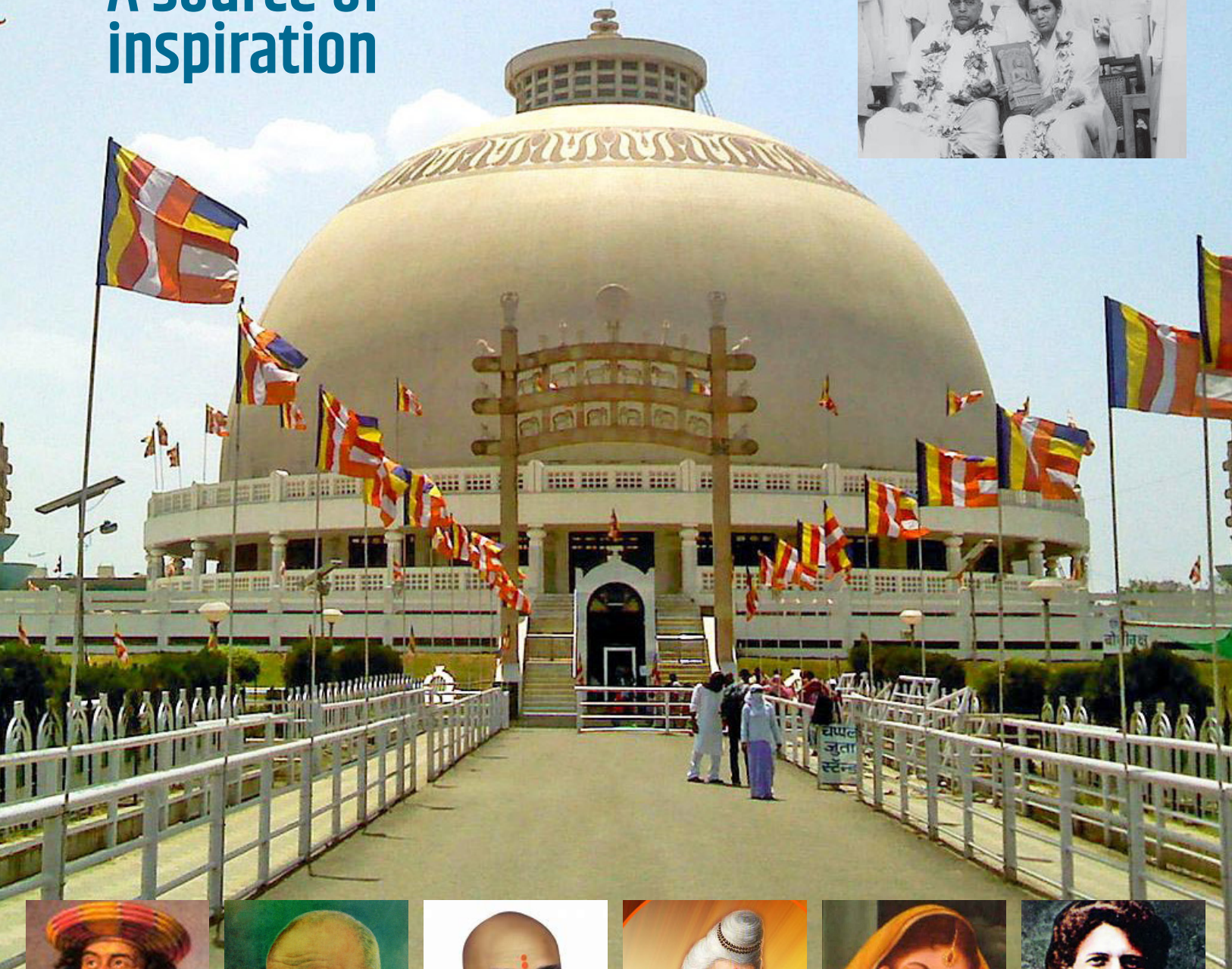


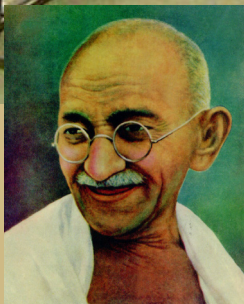
UNHEARD VOICES

14 OCTOBER 2021 | Year 1 | Vol. 7

Dikshabhoomi : A source of inspiration



27th September
Raja Ram Mohan Roy
Death Anniversary



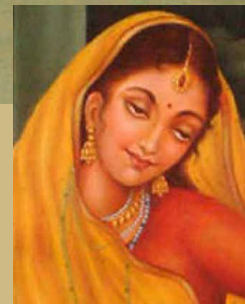
2nd October
M.K. Gandhi
Birth Anniversary



11th October
Sant Tukdoji Maharaj
Death Anniversary



20th October
Maharshi Valmiki
Birth Anniversary



20th October
Sant Mirabai
Birth Anniversary



28th October
Bhagini Nivedita
Birth Anniversary

EDITORIAL

Revisiting Dhamma Chakra Pravartan Din

On the occasion of 65th anniversary of Dhamma Chakra Pravartan, Indian citizens should look within - introspect – where we have reached on the path of equality. It is an apt time to think about the ideology of Tathagat Gautam Buddha, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and the momentum given by both of them to social reformation movement in India.

Dr. Ambedkar, for his entire life, struggled for the human dignity, which was missing from the lives of deprived sections of the society. He took relentless efforts for the purpose. Dr. Ambedkar has deep faith in 'Dnyansadhana', which he believed, would bring the change in the lives of deprived people. But one has to remember that Dr. Ambedkar had an integrated thinking about the nation, which he passed on to his followers.

Dr. Ambedkar's life stands as a perfect model of balance between rejection and acceptance, struggle and dialogue. He rejected discriminating social order and religious scriptures, endorsing it. But never compromised with moral values, cultural ethos and national integrity. His life was full of struggle but he never forgot significance and importance of dialogue.

He steered Indian social movement into a new direction. It is responsibility of all Indian citizens, irrespective of all the so-called differentiating barriers, to think how we will continue with the legacy of Dr. Ambedkar in the current scenario. It is time to take stock of the achievements and shortcomings in the journey towards equality. The very essence of Tathagat Gautam Buddha's teaching is spiritual and universal in nature. It does not merely advocate personal practices, purity of mind and action of an individual but also strongly insists on wellbeing of society and service. It has serious and fundamental social aspects, which attracted Dr. Ambedkar towards his philosophy.

COVID pandemic has endorsed and underlined significance of five precepts or Panchsheel. Tathagat Gautam Buddha's teachings are universal and eternal. Currently, we are experiencing the universality of his teachings, which stressed upon human dignity and equality. Instead on depending on fate and blessings, Tathagat emphasised on human efforts, which attracted Dr. Ambedkar towards him. Tathagat Gautam Buddha

strongly believed that solution to one's problem is hidden within and not outside. Dr. Ambedkar followed this principle in its true spirit. His every decision was thoughtful. For him, self-respect stood above everything.

We will never find any negative sentiment like hatred in Dr. Ambedkar's thoughts. In this sense, he perfectly followed the path of Tathagat Gautam Buddha. He fought against injustice but was never irrational in his fight. He represents culture of dialogue and never approved exclusion and polarization.

Confrontational approach has its own strengths and limitations. Many a times, confrontational approach continues even after achieving the desired purpose. Society faces ill consequences if confrontation is stretched beyond these limits. We must remember this fact when society is undergoing the process of democratization in all the spheres of human life. It is not healthy for society to have confrontational attitude all the time.

Against this backdrop, we need to have anew look at the current scenario. Systemic inequalities seem to be widening. The role of welfare state is shrinking as an outcome of rapidly growing privatization and globalization. More seriously, social injustice and marginalization are manifesting in new forms. Therefore, need of the hour is to redefine social order. Dr. Ambedkar has to be seen above narrow political considerations to ensure the social justice, for which he fought. Those who believe in his philosophy and are trying to follow him, ought to remember these essentials of his life.

Tathagat Gautam Buddha and Dr. Ambedkar also need to be seen in the current international context. The world is facing a challenge from those forces, which destroyed several Buddhist monuments in the recent history. The same forces were also responsible for destruction of ancient historic monuments like Nalanda, Takshsheela as well as Somnath Temple. Some Asian countries are attempting to hijack Tathagat Gautam Buddha and trying to create issue of his birthplace - "Lumbini" and politicize it. We cannot afford to ignore such realities. Let us accelerate our thought process on all these aspects on this occasion.

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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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For feedback please click the below link :
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"Dalits looking for their identity and equality"



Girish Makwana is an Indian film director, currently settled in Australia. Makwana is not merely a director but also a writer, producer and has deep passion for music. Founder of G K Makwana Films, Makwana is best known for his debut international film - Colour of Darkness, which is based on racial violence in Australia in 2009. He has firm views of the caste system in India and believes that Dalits are looking for identity.

UV : Tell us something about your childhood and college days. Your experience during those days seems to have shaped your ideas.

Makwana : I was one and half years old when my left leg got Polio affected. I could hardly go and play with others. I have a lot of physical limitations. We were living in a tiny village called Tundel. My parents were teachers, and my mother had a great passion for reading. Other children used to tease me because of my physical limitations. I used to fight with them as children of my category had strong self-esteem. But my mother gave me books like Champak or Chandamama and was more interested in the pictures. My father bought a harmonium for me. He was a music lover. Here my world started changing.

UV : So, Music was there in your family, and you switched over to Tabla?

