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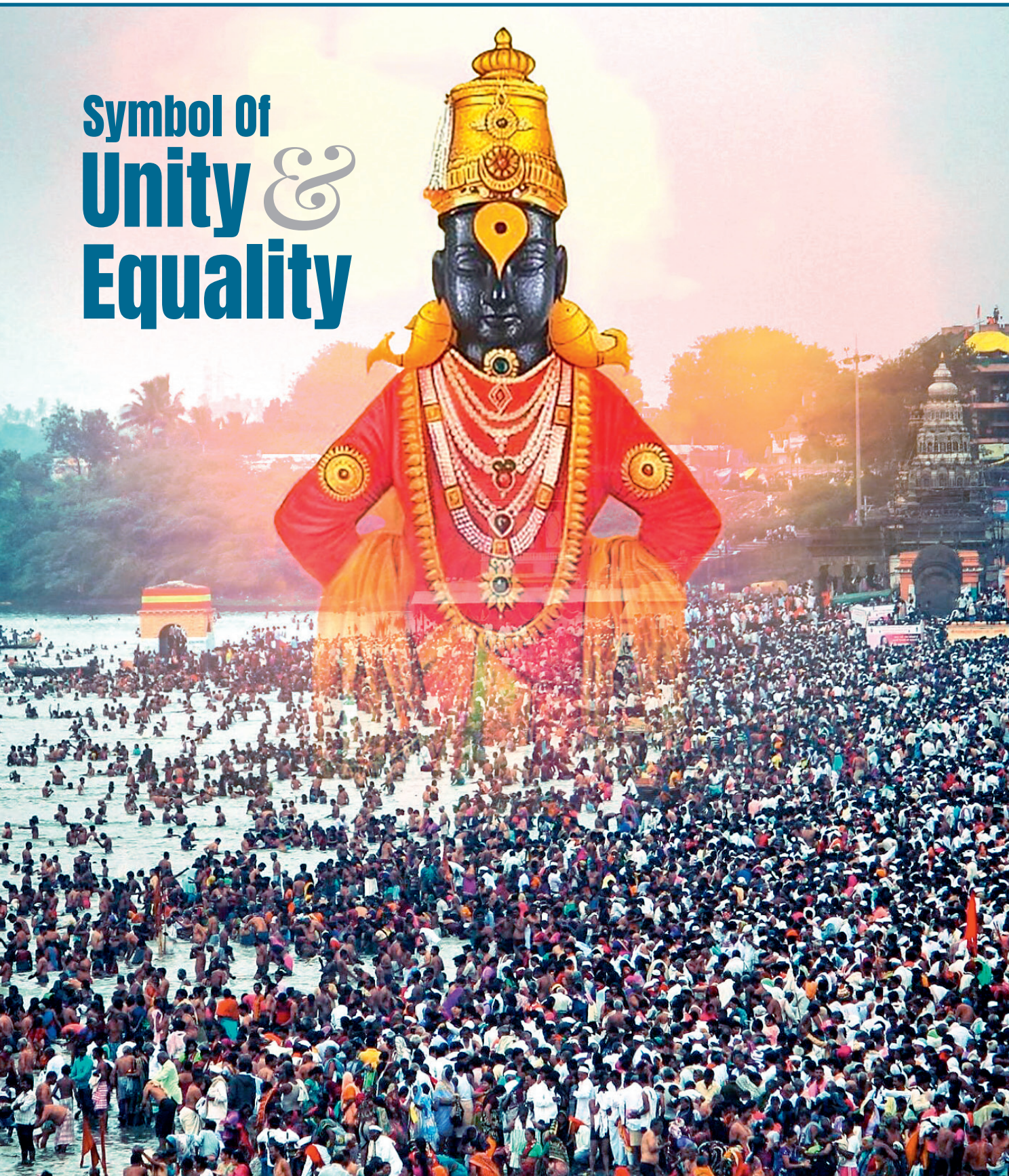
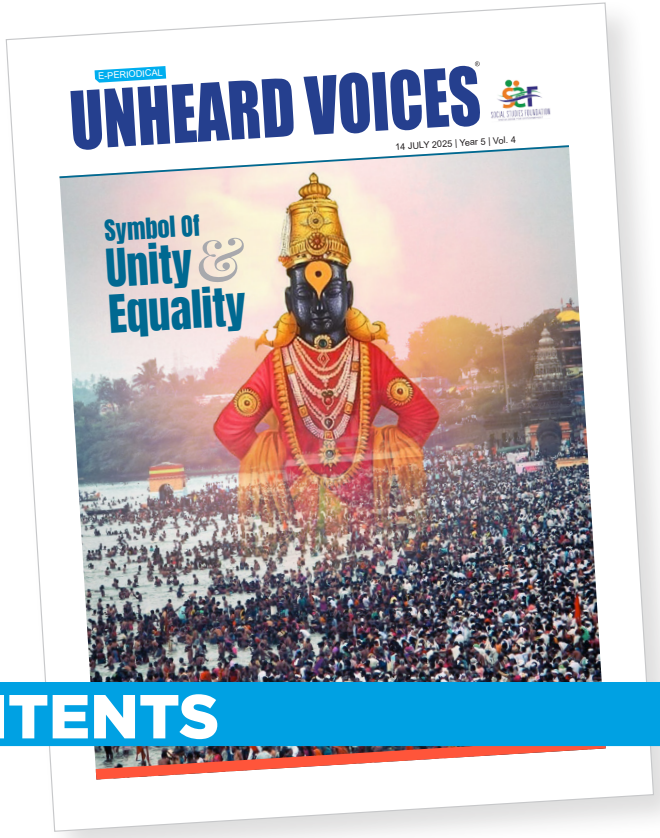


Symbol Of Unity & Equality



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EDITORIAL

Silent Revolution for Generations

Pandharpur Wari, one of the oldest and most vibrant spiritual pilgrimages in India, is much more than a religious procession. It is a living tradition, a cultural phenomenon and a spiritual movement that transcends caste, creed, and class. Followed primarily in Maharashtra, the Wari is the annual pilgrimage to the town of Pandharpur on the banks of the Chandrabhaga River, in devotion to Lord Vitthal, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Every year, lakhs of devotees — called Warkaris — walk for over 21 days from various parts of the state to reach Pandharpur on the auspicious day of Ashadhi Ekadashi.

This sacred journey, which has continued uninterrupted for over 800 years, spreads the timeless values of equality, harmony, peace, and brotherhood — values that are not merely preached but lived and experienced during the Wari. It stands as a testimony of the fundamental difference between western ideas and Indian philosophy. Through the teachings of saints, the practices of the Warkaris, and the egalitarian ethos embedded in the tradition, Pandharpur Wari stands as a unique example of collective spiritual and social awakening with deep roots in the Indian soil.

The roots of the Pandharpur Wari are traced back to the 13th century and are closely associated with Sant Dnyaneshwar and Sant Tukaram, two towering figures of the Bhakti movement in Maharashtra. Palkhis (palanquins of both the sants travel over 250 kilometres, stopping at various villages and towns along the way. Along this route, thousands join the Wari, walking, singing Abhang (devotional songs), and playing traditional instruments.

Every participant is referred to as a Warkari, meaning "one who makes the Wari." There is no distinction of caste, gender, economic status, or education. All are equal in the eyes of Vitthal, and all are bound together by the rhythm of faith and shared humanity.

One of the most powerful aspects of the Wari tradition is its unshakable emphasis on social equality. At a time when rigid caste hierarchies governed Indian society, a series of Sants, associated with the Wari preached and practiced egalitarianism. Sant Dnyaneshwar, a philosopher, emphasized that God dwells in every being. In his famous commentary on the Bhagavad Gita—the Dnyaneshwari — he urged people to look beyond birth-based divisions and see the inner divine essence of all. Sant Tukaram, a farmer-poet rejected rituals and priestly authority and said, "Vitthal loves a pure heart, not your caste". Sant Chokhamela, who belonged to so-called lower caste and Warkari, despite being denied temple entry in his lifetime, is today celebrated and revered. His samadhi is situated in the Pandharpur temple complex—a powerful symbol of the victory of devotion over discrimination.

