

UNHEARD VOICES

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16th January
Mahadev Govind Ranade
Death Anniversary



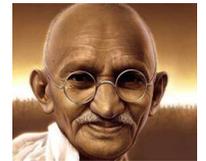
23rd January
Netaji Subhash Chandra
Bose Birth Anniversary



26th January
Republic Day



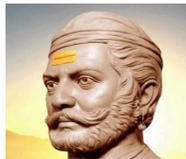
28th January
Lala Lajpat Rai
Birth Anniversary



30th January
Mahatma Gandhi
Death Anniversary



2nd February
Subhedar Ramji Sakpal
Death Anniversary



3rd February
Umaji Naik
Death Anniversary



6th February
Sayaji Rao Gaikwad
Death Anniversary



7th February
Mata Ramabai Ambedkar
Birth Anniversary



11th February
Baba Tilka Manjhi
Birth Anniversary

EDITORIAL

On socio-spiritual pilgrims

UNHEARD VOICES, since its inception in April last year, has been giving forum to all the topics and issues, which involve deprived people. They include current issues and past experiences.

Beginning with this edition, we will be publishing a series of articles on socio-spiritual circuits in 'India that is Bharat'. We intend to cover all these historic places, which have immense value and significance in shaping India that is Bharat. We plan to put before the readers all these places, which were visited by the socio-spiritual legendary personalities – Mahamanavs. To begin with we will be publishing a series of articles on the place, which are of great value in the life of Gautam Buddha. This is now known as "Buddhist Circuit".

History of India shows that many socio-spiritual legends could contribute to Indian philosophy or thoughts because they undertook journeys to understand this land. It is also known as 'vihars', 'vicharans' and 'parikramas'.

Indian history has a series of such legends, who opted for renunciation, giving up all the materialistic pleasures of human life. They never thought of their personal lives. It is equally elating that 'samajpurush' looked after them. Indian philosophy and land stands as a great testimony to the fact that individuals give up terrestrial and materialistic life to attain non-terrestrial goals while society comes forward as caretaker of such individuals.

We ought to realize that such 'vihars', 'vicharans' and 'parikramas' helped these legends to understand the reality of social existence. It helped them to understand the universe through nature. The natural result of this journey was the realization of ultimate truth – which they found in themselves. Mahamanavs have described their process of realization of truth in their literature.

Spirituality, as it is always projected, is never individualistic. In reality, it has a higher level of social orientation. It has a big quantum of energy, which keeps the society dynamic beyond its physical existence. The lives of such legends are an unusual and unique combination as social thinker on one hand and spiritual preacher on the other. Socialization of spirituality was a prominent feature of ancient India. Mahamanavs, who were born in ancient India, cannot be viewed for merely

their spiritual attainment but they need to be understood on a wider canvas of the deep impact they left on the commoners of this land. These 'Mahamanavs' have to be seen with the perception for their known and unknown contribution for the transformation in the social order and shaping the Indian psyche. Significantly, this Indian psyche is always open for a change in accordance with the times. What is the most important part of this process is that these legends undertook journeys in search of ultimate truth – normally considered as spirituality. And they again undertook a journey to share the truth - which they have realized - with the society. Therefore, their teachings can never be confined within artificial walls.

Where did these legends get motivated? What inspired them at a particular place? What are the places, which were witnesses to these historic moments? These are some of the questions which we need to reinvent currently. UNHEARD VOICES has great gratitude for all such legends like Gautam Buddha, Maharshi Valmiki, Sant Kabir, Guru Nanakdeo, Sant Ravidas, and Bhagat Namdev. We feel that any individual, who wants to walk on the path of spirituality or social service, will always be accompanied by these Mahamanavs.

As we begin the series with Gautam Buddha, we need to know that Gautam Buddha was the pioneer of this tradition. Buddha, throughout his life, was traveling. This exercise, he undertook with the sole intention of sharing what he had realized. He was not merely a great philosopher but a great teacher. He hit upon the inner contradictions in the society and tirelessly continued his efforts. He tried to awaken consciousness within the society, which was later accepted by the world as a cognitive approach. He always tried to stimulate positivity within human nature. This was a peaceful revolution. Educating and awakening the masses was the life of Gautam Buddha. His teaching did not bring detachment in human life but filled with the sense of more responsibility. Besides, Gautam Buddha also has to be credited with excellence and perfection in all the walks of life. We are pleased to be part of this process by publishing a series on the places- from Lumbini to Kushinagar, which have great significance in the life of Gautam Buddha.