Makwana : My father taught me basics like Saregama and a few bhajans, filmy songs. So that's how my journey started. My world was different. Ours was a tiny village, and I had to shift to a bigger town called Anand for further schooling. I was admitted to a school with a hostel facility as I couldn't walk down for half an hour to attend the school. It was a school only for disabled children. It had a little library where I could continue my passion for reading. A cinema hall near a school used to attract me. I had a habit of imagining a story with the help of posters. It was my encounter with cinema.

UV : And what about music?

Makwana : Hostel superintendent's daughter used to play radio music. I was listening to filmy songs. After schooling, I joined B.Sc as Music was considered lavish.

UV : You studied microbiology, and it seems that at the same time, you were attracted to Tabla also?

Makwana : My parents build the house at Nadiad. Then I was in a hostel my brother and sister used to stay with my parents. When I would go home, I didn't want to go to the hostel, and when I went to the hostel, I didn't want to go home. My mother used to tell me you don't have to walk with mom and dad holding them for your entire life. You have to develop yourself and stand on your feet because you are a special kid. That stuck in my mind- later, I went back home. I studied in my town's High school BSC as Music was considered a very great thing. My teacher used to say music is for King or Poor. Raja or Rank. King does not have to worry about the food, and the poor do not care about the food. That time when I was studying, I started learning the rhythm. I was privately learning table. When the Ramayan serial started, I learned Tabla, as my Guru was not interested in watching it. Nobody was aware that I was learning Tabla. Later, I bought Tabla when I passed the 12th standard.

So along with my friends, I opted for BSC. I had little interest in college as I was looking for a formal graduation certificate. I was thinking about literature and music all the time. I participated in various competitions and festivals and won several awards and trophies. I was in a dreaming world.

UV : Was it sufficient?

Makwana : I applied for drama in MS University in Baroda. The teacher from university told me that nobody would give me any chance because of my polio-affected leg. He suggested that to get admission in Music, which I accepted. In MS university, a group was going to Africa when I was 19 years old. They asked me to join. We went to Nairobi. I then applied for the Royal College of Music in London even though my English was very weak. But again, an

advertisement was brought to my notice which was about an institution in Australia. I got a scholarship from the Gujrat government, which was meant for disabled children. And then my research work what you mentioned electric Tabla Tarang was started. Dr Greg Schiemer, my supervisor, and I worked on it. Honestly, it was out of fun. It is the instrument where you have to use your fingers, emotions. I came back to India in 2002 and went on Europe tour as a Performer. I went to Germany and France. Then I went back to Melbourne. In life, it is always like that you are trapped, making money, surviving. You do little jobs. I was a filing clerk, this and that. I was always looking for my own identity, and something was missing. I was performing. We performed in a lot of different festivals. And someone took my picture and asked for modelling? I said I am not a model kind of a fellow. I like to be behind the camera, not in front of the camera. He told me, if you help me, I will help you. Then he introduced me to a gentleman who was the Head of RMS University Film and Television department. I got admission and studied film and Television. And I created one small documentary and one short film. They appreciated it. They offered me the masters. I also made one short film. I had a beautiful script for my masters. As you might have heard, in 2009 and 2010 in Australia, there was a lot

Cinema in India is looked at as an entertainment, The South Indian people are very smart and they use it for propaganda. This is because Hindi movies only speak about amir and garib while the reality in India is caste system.

of news regarding the Indian students got bashing. When I talked to my father, he said, We Indians don't have the right to tell anyone that they are racist because we are racist among ourselves. We don't have the moral right, and that stuck in my mind. That's why the script of the Colour of Darkness I wrote.

UV : Was it a moment of finding identity, which you were missing?

Makwana : Yes. Because in Music, like a tabla player, you always accompany. You are helping someone you accompany men. That is the nature of the instrument. There is nothing wrong with it. Even if you practice for 16 hours a day, there is no guarantee not everyone can be Zakir Husain. But I had a different background. I am from a Dalit family and also had physical limitations. I had a strong desire to prove myself and probably could not tolerate a situation where nobody counts you. People might have sympathy but not empathy with persons like me. They might be looking at me as a "poor guy," which I do not want to happen. What struck to mind is that there is equality in cinema halls. Be it CEO or a peon. All of them sit together. There is equality. In that sense, cinema is a compelling medium. It has the

strength to pass your message very powerfully. The two things I learned when you make a film or write a book, you have to choose a specific title that can attract an audience or reader. Those titles are your courier. The title attracts people to your production creation. I would say creation rather than production. The title will never give up a story, but we give at least an idea about the story. That was the first thing. The second thing was about darkness. We are talking about two different countries, Australia and India. Let us talk first about Australia. Here people from 190 different countries of the world live. It is a multilayer cultural country; in addition to that, Australia has its problems. Racial issues. It is a young country. There are a lot of originals and migrants, making it multicultural. This is one darkness. Now let's look at India. We have 29 different states. 1800 different dialects. Twenty-two or more different languages and a lot of different religions and multicultural everything. All kinds of cultures and traditions. But the biggest darkest thing is the caste system. Inequality is the first thing, and that is also another darkness. I am just giving you a few examples. The biggest problem is the caste system. The second thing, (state vs state) Maharashtrian people don't like Bihari, UP people, and we have issues like state versus state. Then the again biggest thing is women. We worship women as goddesses, but we don't want to treat them as goddesses. The caste system and gender inequality are two significant problems. (In India) This is another darkness. We have both positive and negative elements.

UV : You mean to say darkness has its roots or origin in inequality?

Makwana : Yes. The caste system or colour may have caused inequality. That is why I choose the title The Colour of Darkness. This title suits the frame of the story. The very famous director has said that it is your film when you make the film as a director. Once you have finished the film, it is a people's film, not yours anymore. Different people mention that you could have made this scene this way or that story should be like this and that. Everyone gives you a different opinion. Some people liked it very much some did not. I got some phone calls asking why you are talking about this thing? India has got beautiful things. That is the problem. This is the first film to talk about the caste system on the international level. Indians have always been an issue with black people, but they forget how they treat their people. They do not want to talk about that. They don't want to look into their backyard. I call them Facebook or keyboard warriors. They do a lot of webinars. They write a lot of things but practically, they do nothing. I always ask people you write about these issues, but what you did for these people? In a practical manner, how you helped them? Talking is a different thing. Do something, contribute something, rather than just talking about it. I guess it is human behavior.

UV : You spoke about the caste problem. Do

Indians in Australia have it? Do they have the same mindset? In Australia also?

Makwana : You have to understand the Indian mentality. We are slaves. It does not matter what caste you belong to?

UV : Slaves of what?

Makwana : Slaves of the culture the way we have grown up. You have got the power and money, but still, the same mentality exists. Yes sir, yes sir. You can respect everyone. I have no problem with that. There should not be sycophancy. But it will take time.

UV : The problem is still there, but I can see the shift. This is what I am saying with my personal experience. I guess there is a significant change in the mentality regarding this issue in India. The change is visible in India. Is it not the case also in a foreign country?

Makwana : There are some signs, but the majority of the people have the same mindset. I read the news two days ago, which said a boy was fined Rs—25,000 for entering a temple because he was a Dalit. So, there is a contradiction. Like Hindu philosophy says - The God, whatever - he touches, becomes Parasmani Gold. So now, if a Dalit person enters the temple, the temple becomes impure, so either your God is incorrect, or your philosophy is not correct. How your God or temple can become impure?

The second thing they are always banging around is 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.' The entire world is our family. I love that thing, but the problem is when talking about your Hindu brothers and sisters, then you draw the line. 40% have changed, but 60% still strongly believe in it. I don't blame them because no one taught them, explained, or educated them. We have to change this mentality. My film story's crux is precisely this. If some white man or woman does something to Indian NRI, they say these people discriminate because they don't like us. After all, we are brown or black. But at the same time, they forget, under the caste system, they say, I am Brahmin, I am this and that. These things we have to correct.

UV : Your other documentaries also have some social message?

Makwana : Yes. For example, take the film "Gift." It shows a particular Indian mentality is towards disabled people. When you see this five-minute film, the tagline is - Life is beautiful but not perfect. We want everything perfect and beautiful. Nothing wrong as it is human nature. I don't blame them. In reality, our education system gives the certificate of employment. They are not teaching us how life is.

UV : How effectively have Indian movies taken up; the issue of the caste system?

Makwana : In India, only South Indian films, local films talk about the caste system and not Hindi movies.

UV : Can you please explain this?

Makwana : There are only one or two Hindi movies on the caste system. My emphasis is that a Dalit should be the hero of the film when you

are talking about the caste system. The way they show the entire issue is not correct. They should show this is the society we live in, and this is the problem... instead of crying. The Colour of Darkness shows two different case studies. One is an Indian caste system in 1965, and another is in 2010. So let the audience see and decide. It depends on the way you ask the questions to the audience. I watched the film Article 15. Now he is a high-class inspector. He has sympathy and empathy, but the way everything is shown, he makes everything look good. Because always the victim is who? Poor Dalit, poor they can't do anything. Of course, they can't do anything but the story should be from their (Dalit) point of view. I have never seen a single movie (Especially Hindi) where the Dalit is a hero. I will give you an example of Karnan (Tamil film). That is the Dalit Hero. And there is another Manu Saugandh. (Tamil film) Maybe my pronunciation is wrong. One Dalit dies, and they don't allow the funeral (pass his dead body) through the main streets. That is the issue.



UV : Our generation has developed parallel movies that we can call an art film or experimental theatre. Do you think this school has raised the issue satisfactorily?