Other saints like Sant Eknath, Sant Namdev, Sant Savata Mali, Sant Janabai and Sant Gora Kumbhar also contributed to this wave of social reformation, which made Maharashtra distinguished from other parts of the country. Through their Abhangs, they sang of a God who does not discriminate and upheld values of humility, compassion, and equality. Wari thus became not just a spiritual movement but a social revolution quietly and non-violently subverting oppressive structures. Bhakti movement keeps a very strong connect between native people and the religion during the time of aggression by the invaders.

The Wari is not just a walk—it is a moving society with a strong sentiment of oneness

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among themselves with hardly any dispute and no chaos. This harmony is achieved through self-discipline, devotion and service. This is an exercise, which refreshes participants to respect human values like equality and fraternity all over the year. The Warkaris take only what they need. They sleep in the open or under simple tents. Volunteers from villages along the route offer free meals, medical aid, and shelter to the Warkaris, calling it a privilege to serve. This is a unusual and remarkable manifestation of social unity, sans any discrimination. During the procession, one finds men, women, elderly, children, farmers, labourers, professionals, businessmen and even foreigners walking together hand in hand in one direction with a deep sense of brotherhood. Such is the devotion of the people that Warkari is considered as the incarnation of Lord Vitthal. People touch the feet of warkari with great humility and devotion, crossing the barriers of sex, caste, education, language, region and profession, which is a spontaneous reflection of sentiments, originating from the heart.

The Pandharpur Wari signifies a cultural treasure with strong social messages, reminding the people the idea of equality need not be outsourced from western philosophy. It reminds one of eternal moral value, which have been guiding this nation for generations. Increasing number of youths in the annual programme is encouraging. Youngsters who join the Wari experience learn values of humility, sharing, cleanliness, service, and ecological balance.

The spiritual energy and universal values of the Wari have crossed borders. Researchers, filmmakers, and spiritual seekers from around the world come to witness or document this phenomenon. UNESCO has also acknowledged it as an "intangible cultural heritage" worthy of preservation. In a world increasingly torn apart by division and conflict, the Wari offers an inclusive, peaceful, and joyous model of community living. It is a celebration of life, unity and the soul's eternal bond with the divine.

The Pandharpur Wari is not just a religious event—it is a living expression of the highest human values. Through centuries, it has upheld the ideals of equality over hierarchy, love over ritual, peace over strife, and brotherhood over division. It is a reminder that the divine is not in grand temples or complex rituals, but in human values.

As Maharashtra marches to Pandharpur each year, it also walks towards a more compassionate, united, and spiritually awakened society. In every chant of "Vitthal Vitthal Jay Hari Vitthal," echoes the call for a world where all are one.

Appeal for financial assistance

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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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Pandharpur Wari: A Beacon of Social Harmony and Equality in India's Bhakti Tradition

Amol P.

In the heartland of Maharashtra, an extraordinary spiritual phenomenon unfolds each year—one that transcends mere religious observance to become a profound symbol of social harmony, equality, and collective devotion. This is the Ashadhi Wari, an ancient pilgrimage to the holy town of Pandharpur, undertaken by lakhs of Warkaris, devotees of Lord Vithoba, who walk over 250 kilometres to arrive at his temple on the auspicious occasion of Ashadhi Ekadashi. The Wari is not just a journey of faith; it is a living embodiment of India's long-standing tradition of inclusivity and resistance to social discrimination, rooted deeply in the Bhakti movement.

Far from being a ritual confined to one region or community, the Ashadhi Wari stands as a testament to the enduring spirit of unity that defines India's cultural and spiritual identity. With its origins tracing back over 800 years, the Wari has evolved into a powerful expression of egalitarian devotion—where caste, class, gender, and social status dissolve into a shared spiritual quest. Pilgrims from diverse backgrounds walk side by side, address each other as Mauli (a respectful, gender-neutral term meaning 'mother'), share food, shelter, and prayer, and collectively embody the ideal of an inclusive society.

This remarkable tradition finds its philosophical and spiritual foundation in the Bhakti movement—a wave of devotional spirituality that swept across India between the 13th and 17th centuries. In Maharashtra, sants like Sant Dnyaneshwar, Sant Tukaram, Sant Namdev, Sant Eknath, and Sant Janabai emerged as towering figures who challenged the rigid hierarchies of caste and gender. Through their abhangas (devotional verses) and teachings, they asserted that divine grace is not the privilege of a few but the birthright of all. They spoke in the vernacular, addressed the spiritual needs of the masses, and preached a message of love, humility, and equality. The Wari is their legacy in motion—a spiritual journey grounded in the revolutionary idea that all are equal in the eyes of God. In a world still grappling with deep divisions and inequalities, the Ashadhi Wari offers a powerful model of collective living and mutual respect. It is not driven by external ideologies or imported notions of social justice but is instead rooted in India's own indigenous spiritual movements that have long championed the cause of equality.

The Bhakti movement sants did not merely question social evils—they dismantled them through inclusive devotion and the democratization of spiritual knowledge. As the palkhis (palanquins) of Sant Dnyaneshwar and Sant Tukaram travel through towns and villages, welcomed with open arms by local communities offering food, water, and shelter, the Wari becomes more than a pilgrimage—it becomes a lived demonstration of India's timeless message of unity in diversity. Cultural performances, communal prayers, acts of seva (service), and spontaneous expressions of joy weave together a tapestry of human connection that cuts across all boundaries.

This article delves into the historical, spiritual, and social dimensions of the Ashadhi Wari. It traces the Bhakti movement's revolutionary role in confronting untouchability and casteism, highlights the Wari's evolution as a vibrant expression of those values, and explores how this tradition continues to inspire and unite millions in a shared vision of an egalitarian society. In doing so, it affirms a powerful truth: that the ideals of social harmony and equality are not foreign imports, but deeply woven into the very fabric of India's cultural and spiritual legacy.

The Ashadhi Wari, an ancient pilgrimage to Pandharpur in Maharashtra, is a vibrant embodiment of —social cohesion and harmony— that lies at the heart of India's spiritual and cultural heritage. This annual procession, drawing millions of Warkaris (devotees of Lord Vithoba) across 250 kilometres, is a testament to India's deep-rooted commitment to equality, forged through centuries of resistance against social ills like untouchability and casteism. Anchored in the Bhakti movement, the Wari transcends all forms of discrimination, uniting devotees in a shared journey of devotion, humility, and service. Far from requiring Western or foreign ideological inspiration, the Wari and the Bhakti movement demonstrate that equality is intrinsic to India's DNA, with a glorious history of sants and their teachings dismantling societal barriers for over 800 years. Wari's role as a living symbol of social harmony, its historical fight against inequality through the Bhakti movement, and its enduring message of unity.

The Bhakti Movement: A Revolution Against Social Ills

The Bhakti movement, which flourished between the 13th and 17th centuries in Maharashtra, was a transformative force that challenged the rigid caste system and practices like untouchability, which had crept into Indian society. Unlike elite religious traditions that restricted spiritual access to certain classes, the Bhakti movement democratized devotion, asserting that anyone—regardless of caste, gender, or social status—could connect with the divine through love and surrender. This radical egalitarianism was championed by sants like Dnyaneshwar, Tukaram, Namdev, Eknath, and others, whose teachings and abhangas (devotional hymns) became the cornerstone of the Warkari Sampradaya, the spiritual sect behind the Ashadhi Wari.

