

# UNHEARD VOICES

14 MAY 2021 | Year 1 | Vol. 2



26th May  
Buddha Pournima



14th May  
Sri Basaveshwara  
birth anniversary



22nd May  
Raja Ram Mohan Roy  
birth anniversary



27th May  
Mata Ramabai  
Ambedkar death  
anniversary



28th May  
Birth anniversary  
of social reformer  
V. D. Savarakar



30th May  
Sant Chokhamela  
birth anniversary



31st May  
Punyashlok  
Ahilyabai Holkar  
birth anniversary

# EDITORIAL

## Bhagwan Buddha in present context

The entire world is passing through COVID-19 crisis, creating fear and anxiety among human beings. It is a matter of debate whether COVID-19 is the result of a biological war or a natural accident. However, the calamity of COVID-19 has once again underlined the teachings of Bhagwan Buddha. Scientists may have found some medical solution to COVID pandemic but the mute question remains whether, as human beings, we have demonstrated our limitations. Why the people have failed to show much needed restraint during the current crisis.

The answer lies in the philosophy of Bhagwan Buddha. "Trishna" (craving) is the cause of "human sufferings". Currently, human beings are experiencing sufferings but have been unable to show self-restraint thanks to the strong desire for materialistic pleasure. The world would have been different, had we followed the path of Bhagwan Buddha.

Bhagwan Buddha, Dhamma Pravartak and one of those Indian philosophers gave India its real identity as Bharat. Bhagwan Buddha is one of those scholars, whose thoughts and teachings have been nourishing the Indian psyche for centuries. Bhagwan Buddha is the polymath, whose wide knowledge and deep understanding of human pain, sufferings and Psychology does not have geographical limitations.

The world has seen a number of scholars. Some of them offered solutions to the contemporary problems while others structured some philosophy on the basis of their vision. However, Bhagwan Buddha is "rarest among the rare" who found answers to the eternal questions of human beings. We are facing the same problems for ages, manifested in different forms as we forgot the path of Bhagwan Buddha.

The modern world, which is said to

begin from the industrial revolution, is largely driven by consumerism. In fact, many of the incidents in the past four/five centuries are said to be a fall out of competition among the countries to capture new markets. While imperialism is the ugly manifestation of this competition, we are always scared of the third world war because of the same unchanged attitude. Bhagwan Buddha found out reasons for these situations, which all of us face in personal life or as a society.

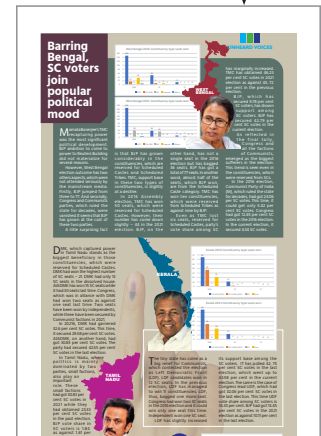
In the given scenario, are we ready to take some pause for deep self-introspection? Are we prepared to re-examine the old path, which we have been following for years? There is a reason to be optimistic, as large a number of people, irrespective of their citizenship, is attracted to the thoughts of Bhagwan Buddha.

When the world is looking for an ideological alternative for healthy human life, it is the philosophy of Bhagwan Buddha, which will rejuvenate us. Bhagwan Buddha's teachings have the potential to emancipate human beings from all the sufferings. It is because of Bhagwan Buddha that India is placed at the centre stage to take the world in a new direction.

Every individual is currently engaged in struggle in his personal or family life. Nations are fighting against each other either on boundary issue or to capture the new market. Unending greed, which Bhagwan Buddha, realized as one of the basic reason for human sufferings, is the main cause of the current stressful scenario. Attitude to rule or dominate has no place in the new world order, for which all of us are waiting eagerly. Bhagwan Buddha means a state of awakening. On the occasion of Buddha Pournima, let us hope that human beings are awakened. Let us work in that direction.

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# Barring Bengal, SC voters join popular political mood

Mamata Banerjee's TMC recapturing power was the most significant political development. BJP ambition to come to power to Reuters Building did not materialize for several reasons. However, West Bengal election outcome has two others aspects, which were not attended seriously by the mainstream media. Firstly, BJP jumped from three to 77. And secondly, Congress and Communists parties, which ruled the state for decades, were vanished. It seems that BJP has grown at the cost of these two parties.

is that BJP has grown considerably in the constituencies, which are reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. TMC, support base in these two types of constituencies, is slightly at a decline.

In 2016 Assembly election, TMC has won 50 seats, which were reserved for Scheduled Castes. However, their number has come down slightly – 44 in the 2021 election. BJP, on the

other hand, has not a single seat in the 2016 election but has bagged 36 seats. BJP has got a total of 77 seats. In another word, almost half of the seats, which BJP won, are from the Scheduled Caste category. TMC has won ten constituencies, which were reserved from Scheduled Tribes as against nine by BJP.

