

UNHEARD VOICES

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Mahaparinirvan



Missing social issues in election

Assembly election to the five states, which are in process currently, has brought out an apprehension whether our political parties have lost focus on social issues, which have been proving as obstacles to the overall development or progress of the country. Barring a few exceptions, issues discussed in the electioneering are purely political in nature. Of course, social issues have political shades but that should never undermine significance or seriousness of the social problems.

Election manifestos mirror their ideologies and commitment to the issues. But the election manifestos announced by political parties in five states have hardly any space for social issues. In fact, they are stuffed with big promises but do not address core social issues. Election manifestos have place from social insurance to monthly pension and from LPG subsidy to laptops. Madhya Pradesh Congress even promised to have its own IPL cricket team. Promises in the election manifestos do not merely reflect lack of imagination but are glaring examples of intellectual bankruptcy.

Among five states are Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Both the states have shown some anxious trends in the recent past. According to a National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) report, incidents of atrocities against the socially backward class are on the high in two states. Rajasthan, stands second in the country when it comes to atrocities on socially deprived people. However, no political party feels it necessary to address this problem. While left wing extremism (Naxal or Maoist movement) has been curbed largely, Chhattisgarh continues to be an affected state. How can we deny that extremist ideas flourished in those regions, which have perennial social and financial problems. In Madhya Pradesh, women voters have unexpectedly come at centre thanks to the various schemes launched by Shivraj Singh Chauhan. As a result, Congress is also trying to attract women voters by making big promises. But all of us must remember that neither women nor socially deprived class is merely a vote

bank but they are human beings. Same is the case of caste census. The issue of caste census is being used as a political tool and its social significance is being questioned.

Political parties must think for long term and sustainable wellbeing. Freebies may ensure their success but it would never be in the real interest of the society, particularly to those, who are always handicapped by social disparities. Government must come forward with a helping hand for socially deprived people but it has to ensure that freebies do not make them weak. We can aspire to be an 'Atmanirbhar' nation only if people are self-motivated and stand on their own feet. We can never be a self-reliant nation if people enter into their comfort zone because of freebies. We, as a nation, must ensure that people do not become habitual of freebies and get away from self-motivated progress.

The concept of the 'welfare state' has always been a matter of debate among academicians. Welfare state is fundamentally a western concept and we need to inspect it before blindly accepting it. The most outstanding feature of Indian society is that it has its own mechanism, in which it was hardly dependent upon any ruler or kingdom. It withstood series of invasions for centuries because of this feature. As a dynamic society, we are already trying to give up the undesirable, unwanted and outdated elements in this mechanism. But the core part of this idea and mechanism – self-reliant society – can still guide us.

Assembly elections were conducted in seven states last year. This election saw the rise of the beneficiary class (labharthi). It was a good sign as the beneficiary class overrides traditional and decisive caste factors in voting behaviour. But that should not be a permanent trend. Real harmonious society can be achieved only if we learn to have deep faith and commitment towards equality without any favour and fear. And this is not the responsibility of political parties alone. We, as citizens, have an equal role to play. Let us awaken ourselves.

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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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Where is reservation for SCs & STs in minority institutes?

Jamia Millia Islamia is a central university established by an Act of Parliament under the Jamia Millia Islamia Act 1988 (the Parent Act). It is noteworthy that the university is administered by its acts and statutes and funded by the consolidated fund of India. All its previous character, if any, was dissolved, and the university was given the status of a central university on the enactment of the above Act in 1988. In accordance with the Constitutional mandate/government of India policy, the benefit of reservation was extended to the recruitment and promotions in teaching and non-teaching positions in favour of the Scheduled Castes and Schedule Tribes candidates up to 15% and 7.5%, respectively, until 2014, when the Executive Council of the University unilaterally altered the substantive provisions of its parent statutes and abolished these reservation benefits without following the due process of law.

Reservation in Minority Institutions



Dr. Santosh Kumar



The extinction of Dalit students in minority institutions centrally funded by the government of India is an issue that no political party dares to touch, even with a barge pole. Regrettably, this is a sad reality from which the Dalit activists and related political affiliates try to maintain a strategic distance and diplomatic silence on such issues. The recent judgement of the Madars High Court on the non-applicability of SC/ST/OBC reservations in minority educational institutions has brought the core question of Dalit rights to the enter.

There is no bar on the grant of funds to such institutions by the state, but state reservation policy

shall not be applicable until the objectives of such institutions are changed or their minority status is not revoked by the National Commission of Minority Educational Institutions (NCMEI). The definition of 'minority' as outlined under Article 29 in India is still a vague proposition and needs a comprehensive investment of the intellectual mind to understand the rationale behind declaring a group, faction, or sect as a minority in India. Moreover, Article 30(1) of the Indian Constitution provides for the establishment of minority institutions on a religious as well as linguistic basis.

The idea of the constitutional validity of minority



institutions get all the more complicated after the formation of the National Commission of Minority Educational Institutions through the NCMEI Act 2004. NCMEI has been granted quasi-judicial status to declare any institute a minority institute under Article 30(1). The annual report data available on the website of the NCMEI reveals that a total of 13,579 institutions have been accorded minority status until 2021. As per the NCMEI Act 2004, no person can be appointed as its chairperson or member unless he or she belongs to a minority community.

The fundamental principle for declaring an institution a minority educational institution is that the institutions are established and administered by a minority or minorities. It is a matter of great concern that two central universities, Jamia Millia Islamia and Aligarh Muslim University, are defying the government of India reservation policy for SC/ST/OBC and EWS in admission as well as in appointment and promotion under the pretext of their contested minority status. They do not even have an SC/ST cell to protect the interests of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. While AMU has never provided reservations to SC/ST since its inception, the story of Jamia Millia Islamia is slightly different.

Jamia Millia Islamia is a central university established by an Act of Parliament under the Jamia Millia Islamia Act 1988 (the Parent Act). It is noteworthy that the university is administered by its acts and statutes and funded by the consolidated fund of India. All its previous character, if any, was dissolved, and the university was given the status of a central university on the enactment of the above Act in 1988. In accordance with the Constitutional mandate/government of India policy, the benefit of reservation was extended to the recruitment and promotions in teaching and non-teaching positions in favour of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes candidates up to 15% and 7.5%, respectively, until 2014, when the Executive Council of the University unilaterally altered the substantive provisions of its parent statutes and abolished these reservation benefits without following the due process of law.