Sant Dnyaneshwar (1275–1296), often regarded as the founder of the Warkari tradition, revolutionized spiritual discourse by composing the Dnyaneshwari, a Marathi commentary on the Bhagavad Gita. Written in simple language, it made complex spiritual truths accessible to the masses, bypassing the exclusivity of Sanskrit-based scholarship. His abhangas emphasized universal devotion, proclaiming, "He who sees God in all beings is the true devotee." This message directly challenged caste hierarchies, inviting all to participate in spiritual life.

Similarly, Sant Tukaram (1608–1650) used his abhangas to denounce discrimination, singing, "Caste has no place in the court of Vithoba; all are equal in His eyes." His poetry inspired countless marginalized individuals to embrace devotion without fear of social stigma.

Sant Namdev (1270–1350), a tailor by profession, and Sant Eknath (1533–1599) furthered this legacy. Sant Namdev's abhangas celebrated the unity of all devotees, regardless

of background, while Sant Eknath's works, like the Eknathi Bhagavat, critiqued untouchability and promoted communal harmony. Women sants like Janabai, a domestic worker in Sant Namdev's household, also played a pivotal role. Her abhangas expressed profound devotion and challenged gender and caste barriers, with lines like, "I am but a maid, yet Vithoba calls me His own." These sants collectively wove a spiritual fabric that rejected societal divisions, fostering social harmony through devotion to Lord Vithoba, a deity symbolizing compassion and inclusivity.

The Bhakti movement's impact extended beyond Maharashtra, influencing similar traditions across India, from Sant Kabir in the north to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in Bengal. By emphasizing personal devotion over ritualistic exclusivity, it created a social revolution that continues to resonate in practices like the Ashadhi Wari, where equality is not an abstract ideal but a lived experience.

The Ashadhi Wari: A Journey of Unity

The Ashadhi Wari, also known as the Pandharpur Wari, is a living manifestation of the Bhakti movement's egalitarian principles. This pilgrimage, undertaken annually in the Hindu month of Ashadha (June–July), sees lakhs of Warkaris walk from various parts of Maharashtra to the Vitthal-Rukmini Temple in Pandharpur, culminating on Ashadhi Ekadashi. The journey, spanning 18–21 days and over 250 kilometres, is a profound expression of devotion, community, and social harmony, uniting people across all divides in a shared pursuit of divine grace.

Origins and Evolution

The Wari's origins trace back over 800 years, with some accounts attributing its inception to Vitthalpant, the father of Sant Dnyaneshwar, in the 13th century. Sant Dnyaneshwar's efforts to popularize devotion through the Dnyaneshwari laid the spiritual foundation for the pilgrimage. The tradition was further shaped by Sant Tukaram, whose abhangas inspired mass participation. In 1685, Narayan Maharaj, Tukaram's youngest son, began the practice of carrying the sants' padukas (sacred sandals) in palkhis (palanquins), symbolizing their enduring spiritual presence. The Wari's formal structure emerged in the early 19th century under Haibatravbaba Arphalkar, a devotee of Sant Dnyaneshwar, who organized the pilgrimage into disciplined Dindis (groups) and established the tradition of carrying the padukas of Sant Dnyaneshwar and Sant Tukaram in decorated palkhis. Today, the Wari is a massive movement, with the Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj Palkhi (from Alandi) and Sant Tukaram Maharaj Palkhi (from Dehu) being the most prominent. Other palkhis from towns across Maharashtra and neighbouring states like Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh join the procession, reflecting its widespread appeal.

When and Where It Begins

The Ashadhi Wari commences in mid-June, with precise dates aligned to the Hindu lunar calendar. The key processions begin as follows:

- Sant Tukaram Maharaj Palkhi: Departs from Dehu, with a ceremonial send-off involving kirtans and prayers.
- Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj Palkhi: Starts from Alandi, marked by devotional gatherings and rituals.

These palkhis converge in Pandharpur for the grand entry, followed by the darshan of Lord Vithoba and Goddess Rukmini on Ashadhi Ekadashi.

Traditional Route and Halts

The Wari follows well-defined routes, with the two primary palkhis covering distinct paths that merge closer to Pandharpur. The Sant Tukaram Maharaj Palkhi's route includes:

- Departure from Dehu.
- Pune, a major halt with vibrant kirtans and bhajans.
- Saswad and Jejuri, where devotees offer prayers at the Khandoba Temple.
- Akluj, a key stop for rest and spiritual programs.
- Stops at Velapur, Bhandishegaon, and other villages, with community meals and devotional events.
- Grand entry into Pandharpur.
- Ashadhi Ekadashi darshan at the Vitthal-Rukmini Temple.

The Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj Palkhi follows a parallel route:

- Departure from Alandi.
- Pune, with large-scale devotional gatherings.
- Jejuri, a significant spiritual stop.
- Lonand, Phaltan, and Natepute, with rest and

seva activities.
- Wakhari, the final halt before Pandharpur.
- Arrival in Pandharpur, merging with other palkhis.

Local communities along the route provide food, water, and shelter, embodying the spirit of seva and reinforcing the Wari's ethos of mutual care.

Activities During the Wari

The Wari is a dynamic blend of spiritual, cultural, and social activities that foster unity and equality:

- Devotional Singing and Chanting: Warkaris sing abhangas by Sant Tukaram, Sant Dnyaneshwar, Sant Namdev, and Sant Janabai, chanting "Jai Jai Ram Krishna Hari" and "Gyanba Tukaram." These songs, rooted in the Bhakti tradition, emphasize universal devotion and equality. Kirtans narrate the sants' lives, making spiritual teachings accessible to all.
- Ringan Ceremony: This ritual involves a ceremonial race between two horses, one riderless, symbolizing the sant's spiritual presence. Accompanied by folk dances and games, the Ringan fosters a sense of collective joy and unity.
- Community Service (Seva): Warkaris and local communities provide food, water, medical aid, and shelter to pilgrims. Community kitchens serve meals to thousands, with no distinction based on caste or status, reflecting the Bhakti principle of equality.
- Cultural Performances: Folk dances, music, and plays celebrating the sants' lives are performed at halts, preserving Maharashtra's cultural heritage and engaging diverse participants.
- Disciplined Processions: Each Dindi operates as a self-sufficient unit, with flag bearers, drummers, and organizers ensuring smooth coordination. This structure promotes collective responsibility and inclusivity.

Government initiatives like Nirmal Wari support cleanliness with portable toilets and waste management, while medical camps and police security ensure pilgrims' safety, aligning with the Wari's ethos of care for all.

Equality and Social Harmony in the Wari

The Ashadhi Wari is a living embodiment of Social harmony, where equality is not merely preached but practiced. Warkaris, addressed as Mauli (a gender-neutral term meaning "mother" or "caring figure"), come from all walks of life—farmers, professionals, men, women, young, and old—yet walk as equals. The pilgrimage dissolves caste, class, and gender barriers, creating a microcosm of an egalitarian society. Devotees share meals, tents, and responsibilities, with no regard for social status, embodying Sant Tukaram's teaching: "All are one in Vithoba's embrace."

The Bhakti movement's rejection of discrimination is vividly reflected in the Wari. Dnyaneshwari declares that devotion transcends caste, while Sant Tukaram's abhangas assert, "Vithoba sees no high or low; all are His children." Sant Janabai, a low-caste woman, found acceptance in the Warkari fold, her abhangas resonating with millions. Women play a prominent role, carrying Tulsi plants or water pots, and initiatives like Wari Nari Shakti (2019) promote gender equality through menstrual hygiene awareness. The Wari's inclusivity extends beyond Maharashtra, attracting devotees from Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and even international participants, proving that its message of unity transcends borders.

The fight against social ills like untouchability is intrinsic to the Wari's history. The Bhakti sants confronted casteism head-on, with Sant Eknath inviting untouchables to his home and Sant Namdev advocating for universal brotherhood. The Wari continues this legacy, with communal darshan on Ashadhi Ekadashi symbolizing equality before the divine. Devotees bathe in the Chandrabhaga River and stand shoulder-to- shoulder in the Vitthal-Rukmini Temple, their differences dissolved in devotion.