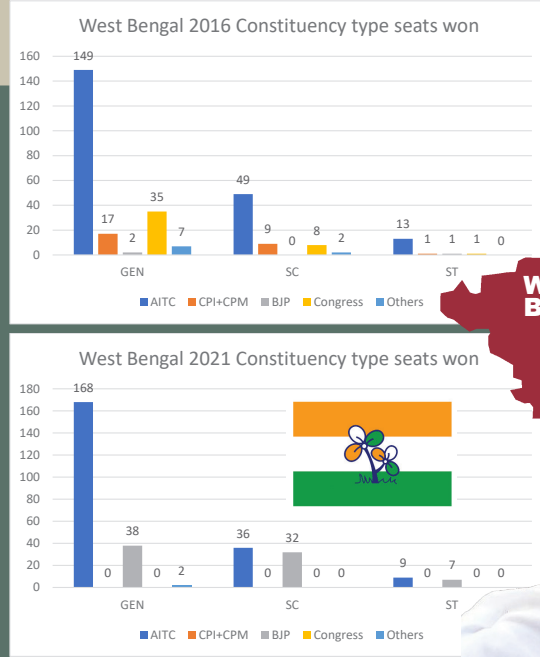
Even as TMC lost six seats, reserved for Scheduled Castes, party's vote share among SC

has marginally increased. TMC has obtained 46.23 per cent SC votes in 2021 election as against 45.72 per cent in the previous election.

BJP, which has secured 9.78 per cent SC voters, has shown support among SC voters. BJP has secured 42.79 per cent SC votes in the current election.

As reflected in the final tally, Congress and all the factions of Communists, emerged as the biggest sufferers in the election. This trend is seen even in the constituencies, which were reserved from SCs.

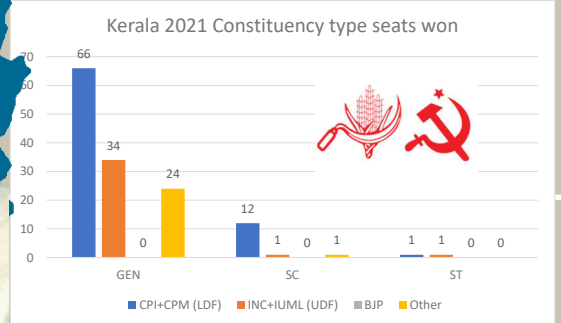
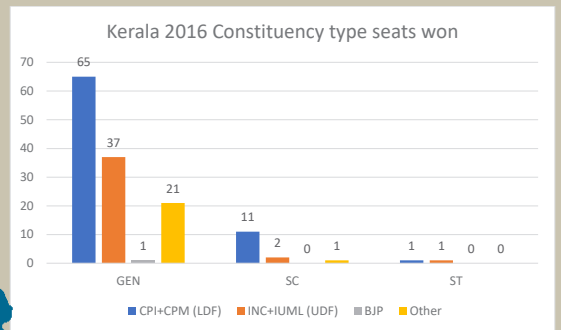
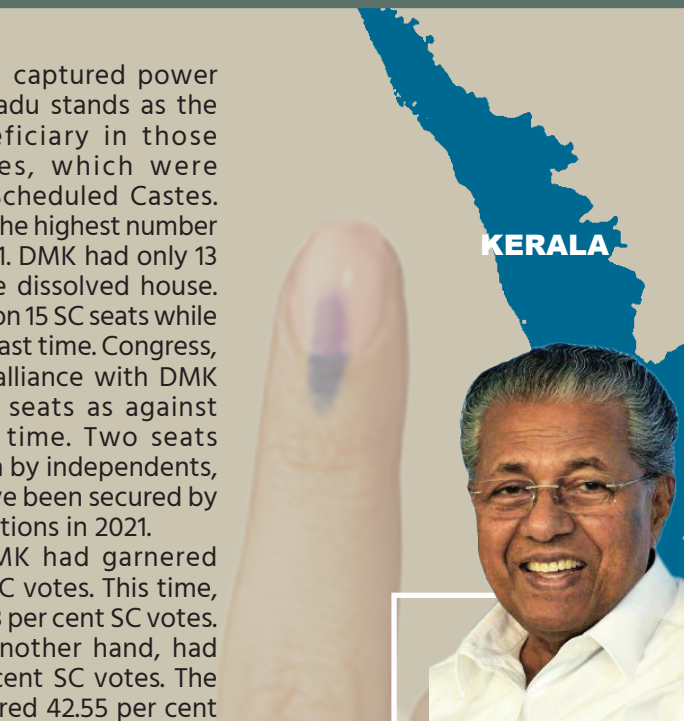
In the 2016 election, Communist Party of India (M), which ruled the state for decades, had got 24.06 per cent SC votes. This time, it could get only 5.42 per cent SC votes. Congress had got 12.45 per cent SC votes in the 2016 election. In the current election, it secured 4.34 SC votes.



DMK, which captured power in Tamil Nadu stands as the biggest beneficiary in those constituencies, which were reserved for Scheduled Castes. DMK had won the highest number of SC seats – 21. DMK had only 13 SC seats in the dissolved house. AIADMK has won 15 SC seats while it had 30 seats last time. Congress, which was in alliance with DMK had won two seats as against one seat last time. Two seats have been won by independents, while three have been secured by Communist factions in 2021.