Prior to 2011, the university had been following the reservation policy of the Government of India in respect of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe in admission, appointments, and promotions as per the Government of India policy. In 2011, the National Council of Minority Educational Institutions (NCMEI) declared Jamia Millia Islamia a minority institution under Article 30(1). The fact that the university, JMI, was neither administered nor run by a minority community was blatantly ignored by the NCMEI solely because neither the National Commission for Scheduled Caste or Tribe nor any member of the Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe was party to the case, which culminated in awarding the university as a minority educational institution. This was nothing but a fraud on the Indian Constitution, which guarantees reservation for members of the

Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe. However, the matter of the minority status has been challenged and is still under sub-judice in the honorable High Court of Delhi, vide writ petition 1970 of 2011.

The reservation for Scheduled Caste (Hindu) and Scheduled Tribe (Hindu) in admission was done away with by the university since 2011, while the same in appointment and promotion has been stopped since 2014 following a clandestine and shrewd resolution in the University Executive Council. This all happened during the pendency of the court case against the minority status of the university. The matter of the Minority Institution of Jamia Millia Islamia is under sub-judice in the Hon'ble Court of Delhi, and a final decision in this regard is still pending. Hence, the denial of reservations to SC and ST employees in recruitment and promotions by the JMI is a flagrant violation of their fundamental rights. It is also pertinent to mention here that after the grant of

There is no liaison officer in the university to take up matters relating to the representation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in all establishments and services. Due to the arbitrary resolutions by the university's Executive Council against the reservation of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe, the prospects, careers, and dignity of the members of Scheduled Caste and Tribe are heavily jeopardized.

minority status to JMI, promotion and recruitment to the SC/ST category must have been continued, as Jamia Millia Islamia University is still getting 100% funding or aid from the Govt. of India, and in the official document of the university, JMI, there is nowhere mentioned that Jamia Millia Islamia is a minority educational institute.

Still, the university, JMI, is a central university. Hence, the denial of reservation to SC and ST employees is highly unjustified and a violation of their rights. It is evidently prevarication on the part of the university because there is no decision or order of the NCMEI to scrap the reservation of SC/ST from the university. The said resolution of the Executive Council is infructuous ab initio as the reservation policy of the university adopted in admission cannot be adopted for appointment and promotion on the ground that reservation in admission in the university is granted on the basis of religion, for example, 30% Muslim, 10% Muslim Women, 10 Muslim OBC, and Muslim ST, and the same cannot be replicated for appointment and promotion as there is no religion-based reservation in jobs in a central university established by an Act of Parliament. Furthermore,



the Executive Council cannot override the provisions embedded under Section 7 of the Jamia Millia Islamia Act 1988. The whole basis of scrapping reservations at the university is a flagrant exercise of unbridled power that, unfortunately, the university has assumed for itself, and the same is in contravention of established law and constitutional sanctity. The parent act of the university makes it abundantly clear that it is mandatory for the Executive Council to procure the assent of the Visitor, i.e., the President of India, before any new or additional statute or amendment to the statute is carried out by the Executive Council, and in the absence of such assent, the said alterations would be deemed invalid.

The Parent Statute of the University also prescribes that every statute, ordinance, or regulation made under this act shall mandatorily be published in the official Gazette and shall be laid before the Parliament, and in the absence of fulfilment of such a requirement, the said statute, ordinance, or regulation shall be rendered null and void. It is to be underlined that there has not been any amendment to the Jamia Millia Islamia Act of 1988, and the university is still governed by the provisions enshrined in the Act of 1988. For instance, Paragraph 7 of the Act reads:

1. The University shall be open to persons of either sex and of whatever race, creed, caste, or class, and it shall not be lawful for the University to adopt or impose on any person any test whatsoever of religious belief or profession in order to entitle him to be admitted therein as a teacher or student, or to hold any office therein, or to graduate therefrom.

2. The university is open to all classes, castes, and creeds. Provided that nothing in this section shall be deemed to prevent the university from making appropriate provisions for reservation for the scheduled castes, the scheduled tribes, the physically handicapped persons, and women. The resolution for abrogating the SC and ST reservations has never received the assent of the visitor, i.e., the Hon'ble President of India. It has neither been published in the official gazette nor been laid before both houses of the Parliament of India. Therefore, the impugned provisions are directly in line with the

parent statute of the respondent university. Jamia Millia Islamia has also closed the university SC/ST. Cell Presently, there is no representative of a member of the Scheduled Caste or Tribe in the promotion or selection committee, despite the fact that there are teaching and non-teaching staff from the reserved category in the university.

There is no liaison officer in the university to take up matters relating to the representation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in all establishments and services. Due to the arbitrary resolutions by the university's Executive Council against the reservation of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe, the prospects, careers, and dignity of the members of Scheduled Caste and Tribe are heavily jeopardized. Since June 2014, there has been virtually no appointment of a member of the Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe in teaching or non-teaching positions at the university. About 35,000 to 40000 SC/ST students have been deprived of quality education at a central university. Since 2011, the absence of reservations for members of Scheduled Castes and Tribes in admission, recruitment, and promotion has also had an adverse impact on the demographic diversity of the university. Almost 80–85 students enrolled in any program are from the same community, owing to multiple quotas not known to the public openly- J&K domiciled, migrant, NRI, employee ward category, etc The so-called sane intellectuals, who claim to be the country's heralds and protectors of secularism conveniently ignore the crucial argument that an institution cannot be both a minority institution and a central university because a secular state should not be seen as establishing minority institutions. A lack of cultural diversity in schools and other institutions could contribute to the further ghettoization of India's minorities and estrangement from mainstream society. By its very nature, education defies categorization into either 'minority,' or 'majority' groups.

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On the occasion of 67th death anniversary Dr. Manoj Kumar, who has written 'Rashtrawadi Chintak - Dr. Ambedkar' writes unexplored aspects of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar.

Unrealised goals of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar

Dr. Manoj Kumar

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar empathised with the pain and agony of the depressed and untouchables and awakened the people to the feeling of service to humanity and social work saying, "I have entered politics not to enjoy its delectation, but to fight for the rights of all my depressed brothers."

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar relentlessly continued his social, political, religious and cultural struggle to restore the social prestige, psychological honour and rights of untouchables on several occasions and in varying manners. Besides working for the uplifting of the untouchables, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar made several important achievements. It is unfortunate that in the conditions prevailing in politics of India then and in a bid to capitalise on political gains, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's projection was restricted to calling him a mere Dalit thinker as a part of a vile conspiracy. Several achievements made by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar were suppressed as a part of the conspiracy. Indeed, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar is the highest-ranking and greatest visionary in the context of Indian politics and socio-political philosophy. A deep study of his works reveals that

he has reflected seriously on all aspects of human life right from one's birth to death. No aspect of human life has been left out in the works of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar.