Arrival at Pandharpur

The palkhis enter Pandharpur in a grand procession, accompanied by kirtans and chants. On Ashadhi Ekadashi, lakhs of Warkaris gather for the Maha puja and darshan, a moment of spiritual culmination where all stand equal before Vithoba. The temple's atmosphere, filled with devotion and unity, encapsulates the Wari's essence as a celebration of Social Harmony. India's Enduring Legacy of Equality can be found in the Bhakti movement and Ashadhi Wari underscore that the movement for equality is not a foreign import but a cornerstone of India's spiritual heritage. For centuries, sants like Dnyaneshwar, Tukaram, Namdev, Eknath, and Janabai have fought social ills through their teachings and abhangas, creating a legacy of inclusion that the Wari carries forward. This pilgrimage is a powerful reminder that equality is India's DNA, rooted in its own traditions and continuously strengthened through practices like the Wari. As Warkaris walk the sacred path to Pandharpur, they reaffirm India's commitment to social harmony, proving that the fight for justice and unity is a timeless mission, born from the heart of its own culture.

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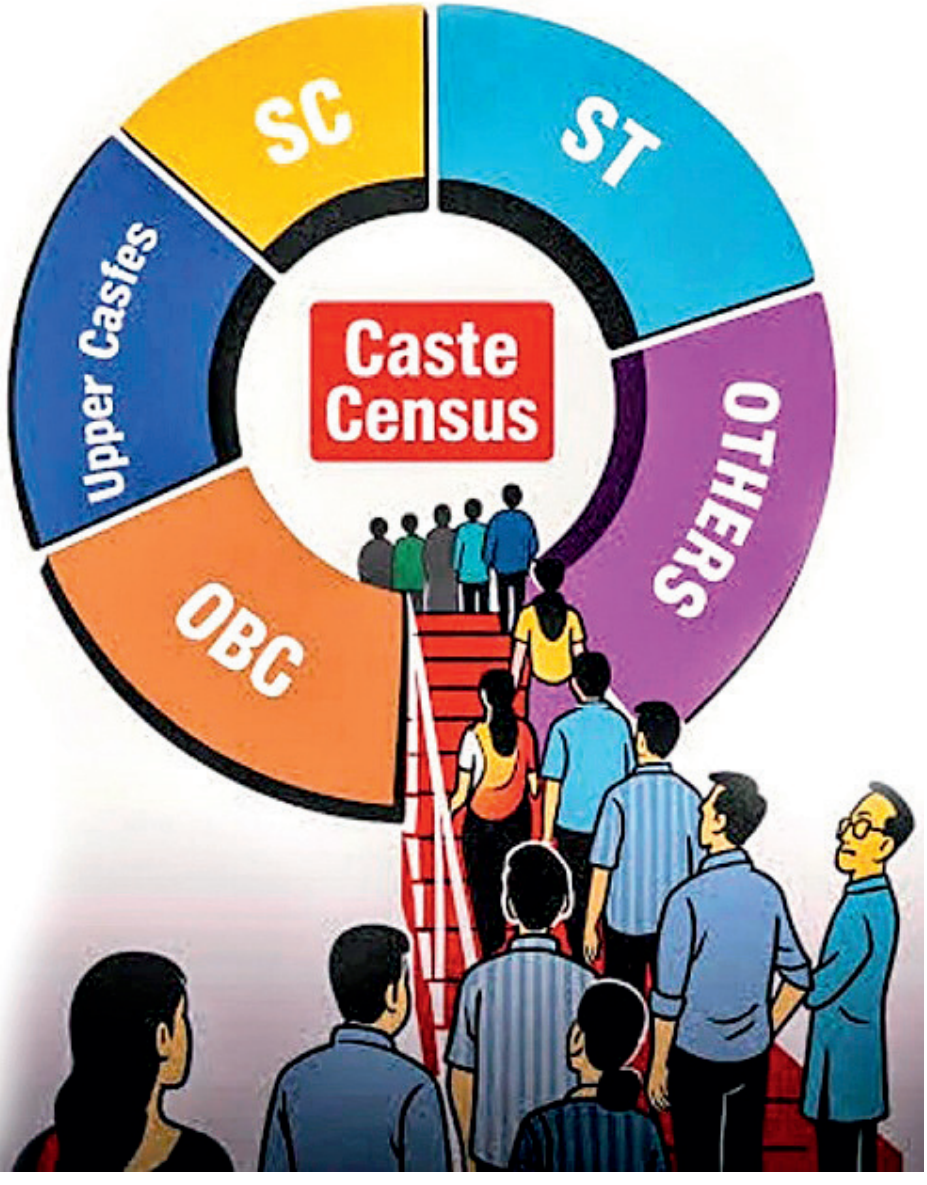
Caste Census: Benefits and Importance

The Constitution of India ascribes top priority to social justice. Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar made specific provisions for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes in the Constitution. However, the benefits of reservation and welfare schemes are not distributed equitably because the exact number of OBC and Other Backward Castes is not known.

Vijendra



There is equality only among equals. To equate unequal's is to perpetuate inequality.
– Mandal Commission Report

India is a peculiar country where cultural, religious and social diversity coexists in a unique manner. Its social structure is based on a number of castes, sub-castes, religions, languages and traditions. That, in itself, is the unique feature of the glory and complexity of the country. The caste system has been influencing the social and economic strata since the pre-independence era.

Post independence, Indian constitution determined the target for the country to achieve social and economic equality. Ever since, the governments have chalked out a number of schemes and plans to achieve this target. Most important and much discussed among them is caste census. During the pre-Independence era, caste census was conducted in India till the census of 1931. However, post-Independence, since the census of 1951, record of only the population of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes were maintained. This move is aimed at reducing the caste

disparities and promoting national integrity. However, voices demanding caste census are becoming louder across the country over the last some years, especially in context of social and economic backwardness of Other Backward Classes and other social groups. Therefore, an attempt to take review of historic context, need and benefits of caste census as well as the challenges involved in it and possible future consequences thereof is made through this article.

Historic Context

The tradition of census in India is ancient. Kautilya's Arthashastra (321-296 BCE) mentions methods of census, through which information about residents of the village, their occupations and social strata would be compiled. Similar information was being compiled for administrative purpose during the era of the Mauryan (322-185 BCE) and Gupta (320-550 CE) empires too. However, the census in its modern form, began during British rule in 1871. At that time, the census included caste, religion, occupation, education and social strata. They used this information for both administrative planning and engineering split among the social groups to implement their 'Divide and Rule' policy. The census of 1931 is considered vitally important in the context of castes in India because detailed information of castes and sub-castes was compiled in it. This information was used as reference to chalk out social policies even in the post-Independence era.

For example, the Mandal Commission (1980) used the 1931 census as base while making a list of the Other Backward Classes (OBC). In post-Independence era, caste census was not conducted since the census of 1951. This decision came out of belief of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and other leaders that caste census could endanger social integrity and obstruct the efforts to build India as a modern nation. However, census of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes continued for implementation of reservation and welfare schemes. The issue of social and economic backwardness of OBC category became focal point due to the report of the Mandal Commission in the 1980s. The Mandal Commission report recommended 27% reservation for the OBCs. This recommendation was implemented in 1990. However, numerous issues arose during its implementation due to non-availability of exact data of population. Therefore, the demand for caste census gained momentum. An attempt to conduct Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) was made while conducting census in 2011. However, the information compiled therein could not be used effectively as the Census was not published.

Need of Caste Census

Caste census is essential for following purposes: -

1. Enforcement of social justice

The Constitution of India ascribes top priority to social justice. Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar made specific provisions for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes in the Constitution. However, the benefits of reservation and welfare schemes are not distributed equitably because the exact number of OBC and Other Backward Castes is not known. The Mandal Commission report estimated the population of Other Backward Classes to be approximately 52%. However, updated data to verify and confirm this is not available. Caste census would provide clear information of population of each of the castes, their social-economic strata and geographical distribution. Consequently, the policies can be implemented in a more targeted and effective manner.