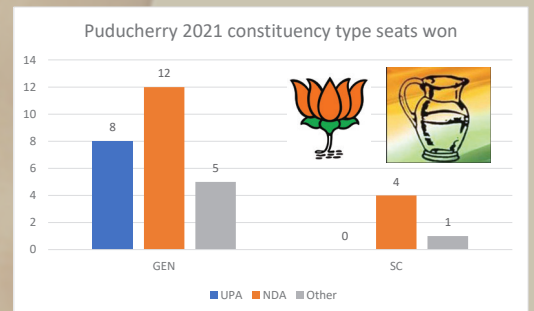
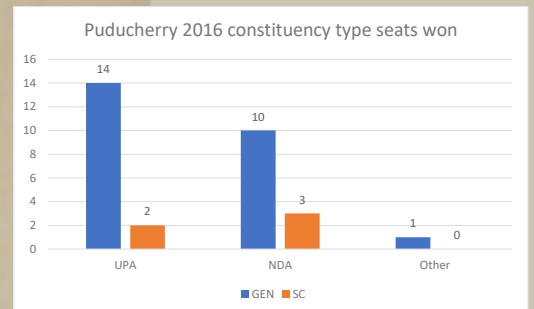
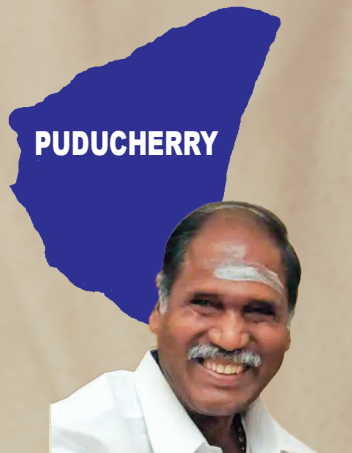
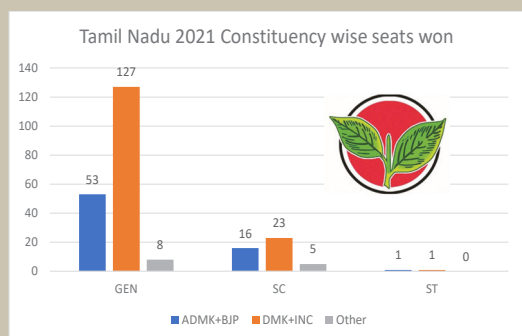
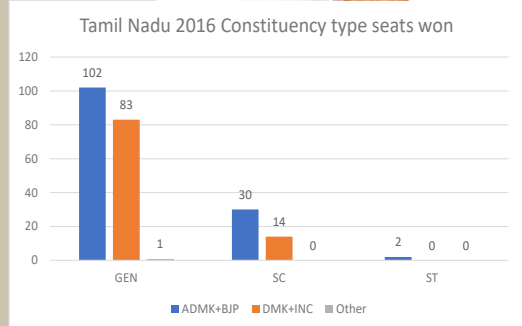
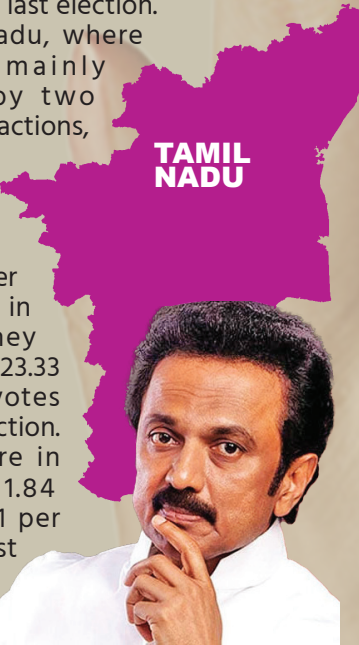
In 2016, DMK had garnered 32.6 per cent SC votes. This time, it secured 29.58 per cent SC votes. AIADMK, on another hand, had got 30.83 per cent SC votes. The party had secured 42.55 per cent SC votes in the last election.

In Tamil Nadu, where politics is mainly dominated by two parties, small factions, also play an important role. These small factions had got 30.83 per cent SC votes in 2021 while they had obtained 23.33 per cent SC votes in the past election. BJP vote share in SC voters is 1.84 as against 1.61 per cent in the last election.



The tiny state has come as a big relief for Communists, which contested the election as Left Democratic Front (LDF). LDF candidates won in 12 SC seats. In the previous election, LDF has managed to win 11 constituencies. LDF, thus, bagged one more seat. Congress had won two SC seats in the 2016 election and it could win only one seat this time. Independent won one SC seat. LDF has slightly increased

its support base among the SC voters. IT has polled 42.75 per cent SC votes in the last election, which went up to 43.58 per cent in the current election. The same is the case of Congress lead UDF, which had got 32.06 per cent SC votes in the last election. This time UDF vote share among SC voters is 35.33 per cent. BJP had got 13.45 per cent SC votes in the 2021 election as against 10.11 per cent in the last election.



Puducherry, the only Union Territory, which went for the Assembly seats, has total of 30 seats and three members are nominated by the central government. It has five seats, which are reserved for Scheduled Castes. AINRC, which emerged as the single largest party, has bagged three SC seats. BJP won one seat while one went to an

independent candidate. In previous 2016 election, Congress, which formed the government, had won three seats while AINRC had bagged one.