Makwana : We Indians never invent anything. We always copy. We always adopt. One has to understand the history of the parallel movies, which started in Italy & French. New wave cinema and its makers broke typical Hollywood concepts. Rather than showing a hero or heroine larger than life, they showed the reality. This started in 1920 -1930. They always tried for social equality. Slowly when that came to India in Kerala and Bengal, they were the first people.

Satyajit Ray and others, you know they did a good job. Satyajit's one film I forgot the name. One untouchable comes to work at Brahmin's house, and he dies there. Few films were audacious. If you are a filmmaker and a writer, you will tell the story from the background you come from. Because I don't know your experience and I can't tell your story. But the reality is that Indian people were already living a hard life.

Ordinary people do not want to go and see another tragedy as they were already experiencing it. People want to forget their problems for three hours and watch good songs and dance. Parallel cinema was also stuck with the elite class. For example, a man who is cleaning gutter every day – why should he watch his sufferings? In India, the person never lives for himself. People live for someone else; that is the social structure we have. Now they want to have entertainment with family. He is going to see a good story that will make him laugh. For the elite class, it is fashion – let's talk about this subject. Their intention may be good, and credit has to be given. But slowly, after the eighties, a new wave of parallel cinema started in India. Corporate people came, and the film was like making a product. They are selling the product Good quality, does not matter for them. Even they do not bother if one is a good actor. The fact considered is that do one's name is sold and let's make a film.

UV : Why can't be there be some working arrangement in this situation?

Makwana : Of course, there has to be, but many people are trying, but financiers, distributors, exhibitors have a monopoly, and they may not be allowing this to happen. I have a feeling and hope that people will come to the OTT platform. Now you get more freedom, you can make a cheap (low budget) film, and now they want material content on OTT. You don't depend on the cinema theatre. It has broken the monopoly of distributors and exhibitors. But theatres will be there. When the video came, people had similar fear, but they survived. You can't get the same experience as in the hall. Not possible on TV or mobile. I feel that parallel cinema may take some to emerge in the current situation and will come in some different form. We must not forget that cinema is an art.

UV : So you mean to say there is no such category as an art film and all the movies are art?

Makwana : I am a writer, composer, lyricist, and director. I composed the music. I know how to edit and everything. It is one pot with all togetherness. For example, one says – it is a bakwas film. But we can't forget that several people have put in their efforts, whose names one may not be knowing, for the film. One has to take the movie as an art in this manner.

UV : What do you feel about the current status of the film industry. Do you think that they are taking up the real issues?

Makwana : Indian cinema is technically now excellent, but the content is fragile. They don't know about the real issues, but vernacular films know about them. People like Karan Johar will not be in a position to tell you the real story. This can be expected from regional languages. They are more connected to the ground—for example, Bollywood blockbuster Salman Khan and Akshay Kumar films.

Even if they address the real issues, they are sugar-coated.

As against this, if you see the Hollywood cinema, they are honest with themselves.

The story is about the hero. In India, it is opposites; the story changes according to heroes. (in Indian film Industry) Besides, factors, which control by the private sector, will not allow the freedom to tell the real story. They are slaves of the system in this manner. Comparing to Hindi vernacular, movies can take up issues more seriously and effectively. Take the case of Karnan (Tamil) or Asuran (Tamil). They have no famous artists, but they are pulling the crowd. Hindi cinema is in the hand of the first/second rich generation of actors & actresses, and they don't understand what real India is.

UV : Similar question I want to ask there is a kind of awareness among the Dalits in India. What is the contribution of Indian movies to that awareness? About their rights about Injustice done to them?

Makwana : Cinema in India is looked at as entertainment. The South Indian people are brilliant and use it for propaganda. You have to understand MG Ramachandran (MGR) & NT Rama Rao, those Dravidian schools of thought. They bring awareness, but Hindi cinemas are only for entertainment. This is because Hindi movies only speak about Amir and Garib, while the reality in India is the caste system. They talk about economic inequality but not social equality. When Hindi movie tells of the fundamental issues, the audience backs off. We have to understand that the real problem in India is identity. Dalits in India, who have good houses, earnings, and positions, also behave like upper caste people. It shows that Indian society is mentally prepared for equality. It will happen but will take time.

UV : What is their real identity?

Makwana : Identity. Equal identity. Someone was telling me why there should not be reservations. I told him that I agreed with him but are you ready to get rid of the caste? Once you get rid of this mental block, the reservation problem will be automatically solved. Both Dalits and non-Dalits should keep their minds open. Dalits should also remember that they have inequality amongst themselves as there are layers among them. We have to be the education in that direction and not merely for certificates.

UV : What is your next plan? Any new project?

Makwana: I am working on a film called "Sadhu (The Monk)." It is about Aghori Monk. A woman comes to India from the West, looking for spirituality, and falls in love with this monk. And her journey starts, she meets different characters. How her journey takes place, her experience of India, and how she connected with other characters in her journey... This film is more about human behaviour, like human emotion and desires. It says you can win your desire but cannot kill it. Raman Maharshi had said once that one could seek enlightenment and not killing of desire. But here also, enlightenment is a desire.

*Interviewed by Satyajit.
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*

A source of inspiration



1. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar with Mai Ambedkar taking Diksha from Mahasthvir Chandramani at Nagpur on October 14, 1956.

2. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar administering Dhamma Diksha on October 14, 1956 at Diksha Bhoomi, Nagpur.

3. Dr. Ambedkar with Bhante Chandramani during Dhamma Pravartan ceremony at Dikshabhoomi, Nagpur October 14, 1956.





Interior view of Diksha Bhoomi

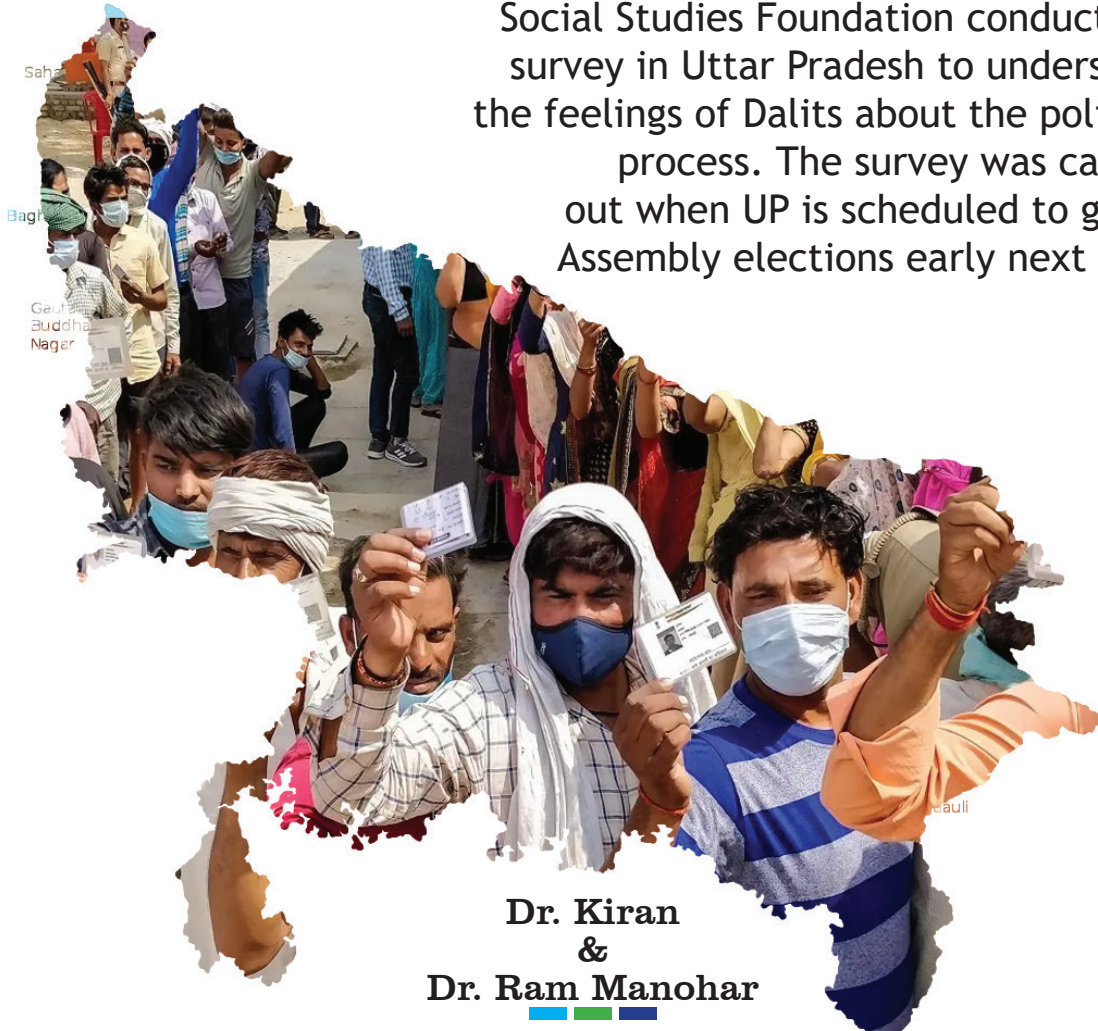


The President Shri Ram Nath Kovind during his visit to Diksha Bhoomi, at Nagpur, on September 22, 2017.



What do UP Dalits feel?

Social Studies Foundation conducted a survey in Uttar Pradesh to understand the feelings of Dalits about the political process. The survey was carried out when UP is scheduled to go for Assembly elections early next year.