2. Assessment of economic and educational backwardness

Social-Educational backwardness is closely associated with castes. According to the National Sample Survey Organisation and other studies, some castes are more backward socially and economically compared to other castes. For example, there is a huge difference in the level of education, employment and health facilities among some OBC and General Category castes. However, the basis of this information is inadequate. Caste census would make available the data concerning caste-wise rate of education, employment opportunities, income and health facilities. This would enable the government to chalk out special schemes for backward classes.

3. Policy making and planning

Reliable data is a basic requirement for modern governance. Niti Aayog and other organizations depend on accurate data for policy making. Presently, out of date 1931 census is used as base to project population of OBC and other castes. Caste census would make the latest data available. Resultant, more accurate planning for education, employment, health, basic facilities and social welfare would be possible. For example, if the level of education is low in a specific caste, special scholarships can be offered to students of that caste or educational centres can be set up for them.

4. Elimination of caste-based disparities and inequality

Understanding basic reason for existence of caste-based disparities and inequality is vitally

important to eliminate them. Sachar Committee (2006) and Rangnath Mishra Commission (2007) conducted study of backwardness in Muslims and other minority castes, wherein inadequacy of caste-wise data came to the fore. Details of social inequality and its intensity will become available due to caste census. This would enable the Government to take concrete steps to reduce caste-based disparities and to promote social inclusiveness.

5. Studying social dynamics

Social structure in India is dynamic and constantly changing. Social and economic conditions of some castes have improved due to urbanization, education and economic reforms, but some castes still remain backward. Caste census would enable deeper study of these social dynamics. As a result, the Government would be able to change social conditions while making future policies.

> The census of 1931 is considered vitally important in the context of castes in India because detailed information of castes and sub-castes was compiled in it. This information was used as reference to chalk out social policies even in the post-Independence era.

Benefits of caste census

Caste census would provide following benefits: -

1. Accurate and reasonable reservation policy

Giving benefits as per the ratio of population is essential while implementing the reservation policy. The Supreme Court has raised questions concerning the criteria applied for reservation, especially in the context of reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBC) and Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) on several occasions. Caste census would provide clear information on population and backwardness of each caste. This would help make the reservation policy more transparent and justifiable. Consequently, disputes over reserved seats would be curbed and every entitled section of the society would be able to secure its rights.

2. Targeted welfare schemes

Availability of caste-wise data would enable the government to draft targeted schemes for specific castes. For example, if a caste is educationally backward, special scholarships, hostel accommodations or skill development programs for students of that particular caste can be offered. Similarly, if unemployment is more acute in a specific caste, employment-oriented training programs for students of that caste can be launched.

3. Unity and social inclusiveness

Caste-based disparities is a major source of tension in the society. Providing appropriate representation and opportunities to backward castes using the caste census would promote social unity. Mahatma Gandhi too had laid emphasis on social inclusion. Thus, caste census would help mitigate the historic injustice done to certain castes and build a unified, inclusive society.

4. Governance based on scientific data

Caste census would give a major boost to the governance based on scientific data. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru stressed on the scientific approach to build India as a modern nation. Updated data is the base of scientific governance. Caste census would help the government ensure accuracy in social and financial planning besides increasing its effectiveness.

5. Research and academic study of society

Caste census would prove vitally important for social scientists, researchers and academic institutions. That would enable them to study issues concerning castes, social dynamics, inequality and development in depth. Resultant, better understanding of social structure in India would be available and that would help determine directions of future policy.

Challenges and criticism

Demand for caste census faces following challenges and criticism: -

1. Apprehensions of increase in caste-based animosity

Some critics say that caste census would result in increased caste-based discrimination and social tension. The Constituent Assembly decided to stop conducting caste census after 1951 for the same reason. However, this resulted in neglect towards issues faced by backward castes. On the contrary, data-based policies would help implement social justice and reduce social tensions.

2. Issues concerning compilation of data

Thousands of castes and sub-castes exist in India. Recognizing and classifying them is a major challenge. Census commissioners have highlighted technical issues concerning compilation of such data in the past. However, modern technology such as digital platforms and learning machines would help resolve these issues.

3. Political misuse

Misuse of caste-wise data for political motives is possible. Caste-wise data was used for dividing society during British rule. Therefore, the government would be required to be transparent and responsible concerning compilation and use of the data.

4. Issues concerning protection of privacy

Personal information is collected in caste census. Therefore, the possibility of breach of privacy prevails. Stringent data security laws and transparent procedure is essential to deal with this.

Solutions and recommendations

Following solutions can be adopted to make a successful caste census.

1. Formation of independent commission: - An autonomous and unbiased commission be formed to compile and analyse caste-wise data.

2. Use of digital technology: - Digital platform, block chain and machine learning should be used for compilation of data to ensure accuracy and effectivity.

3. Public awareness campaign: - Social awareness must be spread about importance of census to gain public support to the exercise.

4. Transparency and responsible approach: - Use of data only for social justice must be ensured. Privacy should be honoured while making the data public.

5. Pilot project: Testing of data compilation on smaller scale be made under a pilot project before conducting a nation-wide caste census.

Conclusion

Caste census is a potentially important tool to implement social justice, equality and to make inclusive development in India. Caste census is unavoidable considering the historic context, social needs and requirements of modern governance. However, due consideration of issues concerning collection of data, its political misuse and social tension is required before conducting the exercise.

Caste census can potentially prove to be an effective step taken towards realizing Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision of equality-driven India. It would help not only achieve social justice, but also promote social unity, development of the nation and provide scientific governance.

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Dignity and Social Inclusion Index

Globally, several countries have developed quantitative tools to measure social inclusion. Australia's Social Inclusion Board, for instance, adopted indicators ranging from employment rates and access to education, to community participation and cultural acceptance.

Dr. Aditi

In an age where economic growth often overshadows equity, the concept of social inclusion stands out as a critical benchmark for evaluating a nation's true progress. In a diverse and historically overpowering society like India, the idea of social inclusion goes beyond the development jargon; it becomes a moral imperative. It ensures that every individual, regardless of caste, gender, disability, region, or economic status, can participate in every aspect of the country. According to the World Bank, "Social Inclusion is the process of improving the terms on which individuals and groups take part in society—improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity" (World Bank, n.d.). In simpler terms, it refers to the process of improving the terms of participation in society for people who are disadvantaged based on identity, ability, or socio-economic status. The United Nations defines it as "the process of enabling all people to participate fully in society, regardless of their background or circumstances" (United Nations, n.d.). The European Commission takes a people-centric view: social inclusion is about "improving life chances of those who are socially excluded" (European Commission, n.d.). Each of these definitions underscores that inclusion is not only about alleviating poverty but also about actively removing barriers—structural, institutional, and attitudinal—that prevent full societal participation.

Parameters of Social Inclusion: Global Perspectives

Globally, several countries have developed quantitative tools to measure social inclusion. Australia's Social Inclusion Board, for instance, adopted indicators ranging from employment rates and access to education, to community participation and cultural acceptance (Australian Government Social Inclusion Board, n.d.). Their model emphasizes belonging, not just economic parity. Similarly, across Europe, indices of social inclusion often integrate dimensions such as housing stability, health equity, digital access, and minority representation. The European Union's Social Inclusion Scoreboard is a case in point; it evaluates how well countries are doing in reducing child poverty, integrating migrants, and bridging digital divides, among other goals (European Union, n.d.). These international efforts suggest that social inclusion is a multidimensional concept. It cannot be captured merely through GDP, literacy, or employment numbers; it must account for societal participation, voice, and dignity.