Guardian of Democracy

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a true champion and dedicated guardian of democracy. He believed that the castes malice and animosity arising out of it is the biggest threat to democracy. Society suffers a total lack of fraternity due to it. We have been unable to follow brotherhood because of it. Castes and ignorance are the lacunas we suffer. The feeling that all Indians are brothers and sisters of each other, all Indians are one and related to each other is called brotherhood. The principle of brotherhood ushers in blissful integrity in social life. However, living by this principle in one's daily life is very difficult. Several castes prevail in India. The castes cause differences in social life. The castes are anti-national. Various castes bear extreme amounts of malice and hate against each other. If we have the true will to qualify ourselves as one nation, we must remove all these hurdles in the way.



Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar considered social inequality and mutual animosity the biggest threat to Indian society. He believed that our integrity and security were in danger due to these evils. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar strived to bring in social integration.

Musing on the serious topic of what must be done to change the prevailing course of politics, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar stressed, "We must continue to protect the interests of our society. However, at the same time, we must think about how to protect the independence that our country has attained. In the past, this country has been forced to suffer enslavement despite attaining independence. First, the Muslims and then the British stripped us of our independence. The lower castes deserve independence as much as the upper castes. However, if we are forced to become slaves of foreigners again, it would be extremely unfortunate. Therefore, each one of us must consider it his supreme duty to protect the independence of this country."

Pained, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar handed his resignation to the then Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on 27th September 1951 saying, "I was thinking of resigning for the last several days. Only the craving that the Hindu Code Bill should be passed by the parliament of this country prevented me from acting on it. I contained myself to break up the bill and limit it to marriage and divorce with the hope that our efforts would bear fruits at least concerning these. I see no reason for which I should continue to be a part of your cabinet." This dream envisaged by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar is unrealised to this date.

The present Indian democracy has become corrupted. We do much more idolisation of individuals and attach undue importance to individuals compared to the nation. As a society, we have become too restricted and limited ourselves to castes. We give utmost importance to ourselves, our cast and people of our caste. This is a festering wound that our society suffers. Indian democratic values are degrading due to these ills. We had lost our independence because of these ills in the past and progressing in the same direction even today. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's motto was "We must strike a balance between enjoying rights and following duties." Independence of the nation of India cannot

be done merely by exercising rights. Fulfilment of one's duties is essential for the purpose. Protecting and honouring democracy is not possible in the absence of it.

No castes or religious narrowness can be found in the musings of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar always thought comprehensively in the interest of all cross sections of society. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was the first person to consider the untouchables a sacred and inseparable part of himself and the society and launched political, social and religious struggle for them. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar added a new dimension to social equality and social integration and said the Baudhdhas and the untouchables are all our people. Similarly, other people, or all members of society are our people. He spread the message of affinity and brotherhood.

Nationalism and Social Equality

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar laid the foundation of the social context of nationalise on three principles, namely Freedom, Equality and Brotherhood. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar adopted these three principles from the philosophy of Bhagavan Gautam Buddha. One may find these terms used by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar new or ancient, but they certainly carry a specific meaning in cultural context. By using these terms Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar added the essence of pure Indian culture and traditions to the social context of nationalism. This is a tight slap in the face of writers like Arun Shourie.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar displayed a very high amount of courage in honouring the pure Indian cultural principles and our Buddhist tradition by adopting the principles of Freedom, Equality and Brotherhood which originally arose out of Indian philosophy and not out of France. By honouring the Indian traditional knowledge, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar gave a fitting reply to foreign principles and schools of thought. Indeed, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a patron and propagator of indigenous schools of thought and principles deeply rooted in Indian culture.

Padmashri Namdev Dhasal, the founder of Dalit Panther, said, "I am thankful to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, who lifted us from our subhuman conditions and helped us get the status of human beings. Had it not been for Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, we would have been living animal-like lives till this date." He further added, "If Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar is reborn in the present day, innumerable people like us will make shoes of their skin and wear them on his feet with the utmost respect because Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar is the only reason because of which we are living respectable human life today."

Relevance or Unrealised Goals

Besides obtaining knowledge, we must possess morality and unblemished character. Knowledge without morality carries no meaning because knowledge is a weapon, a science. One who



possesses the weapon of knowledge and who has an unblemished character would surely be able to use integrity. However, if a knowledgeable person lacks morality, he will use the weapon of knowledge to attack others. Knowledge is razor-sharp. In present days, we notice a lack of morality and unblemished character among youths. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that we strive to realise this vision of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Notably, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar considered youths to be the biggest asset of the nation and the society.

We must also focus on providing education to our daughters. Knowledge and education are not the fiefdom of men. They are essential for women too. We must educate our daughters if we intend to improve our next generation. We are plagued by ills such as inequality, discrimination and untouchability. Unfortunately, many elements have succeeded in providing a religious base to such grotesquery. Consequently, this social sin has found its base in religion and evil traditions continued for centuries.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a true well-wisher of women. He understood the sufferings, pain and agony of women. When he drafted the Hindu Code Bill, the superstitious and anecdotal India opposed it to the teeth. Several organisations (Sangh, Hindu Mahasabha) opposed it strongly. They hit the streets. Not only that, the deep influence of superstitious and anecdotal thinking on the parliament was also revealed. Following heated arguments and detailed deliberations in the parliament, the first-term government of the country shoved reasonability and scientific approach aside and took a judgemental decision. Thus, no consensus could be reached on the Hindu Code Bill. Pained, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar handed his resignation to the then Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on 27th September 1951 saying, "I was thinking of resigning for the last several days. Only the craving that the Hindu Code Bill should be passed by the parliament of this country prevented me from acting on it. I contained myself to break up the bill and limit it to marriage and divorce with the hope that our efforts would bear fruits at least concerning these. I see no reason for which I should continue to be a part of your cabinet." This dream envisaged by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar is unrealised to this date.

Unaccomplished Vision and Conclusion

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar worked single-handedly and carved out a name for himself as a versatile and knowledgeable person. Not only that, he gave a new vision and a message to the Indian society. His journey from a common man to the legend that Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was due to the knowledge and skills he possessed and virtues like dedication and broad-mindedness that he had in him. In the present times, we all need to find inspiration in Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar in our personal lives.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar has emphasised on total uplifting of the untouchables. However, the

society is in turmoil today. Animosity, hate and lack of confidence prevail in various castes, classes and varnas. India has been forced to suffer severe losses due to this virtuous deformity on several occasions in the past. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision of achieving national integrity, social equality and social integration has not been accomplished yet. The dream of the prevalence of cultural nationalism and restoring the lost glory of the ancient Indian depository of knowledge that he envisaged is also unrealised. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's clarion call, to educate, agitate, organise is the base for the overall development of all Indians. However, what



is the average level of education in Indian society? Our society and the nation are being divided and shattered in the name of getting organised. Therefore, understanding the vision of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and making all out attempts to accomplish it is essential for us all.