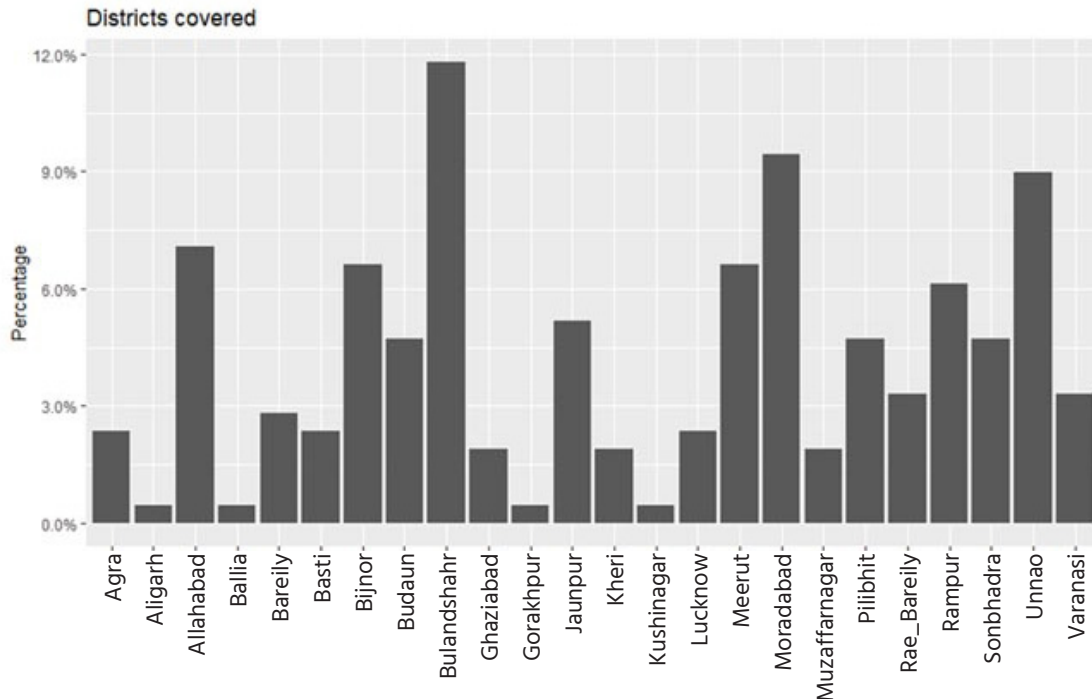


**Dr. Kiran
&
Dr. Ram Manohar**

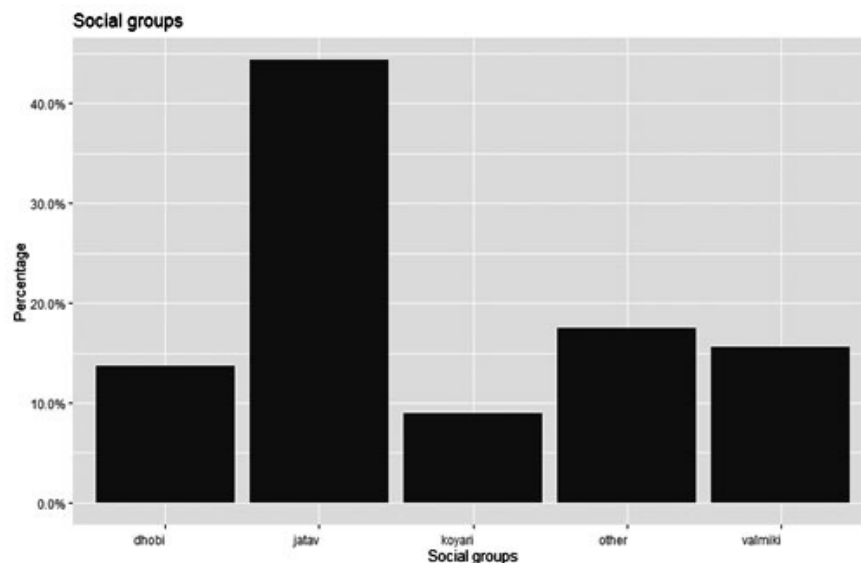


Situation and preferences of Dalits have been a persistent interest for those studying Indian social problems. We decided to have an empirical assessment of situation and political preferences of Dalit individuals. Forthcoming Uttar Pradesh election, slated in 2022, provided us an opportunity where voters are in the process of exercising their political preferences and assessing their situation to determine for whom they will vote.

Considering the limitations on field work because of current COVID pandemic, we opted for cell phone based personal interviews. We approached the voluntary organizations and colleges in Uttar Pradesh to form set of voluntary interviewers. Every interviewer was assigned to a revenue circle (district). Each interviewer was asked to interview ten adult individuals from dominant Dalit communities in Uttar Pradesh. Based on statewide proportions of various Dalit communities from population census 2011, it was decided that every interviewer will try to reach to five individuals from Jatav community, one from Kori, Dhobi and Valmiki community each and two from any other Dalit community in the said district.



212 Interviews were conducted during the period September 8 to 26, 2021 across twenty-four administrative districts of Uttar Pradesh. (Figure 1 and 2) Though sample size is not large enough, the sample is representative of distribution of important castes in Dalit population in Uttar Pradesh and is spread across regions of state of Uttar Pradesh. Thus, the findings are likely to reflect the broad trends while not able to provide more nuanced estimates.



The questionnaire (survey) consisted of three sections. The first section was about the demographic information of the participants. Apart from basic details (Name, age, gender, native place), information about the community, education and occupation was asked. The second section was aimed at understanding the experience and participation of various communities in democratic institutions, the third section was aimed to understand the effect of governmental actions on people's lives along with their expectations from the government.

Findings

The aim of the study was to study pertinent issues for various Dalit communities of Uttar Pradesh and their expectations from government institutions. In addition, our focus was also at studying participation of various Dalit communities in electoral politics. Moreover, the survey also covered questions regarding performance of past and present governments in addressing to socio-economic and cultural issues of Dalit communities and their efficacy in implementing various schemes/policies. Finally, we also sought suggestions from people for development of their communities.

Our findings suggest that around one third of the Dalits feel that they do not receive the social respect which their community deserves. Noticeable are Jatav and Valmiki communities, where 41% and 42% of people respectively, feel this way. It was followed by the Kori community where one third of the people had the same feeling. Among urban Dalit people, this percentage is 30 per cent while it is 39 per cent of rural Dalit people had the same views. In contrast to the popular perception, only 17 per cent of the Dalit people feel that they are victim of atrocities due to social inequality. As expected, the atrocity is more in rural areas where it is reported by 19 per cent respondents. As many as, 14 per cent of the semi-urban and 11 per cent of urban respondents reported atrocity in the survey.

Regarding participation in various elected posts, 25 per cent Dalits feel that their participation in governance is inadequate. The highest number of people feeling this way was from the Kori community (41 per cent). Among urban and rural Dalits, 29% of the rural Dalit participants had the same opinion. As many as 23 per cent of total participants feel that government institutions (police,tehsil, judiciary) are insensitive to their problems. This percentage is more in urban Dalits where 34 per cent people had the same feelings. Around one third - 35 per cent - of total Dalit people feel that they are not receiving adequate benefits of the reservation. Noticeably, 61% of semi-urban Dalits feel that they are not receiving proper benefits of reservation. This feeling has

less takers among urban dalits where around 30 per cent of the people carry the same view.

On being asked if the past governments (governments before the present one) paid attention to the development of various Dalit communities, 45 per cent of the Valmiki participants and 42 per cent of the Kori participants expressed dissatisfaction. This percentage was 30 and 34, respectively, for Jatav and Dhobi communities. In contrast, regarding current government's effort to uplift various Dalit communities, only 21 per cent of Kori and 15 per cent of Valmiki community, showed dissatisfaction. At the same time, 15 per cent Jatav and 14 per cent Dhobi participants had dissatisfaction with the current government's efforts.

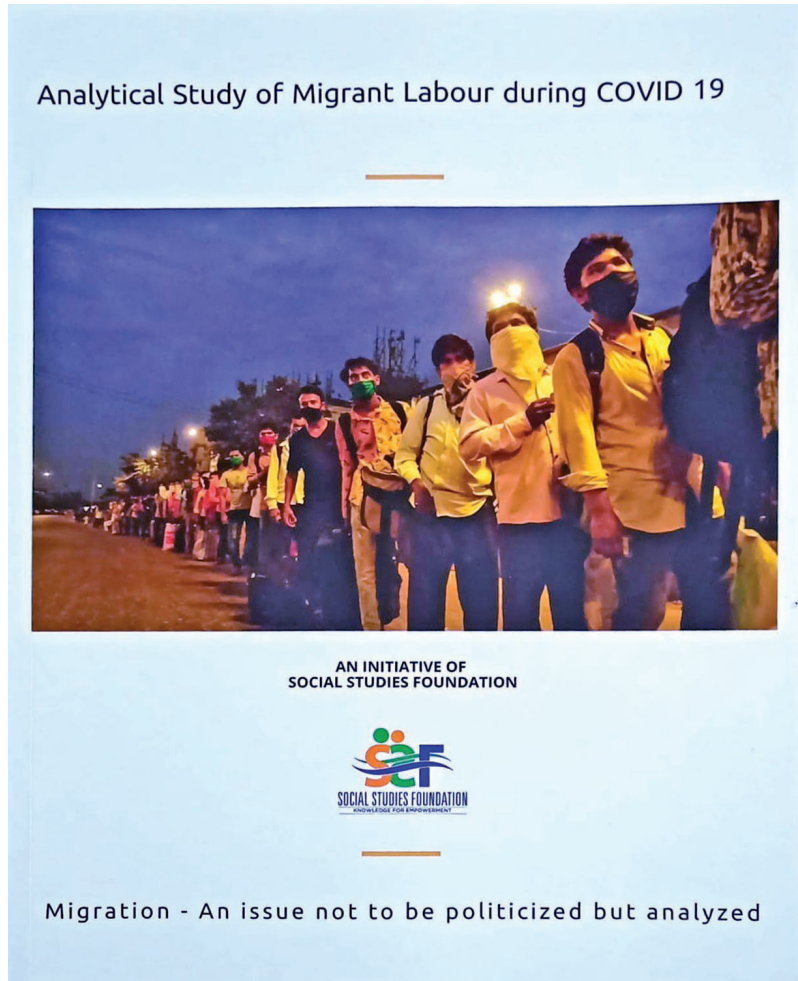
More than 75 per cent of the Valmiki participants and around 70 per cent of Dhobi participants feel that their lives had improved in the current regime. This percentage is around 62 per cent for both Kori and Jatav communities.