The Social Inclusion Index (SII): A Global Tool

Enter the Social Inclusion Index, a comprehensive quantitative tool that brings structure to this complex idea. An SII usually comprises indicators such as access to quality education and healthcare, employment, political representation, environmental safety, and social cohesion. These indicators are assigned weights based on contextual relevance, then aggregated to produce an index score that can be tracked over time or compared across regions. For example, the UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) already integrates health, education, and income (United Nations Development Programme, n.d.), but SII goes further by examining dimensions like cultural recognition, digital access, and social discrimination. It becomes especially useful in multicultural, multi-tiered societies like India, where exclusion takes on layered forms from caste to gender to geography.

India's Reality: Where Are We Excluded?

India's history of social exclusion is long and multi-layered. The caste system institutionalized social segregation for centuries. Post-independence, while the Indian Constitution provided a robust framework for equality and affirmative action, exclusion persists. Gender inequality, rural-urban divides, disability, and linguistic marginalization still dictate people's access to opportunity. In Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, for instance, Dalit women face triple oppression based on caste, gender, and poverty. According to NFHS-5 data, only 10% of Dalit women in Bihar reported access to post-secondary education, compared to 32% of general category women (National Family Health Survey [NFHS-5], 2021).

In tribal belts of Odisha or Chhattisgarh, Adivasi communities still lack access to basic healthcare and digital infrastructure. Programs like the Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP), Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, and the Accessible India Campaign aim to counter such exclusions. Yet, without a unified measurement framework, it is difficult to assess their cumulative impact on real inclusion.

NITI Aayog and India's Move Towards Index-Based Governance

India has begun to appreciate the value of indices in shaping governance. NITI Aayog's Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) ranks districts on indicators like education, health, and infrastructure (NITI Aayog, 2022). Similarly, the Women Empowerment Index developed with UNDP (NITI Aayog & United Nations Development Programme, n.d.), or the Multidimensional Poverty Index (NITI Aayog, n.d.), are steps toward data-driven policy planning. However, India still lacks a full-fledged Social Inclusion Index that integrates the social, cultural, economic, and political dimensions of inclusion in a consolidated manner. Recognizing this gap, NITI Aayog in 2022 acknowledged the need to work towards a World Social Inclusion Day Index, an ambitious effort that seeks to align India's social development goals with international benchmarks. Although still in its conceptual phase, such an index could help monitor inclusion efforts across states, districts, and even urban vs. rural zones.

What Should an Indian SII Look Like?

India's SII must reflect its unique socio-political structure. The indicators should go beyond traditional metrics to include:

- Caste and community-based access to education, healthcare, land rights
- Gender inclusivity in economic participation, mobility, digital access
- Disability inclusion in employment and public infrastructure
- Linguistic and regional equity in governance and representation
- Access to social protection schemes for informal workers and migrants
- Political participation of marginalised communities in local governance
- Digital inclusion, especially in rural and remote areas

Identify dignity violations: Track experiences of stigma, humiliation, or exclusion, which are often more telling than positive indicators alone (Jacobson, 2009).For example, in Jharkhand, where tribal populations form over 26% of the demographic, inclusion could be measured through land rights, mother tongue instruction in schools, and representation in Gram Sabhas. In Delhi, on the other hand, slum dwellers' access to clean water and digital learning platforms may be more appropriate parameters.

Why It Matters/The Strategic Importance of Measuring Social Inclusion for Policy and Governance

The value of an SII lies not just in measuring gaps but in prompting action. It helps policymakers focus interventions where they are needed most. It provides civil society with a tool to demand accountability. For example, if Bihar scores low in gendered access to education, targeted scholarship schemes and community outreach can be introduced. If Mumbai's informal workers show high digital exclusion, tech-based skilling and app-based service platforms can be scaled. Most importantly, an SII allows for comparative federalism; states can be benchmarked against each other, pushing healthy competition and innovation in inclusion strategies.

The Road Ahead

Developing such an index won't be easy. It must involve participatory research, anthropological intervention, and ground-level testing. But if done right, it can become India's most powerful instrument to make exclusion visible and ensure no citizen is left behind—not in data, not in opportunity, not in dignity. Dignity is the foundation of social inclusion. It ensures that every individual is recognized as a person of worth, deserving respect, equal treatment, and opportunities in society (United Nations, 1948). In the Indian context, where social exclusion often arises from caste, class, gender, disability, and economic status, embedding dignity in a social inclusion index is crucial for:

- Measuring true inclusion: Not just access to resources, but whether individuals feel respected, valued, and empowered (Sen, 1999).
- Policy effectiveness: Policies that ignore dignity may perpetuate stigma or discrimination even if they improve material conditions (Nussbaum, 2011).
- Human rights alignment: Dignity is central to international human rights frameworks and India's constitutional values (United Nations, 1948).

Defining and measuring dignity is essential for any meaningful Social Inclusion Index in India. It ensures that inclusion is not just about material well-being, but also about respect, empowerment, and the absence of stigma or humiliation.

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Ata Thambaycha Naay: Story of Resilience and Education

As Mumbai's sanitation workers continue their tireless work, often in the shadows, Ata Thambaycha Naay ensures their stories are seen, heard, and celebrated. It's a film that not only entertains but also leaves a lasting impact, urging us to rethink how we view education, dignity, and the human spirit.

Chandrashekhar

The Marathi film Ata Thambaycha Naay (2025), directed by Shivraj Waichal, stands as a cinematic beacon of hope, illuminating the extraordinary lives of Mumbai's unsung heroes—sanitation workers, sweepers, and drainage cleaners—who defied societal barriers to pursue education and transform their futures. Inspired by the real-life journey of 23 Class IV workers of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), this film weaves a narrative of grit, determination, and triumph as these individuals, often dismissed by society, cleared their 10th standard exams.

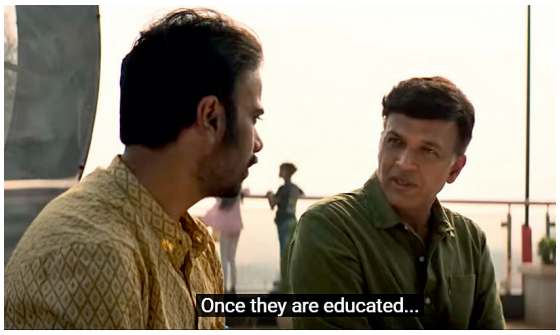
Featuring a stellar ensemble cast including Bharat Jadhav, Siddharth Jadhav, Ashutosh Gowariker, Kiran Khoje, and Prajakta Hanamghar, the film delivers a poignant social message: it's never too late to dream, learn, and rise above adversity. With its 144-minute runtime, Ata Thambaycha Naay balances humour, emotion, and social commentary, earning critical acclaim with a 3.5-star rating and an 8.9 IMDb score.

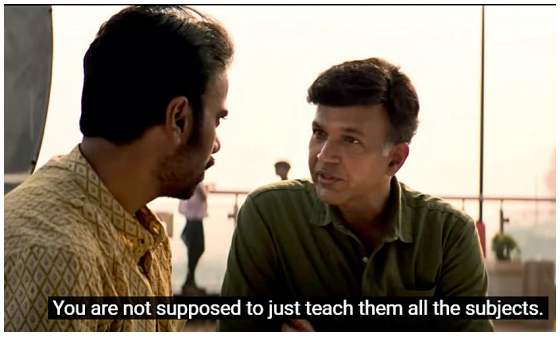
A Real-Life Miracle Turned Cinematic Inspiration

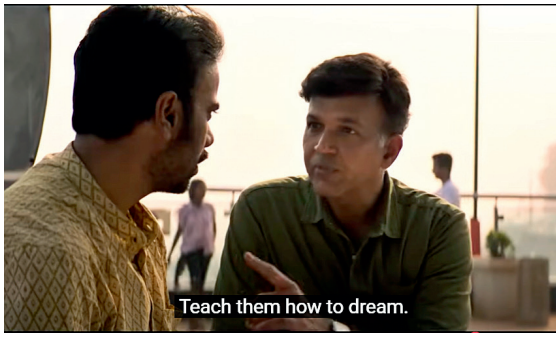
The title Ata Thambaycha Naay, translating to "Now We Won't Stop," encapsulates the relentless spirit of its protagonists. The film is rooted in a remarkable real-life event from 2017, spearheaded by Udaykumar Shirurkar, a retired Assistant Municipal Commissioner at the BMC. Recognizing the systemic marginalization faced by Class IV workers—sanitation staff, gutter cleaners, and pipeline menders, many of whom come from deprived and caste-oppressed communities—Shirurkar launched a transformative initiative to empower them through education. These workers, often in their 30s and 40s, had been forced to abandon their studies early due to financial hardship, family responsibilities, or societal exclusion.