Today we are forgetting the glorious past of India. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had said, "A community that forgets its past can never write its history." Therefore, come, let us all unite and make all out efforts to transform this vision of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar into reality. Let us all develop an understanding of our glorious past and showcase it to others too.

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Atrocity Act: HC expects to protect community interests

Bombay High Court gave a purposive interpretation to the impugned provisions of the atrocities act and decided that the protection given to SCs and STs against atrocities under the act cannot be limited to a particular State or Union Territory and members of these communities are entitled for protection across the country. The judgment is being seen as a progressive step towards strengthening the existing legal framework for the prevention of atrocities against the members belonging to SC and ST community.

Piyush Kumar & Mayank



It was ironic that, on April 2, 2018, amidst the scorching heat, the Dalit community took to the streets, yet the media perhaps had no clue about the undercurrent going on even the day before the Dalits came out on the streets. Media's ignorance about such events is sad. It has multiple reasons, which primarily includes the underlying social structure and lack of diversity within the newsrooms.

The protest originated from a call for a Bandh and it organically evolved into a massive Dalit community resistance, a unique moment in the political history of the country. This organically built and people driven protest reflected the outburst of the Dalit

community, who were aggrieved by a Supreme Court judgment pronounced by a two-judge bench of the Supreme Court comprising of Justices A.K. Goel and U.U. Lalit, in the case of Dr. Subhash Kashinath Mahajan v. State of Maharashtra & Anr., which diluted the provisions of the Schedule Caste and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 (hereinafter referred to as the Act). The decision negated the very object of the Act and was perceived by Dalits as an assault on their constitutional and statutory protection guaranteed to them under the Act. This threat compelled them to protest against the decision of the apex court. The



protest proved successful which can be measured by the fact that the government, in an unprecedented move, had to immediately bring in an amendment restoring the original provisions of the Act in order to nullify the impact of aforesaid judgment.

Unfortunately, this was not the last of such a case, not even five years had passed and again even worse a situation came into being. In the first quarter of the year 2023, the seven sisters from the north eastern part of the country were exhibiting a tapestry of colours and culture. The State of Manipur revealed its true essence with blooming flora in the valley. It was in the midst of a quiet afternoon that a court pronouncement changed this narrative. The High Court of Manipur, while dealing with a matter pertaining to inclusion of a community into the Schedule Tribes list in the case *Mutum Churamani Meetei v. State of Manipur* triggered an ethnic war-like situation in the state. The region experienced one of the most devastating ethnic conflicts since its merger with India. The aftermath of this conflict left Manipur, once a picturesque state, marred with the tragic stains of bloodshed and violence. Communities were torn apart, families shattered, and the economy lay in ruins. The violence in Manipur served as a reminder of a previous resistance by the Dalit community in the country, which occurred five years ago in response to the Supreme Court judgment.

These two judicial decisions followed by the protests and mass resistance by Dalits and Adivasis are lessons for the constitutional courts that while interpreting such sensitive laws, which may have very extensive and intricate ramifications, these courts must exercise greater caution. It is advisable that if courts fail in their duty to interpret any statute by going against its stated object and purpose then the government should come forward and clear the picture.

In the wake of the recent Bombay High Court decision in the case of *Sanjay Krushna Katkar v. State of Maharashtra and Anr.*, such a situation might arise in future as well. In this decision the High Court gave a purposive interpretation to the impugned provisions of the Act and decided that the protection given to SCs and STs against atrocities under the Act cannot be limited to a particular State or Union Territory and members of these communities are entitled for protection across the country. The judgment is being seen as a progressive step towards strengthening the existing legal framework for the prevention of atrocities against the members belonging to SC and ST community.

The judgment arose out of a much-contested issue which the courts have been facing since last few years. The issue reads thus: "If a person belongs to a caste or a tribe which is declared by notification as a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe in a particular State or Union Territory, but not in other parts of the country, then whether any act

defined under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989; can be an offence outside that State or Union Territory."

In other words, the full bench of the High Court was asked to decide the issue, whether the offence under the Act gets attracted when a person belonging to a caste or tribe declared by a notification in a particular state or union territory moves out of its territorial jurisdiction, where he is not recognized so.

Speaking for the full bench Justice Bharati Dangre decided the aforesaid issue in affirmative and held thus: "The scope of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities Act), 1989 cannot be restricted to a person belonging to a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe to the State or Union Territory in which he is declared as Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe only, but he is also entitled to the protection under the Act, in any other part of the country, where the offence is committed, though he is not recognized as Scheduled Caste or

The Union government, therefore, is required to remove the ambiguity with regard to identification of victims of atrocities under the provisions of the Act by making it clear that once a person has been recognized as SC or ST in any State or Union Territory, he or she would remain the member of SC and ST community for the purpose of using the protection against atrocities committed against such person.

Scheduled Tribe in that part."

The Court correctly held in its decision that the mere movement of a person from a State or Union Territory where such person is declared as SC or ST to a State or Union Territory, where he is not recognized as SC or ST, does not change the social identity of the person and the baggage and the lack of social, educational and economic backwardness that comes along with such identity. The decision of the High Court is in conformity with the object and purpose of the Act as it would not be justifiable to take away the statutory protection guaranteed by the Act, which was enacted in some special and extraordinary circumstances to prevent the atrocities inflicted upon Dalits on a regular basis just because a person recognized as SC has moved out of a specific territory.

Also, free movement throughout the country is one of the fundamental rights guaranteed under Part III of the Constitution of India. If any condition related to application of the Act regarding



the geographical territory is imposed, it would tantamount to surrendering or waiving-off of a citizen's fundamental right in order to get the statutory protection given to Dalits and Adivasis under the provisions of the Act. In order to claim the protection of the Act, any person who is a victim of atrocities within the scheme of the Act, such victim need not to surrender his fundamental right to move throughout the territory of India and is not required to remain confined in a specific territory wherein he recognized as a member of the SC or the ST community.