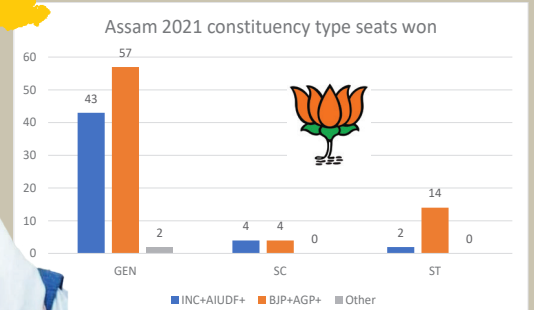
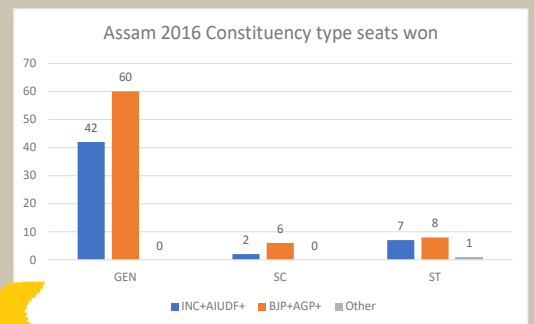
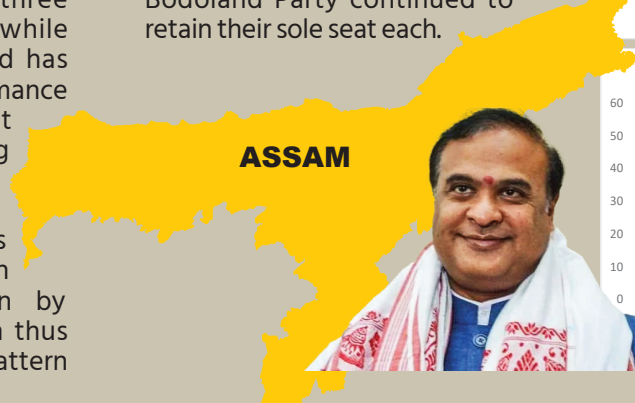
Assam, which has 126 Assembly seats, has given a verdict in favour of BJP for the second consecutive time. Congress, which is another dominant player in the state, had to face defeat in this state.

Assam has total eight seats, which are reserved for Scheduled Castes (SC). BJP has won three seats in the fresh verdict while its ally Assam Gan Parishad has bagged one seat. BJP performance continued to be the same as it had won four seats, including one by AGP in the 2016 election.

Congress has retained three seats as in the previous election by winning three seats. Assam thus did not reflect the voting pattern

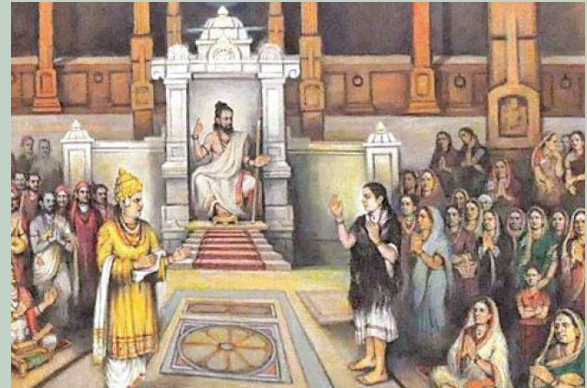
in those constituencies, which are reserved for SCs.

In the constituencies, reserved for Scheduled Tribes, BJP and its allies won seven seats as against nine seats in the 2016 election. United Peoples Party banned five seats while it had won five in the last election. Congress and Bodoland Party continued to retain their sole seat each.



# Anubhav Mantapa : Unique experiment by Sri Basveshwara

Anubhav Mantapa was a unique experiment by Sri Basveshwara 900 years back. It sends a strong signal of social equality as anybody could participate, irrespective of caste, sex, education or on any other ground. The most significant feature of Anubhav Mantapa was that the participant could raise any issues or ask questions from materialistic to spiritual life.



**Mahadevayya  
Karadalli  
Vijendra  
Sonawane**

**B**hakti, Social harmony, Morality and Equality are the ethos of teachings of Sri Basveshwara, who launched various experiments 900 years ago. Sri Basveshwara advocated for equality with samarasya, rejecting discrimination on any ground – be it sex or caste. Eradication of poverty, caste system and superstitions were the life mission of Sri Basveshwara. He started various activities for all-around development of common man lifestyle. Anubhava Mantapa stands as a novel experiment among them. ANUBHAVA MANATAPA launched by Sri Basveshwara, was ahead of his times, manifests his deep faith in equality and vision.

Anubhav Mantapa for moral and spiritual values in life

While we are pressing for participative and transparent

democracy, Anubhava Mantapa can still guide the world not only to nourish democratic values but also to hope for a healthy social life, which is the ultimate goal of all the ideologies. The principles of Anubhav Mantapa have all the potential to lead a materialistic, intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual life. Anubhav Mantapa used to be a public assembly of Sharanas in which men and women, irrespective of their caste and economic status, were allowed to participate. All the men and women, with good conduct and devotion, could be part of Anubhav Mantapa. They were expected to follow the principles of Kayaka (working with sincerity), Dasoha (to feed the needy) and self-reliance. All three principles have great significance when the entire world is searching for moral and spiritual guidance to get free from the current problematic situations.