An important observation about voting behavior of various communities is that state and leaders' stand on various national issues matter for them. Survey shows that 47 per cent of the Kori participants had the said view. This was higher than any other Dalit community. In general, around 35% of all Dalit participants feel that the personality of a candidate is important for their voting decision. Around 20 per cent of the total participants put the opinion of their community members above all while making a decision to vote. Around 39 per cent of the total participants think that the roads have improved considerably, 37 per cent have shown satisfaction in improvement in drinking water facilities by the government. Around 78% of the total participants feel that the government should control the inflation and 85 per cent feel that the petrol/diesel prices need to be controlled. Around 66 per cent of the total respondents expressed concern over unemployment. In contrast to popular media narrative, only 22 per cent of the participants feel that the government has mismanaged the COVID situation. On the other hand, around 50 per cent of the total participants feel that the government should resolve the farmers' issues amicably.

Conclusion

The survey indicates a plurality of opinion among various Dalit communities. Specifically, the Kori and the Valmiki communities stand out in having a considerably positive perception about the current state government. Inflation and problems of farmers are matter of concern for them. But it does not indicate large scale and deep discontent among the respondents on state specific issues or management of COVID pandemic. This is in contrast to a dominant perception that says that BJP and Dalits do not go hand in hand. Therefore, deep scrutiny, going beyond the so called dominant, is needed as far as identity and preferences of Dalit voters is concerned.

E-shram portal launched for workers in unorganised sector



With the launching of E-Shram Portal, the Union government has accepted majority of the recommendations made by SSF. The portal, which was launched August this year, covers SSF suggestions. The study was about migration of laborers, covering various states in the country. A delegation of SSF had met the then minister for labor and employment Santosh Gangwar and made some recommendations.

Satyajit

The Labor and Employment ministry has launched a portal for laborers in the unorganized sector, which will be the first of its kind attempt to have scientific data to formulate the policies and implementation of various schemes.

Launched on August 26 this year, more than 1.66 crore laborers from unorganized sector have registered their names while the government estimates their number at 38 crore across the country. The ministry also plans to conduct a survey to collect systematic and scientific data of the unorganized labors.

The decision assumes significance as the Social Studies Foundation (SSF) made the demand in November 2020 when the country witnessed large-scale migration of the labor force in the aftermath

of COVID pandemic. In absence of any data, union and state governments were handicapped while extending assistance to them and also their relocation.

SSF had published a study on migration of laborers, covering various states in the country. A delegation of SSF had met the then minister for labor and employment Santosh Gangwar and made some recommendations. Many of them are being implemented with the launching of a portal.

Speaking at a function recently in Mumbai, Labor Minister Mr. Bhupendra Yadav said that they had identified as many as 400 trades and portal will provide government information on each trade. Mr. Yadav said that the government wants every worker to register his/her name with the portal so that they

Objectives of eSHRAM Portal

- Creation of a centralized database of all unorganized workers (UWs) including Construction Workers, Migrant Workers, Gig and Platform workers, Street Vendors, Domestic Workers, Agriculture Workers, etc., to be seeded with Aadhaar.
- To improve the implementation efficiency of the social security services for the unorganized workers. Integration of Social Security Schemes meant for UWs being administered by MoLE and subsequently those run by other ministries as well.
- Sharing of information in respect of registered unorganised workers with various stakeholders such as Ministries/ Departments/ Boards/ Agencies/ Organisations of the Central & State Governments through APIs for delivery of various social security and welfare schemes being administered by them.
- Portability of the social security and welfare benefits to the migrant and construction workers.
- Providing a comprehensive database to Central and State Governments for tackling any National Crises like COVID-19 in future.

Who can register in eShram (NDUW) Portal?

Any individual satisfying following conditions can register on the portal :

- An unorganised worker (UW).
- Age should be between 16-59 years.
- Not a member of EPFO/ESIC or NPS (Govt. funded)

Who is Unorganised Worker?

- Any worker who is a home based-worker, self-employed worker or a wage worker in the unorganised sector including a worker in the organised sector who is not a member of ESIC or EPFO or not a Govt. employee is called an Unorganised Worker.

What is required for registration?

Following is required to register on the portal:

- Aadhar Number
- Mobile number linked with Aadhaar.
- Savings Bank Account number with IFSC code

can avail benefits of various government schemes. Mr. Yadav also said that the workers, who have registered their names, are covered with insurance of Rs. two lakhs.

Mr. Yadav said that the government is trying to collect data even of the last man on the street. The government will soon undertake a survey of domestic and migrant workers, which is expected to give precise information about the labour force in the country. "It will also help government in formulating the policies on labor", he said.

The portal is expected to give each and every labor a distinct identity and recognition. E-Shram card will be considered as a single card to avail all the government schemes including one nation one ration card. The government also expects local self governments, PSUs and app based services to play a big role in enrolling the names of laborers.

SSF delegation, which met the then labor and employment minister Santosh Gangwar has said that the Central government can play a meaningful role by integrating efforts of concerned state governments along with NGOs, associations and other stakeholders, who are working for the migrant labour. Few recommendations made by SSF include

- * The Ministry of Labour should have a separate cell for migrant labour issues.
- * To begin with, this cell should start collecting the data on the well-being, status of migrant laborers in different destination states and Union Territories.
- * The government should open center namely Migrant Labourers Information Centre at Block

level to facilitate their well-being in source states.

- * A structured questionnaire may be included in census 2021 for aforesaid purposes.
- * The central labor ministry should collect gram panchayat level data from source state about current skill levels of the migrant laborers for appropriate upskilling.
- * Registration of migrant workers covering their Socio-economic-educational-skill background using the latest digital technologies.
- * Unique ID numbers should be given by issuing cards (like Aadhar card) which will be useful throughout the country wherever workers migrate.
- * To tackle migrant labour issues effectively in future, regular orientation programs should be organized for bureaucrats, politicians and other stakeholders for their sensitization.
- * The sociological, cultural and psychological issues such as gender equality, education to children of the migrant workers, the language barriers, the domestic violence, dignity of women, the old age problems of the migrant workers after retirement etc. needs to be addressed by the government in a planned phased manner in proposed changes in the existing migrant labour act.
- * The government can entrust such issues to the NGOs, or semi-government bodies to resolve.
- * The central and state governments should promote Small Scale Industries on a priority basis in those source districts from where the migration is rampant.

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Caste census needed or not?

The country is witnessing heated arguments over inclusion of caste in the census. One argument holds that it would help policy makers to draw their strategies so that it would reach the needy people. Another side has a fear that it would further legitimize caste system, which we want to abolish. They fear that it would sharpen the caste sentiments. We put forward both the views.



Census needed for targeted policies

Kiran Kumar

Caste Census has been creating a buzz in the country for the past few months, with political parties across the country uniting to push the demand for it. They are demanding that the caste census be included in the 2021 census. The Census is being conducted to count the demographics on various categories – age, gender, marital status, household composition, caste-SC and ST, religion, economic activities, literacy, rural-urban composition, language, disability and migration. The census is considered the most credible information for designing and implementing various public policies.

Though efforts were started in 1865-1872, the full-fledged census was started in 1881 for the first time in the history of India. The Census before Independence used to collect information related to castes of all categories. The census in 1931 collected data pertaining to castes. The data was the foundation for the First Backward Classes Commission (Kaka Kalelkar Commission) and the Second Backward Classes Commission (Mandal Commission).

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Time to look beyond caste

Bhanu Kumar

We cannot make a choice of birth identification, especially when it's coupled with the caste identity in our society. Our society wants to escape from the prevalent harsh reality of caste identity but an enumeration of caste will only fix the identity within the premise of caste itself. Rather than having any benefit, the enumeration process will simply serve to legitimize the fact that we shall forever be defined by our caste identity.

The debate around caste is misinterpreted and very narrowly discussed by some politicians, academicians, journalists, and intelligentsia. Their assumptions regarding the lived experience and intellectual understandings of how caste will function/work in India are far-off from the ground reality. In India, caste is not a religious linked structure, it is rooted in the social and political consciousness of masses. Recently, PEW Research has published a report on caste in India. The report specifies that nearly all Indians (98 percent) identify him/herself with a particular caste, regardless of

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Census needed for targeted policies

The data is crucial for making public policies related to social justice and social welfare schemes. The Commissions and committees like National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC), Justice Rohini Committee on Sub-Categorization, and other state government appointed committees are facing severe hurdles in procuring the data from different sources for analyzing the present situation of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and giving more comprehensive recommendations and policy suggestions.