Even though the judgment is path-breaking, it may give rise to further controversies, mainly for two reasons:

1. According to the doctrine of precedent, the judgment of the Bombay High Court is binding only on the courts which come within its jurisdiction. Further, a judgment passed by any High Court merely has the persuasive value for other High Courts and does not have a binding authority. Therefore, other High Courts are at liberty and exercise the discretion to decide the same issue otherwise. If we have a situation where High Courts end up giving contradictory interpretations to the aforesaid issue then it may create a situation wherein the Supreme Court will be required to opine on the subject and decide the matter conclusively.

2. The Second scenario is, if any party aggrieved with the judgment prefers an appeal against the impugned judgment before the Hon'ble Supreme

Court, it will have to intervene and then there is a 50% probability that the Apex Court might decide the aforesaid issue in negative and accordingly reverse the judgment of the Bombay High Court.

The occasion for other High Courts or the Supreme Court to interpret the Act, may give rise to the similar situation as had happened after the decisions of the Supreme Court in Subhash Kashinath Mahajan case and Mutum Churamani Meetei case. To avoid such a situation, the need of the hour is that the Union government should introduce a Bill in the Parliament to amend the Act by adding an explanation to the definition clauses of SCs and STs which would clarify that the protection under the Act is available to the members belonging to the SC/ST communities across the country and not merely limited to the State or Union Territory wherein they have been declared as SCs and STs. In other words, the Union government, therefore, is required to remove the ambiguity with regard to identification of victims of atrocities under the provisions of the Act by making it clear that once a person has been recognized as SC or ST in any State or Union Territory, he or she would remain the member of SC and ST community for the purpose of using the protection against atrocities committed against such person.

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Much needed relief by SC to manual scavenging workers

The government must take robust and effective action. It's not just about providing compensation to the victims; it's about extending support in the form of scholarships and skill development programs for their families. Each one of us has a role to play in this mission. Both the state and central governments must ensure that these programs are not only created but also rigorously enforced. It is our collective responsibility to breathe life into the ideals of true brotherhood.



Adv. Girender Nath



The Supreme Court's decision to grant a compensation of Rs 30 lakhs to the families of workers, who have lost their lives during sewer cleaning marks a significant milestone in putting an end to the deplorable practice of manual scavenging. This ruling comes after numerous attempts to establish rules that prevent such tragic deaths during sewer cleaning operations. Despite these regulations, the alarming frequency of worker fatalities in some states due to the negligence of authorities and contractors remains a cause for concern.

The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013

provides clear provisions for sewer cleaning through machinery and allows for manual cleaning with appropriate safety measures when necessary. However, it's disheartening to note that sewer workers are often enticed with financial incentives, threatened, and compelled to carry out cleaning tasks without the essential safety equipment. Tragically, this often leads to fatal consequences for these workers.

Government statistics reveal a harrowing truth: from 1993 until now, a total of 1228 sewer cleaning workers have lost their lives in the line of duty. Moreover, between January 2023 and October 31,



2023, an additional 46 deaths have been reported, according to official figures. These distressing numbers underscore the urgent need for change and the imperative to prioritize the safety and well-being of these brave individuals who work in such hazardous conditions.

Prior to 2014, the families of sewer cleaning workers who tragically lost their loved ones faced a multitude of challenges when seeking compensation. In many instances, their pleas for justice were met with indifference, and their FIRs were swiftly dismissed. However, a significant turning point occurred on March 27, 2014, driven by the directives of the Supreme Court. In response to these directives, a provision was established to provide the grieving families with a comprehensive compensation package. This included a monetary relief of 10 lakhs, access to suitable housing, educational support, and scholarships for their children, as well as opportunities for future employment. This marked a moment of hope and relief for these families during their darkest hours. Regrettably, there remained a critical gap in this provision. In cases where two or three sewer workers were exposed to life-threatening poisonous gases while working in the sewers, the situation took a dire turn. If, tragically, two of them lost their lives, and one managed to survive but suffered from severe infections due to exposure, there was no provision for compensation for the survivor. Their survival often came at the cost of their ability to work in the future, leaving them without the support they so desperately needed.

I have had a firsthand experience of the dire situation faced by one particular family. On February 2, 2020, at C.B.D GROUND in East Delhi, I personally witnessed the heart-wrenching incident that unfolded during a sewer cleaning operation. Two brave sewer workers were exposed to toxic gases. Tragically, one of them lost his life, while the other miraculously survived but not without paying a heavy price—he suffered from a severe infection. In response to this devastating event, we took it upon ourselves to advocate for justice and fair compensation. We exerted relentless pressure on the authorities, and ultimately, we succeeded in securing a compensation of 10 lakhs for the family of the deceased worker. This moment offered a glimmer of solace in their darkest hour, knowing that their loss had not been in vain.

However, it remains a painful truth that there was no provision in place to offer any form of assistance or compensation to the worker who survived. The absence of such a provision left this survivor in a state of distress and vulnerability, as there was no legal recourse to address his suffering and recovery. This deeply underscores the urgent need for comprehensive change in our policies and regulations regarding such situations.

When my colleagues and I had the chance to meet with the family of the survivor, I vividly remember the poignant words of the survivor's elderly mother.

With a heavy heart, she expressed that if her son had met the same tragic fate as his colleague, the family would have received a compensation of 10 lakhs. But the reality they faced was one of unbearable anguish - her son neither alive nor truly at peace in death. Her words brought tears to our eyes, as it was a stark reminder of the countless cases where victims of such accidents are left in a harrowing state, akin to living ghosts. This is a grave and pressing issue that touches upon the very core of our humanity.

In an effort to address these heart-wrenching situations, various social organizations and dedicated activists have relentlessly corresponded with the central government. They have passionately championed the cause and filed numerous public interest petitions in the courts. Their tireless efforts bore fruit when the esteemed Supreme Court, taking into account all these critical matters, delivered a historic judgment on October 20, 2023. This marked

I strongly believe in the need to establish a system that ensures swift compensation for the families of sewer workers who tragically lost their lives during sewer cleaning. We can model this system on the Motor Accident Claims Tribunals (MACT) present in every district across the states. Such an approach would guarantee that compensation and other benefits reach the affected families promptly.

a significant turning point in the pursuit of justice for those who had suffered in silence for far too long.

The Supreme Court's recent ruling has brought a ray of hope to those affected by the heart-wrenching tragedies that occur during sewer cleaning. The Court has issued a resolute order, directing government authorities to provide compensation in cases where lives are tragically lost during these operations. This landmark decision underscores the Court's unwavering commitment to putting an end to the deplorable practice of manual scavenging. The judges voiced their deep concerns that such an archaic and inhumane practice continues to persist even today. They emphasized that this is not merely a battle for financial compensation but a profound struggle to reclaim the lost human dignity and freedom of those affected. The Court's verdict resonates with a powerful message: every life is invaluable, and it is our collective duty to protect the fundamental rights and dignity of all citizens.