Shirurkar's vision was both simple and revolutionary: education could break the chains of poverty and invisibility. He introduced a night school program tailored for these workers, offering free education, remuneration to encourage attendance, and the promise of a potential salary increase upon passing the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) exams. This initiative bore fruit in an extraordinary way—23 BMC workers, many of whom had not touched a textbook in decades, passed their 10th standard exams with remarkable success. Their achievement challenged stereotypes and proved that determination transcends age, circumstance, and societal prejudice.

The film draws directly from this inspiring story, bringing to life the struggles and triumphs of these workers with authenticity and heart. It serves as both a tribute to their resilience and a call to action for society to recognize the







dignity of their labour. The Film's Narrative: Grit, Hope, and Second Chances Ata Thambaycha Naay unfolds as a deeply human story, blending humour, emotion, and social critique. At its core is Uday Shirurkar (played by Ashutosh Gowariker), whose compassion and vision drive the educational initiative. The ensemble cast brings depth to the workers' stories: Bharat Jadhav as Sakharam, an aging sanitation worker grappling with self-doubt; Siddharth Jadhav as Maruti, a spirited dreamer; Kiran Khoje as Apsara, a woman defying gender norms; and Prajakta Hanamghar as Jayshree, a mother balancing family and ambition. Each character's journey reflects the broader struggles of BMC's Class IV workers, who face gruelling work conditions, societal stigma, and personal insecurities while daring to pursue education.

The film's 144-minute narrative traces the workers' transformation from hesitation to empowerment. Initially, many are sceptical about returning to the classroom at their age, fearing ridicule or failure. However, under the guidance of their dedicated teacher, Nilesh (Om Bhutkar), they find strength in their shared struggles. The classroom becomes a space of camaraderie and mutual support, where light-hearted moments—like Sakharam's humorous attempts to grasp basic math—blend seamlessly with poignant reflections on their dreams and hardships.

A particularly moving scene encapsulates the film's emotional depth. When a teacher confronts a student who takes post-mortem photographs for a living, saying, "Tu melelya mansanche photo kadhto na, kadh mag maza pan" ("You take photos of the dead, so take mine too"), it underscores the workers' struggle for dignity and recognition. Such dialogues resonate with audiences, urging them to see the humanity behind the labour. The film avoids melodrama, instead focusing on authentic storytelling that celebrates the workers' quiet rebellion against a system that often renders them invisible.

A Tribute to the Unsung Heroes

Ata Thambaycha Naay shines a spotlight on the often-overlooked lives of BMC's Class IV workers, who keep Mumbai's streets clean and its infrastructure running. These individuals, hailing from marginalized communities, face systemic challenges, including caste-based discrimination, economic hardship, and societal apathy. The film portrays education as a powerful equalizer, likening it to "a tigress's milk—only those who endure can succeed." This metaphor captures the workers' resilience as they navigate societal barriers to reclaim their dignity and agency.

The real-life success of the 23 BMC workers serves as a testament to the transformative potential of education. By passing their 10th standard exams, they not only gained qualifications but also challenged deep-seated stereotypes about caste, class, and age. The film amplifies this message, urging viewers to value the contributions of sanitation workers and recognize their right to dream and grow. It also highlights the importance of initiatives like Shirurkar's, which provide second chances to those society often overlooks.

Cinematic Excellence and Social Impact

Directed by Shivraj Waichal, Ata Thambaycha Naay is a triumph of cinematic storytelling. The cinematography captures the gritty realities of Mumbai's sanitation workers—dark, cramped drainage systems and bustling streets—while juxtaposing these with moments of hope, such as the warmly lit night school classroom. The screenplay, crafted by Omkar Gokhale, Arvind Jagtap, and Waichal, strikes a delicate balance between humour and pathos, ensuring the narrative remains engaging without slipping into sentimentality.

The performances are a standout, with Bharat Jadhav and Siddharth Jadhav delivering heartfelt portrayals that mark a memorable reunion after a decade. Bharat's Sakharam is both vulnerable and resilient, embodying the quiet strength of the workers, while Siddharth's Maruti injects humour and optimism into the story. The ensemble cast, including Kiran Khoje and Prajakta Hanamghar, adds authenticity, portraying the workers' struggles with nuance and empathy. Om Bhutkar's portrayal of Nilesh, the teacher who believes in his students' potential, adds a layer of inspiration to the narrative.

Critics have lauded the film for its ability to "restore faith in humanity," with review praising its heartfelt storytelling and emotional resonance. Its 3.5-star rating and 8.9 IMDb score reflect its widespread acclaim among audiences and critics alike. The film's ability to entertain while delivering a powerful social message makes it a standout in Marathi cinema.

Broader Context: Education and Social Change

Ata Thambaycha Naay arrives at a time when conversations about education, equity, and social justice are more relevant than ever. In India, where caste and class barriers continue to limit opportunities for marginalized communities, the film serves as a reminder of the power of education to break cycles of poverty and exclusion.

The real-life initiative it portrays is a model for grassroots change, demonstrating how targeted interventions can empower individuals and communities. The film also highlights the broader challenges faced by sanitation workers across India. Despite their essential role in maintaining public health and urban infrastructure, these workers are often underpaid, undervalued, and exposed to hazardous working conditions. Ata Thambaycha Naay humanizes their struggles, urging audiences to advocate for better wages, working conditions, and social recognition for these unsung heroes.

Moreover, the film underscores the importance of lifelong learning. In a rapidly changing world, where new skills and knowledge are essential for personal and professional growth, the story of BMC workers returning to education in their 30s and 40s is a powerful testament to the idea that it's never too late to learn. This message resonates universally, inspiring viewers to pursue their own goals, regardless of age or circumstance.

Why Ata Thambaycha Naay Matters

Ata Thambaycha Naay is more than a film—it's a movement. It challenges societal apathy toward marginalized communities and celebrates the transformative power of education. By bringing the real-life story of BMC workers to the big screen, it inspires audiences to believe in second chances and the potential for change. The film also serves as a call to action, urging viewers to acknowledge and respect the contributions of sanitation workers who keep cities running.

For Marathi cinema audiences, the film offers a refreshing departure from conventional narratives, combining entertainment with a meaningful social message. Its universal themes of resilience, hope, and the pursuit of dreams make it accessible to a global audience. Available to stream in high definition on platforms like Desi Cinemas, Ata Thambaycha Naay is a must-watch for anyone seeking a cinematic experience that entertains, inspires, and provokes thought.

As Mumbai's sanitation workers continue their tireless work, often in the shadows, Ata Thambaycha Naay ensures their stories are seen, heard, and celebrated. It's a film that not only entertains but also leaves a lasting impact, urging us to rethink how we view education, dignity, and the human spirit. In a world that often overlooks the contributions of the marginalized, Ata Thambaycha Naay stands as a powerful reminder: when given the opportunity, the human spirit can achieve the extraordinary, and once it starts, it will never stop.

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Why Reservation Matters in the Judiciary

On June 24, 2025, the Supreme Court of India made a significant move by introducing a reservation policy for the direct appointment and promotion of SC & ST employees among its staff. This decision, which aligns with the Union government's reservation framework, ensures that 15 percent of posts are reserved for SCs and 7.5 percent for STs. It is a step that recognizes the need for greater inclusion and fairness within the highest court's own workforce. But as we celebrate this progress, a bigger question emerges: Shouldn't similar efforts be made to ensure diversity and representation among the judges themselves?