In the context of evidence-based public policies, the data is critical for making such policies and for implementing the policies. Coming to the arguments brought by certain sections of the society that the caste census will divide the society based on the caste lines, we cannot ignore that the Indian caste system has already divided the society. When the government is collecting castes in Scheduled Castes and tribes-related data along with religion, how will collecting data related to OBCs and Upper Castes divide society?

The data will give inputs for the government to take effective policy-level interventions to reduce the inequalities among the castes. OBCs include Backward Castes in Hindu and Muslim religion, Scheduled Castes converted in to Christianity, Jains, and Transgender in some states. So collecting information related to OBCs will help the governments make targeted policies for the different sections of the society. Caste census will not divide the society, but it will only reflect diversity and plurality already existing in the society.

The Government has submitted the affidavit against the Caste Census in the Supreme Court, mentioning the logistical and technical issues in

the collection of the Caste Census along with the continuation of the policy being followed since independence. The National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) is already having the state-wise OBC lists. The Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India (ORGI) can explore options for taking the information for preparing the schedules for the enumerators. The advanced technologies will help the institutions to explore options for using the information to collect the data.

The Government may also explore collecting the data related to castes and can opt for not making caste-wise numbers in the public domain. They can only keep the overall percentage of OBCs and their social and educational backwardness at national and state levels in the public domain. States like Odisha do not even provide Social and Education Backward Classes (SEBC) reservations in state-level higher education institutions like engineering and medical colleges. States like Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, etc., are providing lesser than 15% OBC reservations. Some other states like Telangana reduced OBC reservations in local body elections due to legal problems.

These states have more SC and ST populations, and the Constitution provides reservations proportionate to their population. Providing reservations of anything more than 50% will face legal hurdles. The Union Government and State Governments can only convince the judiciary with proper social and educational backwardness data and extend the reservations to OBCs crossing the ceiling limit.

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Time to look beyond caste

whether they are Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Buddhist or Jain.

The demand for a caste census is deeply linked with the policy of reservations in government jobs and educational institutions by those supporting it and those opposing it look at it as a new era of social struggle. For noted political commentators like Pratap Bhanu Mehta, caste census is a 'monumental travesty'; while for Yogendra Yadav it is 'important'.

History of Caste Census:

India traces the history of the census long back from the time of its colonial past, where it was a tool to strengthen British control and create division in the society in the name of caste. The record of the caste census starts from 1871 during the British era. They started using census for understanding

and classifying the social structure. At the same time, they aimed to strengthen their system of governance and divide Hindu society. Along with this, a religious census has also been done. In such a situation, many regional parties have played their important role by doing politics of backward castes based on the census of 1931.

The British used the census to counter the emerging nationalism and to pursue their policy of divide and rule. The British administrators used census findings to institutionalize divisions amongst the people of India. This policy was changed with the passing of The Census Act 1948.

Politics of Caste and Census:

Colonial power saw caste from the western perspective, where the very understanding of the

caste system was linked to race. To have clear thoughts about caste and census we need to know about 'politics of caste'. It has largely become the politics of cowardice and hypocrisy. It has not produced much justice to the deprived sections and diverted the attention from more significant issues prevalent in our society. But what it has shaped is the fundamental distortion of our character, where the



variance between what we privately acknowledge to be true and what we profess in public increases by the day.

In March 2021, Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai stated in Parliament, "The Government of India has decided as a matter of policy not to enumerate caste-wise population other than SCs and STs in Census." But most of the non-BJP ruling states have demanded the caste census. Maharashtra government has filed an appeal in Supreme Court with a demand regarding sharing of census data of OBCs collected by the Centre in 2011-2013, in response to this petition the Central government has filed an affidavit and rejected the idea of caste census and said it "administratively difficult and cumbersome". In an affidavit, the central government cleared that Socio Economic and Caste Census 2011 was not an enumeration of Other Backward Classes, but it was a comprehensive exercise to enumerate all the information of all households in the country.

The SECC data of the households including their deprivations were used by the central government to identify the poor households and used in anti-poverty implementation programs and policy formulation. The raw and unprepared caste data has not been disclosed and has been kept with the Office of the Registrar General India, primary reason is a technical mistake in compiling data, which makes it inoperative. The Central government has told in the Supreme Court that the caste data had some serious errors and details available in the record of the

Census were not reliable either for the purpose of any reservation, whether in admission, employment, or elections to local authorities.

Caste is a Portuguese name used mostly in Spanish America in the 17th and 18th centuries to denote all mixed-race persons in post-conquest period. In India, the varna system defines Hindu society into four parts on the basis of 'karma' i.e., the work one does, while caste divides India in thousands of caste subgroups.

In such a situation, the question arises whether Hindu society can be understood from the view of caste census alone? Or in the name of caste census, efforts are being made to widen the gap of social, cultural, linguistic diversities in a manner like what the British did.

Susan Bayly, while explaining the necessity of the uniform and scientific understanding of caste in India by the colonizers has written that "the thrust on the systematic and 'scientific' understanding was to subjugate it; to name it, class and number its castes and by implication the races, was to fragment a complex and dynamic society and to draw strategic gains from its atomized constituent elements- 'recruiting the martial races, pacifying criminal tribes', dividing Brahmins and non-Brahmins in the new arena of the constitutional politics.

Supporters of caste census are over-optimistic and far from the realistic situation. The Indian state has moved towards the minimum state, where the state has limited its role as a regulator and

Colonial power saw caste from the western perspective, where the very understanding of the caste system was linked to race. To have clear thoughts about caste and census we need to know about 'politics of caste'. It has largely become the politics of cowardice and hypocrisy. It has not produced much justice to the deprived sections and diverted the attention from more significant issues prevalent in our society.

the market has emerged as the main employer of job. This is the case in education as well. To bring development and pragmatic change in our society we need to think beyond our caste identities, we need to understand that it was always a tool to divide us and not to unite us. In today's globalised world we need to shift our focus from caste to upcoming challenges like climate change, education, poverty, sustainability, deforestation, air pollution, global health.

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लॅटरल एन्ट्री का अबौद्धिक विरोध विवेकसम्मत नहीं

समस्या अधिकारी की नहीं है, समस्या इस अपेक्षा की है कि अधिकारी सब कुछ ठीक उसी दक्षता के साथ कर सकते हैं जैसा अपने जीवन के कई साल एक ही क्षेत्र में खपा चुका विशेषज्ञ। क्या ऐसा मानना उचित है? निश्चित रूप से तकनीकी विशेषज्ञ वो नहीं कर सकता जो अधिकारी क्यों कि दोनों के चयन एवं प्रशिक्षण के साथ साथ अनुभव एवं क्षेत्र का भी अंतर है।

देवेंद्र सिंह

विधितापूर्ण-बहुभाषी, बहुसांस्कृतिक, १३० करोड़ से अधिक जनसंख्या वाले भारत में सुशासन प्रदान करना किसी भी सरकार हेतु सबसे बड़ी चुनौती है। उदारीकरण व सूचना क्रांति के आगज के बाद जनता की जागरूकता एवं सरकार से अपेक्षाएं भी बहुत बढ़ गई हैं। ऐसे में जिस तंत्र पर इस व्यवस्था को चलाने की जिम्मेदारी है उसमें बदलते समय के अनुरूप परिवर्तन नहीं आ पाए हैं अर्थात हमारी 'स्टील फ्रेम' नौकरशाही में लग रहे जंग की तरफ ७० वर्ष तक शायद ध्यान ही नहीं दिया गया है। इस बार एक बड़ा

परिवर्तन 'लेटरल एन्ट्री' के माध्यम से किया गया है जिस पर भी सवाल उठने लगे हैं। क्या वास्तव में लेटरल एन्ट्री आज के समय के अनुरूप अवांछित है या कहीं हमारे बुद्धिजीवियों की सोच ही एक विचार विशेष में कैद होकर रह गई है जिस कारण इस परिवर्तन का विरोध हो रहा है।

आजादी के बाद से ही हमारी नौकरशाही की व्यवस्था लगभग अपने औपनिवेशिक स्वरूप में ही बनी रही। सिविल सेवा परीक्षा में कोठारी आयोग की अनुशंसाओं के अलावा कोई अमूलचूल परिवर्तन नहीं हुआ। यही स्थिति प्रशिक्षण के स्वरूप में भी हुई है। सेवा के दौरान प्रशिक्षण की स्थिति तथा उसके परिणाम बहुत निराशाजनक

हैं। ऐसे प्रशिक्षण औपचारिकता बन कर रह गए हैं, क्यों कि इसके बाद अधिकारियों की कार्यशैली में कोई परिवर्तन देखने को नहीं मिलता है। कुछ बेबाक अधिकारी ही आपको बता देंगे कि व्यवस्था ही ऐसी है कि अधिकारियों की ग्राह्यता खत्म होती जाती है और वे भी एक तयशुदा ढर्रे पर चल पड़ते हैं। इसकी शुरुआत मसूरी में प्रशिक्षण से ही हो जाती है। कई विशेषज्ञ समितियों की अनुशंसाएं विचाराधीन फाइलों की पंक्ति में कई दशकों से लगी हैं। ये सब वर्तमान व्यवस्था में खामियों एवं परिवर्तन के आवश्यकता के संकेतक हैं जिन्हें काफी पहले से गंभीरता से लिया जान चाहिए था। इन कारणों से कई बार यह मांग उठी है की प्रशासनिक सेवा में विशेषज्ञों की भी भर्ती हो ताकि तंत्र में प्रतिभा, विविधता, गतिशीलता बनी रहे। इसी क्रम से नीति आयोग व सचिव समूह ने फरवरी २०१७ में अपनी रिपोर्ट में मध्यम व वरिष्ठ स्तर पर सीधी भर्ती का सुझाव दिया। राज्यसभा में पूछे गए प्रश्नों के उत्तर में कार्मिक राज्यमंत्री ने बताया कि, विशेषज्ञता व क्षेत्र विशेषज्ञ में ज्ञान को देखते हुए भारत सरकार ने इससे पूर्व भी बहुत सुविज्ञ लोगों की नियुक्ति तंत्र में की है। इसी तरह लेटरल एंट्री के माध्यम से सरकार प्रतिभा व मानव संसाधन उपयोगिता के दोहरे लक्ष्य को अर्जित करना चाहती है। इस प्रकार यह व्यवस्था शुरू हुई कि विशेषज्ञों की आवश्यकता अनुसार अनुबंध के आधार पर सीधे संयुक्त सचिव स्तर पर नियुक्ति की जाएगी। इसमें पहले विज्ञापन के साथ ही आलोचनाएं शुरू हो गईं जो विश्लेषण कम, विरोध अधिक जान पड़ती हैं।