The Supreme Court's message is loud and clear: the government must take robust and effective action. It's not just about providing compensation to the victims; it's about extending support in the form



of scholarships and skill development programs for their families. Each one of us has a role to play in this mission. Both the state and central governments must ensure that these programs are not only created but also rigorously enforced. The Court has underlined the inhumane conditions in which manual scavengers and sewer workers find themselves – often unheard and unseen by society. It is our collective responsibility to breathe life into the ideals of true brotherhood. The Court's stance is unequivocal: this is more than just a battle for financial compensation. It's a profound struggle to restore the basic human dignity that every individual deserves. In the face of such adversity, we are all called upon to be the architects of change and uphold the principles of compassion and justice.

A bench presided over by Justice S. Ravindra Bhatt has issued a compassionate order, ruling that the families of laborers, who tragically lose their lives



during sewer cleaning should be entitled to receive compensation of 30 lakh rupees. For those who suffer total disability, the compensation should be 20 lakh rupees, and if a labourer becomes physically challenged as a result of their cleaning work, they should be granted a compensation of 10 lakh rupees.

The court has emphasized the need for government authorities to take stringent measures to prevent such incidents from occurring. It urged the central government to engage in discussions with state secretaries to comprehensively address the issue of preventing manual scavenging, as instructed on April 13. A petition has been submitted to the Supreme Court to put an end to manual scavenging. In February, the Court had called upon the central government to provide details regarding the steps

taken to enforce the 2013 law related to this matter and the implementation of guidelines issued under the 2014 Supreme Court judgment.

The lack of a substantial initiative until now has raised questions. Over the past several years, concerns have been repeatedly voiced about the deaths of workers during cleaning operations. Just last year, the Parliamentary Standing Committee expressed its frustration with the delay in compensating the families of the 104 individuals, who lost their lives during cleaning work. Prior to this, in 2014, the Supreme Court had mandated compensation of 10-10 lakh rupees for the families of those who tragically died during cleaning operations. A parliamentary committee sought to understand why workers were losing their lives during sewer and septic tank cleaning despite established safety standards. In that same year, the budget announcement introduced the 'Namaste' scheme, allocating a budget of 100 crores to fully mechanize the cleaning of sewers and septic tanks. It was also disconcerting that the majority of these workers belonged to the Dalit community.

I strongly believe in the need to establish a system that ensures swift compensation for the families of sewer workers who tragically lost their lives during sewer cleaning. We can model this system on the Motor Accident Claims Tribunals (MACT) present in every district across the states. Such an approach would guarantee that compensation and other benefits reach the affected families promptly. Additionally, it is crucial to consider providing government jobs to the adult dependents of the deceased under a dedicated quota. This initiative will not only grant them financial stability but also offer support during their challenging times.

The 'Namaste' scheme introduced by the Indian government, with the goal of fully mechanizing sewer and septic tank cleaning, seems like a small step in the right direction. Can a budget of 100 crore rupees truly revolutionize sewer cleaning across the vast expanse of India? I also firmly believe that the advantages of the Namaste scheme should extend to educated young individuals through firms, agencies, or organizations actively participating in CSR funding. This approach allows them to access state-of-the-art cleaning equipment and provide employment opportunities to the young members of our society, empowering them to work as sanitation workers.

Only through this collective effort can we genuinely enhance their social, economic, and educational well-being. Furthermore, I suggest that the National Safai Karmachari's Commission should be granted permanent status and constitutional recognition. This step would strengthen its role in ensuring social justice for the sanitation worker community, prioritizing and safeguarding their rights and well-being.

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The Statue of Equality: Inspiration for downtrodden

On October 14, 2023, a momentous event took place in the United States that resonated with the hopes and dreams of millions in India and worldwide. The tallest statue of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the principal architect of India's Constitution and a tireless advocate for the rights of the Dalit community, was inaugurated in the state of Maryland. This grand statue, the "Statue of Equality," is a powerful symbol of inspiration and aspiration for all, especially the youth from oppressed communities.

The man behind this towering tribute is the renowned artist Ram Sutar, known for his iconic work on the Statue of Unity, dedicated to Sardar Patel. The "Statue of Equality" is part of the Ambedkar International Center (AIC), a sprawling 13-acre complex in Accokeek township. The AIC



encompasses facilities like a library, convention center, and Buddha Garden, which aim to foster education, unity, and social justice.

The statue's significance is not confined to any specific geographical boundaries. As Deelip Mhaske, a prominent leader of the Ambedkarite movement in the US, emphasizes, it represents 1.4 billion Indians and 4.5 million Indian Americans. The statue is a testament to equality and social justice and inspires not only Indian Americans but also individuals from diverse backgrounds, including the Black and Hispanic communities. The "Statue of Equality" is a powerful symbol of unity and solidarity, transcending borders and backgrounds.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's life and work are an enduring source of inspiration for all, particularly the youth hailing from marginalized communities. His journey from being an untouchable in colonial India to the forefront of social and political change is a story of remarkable determination and resilience. As the principal architect of India's Constitution, he tirelessly advocated for equal rights and opportunities for the Dalit community, laying the foundation for a more inclusive India.

What sets Dr. Ambedkar apart is his relentless pursuit of knowledge and his unwavering commitment to social justice. He knew that education was the key to empowerment and liberation. This belief led him to undertake a journey

of academic excellence abroad, which transformed not only his life but also his perspective on the world and his role in it.

The story of Dr. Ambedkar's studies abroad is one that should inspire every young person, especially those from oppressed communities. His experiences while studying abroad, particularly in the United States, played a pivotal role in shaping his vision and aspirations. Dr. Ambedkar's journey is a testament to how education can change minds and lives.

As we look at the "Statue of Equality" in Maryland, it's a call to the youth, especially those from marginalized communities, to aspire for a similar transformation through education. Here are some key aspects of how studying abroad, particularly in the top fifty universities, can impact the minds and lives of youngsters:

1. Exposure to Diverse Perspectives: Studying abroad exposes individuals to a diverse range of people, cultures, and ideas. This exposure can broaden one's horizons and foster a more inclusive and open-minded outlook. It enables students to appreciate the richness of global diversity and encourages tolerance and acceptance.

2. Academic Excellence: Top international universities offer world-class education and research opportunities. Students studying abroad have access to cutting-edge knowledge and resources, enabling them to excel academically and develop critical thinking skills.