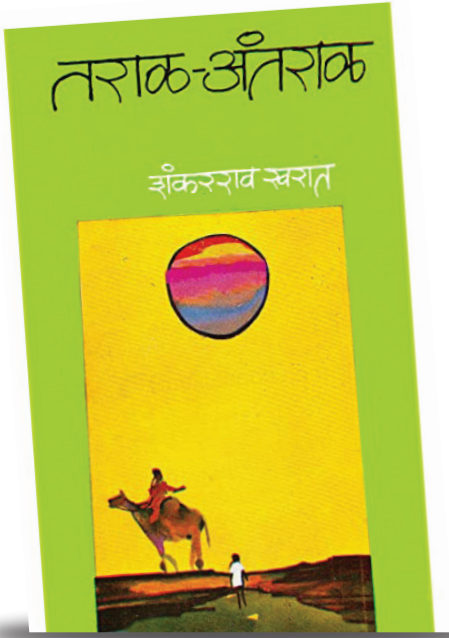
The most significant feature of Anubhav Mantapa was that the participant could raise any issues or ask questions from

materialistic to spiritual life. Practical problems being faced by the participants were discussed freely to find suitable solutions. Discussions include various angles of knowledge, such as hearing the elders, by seeing the work of experts, self-study and practical experiences. It helped to cultivate an attitude to listen to others – what is now described – “tolerance”, which is even relevant in the current social and political hostility. The practice of healthy debate and discussion helped to inculcate democratic values and principles among the participants of the Anubhav Mantapa.

We need to understand that revolution with a positive attitude had happened in 12th century i.e. 900 years ago itself. It happened when society was not merely divided on basis of caste but the entire decision-making process was based on birth rather than worth. Sri Basveshwara, thus, tried to rejuvenate the society with a modified set of conducts that had equality as its guiding principle. Sri Basveshwara, thus, asked the people **(Page 10)**



# Taral Antral : A landmark Dalit autobiography



Published in 1981, Taral Antral was the most sought Marathi autobiography, when Dalit literature was taking shape. Kharat, who had worked with Dr B R Ambedkar, wrote the unseen side of India - which is inhuman. Taral Antral is considered as a landmark book as it strengthened Dalit literature in Marathi. Kharat is known as one of the pioneers of Dalit literature. Significance of the book on the occasion of Kharat's birth anniversary, which will begin next month.

## Dr Rushikesh Bhimrao Kamble

Many Oppressive and inhuman customs prevailed in our society. Such customs were accepted by even the oppressed class as the punishment meted out to them by none else but the God himself. Though many Saints denounced untouchability, serious attempts to condemn it began only in the 19th century when reformers like Mahatma Phule, Justice M G Ranade, Balkrishna Jambhekar, Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, Maharshi Dhondo Keshav Karve, Justice Kashinathrao Telang and Justice Chandavarkar started taking a stand for equality. This underlines the importance of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar's crusade for liberating mankind from the chains of slavery in all forms. All this background needs to be considered when one looks at the life and work of eminent Marathi writer Shankarrao Kharat, the author of the celebrated Marathi autobiography Taral-Antral. Having suffered evils of untouchability himself, Shankarrao Kharat was a part of it. His autobiography Taral-Antral vividly depicts the inhumanness of untouchability.

Taral (burden bearers belonging to castes traditionally considered lower strata of society), also known as Yeskar, was a tradition from the dark ages. Taral used to be one of the twelve balutadara (public servant of a village entitled to balutem \_ share of the corn and

garden- produce assigned for the subsistence of the twelve hereditary officers of a village). A Taral was required to keep himself updated about everything that was happening in the village. In the age-old village system, he would serve as a spy and at times even a judge. He would know all happenings in the village, even the illicit ones. He would also know the demarcations and rights of every property in the village. He would be summoned to testify during the sessions of the panchayat (village court). And still, he was forced to live a life of a pauper and beg for alms. He would have to visit every home begging for morsels of food to sustain himself and his family. When a cattle would die, a Taral would carry it outside the village and share its flesh with other members of his community to use as it as food. Members of this community would eat Saguti (curry made of Chann - pieces of dried flesh of carcasses of cattle) because they had no access to any other food.



Shankarrao Kharat

Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar had to launch a special campaign to stop the custom of eating the flesh of carcasses. This miserable life is depicted vividly in Shankarrao Kharat's autobiography Taral-Antral. Shankarrao Kharat was born in a family belonging to such Taral community. No wonder, the incidents described in Taral-Antral are scary and shattering. The book narrates an incident wherein Shankarrao Kharat's illiterate father went to a teacher with a request to (Page 10)

# Love is the basis of marriage, not caste

Kritika Bissa hails from orthodox Rajasthan, but she preferred love to caste. The couple faced serious problems when they announced the decision of marriage but both of them were determined. Kritika and her husband are currently settled in Ireland. Their kids would not have surnames.

**K**ritika Bissa recalls her inter-caste marriage and shares her experience. She firmly believes that marriage has to be based on love and not on caste or culture. "People do not see castes before they love and that is the beauty of love. As organic as love is, I am sure it will make the whole idea of a society beautiful one day", she says.

**How would you recall your first meeting with the spouse? Was it an accident or arranged?**

We first met at our workplace and that was totally accidental. We became good friends after knowing each other.

**What was your self talk when you decided to marry in view of the current social conditions?**

We both are from different castes so it was obvious to get challenges from both sides. We were scared and afraid for sure and knew this was going to be difficult and that we might lose some of our very loved ones, but for both of us from where we belonged didn't matter. What mattered was that we as individual human were perfect for each other and no social barriers should come between that. We were ready to face challenges because we knew, in the end, it would bring us together.

**How was the actual marriage ceremony?**

It was an Arya Samaj wedding. We recall it as one of our fondest as well the bravest memory. We were taking a decision solely on

our own for our lifetime ahead. It was a proper wedding and We are glad We had one.

**What was the response from both families when you decided to get married?**

It was extreme, to be honest. They were panicked and worried. They were anxious about how society would respond to it. They accepted it after rounds of heated and polite discussions.