पहला शोर इस बात को लेकर मचाया गया कि ऐसे कैसे सीधे किसी को संयुक्त सचिव बना सकते हैं। इतने महत्वपूर्ण फैसले भला कोई अन्य (अखिल भारतीय सेवा के अलावा) व्यक्ति कैसे ले सकता है। क्या सिविल सेवा परीक्षा में 'युवा', प्रेरित व प्रतिभाशाली'

प्रतिभाओं का इस्तेमाल बदलती परिस्थितियों में नई चुनौतियों से निपटने हेतु बहुत उपयोगी हो सकता है। यदि सरकार ऐसा करती है तो वह कैसे समस्या का कारण बन जायेगा, समझ से परे है। निजी क्षेत्र में विशेषज्ञता पर जोर है, इसी विचार से हमारे देश में भी भारतीय शिक्षा सेवा, भारतीय न्यायिक सेवा की पुरजोर मांग की जा रही है ताकि क्षेत्र के ही अनुभवी व्यक्ति अधिक दक्षता के साथ कार्य संपादन करते हुए अपने पद व दायित्व के साथ न्याय कर सकें।

अधिकारी नहीं चुने जाते? फिर इस बात पर हो-हल्ला मचाया कि इसमें आरक्षण का कोई प्रावधान न होने के कारण यह व्यवस्था सामाजिक न्याय के विरुद्ध है। इसमें स्पष्ट उल्लेख होना चाहिए था कि किस प्रकार से आरक्षण व्यवस्था लागू की जाएगी। इन आरोपों से संतोष ना होने पर कई विचारवान विशेषज्ञों ने इस माध्यम से चुने जाने वाले लोक सेवकों की पूर्व निष्ठा व वर्तमान निष्ठा पर भी सवाल उठाने प्रारंभ कर दिए।

वस्तुतः ऐसे आरोप सतही व वर्तमान परिस्थितियों से अनभिज्ञता के परिचायक हैं। शायद आलोचक भूल जाते हैं कि विज्ञान व प्रौद्योगिकी विभाग के सचिव प्रशासनिक सेवा से नहीं होते। आज

जब सरकार के काम-काज एवं उससे अपेक्षाओं में परिवर्तन हुआ है तो व्यवस्था भी उसी अनुरूप बदलनी होगी, नहीं तो तंत्र की स्थिति रुके हुए पानी जैसी हो जायेगी। इसे नए निर्णय के अनुसार सरकार उच्च पदों पर उन्हें भी नियुक्त कर सकती है जिन्होंने संघ लोक सेवा आयोग की सिविल सेवा परीक्षा उत्तीर्ण नहीं की। वे निजी क्षेत्र, विश्वविद्यालय, सामाजिक क्षेत्र के विशेषज्ञ, इंजीनियर, डॉक्टर, वैज्ञानिक, कोई भी हो सकते हैं जिनकी आवश्यकता सरकार को है। इन प्रतिभाओं का इस्तेमाल बदलती परिस्थितियों में नई चुनौतियों से निपटने हेतु बहुत उपयोगी हो सकता है। यदि सरकार ऐसा करती है तो वह कैसे समस्या का कारण बन जायेगा, समझ से परे है। निजी क्षेत्र में विशेषज्ञता पर जोर है, इसी विचार से हमारे देश में भी भारतीय शिक्षा सेवा, भारतीय न्यायिक सेवा की पुरजोर मांग की जा रही है ताकि क्षेत्र के ही अनुभवी व्यक्ति अधिक दक्षता के साथ कार्य संपादन करते हुए अपने पद व दायित्व के साथ न्याय कर सकें।



समस्या अधिकारी की नहीं है, समस्या इस अपेक्षा की है कि अधिकारी सब कुछ ठीक उसी दक्षता के साथ कर सकते हैं जैसा अपने जीवन के कई साल एक ही क्षेत्र में खपा चुका विशेषज्ञ। क्या ऐसा मानना उचित है? निश्चित रूप से तकनीकी विशेषज्ञ वो नहीं कर सकता जो अधिकारी क्यों कि दोनों के चयन एवं प्रशिक्षण के साथ साथ अनुभव एवं क्षेत्र का भी अंतर है। इसका यह अर्थ नहीं की इनमें विरोधाभास है। आवश्यकता है इन्हें पूरक के रूप में देखने की। प्रशासन के क्षेत्र में जहाँ विशुद्ध प्रशासक की आवश्यकता है वहाँ वे ही नियुक्त हों और जहाँ विशेषज्ञ की कुछ समय हेतु आवश्यकता है वहाँ विशेषज्ञ नियुक्त हों ताकि देश एवं नागरिकों के कार्य अधिक कुशलता एवं दक्षता से सम्पादित हो सकें।

इस प्रश्न को पुरानी सोच से उठकर अंतर्राष्ट्रीय प्रशासनिक व्यवस्थाओं से तुलना करते हुए देखे जाने की आवश्यकता है। बात सिर्फ इतनी सी है कि अनुबंध के आधार पर सरकार विवेकानुसार विशेषज्ञों की सेवा ले रही है। मूर्छित होती जा रही व्यवस्था को थोड़ा झिझोड़ने का यह प्रयास स्वागत योग्य है। इसके सर्वश्रेष्ठ उपयोग हेतु इसमें सुधार किए जा सकते हैं परंतु इस विचार का अबौद्धिक विरोध विवेकसम्मत नहीं है। आवश्यकता है तो इस प्रकार के अन्य मार्ग खोजने की जिनसे देश की व्यवस्था को वे प्रतिभाएं मिल सके जिनका देश हकदार है।

**(‘अखिल भारतीय प्रशासकीय परीक्षाओं में भाषाई न्याय’
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'हरिजन' से 'अनुसूचित जाति' : एक प्रवास

गांधीजी की जयंती पर विशेष लेख

आपत्तियों के बाद भी हरिजन शब्द का प्रभाव दलित समुदाय के साथ भारतीय समाजपर समान रूप से पड़ा। हरिजन शब्द ने मंदिर प्रवेश आन्दोलन में ईंधन का काम किया। तथाकथित सर्वर्ण भी अपने आपको हरिजन सेवा में लगाने के लिए तैयार होना, हरिजन शब्द का ही प्रताप था। इसका प्रभाव दक्षिण की अपेक्षा उत्तर भारत में अधिक रहा।



मूलचंद्र सिंह

भारतीय संविधान की प्रस्तावना में सामाजिक, आर्थिक और राजनैतिक न्याय की अवधारणा का उल्लेख किया है। यहाँ संविधान सभा के सदस्यों की प्राथमिकता, संबंधित दृष्टिकोण का भी पता चलता है। हम न्याय की इस अवधारणा को देखें तो सर्वप्रथम सामाजिक न्याय का महत्व अधिक प्रतीत होता है। क्यों कि सामाजिक समानता, आर्थिक समृद्धि तथा राजनीतिक प्रतिनिधित्व किसी भी समाज की प्रगति के मूल आधार हैं। जब भारत परतंत्रता की जंजीरों को तोड़कर, स्वतंत्र होना चाहता था, तब अंग्रेज इन जंजीरों को और मजबूत करने का प्रयास कर रहे थे। वे भारत की राजनैतिक सत्ता में बने रहकर इसका आर्थिक शोषण करने की दीर्घकालिक योजना बना रहे थे। इसी योजना की एक नीति थी 'फूट डालो और राज करो'। इस नीति का प्रयोग सबसे पहले राजनीतिक रूप से करने के तत्पश्चात् इसको सामाजिक रूप से लागू किया गया। समाज में आई विकृतियों का लाभ लेने के लिए उन्होंने उसे और विकराल करने का प्रयास किया। जिन में सबसे महत्वपूर्ण विकृति अस्पृश्यता सम्बंधित थी।

सविनय अवज्ञा आंदोलन के समय ब्रिटेन में गोलमेज सम्मेलन का आयोजन किया गया। इस सम्मेलन में भारत के लगभग सभी दलों, समुदायों के