3. Personal Growth: Living in a foreign country and navigating a new environment can be challenging. This experience fosters personal growth, resilience, and adaptability. It teaches individuals to overcome obstacles and become more self-reliant.

4. Networking and Global Connections: Studying abroad provides an excellent opportunity to build a global network of contacts and friends. These connections can be invaluable in one's career and personal life, opening doors to diverse opportunities.

5. Advocacy for Social Change: Dr. Ambedkar's experience abroad fuelled his commitment to fighting for the rights of marginalized communities in India. Similarly, today's youth can use their international exposure to advocate for social change, both in their home countries and on the global stage.

The "Statue of Equality" in Maryland is a powerful symbol of Dr. Ambedkar's ideals, his struggle for social justice, and his unwavering commitment to education. It is a beacon of hope for the youth, especially those from oppressed communities, inspiring them to follow in the footsteps of a man who transformed his own life and, **(On page 17)**



Bihar reservation quota increased

The Nitish Kumar-led Bihar cabinet has taken a significant step towards enhancing social justice and inclusivity by approving a proposal to increase reservation in the state to 75 percent, up from the existing 60 percent. This move is particularly noteworthy as it includes a 10 percent quota for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS), in line with the 103rd Amendment to the Indian Constitution, which allows for such reservations for the economically disadvantaged.

The decision to raise the reservation limit comes as a means to address historical disadvantages various communities face and promote equitable opportunities for all citizens in the state. By increasing the reservation to 75 percent, the government aims to provide a more level playing field for marginalized sections of society, ensuring they have better access to education, jobs, and other opportunities.

However, this reservation policy must be implemented efficiently without compromising merit-based selection processes. Striking a balance between affirmative action and ensuring that the most qualified candidates are chosen for positions is crucial. It will be essential for the government to monitor and evaluate the impact of these changes to ensure they are achieving the desired outcomes.

Heeralal Samariya's historic appointment

In a heartwarming turn of events, Heeralal Samariya, who belongs to the 1985 batch of the

Telangana Cadre officers, was appointed as the Chief Information Officer by President Draupadi Murmu on November 6, 2023. This is not just a professional achievement but a significant milestone in his life journey.

Samariya hails from a less privileged background, and his ascent to the position of Chief Information Officer is a remarkable achievement. He is a trailblazer in his own right, being the very first person from his community to hold such a prestigious position.

Over the years, Samariya has contributed his expertise and dedication to various government roles. He served as the Secretary in the Labour and Employment Ministry and also as a Joint Secretary in the chemicals and fertilizers industry. His career is a testament to his unwavering commitment to public service and his journey from humble beginnings to a position of national importance is truly inspirational.

His appointment as the Chief Information Officer not only reflects his personal triumph but also serves as a symbol of hope and inspiration for countless others, especially those from marginalized communities. It showcases the power of determination, hard work, and the potential for individuals from any background to reach the pinnacle of success in the service of their country.

Case of crypto Christianity in Amaravati

A 17-year-old girl from Amaravati has recently brought attention to the Bombay High Court through a Public Interest Litigation (PIL). The young girl had a photograph of Yeshu, a revered figure in Christianity, displayed in her residence. However, during a routine Caste Validity check, a Vigilance Officer assumed that her family had converted to Christianity and subsequently reclassified them into the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category. This situation highlights an unusual case of crypto Christianity, where a religious affiliation was assumed based on the mere presence of a religious symbol, leading to unintended consequences in the caste categorization system.

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The Statue of Equality

(From Page 16)

in doing so, changed the course of a nation.

In conclusion, the "Statue of Equality" is not just a monument; it is a call to action. It calls on the youth to dream big, to aspire for a brighter future, and to understand the transformative power of education. Just as Dr.

B.R. Ambedkar's experiences abroad shaped his mind and drove his aspirations, the youth from downtrodden communities can embark on a similar journey of discovery and transformation. Studying in the top fifty universities abroad can be the stepping stone to a future filled with hope, equality, and

progress. The "Statue of Equality" stands tall, not just in physical stature, but as a testament to the enduring power of education and aspiration and a reminder that, like Dr. Ambedkar, they, too, can be architects of a brighter, more equal world.

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Justice loving ruler - Ahilyadevi

Rambhau Lande



Ahilyadevi was known for her exceptional reputation of being just and providing quick and fair justice. Her fame extended beyond her kingdom, reaching distant states. As a result, people from various regions would approach her to seek justice, knowing they would receive impartial and swift resolution to their grievances. The administration of Ahilyadevi is still looked upon in Central India as that of a Model ruler. Her toleration, justice and careful management of all the departments of the State were soon seen in the increased prosperity of her dominions and the peace which ruled through her days. Ahilyadevi is portrayed as a monarch, who wholeheartedly dedicated her realm to Lord Shiva, championed the cause of truth and public service, and actively participated in the governance of the state. The presence of the royal emblem, which features an image of Lord Shiva on a coin inscribed with the name 'Rajmudra Nanavari Shiva Pindi', serves as a testament to her unwavering commitment to serving the public.

Ahilyadevi, not only stands as an exceptional ruler among Indian monarchs but is also celebrated as an exemplary world leader. Her governance, known for its fairness and commitment to the welfare of her subjects, has earned her immense respect and admiration. Her skillful administration of religious tenets and her generous philanthropic efforts have rightfully bestowed upon her the esteemed title of 'Punyashlok' in the annals of history. By fulfilling religious duties and engaging in acts of charity, an individual not only becomes an exemplary citizen but also contributes to the development of a successful society. Effective governance requires a ruler to possess foresight, strategic wisdom, military prowess, and unwavering dedication. The availability of wealth is often considered essential for religious and philanthropic endeavours.

Ahilyadevi was born in the eighteenth century, a time when the world was characterized by extravagant, self-indulgent monarchies. She hailed from the courageous Shinde family from the village of Chondi and was the beloved daughter-in-law of the illustrious Subhedar Malharrao Holkar. Despite facing the early tragedy of widowhood and enduring a wide array of life's trials, she emerged as a compassionate, justice-oriented ruler, wielding her authority like a benevolent sword for the well-being of her subjects. Ahilyadevi earned international acclaim for her dedication to compassion and justice. She steadfastly ensured that her subordinates conducted themselves with integrity and fairness, leaving no room for misconduct or injustice.