**Did you have any problems getting married? If so, how**

on what we had achieved at such a young age.

**Who were the people who supported your decision?**

Well, We had a rock-solid team of my parents, my sister, Nitin's Parents, sister, Jiju and his extended family along with his friends. But the support did not come as easily as I am able to write here. Our decision was objected to, questioned and they all made sure that we were 100% sure about each other. Once they



**did you address them?**

Yes, we had. Society almost isolated me and my parents, they made us feel that we are spoiling the community and that we are setting up a wrong example for their kids. Initially, a very few joined and came together to wish us and it was almost impossible for us and our parents to go anywhere.

I would say we did not address them, we just worked on our growth, relationship and family and gradually all our extended family and the society that once cornered us were all praises for us

knew that this was not something that was just emotional but also well thought of, they decided to extend their support.

**Do you have any problems in post-marriage life? How did you solve them?**

We did, after all, it was a marriage between 2

two absolutely different "castes", it wasn't easy for both of us for almost six months. With our parents worried about how this marriage will work out, others were constantly keeping a check on any loophole they may find. We,

# Public hearing and women safety are top agenda : Dr Anju Bala



Recently appointed member of National Commission for Scheduled Castes, Dr Anju Bala says she plans to hold a series of Jansunwais in various places to zero in on problems faced by Scheduled Castes and work in tandem with Central and State Governments for more effective implementations of various laws and welfare schemes

Forty-two-year-old Dr Anju Bala, who was appointed a member of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes in February this year, is indeed a multi-faceted young achiever. Born in the Cantonment town of Kathua in Jammu and Kashmir, she has done her MA in Hindi, Sanskrit and Education hold a PhD, has emerged as a job provider for many as an industrialist-farmer, has served one term as a Member of Parliament and has been a member of a number of Parliamentary Committees. In this interview, Dr Anju Bala says now as a member of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes, she wants to focus on providing access to education for girls because womens' education can bring a sea change to the plight of the downtrodden and hold a series of Jansunwais in various states and work

## Prasannakumar Keskar



More closely with the Central and State Governments for more effective implementation of laws and welfare schemes for Scheduled Castes. Read on...

**Q: You have been doing social work for a long time. Tell us about your journey.**

**A:** I was born at Kathua in Jammu and Kashmir in 1979 and I am living in Uttar Pradesh ever since I got married. I was outspoken against injustice in all forms ever since I was a student. I volunteered as NCC Cadet during my college years and for a while thought of pursuing a career in the Armed Forces but my height was less. Later I became president of SC/ST Student Union and also participated in gheraoing the State Assembly. I met my husband Satish Verma, who is from Hardoi district of Uttar Pradesh in 2006 and we got married in 2008. In 2010, I became President of Panchayat Samiti and in 2014 I was elected a Member of Parliament. My inter-caste wedding clearly shows that education is a key to annihilate casteism and untouchability.

**Q: Tell us about your work for**

**the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.**

**A:** When I was in 9 th standard, some girls from rural areas who were my co-eds passed

castest remarks. I immediately objected to that and that was when the students came to know that I was an outspoken SC student. I have been voicing myself ever since. Now, after becoming a member of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes, I meet people approaching the commission after being turned down by every authority. They come to us with great faith and trust. Immediately after I took charge on 25th February, I received a complaint that a Rajya Sabha member in Tamil Nadu was

forced to step down from the stage at a programme by the chief of his own party. I took immediate action and sought a report on the incident. Recently there were complaints from SC and ST candidates in Lucknow about roaster of service. We immediately took action and got a new roaster prepared. I aspire to perform my duties as a commission member with utmost dedication and loyalty.

**Q: What are your priority areas as a member of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes?**



**A:** My topmost priority would be to deal with pending cases. Some 60,000 cases are pending with the commission as of today. My first priority would be to do justice to those people at the soonest. Also, providing a safe atmosphere to girl children is of utmost importance, especially in view of increasing incidents of rapes against SC/ ST girls across the country. I would like to work for increasing access to education for Scheduled Castes, and especially girls belonging to the category because a well-educated girl is the key to the development of society. I would also like to make efforts to ensure the effective implementation of various government schemes for Scheduled Castes.

**Q: What measures should be taken to increase the efficiency of the commission?**

**A:** This issue has been on the mind of Chairman, Deputy Chairman and other members of the Commission too. We have noticed that many people find it difficult to reach out to us. Therefore, a platform to file online complaints has been launched recently. People of senior rank are monitoring the online complaints. I am responsible for the states of Karnataka, Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh. I have already started conducting hearings of cases there. A three- year term is not a long time to work and I would not like to waste any time of my term.

**Q: You have been using Jansunwais as a tool to reach out to people and solve various issues for a long time. Do you plan to use Jansunwais to extend the outreach of the commission?**

**A:** Jansunwais would prove immensely useful because the poor belonging to the Scheduled Castes category would find it difficult to reach out to us in Delhi or the capital of the state. If I visit various places, they would find it easy to meet me and submit their complaints and I too would be able to start immediate action on them. Therefore, I have been conducting Janta Darbar on every Sunday ever since I was elected as an MP. I plan to continue the practice as a commission member too.