For feedback please click the below link : <https://forms.gle/XWQ19k9xC1CyNr6e7>

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Response

Thank you so much for 'Recognised' in "Unheard Voices" of 14 Dec 2021

Thank you so much for sharing with me the 14 Dec 2021 issue (Vol. 1) of your Unheard Voices, an e-periodical under the aegis of the Social Studies Foundation dedicated to the upliftment and due recognition of the people of the SC/ST communities. Your report "Recognised," covering the 15 SC/ST personalities that had been honored with Padma awards for 2020 and 2021, is vivid and appealing. And thanks a lot for giving space to me as well in the report.

Journals, initiatives, and movements like yours with a positive and constructive spirit aimed at a harmonious Indian society should be the order of the day. And my views are the same as yours in this regard. May your mission receive the support it deserves and succeed well.

Kudos to your entire team. Very warm regards.

Dr. Asavadi Prakasa Rao, Padma Shri 2021

Many thanks for your email of December 16, 2021 sending me good wishes for receiving the Padmashri Award. I have gone through the e-publication 'Unheard Voices' and found it very impressive. I thank you once again for including my name also in the publication.

With warm regards,

Usha Chaumar, Padma Shri 2020
President : Sulabh International

I liked the magazine- Unheard voices I just felt like different flowers in a beautiful garland attracting people and giving them a teaching about equality by telling their own experience.

Anju Bala, Member of NCSC.

Thanks to the Padma Shri recipient Dr. Asavadi Prakasa Rao, who shared with me the 14th Dec 2021 issue (Vol. 1) of your Unheard Voices, I am very much touched with the report "Unrecognised" therein. The hardships and accomplishments of 15 of our SC/ST brethren and sisters brought tears of joy to me.

I am having love & affection for the people of SC/ST communities. Your positive & constructive

approach for ushering in an India of social harmony is the need of the hour and highly laudable as well as emulable.

I was particularly elated as I was the official guest accompanying Dr. Asavadi Prakasa Rao to the Rashtrapati Bhavan for the Padma investiture ceremony. Warm regards.

U Atreya Sarma, Chief Editor, Muse India

Its very well-articulated. Articles on Constitution and Social Justice as well as on atrocity acts are informative, meaningful and time demanding. Dr. Ambedkar and EVR compromising analysis is worthwhile.

Dr. K.N. Bavale Pune.

Jai bhim Sir, this issue is very informative and brainstorming, looking forward more.

Ramkishan Manjre, Asst. Prof. Shivaji College, Udgir.



The tallest tricolour at historic Hari Parbat fort in Srinagar

Abrogation of Article 370 : What it means for Deprived?

Pankaj



Large population groups amongst scheduled caste people of J & K like West Pakistan Refugees (WPR) and Valmiki Safai Karamcharis have faced discrimination for seven decades due to Article 35A and biased policies of J & K government under the shield of Article 370.

The Jammu and Kashmir is currently divided into two union territories. Article 370 of Indian constitution, related to Jammu and Kashmir, was abrogated in August 2019. This is significant to Jammu and Kashmir as all the provisions of Constitution of India and its amendments became applicable to J & K. Abrogation move received a wide public support across the country, with the exception of a segment in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. This section is plagued by Pakistan-sponsored terrorism. Many constitutional anomalies which were going on for seventy years are now removed in J & K.

Nullification of Article 370 brought a positive change in many established ideas. One amongst them is the reservation rights granted to the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled tribes and also to OBC people. All three

categories were deprived of political representation in the elected bodies when article 370 was in force. It is almost unbelievable today that STs in J & K did not get political reservation till August 2019. This was the reality even though people from above categories were getting political representation in the rest of India. Apart from political representation, number of other steps have also been taken by the government to ensure welfare of Dalits in J & K. Employment and empowerment, accompanied by other welfare schemes are on the top of government agenda.