Reservation in India has always been about correcting historical wrongs and giving everyone a fair shot. It has opened doors in education and government jobs for people who have faced discrimination for generations. Yet, when it comes to the judiciary—especially

the appointment of judges in High Courts and the Supreme Court—there is still no official reservation policy. This gap is striking, especially when you consider the power and influence judges hold in shaping society.

Back in December 2022, then Law Minister Kiran Rijiju made a revealing statement in Parliament. He admitted that while there was no reservation for judges, the government had at least asked Chief Justices of High Courts to keep disadvantaged groups in mind when recommending names for judicial appointments. He also pointed out a stark reality: until then, only one judge from the ST community had ever served in the higher judiciary. This fact alone highlights how much work remains to be done.

The importance of diversity among judges cannot be overstated. Judges are not just legal experts; they are decision-makers whose rulings affect millions of lives. If the judiciary is made up mostly of people from similar backgrounds, it risks missing out on the perspectives and experiences of large sections of society. For India, a country known for its incredible diversity, this is a serious concern. When judges come from different communities, they bring with them a wider understanding of the challenges faced by ordinary people. This leads to more balanced and empathetic decisions.

The lack of diversity in the higher judiciary is not just about numbers. It is about missed opportunities. Many talented people from disadvantaged groups are never considered for judgeships because they lack access to the same networks, education, or opportunities as others. Sometimes, even when they are qualified, their names do not come up for consideration. The system, as it stands, often works against them.

Introducing reservation for judges is not a new idea, but it has always been controversial. Some argue that merit should be the only criterion for selecting judges, and that reservation could lower the quality of the judiciary. But this argument misses the point. Merit is not the exclusive property of any one group. Talent and ability exist everywhere, but opportunity does not. If the playing field is not level, many deserving candidates will never get a chance to prove themselves.

Another important reason to consider reservation in the judiciary is public trust. People are more likely to have faith in the legal system if they see it as fair and representative. When citizens see judges who share their backgrounds and experiences, it reassures them that justice is truly for everyone. In a country as diverse as India, this sense of belonging is essential.

It is also worth noting that reservation has worked in other areas. In government jobs and educational institutions, it has helped thousands of people from disadvantaged backgrounds move up in life and contribute to society. There is no reason why similar benefits cannot be seen in the judiciary. Of course, any reservation policy for judges would need to be carefully designed and implemented, with clear guidelines to ensure fairness and quality.

One of the main challenges is the current system for appointing judges, known as the collegium system. This process is often criticized for being secretive and lacking transparency. Decisions about who becomes a judge are made by a small group of senior judges, with little public input or oversight. This makes it difficult to ensure that candidates from disadvantaged groups are even considered. Introducing reservation, or at least clear guidelines for diversity, could help make the process more open and fairer.

Some worry that reservation could lead to less qualified judges. But experience from other sectors shows that people from all backgrounds can excel when given the opportunity. The goal

should be to find the best candidates from every community, not just a select few.

To truly move forward, the judiciary must take concrete steps to become more inclusive. This could mean setting targets for diversity, improving the way reservation works for court staff, and encouraging more people from disadvantaged groups to enter the legal profession. The government and judiciary should work together to make the system more open and welcoming.

In the end, the Supreme Court's decision to introduce reservation for its staff is a positive step, but it should not be the last. The time has come to seriously consider reservation and greater diversity in the appointment of judges. A judiciary that reflects the people it serves will be better equipped to deliver justice for all. By taking bold steps now, we can build a legal system that is fairer, stronger, and more truly representative of India's rich diversity.

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SC Introduces SC/ST Reservations in Staff Hiring Under CJI Gavai's Tenure

For the first time, the Supreme Court of India has implemented a formal reservation policy for Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) staff in appointments and promotions. The policy, effective from June 23, 2025, was announced via an internal circular and applies to roles such as registrars, assistants, and court attendants.

The reservation includes a 15% quota for SCs and 7.5% for STs, covering both direct recruitment and promotional posts. Staff have been invited to report discrepancies in the roster

to the Registrar (Recruitment). This significant step toward inclusivity comes under Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai—the second SC judge to hold the top post—and is seen as a move to address longstanding representation gaps within the judiciary.

Caste Discrimination Persists Despite Legal Protections, Says Kerala HC

The Kerala High Court has observed that despite constitutional safeguards and laws like the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, caste-based discrimination and social ostracization against Scheduled Castes persist in Indian society.

Justice V.G. Arun noted that the SC community continues to face systemic exclusion, violence, and denial of access to resources and education. "Only the wearer knows where the shoe pinches," the court remarked, underscoring the emotional and social toll endured by marginalized groups.

The observations came while dismissing a plea by C.K. Kusuman, former principal of DB College, Kottayam, who sought to quash a case filed against him for allegedly making casteist remarks against an assistant professor in 2022. The court held that whether the remarks amounted to a public insult must be determined through evidence, not pre-trial scrutiny.

SC Survey in Bengaluru Covers Only 48% Despite Extensions

The ongoing enumeration of Scheduled Caste (SC) households in Karnataka for internal reservation has seen poor response in Bengaluru, with just 48% of the projected SC population covered so far. This is despite multiple deadline extensions and options for online and booth-level registration.

Statewide, coverage has reached 90.64%, with 26.39 lakh families and over 1.05 crore individuals surveyed since May 5. However, in Bengaluru (BBMP limits), only 6.58 lakh of the projected 13.62 lakh population have participated. Challenges cited include lack of ground-level enumerators, restricted access to gated communities, and reluctance among some SC families to identify themselves due to stigma. With school teachers back on duty, Bescom bill collectors have been tasked with identifying SC households, leaving BBMP officials to follow up. In contrast, 11 districts have exceeded their projected numbers, with Haveri recording 111% coverage and Davangere, Gadag, Dharwad, and others surpassing 100%.

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DINVISHESH

Remembering Udham Singh

31st July

Udham Singh was an Indian revolutionary and freedom fighter, best known for assassinating Michael O'Dwyer, the former British Lieutenant Governor of Punjab, in 1940. This act was widely viewed as retribution for the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919—a tragic and defining moment in India's freedom struggle.

Determined to fight British imperialism, Udham Singh joined revolutionary groups like the Ghadar Party and became active in anti-colonial movements both in India and abroad. He travelled widely—through East Africa, the United States, and Europe—building contacts with other Indian revolutionaries and plotting his revenge.

He held Michael O'Dwyer, the Punjab Lieutenant Governor at the time of the massacre, personally responsible. Though General Dyer executed the massacre, O'Dwyer had endorsed and defended it, making him a prime target for Singh's vengeance.

On March 13, 1940, Udham Singh carried out his long-awaited act. At a meeting of the East India Association at Caxton Hall in London, he pulled out a revolver and shot Michael O'Dwyer dead on the spot. Singh made no attempt to flee and was immediately arrested. His motive was clear: to avenge the lives lost at Jallianwala Bagh.

During his trial, Udham Singh showed no remorse. He gave his name as "Ram Mohammad Singh Azad", symbolizing the unity of India's major religions—Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh—and the shared fight for independence. His fearless statement in court condemned British colonialism and declared his pride in striking a blow for India's dignity.

Udham Singh's legacy resonates strongly in contemporary India. He is seen not just as a revolutionary who took justice into his own hands but also as a reminder of colonial atrocities and the fierce will to resist oppression. His story is a poignant chapter in India's independence movement—a tale of personal loss transformed into national struggle, and of vengeance turned into sacrifice for the motherland.

18th July
Sant Namdev Maharaj
Death Anniversary

18th July
Annabhau Sathe
Death Anniversary and
1st August Birth Anniversary

13th August
Ahilyabai Holkar
Death Anniversary

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