Ahilyadevi penned a letter addressed to Rao Shivlal Kotwal, and it reads: 'Rao Shivlal Kotwal, a resident of the town of Indore. I direct you

Taking on the role of a ruler at the age of twenty-eight, Ahilyadevi set out to create a kingdom that mirrored Lord Rama's ideal rule. As a ruler, she consistently placed the welfare of her subjects at the forefront of her priorities. She maintained an accessible and open court where common people could approach her without barriers, cultivating a compassionate and genuine relationship with her subjects.



to promptly return the goods that have been forcibly taken from the shop of Shri. Dalerav Mandaloi and restored his property to its original state. Be aware that any further grievances will result in severe action against you.'

Ahilyadevi took note of the situation in which a police officer was harassing a Bohra in Chandwad and felt compelled to write a letter to address the matter. In her letter, she emphasized the importance of conducting future dealings with people in a more respectful and honourable manner, stressing that preserving the public dignity and respect should always be a top priority. She further instructed the police officer that in future any complaints would be taken seriously against him.

The principle of justice was a shared value that united the people, officials, and trusted individuals alike. When complaints arose regarding the actions of Tularam Holkar in Shegaon Pargani, Ahilyadevi, renowned for her unwavering commitment to justice, took it upon herself to address the matter. Her letter to him reads as follows: 'Chiranjeev Tularam Holkar, blessings from Ahilyadevi! You have been found to be unjustly oppressing the people of Shegaon Pargani and engaging in extortion. Complaints to this effect have come to light. Therefore, you are hereby instructed to provide a full account of the money you have acquired unlawfully through extortion from the people to the government. In future, if any complaints of injustice to anyone arise, I will take these complaints seriously and initiate the appropriate actions.' This letter underscores Ahilyadevi's deep-seated commitment to justice and her resolute dedication to the well-being and welfare of her subjects.

Ahilyadevi's approach to justice was straightforward and expeditious. Sir John Malcolm, while commenting on her style of justice, wrote, 'It would be difficult to find a judge like Ahilyadevi.' Her reputation as a just ruler was heard far and wide, and people from smaller and larger centres such as Udaipur, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Dewas, Dhar, Badwani, Charkhari, Jhabua, and others sought her intervention to resolve their disputes. Her reputation as a just ruler radiated in these regions. The delicate ties between her subjects and the ruler were the foundation of her governance, and the legal framework in her state was not strictly codified in writing. However, any doubts about her principles were soon put to rest, making her a unique historical example of principle-based governance.

Ahilyadevi's commitment to justice became particularly evident in her handling of the case of Mandarupasih, a notorious thief. Even though Mandarupasih had not been issued any arrest warrant, Yashwantrao Phanse took the initiative to apprehend him as he sought refuge in the sacred town of Omkareshwar. This bold move by Yashwantrao Phanse led to the gathering of the local population, who had long lived in fear of Mandarupasih. Their apprehension was finally lifted as he was arrested and brought to justice. Mandarupasih was placed in custody, and after

a fair trial and subsequent rehabilitation efforts, his death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. This landmark decision served as a powerful message.

Ahilyadevi's commitment to justice and her dedication to upholding the well-being of her subjects were clearly demonstrated through her handling of this case. Mandarupasih, the infamous outlaw, was implored to lay down his arms. Many of those who had sought refuge with him, involved in criminal activities like robbery and looting, were given a new responsibility: to safeguard the jungles and the routes, ensuring the safety of travelers. They were granted the Bhil and Gond tribes for reforestation and farming. In exchange, they received fertile land for agriculture and were entrusted with the protection of travellers, pilgrims, and traders, which led to a newfound peace in the region.

This innovative plan yielded great success, resulting in the establishment of numerous permanent settlements nearby, aligning with Ahilyadevi's vision of promoting economic stability and peace in the area. To support this endeavour, a protective fort was erected near Ahilya Talab, providing a vital source of water for agriculture in the surrounding villages. It also granted access to water for Bhil and Gond communities, enhancing their quality of life and ensuring various other amenities sustained by this reservoir. Ahilyadevi astutely employed her treasury to finance these projects, underscoring her unwavering commitment to justice and the well-being of her subjects.

Taking on the role of a ruler at the age of twenty-eight, she set out to create a kingdom that mirrored Lord Rama's ideal rule. As a ruler, she consistently placed the welfare of her subjects at the forefront of her priorities. She maintained an accessible and open court where common people could approach her without barriers, cultivating a compassionate and genuine relationship with her subjects. Despite her royal status, Ahilyadevi maintained a strong connection with the common people, granting them the opportunity to actively participate in shaping the future of her state. Recognizing the deep-rooted importance of local traditions, festivals, pilgrimages, and religious sites in the hearts of her subjects, she seamlessly integrated these elements into her governance. This not only strengthened the cultural fabric but also profoundly engaged the people in the advancement of the state. She intelligently harnessed the power of public participation, ensuring they played an active role in various initiatives. Instead of focusing on territorial expansion, she directed her efforts toward establishing peace and harmony within her realm, a vision she held as paramount. Her unwavering belief in the value of education prompted her to appoint scholars and introduce innovative teaching methods through schools, providing the gift of knowledge to her subjects.

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DIN VISHESH

Remembering Sant Ravidas

Sant Ravidas, or Guru Ravidas, was a remarkable figure in India during the 15th and 16th centuries. He wasn't just a saint, but also a poet and a philosopher. His impact extended across different religious traditions, including Sikhism and the Bhakti movement within Hinduism.

What made Sant Ravidas truly special was his profound devotional and spiritual poetry. Through his verses, he eloquently conveyed the importance of love, unity, and equality. He wasn't content with the status quo; he aimed to break down the social barriers of his time. He passionately preached the idea of oneness among all people, irrespective of their social or economic background.

Sant Ravidas's hymns and verses have endured through the centuries, cherished by his followers who continue to recite and find solace in his words. His enduring influence is not limited to the realm of spirituality; it has also played a significant role in sparking social reforms in India.



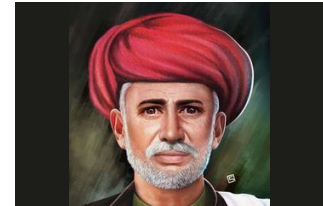
30th November
Sant Ravidas Death Anniversary



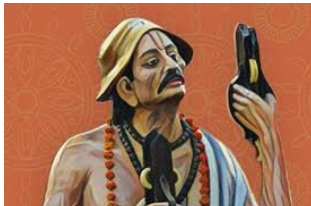
23rd November
Sant Namdev
Birth Anniversary



26th November
Constitution Day



28th November
Mahatma Phule
Death Anniversary



2nd December
Narsi Mehta
Birth Anniversary



6th December
Dr. Ambedkar
Death Anniversary



11th December
Sant Dyaneshwar
Death Anniversary

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