People belonging to Scheduled Caste are predominantly from rural areas. 2011 J & K census says that 7.3 per cent population of the erstwhile state belongs to the scheduled castes. 2011 census reveals that 11.9 per cent population of the erstwhile state belongs to Scheduled Tribes. In another words, J & K state has 9.2 lakh SC population and 15 lakh

ST population. Many studies have suggested that position of SC, ST groups in J & K was very weak in all the aspects of the life. A closer look of few groups belonging to SC, ST and OBC is essential here for putting the facts clearly in public domain.

Deplorable condition of scheduled caste in J & K

Large population groups amongst scheduled caste people of J & K like West Pakistan Refugees (WPR) and Valmiki Safai Karamcharis have faced discrimination for seven decades due to Article 35A and biased policies of J & K government under the shield of Article 370. Situation of SCs in J & K prior to Article 370 abrogation can be understood by looking at WPR and Valmiki Safai Karamcharis' stigmatized situation in UT of J & K. West Pakistan refugees are those persons, who migrated to India in 1947 from western Pakistan during partition period. They settled in different districts of Jammu region as this was the nearest place for them where they could take a safe refuge. These west Pakistan refugees, primarily consist of Hindus and Sikhs and belong to the Scheduled castes and backward classes. According to estimate, around 80 per cent of WPR belong to Schedule Caste category. Having experience of poverty since migration, these people are still forced to live in mud houses and temporary makeshift structures. Even basic amenities like drinking water and sewer-line system are not available. We have to note that they are living in such a deplorable condition after 70 years of independence. Due to operational effect of Article 35A, WPR could not apply for the J & K Government jobs, as these were exclusively reserved for permanent resident certificate holders. WPR were also not allowed to get admission in professional courses and technical courses in Jammu Kashmir State.

Valmiki Community was also denied government jobs. Safai Karamcharis (scheduled caste) were

brought in the state by the then government of J & K in 1957. They are staying for six decades now. These people were specifically brought to the state to ensure public sanitation in view of the crisis prevailing. Valmiki community was denied government jobs despite having the permanent resident certificate of J & K. They were getting only the jobs of sweeper in complete violation of their fundamental rights. It was because of Article 35A that successive J & K governments chose not to accommodate them in other job opportunities other than sweeper.

STs deprived of legislative power

The groups like Gujjar, Bakkarwal, Gaddi and Sippi belong to Scheduled Tribe in J & K. They were denied reservation in Assembly. They were denied political participation in the State of J & K in violation to constitutional provisions. They never got opportunity to represent themselves at political level and also thereby participating in the political process, which is a fundamental democratic right. This is in contrast when SCs, STs and OBCs from all over the country were getting this opportunity. It would be relevant here, to have a closer look at reservation status of deprived communities in J & K prior to article 370 abrogation.

Reservation under J & K Reservation Act 2005

- a) SC - 8%
- b) ST- 10%
- c) Weaker and Deprived Classes (Social Castes) - 2%
- d) Line of Control / International Residents of the border area -3%
- e) Backward Areas (RBA)-20%

This reservation chart is also applicable for admission in all government jobs and educational institutions. But in Jammu and Kashmir, OBCs, which are known as weak and under privileged classes, were



given only two per cent reservation, which was later increased to four per cent. Further in appointment by promotion in government jobs, this reservation was reduced to mere one per cent.

Injustice to Other Backward Classes

Prior to article 370 abrogation, OBCs of J & K were granted four per cent reservation. This was not only fewer in comparison to the reservation implemented in other States of India, but also much lesser according to the ratio of backward castes of the state. For example, during the 2011 Census, the OBC population in Jammu and Kashmir was not counted separately. Although there is no authentic data of the population of OBCs of Jammu and Kashmir, information with Social Welfare Department, suggests that the state had 21 castes (OBC) and their population was more than 12 per cent in the state.

The above information reveals that rights of SCs, STs and OBCs were completely ignored in J & K and truth was not put before the nation. Strangely, liberal media also did not pay attention to this gross injustice. Neither any organization, otherwise fighting for the SCs, STs and OBCs, nor any political party raised the issue. In fact, Kashmir-centric leaders played many games to suppress the rights of this deprived population group.

