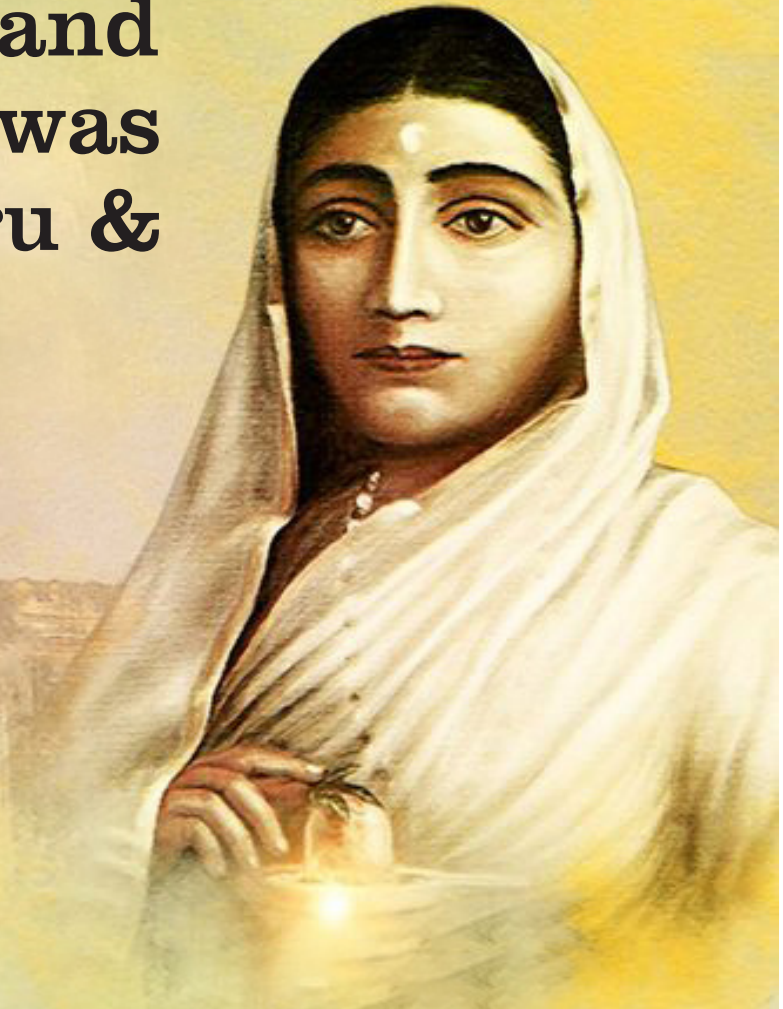
Dr. Ambedkar set an example. As a first-generation graduate, he chose to study alone, representing a generation deprived of fundamental rights, particularly education. Hence, followers of Ambedkar should take his legacy forward.

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Ahilyadevi and Malharrao was pair of 'guru & shishya'

At the age of eight, Ahilya, observing distinctive qualities within herself, decided to undergo the ritual of having her auspicious thread ceremony performed. Despite being a girl, her extraordinary qualities caught the attention of the Holkar family, and at that moment, she became a source of pride for them.



Rambhau Lande



The relationship between Malharrao Holkar and Ahilyadevi were like teacher and disciple (guru and shishya)

The capabilities, courage, and bravery of Malharrao Holkar, his audacity to showcase the art of leading men, recognizing the skill of managing people, and demonstrating a sense of loyalty, led him to be appointed as the Commander-in-Chief by the Peshwa government to rule over North India.

Numerous honours were bestowed upon him by the Peshwa government to recognize his contributions. Malharrao strategically utilized the resources allocated to him and made a significant impact by repairing the damage caused by the conflicts. Malharrao actively worked for the welfare of the people, fulfilling various responsibilities as a Subedar and a ruler. He performed all the necessary duties in governance and administration, leaving a lasting legacy. His son's wife, Ahilyadevi, carried forward Malharrao's legacy. She became a respected figure, revered as a goddess by the people, and her

virtues and achievements earned her the title of 'Punyashlok' in the annals of virtuous personalities in Pune. She ascended to such great heights and reached the divine status of 'Devi' due to her impeccable, transparent, and ethical conduct. This remarkable journey showcases the pristine, evident principles of the 'Devi' through her untarnished, insightful, and noble values. This expedition is truly awe-inspiring. Even beyond the guidance of a guru, the disciple, armed with such virtues, is destined to make a mark in the world. The guru's greatness lies in the disciple's ability to excel further. This is indeed a matter of pride for the guru.