**Q: Are you satisfied with the implementation of Government schemes for Scheduled Castes?**

**A:** We have noticed shortcomings in implementations at some places. We have prepared a letter seeking details of beneficiaries of schemes from the governments and whether fees of all Scheduled Caste students have been paid up. We are now in the process of issuing a notification in this regard. Once we get the information, we would be trying to reach out to the people and conduct a survey to verify them. The field survey would start after the Corona pandemic subsides.

**Q: You are yourselves well educated and hold PhD. Tell us about your academic background.**

**A:** Yes. I have done PhD in Hindi literature and now I am doing my other PhD on Parliamentary provisions for education. I passed my MA exam in Hindi, Sanskrit and Education. After it was clear that I would not be able to join the Armed forces, I wished to become a

professor and teach Sanskrit. I never liked English. I have always liked Hindi. When I chose to learn Sanskrit in 11 th Class, I could not get proper guidance. But I liked the language and when I was In the First Year, I told my professor that I wished to learn Sanskrit well. He avoided me but I kept insisting for three years. Then my father became ill and I had to do a correspondence course for my MA. I was the only student of 2004 batch to do the correspondence course of MA with Sanskrit. My friend Payal Sharma gave me rock support then.

**Q:- Even today our society treats girl children as a second class citizen but you describe yourself as 'Papa's Son'. Was your family supportive?**

**A:** I was in 9 th class when I had to go to Nagrota on a tour as an NCC Cadet. My uncles were Principal, Headmaster and teacher. However, still there was hesitation about sending me on tour because I was a girl. But my father took a firm stand and said I do not support differential treatment to girls. I am sure my

**Some 60,000 cases are pending with the commission as of today. My first priority would be to do justice to those people at the soonest. Also, providing a safe atmosphere to girl children is of utmost importance, especially in view of increasing incidents of rapes against SC/ ST girls across the country.**

daughters would do better than any other boys. He came to see me off and told me that he was confident that one day I would become someone so big that he would be known as my father. Moreover, when my father opened his showroom of footwear, he named the firm 'Ravinder Nath and Daughters'. Such was the support from my parents!

**Q: Did you face any opposition from the society in general?**

**A:** When I was a young girl, the atmosphere in Kathua was not regressive. There was a lot of harmony around because the city has a mixed population. Till then I had only heard from the elders about their experiences about castest atrocities and read Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar's literature. I started facing opposition later on after arriving in UP and becoming an MP. So much that rumours about my and my husband's death were also spread. My profile on

Wikipedia was also tampered with. Since my husband uses two names \_ Satish Verma and Krishna Kumar Singh \_ I was accused to have got married with two persons. It all disturbed me. I spoke to the then Speaker Madam, Ms Sumitra Mahajan. She encouraged me to raise the issue in the house and the entire house stood by me. I consider myself an example of the changes that society is gradually embracing.

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## Taral Antral : A landmark Dalit autobiography

(From page 6) read for him a three-line letter and the teacher makes him cut half a cartload of logs into smaller pieces in return. In another incident, Shankarrao Kharat wishes that some well off man living in the village dies so that he can get new clothes for himself because as per the tradition, the corpses of well off upper caste people would be dressed in new clothes and after the funeral was over, Tarals would use those clothes for themselves. In short, a Taral would get new clothes only when someone dies. Shankarrao Kharat lived such inhuman life before his father enrolled him in the school in response to a general appeal made by Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar. He became LLB. Later on, he became the chairman of the Banking Recruitment Board of Central Government and thereafter Vice-Chancellor of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University. Shankarrao Kharat was forced to shed tears because of such inhuman treatment. His blood was sucked up by the cruel and inhuman traditions. But the movement launched by Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar provided him with an opportunity and he made the best out of it.

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## Anubhav Mantapa : Unique experiment by Sri Basveshwara

(From page 5) through Jnana and Bhakti to free themselves from the clutches of all the indiscrimination and inequality.

Action first and Teaching next

Sri Basveshwara had deep faith in his teachings. His life had no gap between principles and action. Sharana Haralayya, who was a cobbler by profession, was considered equal to Sri Basveshwara because of his spiritual progress. He used to say that any sharana (An individual, who follows Veershaiv philosophy) was neither a Brahmin nor a cobbler. He had a strong belief that sharana, had given up all barriers of caste, creed and status etc at the moment he started wearing Linga , practice Kayaya and Dasoha. Sri Basveshwara started Sharana movement to establish a new model society with a positive attitude. He wants equality through samarsya by removing ignorance, birth-based discrimination & untouchability in the name of Varnsshrama. His movement was aimed at the protection and promotion of human values.

The million-dollar question is – whether we the people of the 21st century are ready to accept the principles of Sri Basveshwara. We need to understand the life and mission of Sri Basveshwara, the promoter of the welfare society in the right perspective. We, in the modern age, are well aware of problems of mankind, equality through Samarasya, and human values. Let us follow the actions with the principle of Sri Basveshwara much better than 900 years ago to achieve all-round development .

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## Love is the basis of marriage, not caste

(From page 7) our parents and our siblings stood like a rock. There was a constant struggle with our parents having to hear all kinds of gossip and bad about us and that bringing an unending saga of people saying what on earth have we done and how will they protect their children from following us. Many people questioned our parents on their upbringing. Surprisingly, many people even prayed that the marriage shouldn't last. And all of this was bringing a continuous disturbance in our newly married life which was supposed to be a fairy tale.