Political reservation granted

After 73 years of independence, for the first time in Jammu and Kashmir, three-tier Panchayati Raj system is being implemented. Along with the district development council (DDC), SC and ST communities will be getting political reservation for the first time in panchayat elections as well. The Jammu and Kashmir administration has amended the Panchayati Raj rules on October 24, 2020, after which a provision has been made for reservation in DDC for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women. Government has amended the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Rules, 1996 through the powers conferred by Section 80 of the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, 1989. Under this, the number of constituencies reserved for Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and Women for each DDC will be decided on the basis of the proportion prescribed under Section 45-A of the Act for each category.

Fresh Delimitation proposes increase in seats for SC and ST

Delimitation commission has proposed 16 assembly seats to be reserved for SCs and STs in J & K. Earlier only seven assembly seats were reserved for SCs while Scheduled Tribes people were never given the right of political reservation. This is for the first time that ST seats are going to be reserved in next assembly elections. Further, J & K Reorganisation Act, 2019 states that the number of seats reserved for Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes shall be allotted to different regional constituencies, in proportion to the population of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes in the constituency. In simple words, for the first time in J & K, Scheduled Castes

and Scheduled Tribes will be getting reservation in proportion to their population in the upcoming elections.

Commission set up for OBCs

A commission has been set up by J & K government to identify the total number of people belonging to socially and educationally backward classes in Union Territory of J & K. Rights denied to OBC for 70 years in the erstwhile State of J & K will now be granted to the residents of newly carved out union territories of J & K and Ladakh. There will be adequate representation of OBCs now in services of J & K government. But the challenge before the central government will be to make a fair assessment of the population of OBC, SCs and STs for their reservation in the administration.

Other than efforts to lay foundation for the grass root democracy in J & K by giving equal representation to weaker sections, Government of India has taken some more steps to bring the SC, ST and other backward classes in the mainstream. Few of them are mentioned here: Application of Forest Rights Act: After one and half decades of long struggle, tribals of J & K have got their right to live a dignified life. Implementation of this act, which was made possible only post article 370 abrogation, is going to elevate the socio-economic status of 14 lakh strong tribal and nomadic population which included groups like Gujjar, Bakkarwal and Gaddi-Sippis.

SC/ST Youth empowerment

Every bank in the country has to make entrepreneurs by giving a loan on low interest scheme to a woman and a person belonging to SCs and STs. The scheme was running with great success in every state of the country, but in J & K. Post article 370 abrogation, all these schemes are available to the youth of weaker section society. Benefits of New Education Policy 2020 is going to be a new opportunity to the wards of SC and ST parents living in J & K as post article 370 changes. The central laws have been made applicable in the region.

Conclusion

Post article 370 abrogation, many forms of hegemony have been destroyed which had kept the Dalits and marginalized section of J & K from building their future. They would have got this opportunity, if they were staying in any other state of India. Government of India's move to abrogate article 370 will make a new beginning in Jammu and Kashmir, but at the same time, there is a need to create awareness about new and positive changes in every corner of the state at the social and political level. This is necessary because some people are spreading many rumours about it due to their selfish political motives. They are merely talking about the taking away special status of the state. In reality, the people never benefited of the special status.

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24X7 Helpline for SCs in operation : Vijay Sampla

“



Chairman of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes Mr. Vijay Sampala is known as a man of action ever since he was a Minister for Social Justice. Living to his reputation, he has swung on to the action on his appointment as chairman of the National Scheduled Caste Commission by launching a helpline enabling SC from across the country lodge complaints of discrimination with the commission. Further, the commission now plans to launch a major nation-wide awareness programme against discrimination. In this detailed interview with Unheard Voices, Vijay Sampala speaks about the functioning of the commission, nature of atrocities against the Scheduled Castes in different states, his perception of the situation and future plans to make the commission more effective.

Q : Please explain the background on which the National Commission For Scheduled Castes was founded, its mandate and to what extent the Commission has succeeded in achieving the objectives.