The relationship between Father-in-Law and Daughter-in-Law is a unique and unparalleled example in the history of the world. Dr. Devi Das Pote has written in this book, Maheshwar's ghats, about the discipleship of Subedar Malharrao Holkar and Punyashlok Ahilyadevi. It describes how transcending the pages of history, they took inspiration from the era, broke traditions, and stood out as individuals, leaving their mark on history. Taking the imprint of their contributions, they moulded contemporary customs, defied conventions, and left an indelible



mark on history. In a time when acknowledging mental servitude and working in servitude to the powerful was considered commendable, a unique personality like Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was born, who, even in his dreams, couldn't have imagined the idea of creating an independent state by considering the era of tyranny. Contemplating the concept of self-rule, he abandoned the ambition to establish a Hindu state. With a profound sense of divine power, they decided, let this state be the will of God. With this formidable inspiration, they united the youth from all common families and, by instilling the spirit of struggle within them, prepared a fierce warrior named Mavala. Through powerful will and struggle, an unprecedented event unfolded.

In the seventeenth century, a great personality emerged, contemplating against the prevailing times. After thirteen years of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's demise, Malharrao was born. Immersed in a traditional, orthodox environment, he made distinctive decisions with his uniqueness, breaking away from established norms, disrupting traditions, and shaping a new chapter in history.

Approximately three centuries ago, when women were considered forbidden to leave their homes, they engaged in tasks like cooking and managing the household. Her life revolved around serving her husband, handling domestic chores, and giving birth to children. In a male-dominated culture, the concept of woman in the Sanskrit tradition had no significant value for her thoughts, aspirations, dreams, or preferences. She was confined to various domestic roles, and giving birth to a girl was considered inauspicious. Women were often treated as servants or objects of pleasure in such circumstances, prevalent in many states and institutions.

In this context, the Holkar dynasty stood as an exception. The Holkar family considered women to be embodiments of strength and honoured femininity. Malharrao served as the first chancellor of the university of these thoughts. He did not think of Ahilyadevi as a mere daughter-in-law but valued her as his daughter. At times, he played her teacher role, and Ahilyadevi became his disciple. In their Malhar University, he provided comprehensive education to his disciple. Ahilyadevi, in turn, fully embraced her capabilities. Both excellently nurtured the relationship between the guru and the disciple.

There are several things in this guru-disciple relationship, among which some are particularly significant.

1) At the age of eight, Ahilya, observing distinctive qualities within herself, decided to undergo the ritual of having her auspicious thread ceremony performed. Despite being a girl, her extraordinary qualities caught the attention of the Holkar family, and at that moment, she became a source of pride for them.

2) Upon Ahilya's arrival at home, influenced by her exceptional qualities, Malharrao entrusted her with his son Khanderao, who was responsible for

military strategy and the kingdom's governance. She was trained in various aspects such as horse riding, wielding a sword, handling a staff, military strategy, army organization, artillery, diplomatic language, court affairs, accounts, judicial proceedings, and diplomatic negotiations.

3) In some notable campaigns, Malharrao accompanied her and provided firsthand information about the battlefield. He shared details about the battlefield, including the use of artillery, military formations, assaults, appropriate timings, and the aftermath of victories.

4) In some courtroom cases, she sat on the throne, listened to both sides impartially, and delivered justice by adhering to the principles of impartiality and fearlessness in jurisprudence.

5) Ahilyadevi accompanied Gautamabai and visited various places for pilgrimage; she gained insights into the lives of people, political situations, religious conditions, and the experiences of comfort and discomfort during travel.

6) During the Battle of Panipat, Ahilyadevi had been stationed in Gwalior. Her responsibilities included overseeing the manufacturing of weapons needed for the war. She efficiently managed the supervision of these tasks.