प्रतिनिधि आमंत्रित थे। इसमें दलित समुदाय के प्रतिनिधि डॉ. बाबासाहेब तथा भीमराव अंबेडकरजी ने तीनों सम्मेलनों में भाग लिया। कांग्रेस के प्रतिनिधि के रूप में महात्मा गांधीजी ने केवल द्वितीय गोलमेज सम्मेलन में भाग लिया। गोलमेज सम्मेलन का परिणाम दलितों के लिए पृथक निर्वाचन मण्डल प्रणाली के रूप में सामने आया। इसके दुष्परिणामों एवं अंग्रेजों की दुर्भावना को देखते हुए गाँधीजी ने इसका विरोध किया। गाँधीजी के आमरण अनशन को बाबासाहेब अंबेडकरजी के साथ हुए 'पूना समझौता' द्वारा समाप्त किया गया। पृथक निर्वाचन प्रणाली द्वारा अछूतों को सदा अछूत रहने से बचा लिया गया, सर्वर्ण व अवर्ण के होनेवाले चिरकालिक बैर को होनेसे बचा लिया गया। सबसे महत्वपूर्ण राष्ट्र को टूटने से बचा लिया गया।

हरिजन शब्द की उत्पत्ति

सन १९२० से ही अछूतोद्धार के लिए कार्यरत, महात्मा गाँधीजी ने 'पूना समझौता' के पश्चात जीवन का सर्वाधिक समय अछूतोद्धार के लिए समर्पित करने का निश्चय किया। अनशन के दौरान मंदिर प्रवेश आंदोलन ने सफलता के द्वार में प्रवेश कर लिया था। उसके पश्चात 'हरिजन सेवक संघ' की स्थापना की, जिसके तत्वावधान में ११ फरवरी १९३३ से 'हरिजन' नामक अंग्रेजी, बाद में गुजराती में 'हरिजन-बंधु' तथा हिंदी में 'हरिजन-सेवक' नाम से समाचार पत्र

प्रकाशित किए। यहीं से दलितों के लिए 'हरिजन' शब्द का व्यापक उपयोग होना शुरू हुआ। हरिजन शब्द के उपयोग के बारे में जब गांधीजी से पूछा गया तो उन्होंने लिखा कि, काठियावाड़ के एक अछूत भाई ने लिखा था कि 'अंत्यज', 'अछूत', 'अस्पृश्य' नाम से उन भाइयों को दुख होता है। इसी भाई ने बताया कि भक्त कवि नरसिंह मेहता ने दलितों के लिए अपने भजनों में हरिजन शब्द का उपयोग किया है। इस विचार को सुनकर गांधीजी के मन में अस्पृश्यता शब्द से घृणा उत्पन्न हुई तथा हरिजन शब्द के भाव को समझकर उसे प्रयोग करना प्रारंभ किया।

हरिजन शब्द का अर्थ

हरिजन शब्द का अर्थ बताते हुए गांधीजी ने लिखा है कि, हरिजन वह व्यक्ति है, जो ईश्वर का प्रिय, ईश्वर का भक्त, ईश्वर का प्यारा हो। संसार भर के धर्म ईश्वर को अनाथों का मित्र, बेसहारों का सहारा, निर्बलों का रक्षक बताते हैं। गांधीजी आगे लिखते हैं, ईश्वर की प्रतिज्ञा है कि वह दुखियों का बेली, दया का सागर, अशक्तों को शक्ति देनेवाला, निर्बलों का बल, पंगु का पैर, अंधों की आंख है, इसलिए दलित लोग उसके प्यारे होने ही चाहिए।

हरिजन शब्द पर आपत्तियां

हरिजन शब्द पर कई तरह की आपत्तियां प्रारंभ से ही की जाती रही हैं। इन आपत्तिकर्ताओं में दलित नेता और रूढ़िवादी सनातन धर्मी भी शामिल थे। इन आपत्तिकर्ताओं को निम्न लिखित पांच वर्गों में रखा जा सकता है :-

1. दलित नेतृत्व की आपत्ति : दलितों के सर्वाधिक स्वीकृत नेता डॉ. भीमराव अंबेडकरजी ने हरिजन शब्द पर प्रत्यक्ष आपत्ति नहीं की, लेकिन उन्हें महात्मा गांधीजी की अस्पृश्यता की अवधारणा पर आपत्ति थी। उनका मानना था कि जबतक वर्ण व्यवस्था से उत्पन्न जाति व्यवस्था को समाप्त नहीं कर दिया जाता, तब तक छुआछूत समाप्त नहीं होगी, दलितों की मुक्ति का मार्ग नहीं खुलेगा। महात्मा गांधीजी का मानना था कि छुआछूत हिन्दू समाज की पवित्र जाति व्यवस्था में रोग के समान है। रोग ठीक हो जाए तो जाति व्यवस्था स्वयं ही अपने पवित्र स्वरूप में प्रकट हो जाएगी। तमाम तर्कों के बाद भी डॉ. अंबेडकरजी ने हरिजन शब्द के स्थान पर दलित या अछूत कहना ही उचित समझा।
2. दक्षिण भारतीय दलित समुदायों की आपत्ति : दक्षिण भारत में इस शब्द को देवदासी प्रथा से जोड़ा गया है। मंदिरों में ईश्वर की सेवा में रहनेवाली देवदासी की संतान को, जिसके पिता का कोई पता नहीं उसे हरिजन के रूप में देखा जाता था। इसलिए दक्षिण भारत में इस शब्द को गाली के रूप में भी माना जाता है।
3. दलित समुदाय में राजनीतिक एकता स्थापित करनेवालों की आपत्ति : कुछ दलित नेता, समाज सुधारक हरिजन शब्द से इसलिए संबंध नहीं रखना चाहते क्यों कि इससे उनकी राजनीतिक एकता स्थापित करने में बाधा होती है। कुछ विद्वान, दलित शब्द उनको हजारों सालों से हो रहे शोषण का आभास कराने हेतु अधिक उपयुक्त समझते थे, उससे इस समुदाय में एकता स्थापित करना अधिक सहज होता है।
4. सामाजिक समरसता स्थापित करनेवालों की आपत्ति : कुछ

समाज सुधारक दलित, शोषित, वंचित वर्ग के लिए किसी भी अलग शब्द के उपयोग के विरुद्ध है। उनका मानना है कि, किसी को अलग शब्द से पुकारने पर वह पृथक रूप से चिन्हित हो जाता है, उसके प्रति किए गए अच्छे व्यवहार को भी वह यह समझकर स्वीकार करता है कि, मैं हरिजन हूँ इसलिए आप ऐसा कर रहे हो। इन लोगों का मानना है, नाम ही आपकी पहचान होने के कारण जाति या पहचान सूचक किसी भी शब्द का उपयोग न किया जाए, वही बेहतर है।

5. रूढ़िवादी सनातनियों की आपत्ति : रूढ़िवादी सनातनी हरिजन शब्द के इसलिए विरोध में थे क्यों कि वे समाज में ऊँच-नीच और भेद-भाव को पूर्व जन्मों के कर्मों का फल मानते थे और अपने सर्वोच्चता के भाव में किसी भी प्रकार की कमी नहीं करना चाहते थे।

हरिजन शब्द का समाजपर प्रभाव

आपत्तियों के बाद भी हरिजन शब्द का प्रभाव दलित समुदाय के साथ भारतीय समाजपर समान रूप से पड़ा। हरिजन शब्द ने मंदिर प्रवेश आन्दोलन में ईंधन का काम किया। तथाकथित सवर्ण भी अपने आपको हरिजन सेवा में लगाने के लिए तैयार होना, हरिजन शब्द का ही प्रताप था। इसका प्रभाव दक्षिण की अपेक्षा उत्तर भारत में अधिक

हरिजन शब्द का सम्पूर्ण समाज ईश्वर की संतान है, ये दार्शनिक महत्व है। मानव कृत भेदभाव को समाप्त करने के लिए सबको हरिजन के भाव को आत्मसात करना होगा। लेकिन राजनैतिक दृष्टिकोण ने इसके मूल स्वभाव को समाज में आत्मसात नहीं होने दिया, इसलिए संविधान सभा में लगभग हर व्यक्तिद्वारा उपयोग किए जानेवाले हरिजन शब्द को त्यागना पड़ा। सितंबर 209८ से तो केवल संवैधानिक शब्दावली 'अनुसूचित जाति' के ही प्रयोग की अनुमति है।

रहा। अनुसूचित जाति - अनुसूचित जनजाति एक्ट, हरिजन एक्ट के नाम से गांव-गांव में प्रचलित हुआ। गांधीजी का यह शब्द केवल दलित समुदायों के लिए तथा सवर्ण कहनेवाले समुदायों के प्रायश्चित के लिए भी था। वे कहते थे कि आप भी हरिजन बनने का प्रयास कीजिए।

हरिजन शब्द का, सम्पूर्ण समाज ईश्वर की संतान है, ये दार्शनिक महत्व है। मानव कृत भेदभाव को समाप्त करने के लिए सबको हरिजन के भाव को आत्मसात करना होगा। लेकिन राजनैतिक दृष्टिकोण ने इसके मूल स्वभाव को समाज में आत्मसात नहीं होने दिया, इसलिए संविधान सभा में लगभग हर व्यक्तिद्वारा उपयोग किए जानेवाले हरिजन शब्द को त्यागना पड़ा। सितंबर 209८ से तो केवल संवैधानिक शब्दावली 'अनुसूचित जाति' के ही प्रयोग की अनुमति है।

अंततः गाँधीजी का कथन, 'हरिजन शब्द से दलितों के जीवनस्तर में कोई बदलाव नहीं आएगा लेकिन उनके और शेष समाज के मनोभावों पर अवश्य ही प्रभाव पड़ेगा। जो उनको हीन भावना से बाहर निकालने के लिए उपयुक्त है। अतः राष्ट्र की सर्वांगीण उन्नति के लिए आवश्यक, सामाजिक एकता और सद्भाव के लिए निरंतर प्रयास होने चाहिए।

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