A : The National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was constituted in 1992. In 2004, National Commission for Schedules Castes and Scheduled Tribes was bifurcated and National Commission for Scheduled Castes and National Commission for Scheduled Tribes were formed. Its first Chairman was Shri Suraj Bhan Ji, who is no longer with us. While National Commission for Schedules Tribes is constituted under Article 338 A, National Commission for Schedules Castes was given constitutional status under Article 338 B. Its basic objective is to protect interests of Scheduled Castes from social exploitation and discrimination. Secondly, even government employees belonging to Scheduled Castes often face discrimination while working. We hear such cases too. Thirdly, this commission deals with grievances relating to implementation of schemes of the Central and State Governments. Fourthly, the Commission

compiles suggestions and recommendations by various stakeholders by organising seminars, holding discussions with luminaries and assigning study projects to university students. They are sent to the government through the President of India. This is done to make it easy for the governments to chalk out and activate its schemes. These are our main functions. When our commission receives a grievance, initially we send three notices. If response to them is unsatisfactory, we conduct a hearing. The commission has powers to summon any person, excluding some constitutional posts. If that person does not appear, first a bailable warrant is issued and if such a person does not appear even after that, we can issue a non-bailable warrant and then conduct hearing. We also have power to requisition any document of any government or even any court. Mainly, this is how we deliver justice to the people. Most issues are solved when we send a notice, but stringent action is needed in a few cases.

Q : According to the latest National Crime Records Bureau, an increase in the cases of atrocities across the country has been recorded in 2019 as

against the numbers of 2018. A total of 42,793 cases were reported in 2018 and the number increased to 45,935 in 2019, registering increase by 7.3 per cent. What action is being taken by the commission in this regard?

A : There is no doubt that the number of cases has been increasing. On the other hand, the means of communicating with us have also increased. Initially, communication with us was limited to correspondence, cognisance of which may or may not be taken. Now e-mail can be sent to us. Grievances can be reported through our portal too. Moreover, not only atrocities but all types of crimes are increasing. It is happening partially because approaching to the authorities has become easier for the people. In earlier days, discrimination was much more but means of communication were limited. Earlier, there was untouchability, which has reduced considerably now. Thanks to development of Information Technology, everything is reported now. As for the commission, there can be no 100 per cent achievement but ever since I have taken over, I give hearing to all cases reported to me and the success rate is 80 per cent. Our focus is on convincing people. Much has been achieved with such convincing. As for registering FIRs with the police, many cases are filed after intervention by the commission. The problem persists. Discrimination is not over. The commission is required because discrimination does take place even today. It is a matter of concern that the society is still divided. The conflict between the influential people and weaker people has always been there and most of the weaker people belong to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. I feel change in mentality is solution to this. It is the need of the hour. Besides, social values are not taught at schools and colleges. We need to change the syllabus to address this.

Q : Since 2014, the government has also tried to give more teeth to the Atrocity Act of 1989. Recently National Helpline Against Atrocities was launched. How many cases are you receiving through it? How much useful do you find it in your proactive initiatives? And what is the trends observed in growth of crimes?

A : Social evils prevail even today. In many states, Dalits cannot ride on a horse during wedding processions. Recently, I received a case from Bulandshahar wherein there were riots because a Dalit rode horse during a wedding procession. One person was killed. Still FIR was filed against the people of Scheduled Castes and the groom who was riding the horse was arrested. Many such incidents take place across the country. *When I visited Bengal after the elections, I noticed that atrocities had taken place against all cross sections of society after results were announced, but most of the atrocities, murders and rapes were committed against people of scheduled castes. When I visited Burdwan, people stated that 700 people were forced to flee in the presence of*

the police. But the Director General of Police told me the number was not 700 and it was 309. And this number was from only Burdwan city. It must be more in villages where maximum number of Dalits live. Maximum number of murders and rapes took place in villages and that too in the presence of the police. Such mentality still prevails. Besides Bengal, at least two to three murders take place in Rajasthan every week and nobody takes cognisance. There is a major problem in South Indian states too. During my recent tour, many people from Tamil Nadu told me that their FIRs are never registered. There is a need to give more powers to the commission. We face manpower shortage. We have 12 state offices all over the country. A person from Tamil Nadu cannot reach Kerala or Delhi to report a case. We launched a portal on April 14, the Birth Anniversary of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar and approximately 300 cases have been reported through it.

Q : What is the mechanism to deliver justice once the commission receives a complaint? Like you said large number of incidents take place in Tamil Nadu but complaints are not registered. How to overcome this?