7) Malharrao was often engaged in various military campaigns, and Ahilyadevi efficiently shouldered the entire responsibility of non-combat administration. Ahilyadevi would regularly correspond with him, discussing the current situation in Indore and getting guidance on matters of administration, military affairs, weapons, or other crucial developments from Malharrao. If there were delays or discrepancies in any task, she would communicate her expectations firmly.

Ahilyadevi meticulously followed each directive from Malharrao. She had complete confidence that every information or order from Malharrao was given after careful consideration. Each word from Malharrao held great significance for her. She had a profound respect and unwavering loyalty towards him.

8) After Khanderao died in the Battle of Kumbher, Ahilyadevi was deeply affected and expressed

her willingness to undergo the practice of Sati. Malharrao reminded her about the state's responsibility. He said, 'Ahilya, you are my Khandu (son), this is my trust', turning Ahilya into the symbol of a committed and responsible ruler.

9) The Guru extended his guidance. The disciple, benefiting from this guidance, adeptly learned everything and absorbed the essence of learning. He internalized the teachings, and with the strength derived from the knowledge given by the Guru, Ahilyadevi peacefully managed the governance of the state for approximately twenty-eight years. She successfully built a benevolent and exemplary state for the welfare of the people.

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DINVISHESH

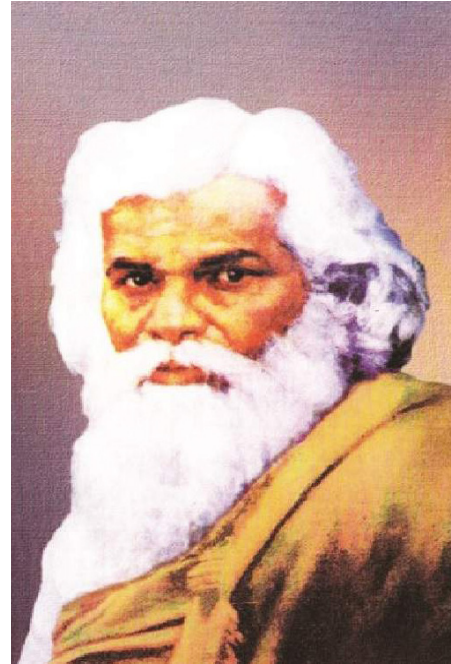
Remembering Vitthal Ramji Shinde

Vitthal Ramji Shinde was a prominent social reformer and a key figure in the Dalit movement in British India during the early 20th century. He was born on October 22, 1873, in a small village called Gargoti in Maharashtra, India. Shinde played a crucial role in advocating for the rights and upliftment of the depressed classes, particularly the Dalits (formerly known as untouchables).

V.R. Shinde advocated for Dalits' right to education and worked towards establishing educational institutions for them. His efforts contributed to promoting education as a tool for social empowerment. He challenged the discriminatory practices that denied access to temples based on caste and worked towards creating a more inclusive and equal society.

Vitthal Ramji Shinde was a strong proponent of social equality and fought against the prevalent caste-based discrimination. He worked towards creating awareness about all individuals' inherent dignity and rights, irrespective of their caste. He played a role in advocating for legal reforms to address the issues faced by the depressed classes. He worked towards securing Dalit legal rights and protections, challenging discriminatory laws, and promoting social justice.

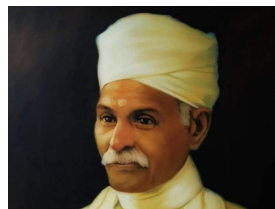
Shinde was also a prolific writer and used his literary skills to spread awareness about the social issues faced by the depressed classes. He wrote extensively on caste discrimination, untouchability, and social inequality. Vitthal Ramji Shinde's contributions were instrumental in laying the foundation for the Dalit movement and the broader social reform movements in India. His efforts paved the way for future leaders and activists to continue fighting for social justice and equality.



2nd January
V. R. Shinde Death Anniversary



20th December
Sant Gadgebaba
Death Anniversary



25th December
Mahamana
Birth Anniversary



3rd January
Savitribai Phule
Birth Anniversary



12th January
Swami Vivekanand
Birth Anniversary

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