The only way we thought we could overcome this was we thought to indulge ourselves in becoming the better and best versions of ourselves and we started to work on ourselves. We removed the burdens of our extended families, our society and started to focus on our careers and on our parents. We made sure we are spending maximum time with them and assure them that their kids took the correct decision.

**What are your views on inter-caste marriage? Do you think it will be a great step to achieve social cohesiveness?**

Well, to be honest, we don't believe in caste. We have also decided that our children will not have any surname but will have his father's name as his last name. Marriages should only be based on love and respect and not caste and culture. With more people deciding to spend their lives on the basis of their feelings and not on the basis of what society wants, I believe we will soon have a modern age where the casts will not matter at all. Inter Caste marriages will not only remove the idea of an upper and lower cast but will also help to polish our society to be more welcoming for all, to be warmer and to celebrate people rather than what their surname says. People do not see castes before they love and that is the beauty of love. As organic as love is, I am sure it will make the whole idea of a society beautiful one day.

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# Language discrimination in UPSC examinations

**Prakash Raj**

Since its inception, UPSC is in the colonial mindset of imperial service. Moreover, bureaucracy in India thinks in English and acts in Hindi. Ironically, UPSC is not representing the idea of inclusive India, it seems to be an organization catering for the Hindi-Belt States. Is UPSC maintaining Hindi hegemony?

The Indian Constitution is federal in nature and post-independence, states are linguistically reorganized considering the people's wish along with Fazl and Shah committees recommendations.

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) a constitutional body that conducts examinations for the country's prestigious civil services envisioned as the 'steel frame' of India's government machinery. Basically, the UPSC's exam pattern is designed for elite English medium students and Hindi speaking states.

For the regional language students, UPSC entry is a gruelling process. Indeed, English medium and Hindi medium aspirants have an edge over the regional language aspirants. In the three-tier exam process, the preliminary examination is conducted in Hindi and English.

It predominantly favours those aspirants, whose mother tongue is Hindi.

Political Scientist John Roemer in his book Equality of Opportunity, substantiate 'What society owes its members, under an equal-opportunity policy, is equal access'. Since its inception, UPSC is in the colonial mindset of imperial service. Moreover, bureaucracy in India thinks in English and acts in Hindi. Ironically, UPSC is not representing the idea of inclusive India, it seems to be an organization catering for the Hindi-Belt States. Is UPSC maintaining Hindi hegemony? Does it provide an opportunity to all the aspirants from different backgrounds? How are we going to solve this problem? These are some pertinent questions to be asked.

In India, the divide between English and regional language education is purely a caste-class divide. The UPSC examination system is unfair, biased and discriminatory for the deprived



castes belongs to OBC/SC/ST who mostly studies in regional language due to their socio-economic conditions. The disadvantage and discrimination for the marginalized sections unveil from the preliminary exam itself.

How can a regional medium rural aspirant from Kallakurichi in Tamil Nadu or Kalahandi in Odisha will compete with an urban English or Hindi medium aspirant from Delhi or other cities? If the postal department could conduct the examination in 15 regional languages, what stops UPSC from following the pattern? In order to establish a the level playing field, renowned experts suggest, UPSC should conduct exams in 22 official

languages that included in the eighth schedule of the Indian Constitution.

It is evident that underprivileged communities in the UPSC examination face unhealthy and unequal competition. The linguistic discrimination based on regional languages other than Hindi is perspicuous. According to United Nations, linguistic rights is a human rights obligation for constructing an equal and stable society. Even in a linguistically torn country like Sri Lanka, examinations are conducted in Tamil and Sinhalese language.

Legal Theorist Alan Hutchinson expounds 'Law is irredeemably indeterminate'. Progressive Intelligentsia could discuss the

preferential UPSC exam pattern relating to the notion of equality of opportunity. Strikingly, there is no commitment from the government or UPSC reforms committee to take into account the regional language aspirants grievance. In long term, the medium of the preliminary examination in Hindi may adversely affect the social and regional unity. The call for equitable reforms in UPSC is steadily louder. We need a robust system based on fairness, equity and social justice.

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## Unheard Voices formally launched by Shobhatai Bansode

The inaugural issue of "UNHEARD VOICES", an initiative by Social Studies Foundation (SSF) was formally launched on April 14th, birth anniversary of Dr B R Ambedkar, at a moderate function. SSF had planned to launch first issue of UNHEARD VOICES in a different fashion. However, we had to constrain ourselves due to COVID situation.

The first issue of UNHEARD VOICES was launched by Shobhatai Bansode, who has been involved in garbage collection for the past 20 years. A resident of a slum near Dandekar bridge in Pune, Shobhatai was deserted by her husband soon after birth a son. However, she did not lose the courage and groomed her son. She took lot of

efforts to ensure that her son got well education. He is now a double graduate. She is now associated with an NGO, which plays a vital role in garbage collection in Pune city.

The presence of Shobhatai Bansode in the function encourage SSF as she represents that class of society, whose voices are hardly heard in the society. SSF commits itself to work and raise the voices of this class through Unheard Voices.

Speaking on the occasion Shobhatai said that it was Dr. Ambedkar who taught them to fight against injustice. 'We would not have seen this change if Ambedkar would not have born'. She expressed gratitude for inviting for launching of the first issue of UNHEARD VOICES.



Shobhatai Bansode formally launching Unheard Voices. SSF director Jitendra Pawar and Avinash Muley are seen in the photo.



SSF director Avinash Muley garlanding the photo of Dr B R Ambedkar.