A : Complaints can be registered with us using any available resource, be it by post, or by e-mail to commission or chairman. When a complaint is received, we mark each and every complaint as to which section would handle it. Then we send three notices to the department concerned. Replies received to the notices are sent to the petitioners concerned asking if he is satisfied with it and if he is not, give us the reasons for dissatisfaction. If he is dissatisfied, we move ahead. Even if there is no reply to our notices, we conduct hearings. If the respondent fails to appear after being summoned, we issue bailable warrant. If he fails to appear after that, we issue non-bailable warrant. Officers concerned and the petitioner are also summoned for the hearing. All proceedings take place in presence of petitioner. After that, we send our recommendations. There was a case from IDBI Bank in Pune in Maharashtra wherein the post of a librarian, holder of which could have been promoted to the post of AGM and further to the post of GM, was vacant. A person belonging to Scheduled Caste was eligible for it but instead of promoting him to the post of GM, the bank abolished the post. It could not have been done if an eligible candidate was available as per the rules. We tried convincing them that if it was the last candidate, no eligible candidate would be left after promoting this candidate and therefore the post can be abolished after promoting this candidate. However, the bank was not willing to concede. Then we became stern and summoned Finance Secretary in-charge of banking. After the ministry too exerted its pressure, the bank held a board meeting, promoted him and then retired him and abolished the post after that. Besides, there are many cases relating to roster in all departments. In many cases, people were

promoted due to our intervention. I am from Punjab and I believed there was no discrimination in Sikh community. But after I was appointed here, I started receiving complaints. I conducted visits and found out that the Dalits were being refused entry inside Gurudwaras although they were Amritdharis. Visit to their houses for post funeral rituals are also denied. I met the Jathedar of Akal Takht in this regard and cautioned that this is harmful not only to Scheduled Castes but also to our culture as it is border area and number of Christians is increasing in border areas. I believe a Hindu who converts gets alienated from India. Condition in Nagaland was also worrisome but the government there saved the day. Earlier, there was no discrimination in Sikh community but today such evils are finding their way into Sikh community. We need to focus on this. Maximum people getting converted in Punjab belong to Scheduled Castes.

Q : What commission is doing?

A : Commission cannot take any action against conversion. We can interfere if one alleges, he is being converted forcibly. But why one would do so?

Q : Dalits who convert to Islam or Christianity continue getting reservation. What can be done about it? Are cases like the ones from Sikh community that you have received being reported from Muslim and Christian Communities too?

A : As per the law a convert is not entitled for the benefit of reservation. Definition of reservation says it is meant for those who have suffered injustice, atrocities, hate due to caste, fraternity or work and those who remained backward due to it. A comprehensive study revealed that the caste discrimination prevailed among Hindus. Therefore, while taking decision of providing reservations, it was decided since discrimination does not prevail among Muslims and Christians and it prevails only in relation to Scheduled Castes. Therefore, it was deemed at the time of providing reservation that a person shall be considered discriminated only if he is a Hindu. Muslim and Christian organisations had demanded that converts should be provided reservation. We had opposed it. Therefore, the converts cannot avail benefits of reservation. Not that there is no discrimination among Muslims or Christians. Not that they have received additional benefit there. They were misled. Their small financial requirements were fulfilled and conversions were made. But when they get converted, our commission cannot conduct hearing on their grievances.

Q : Law and order, along with handling of atrocities, is in the State list. Do you face problems because of it as every State had different procedure? Which are the worst performer States?

A : By definition, reservation is not meant for any specific caste. It is based on in which field, in which state, against which community, how much of discrimination took place and the base year to determine this is 1950. List of castes was made on this basis. In several states, some castes are in SC category

in a few districts and elsewhere they are OBC. In Madhya Pradesh, where I have been Minister for Social Justice Empowerment, Prajapati caste, which is also known as Kumhar, is SC in three districts and OBC elsewhere in the State and across the country. Dhobi community has been included in SC in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh but elsewhere they are OBC. Jammu Kashmir has 13-14 castes in SC category while Punjab has 38-39 and UP has nearly 80. Every state has different number of castes in SC category. If a person of Prajapati caste from Madhya Pradesh wants to get caste certificate, he will be asked from which area he is. He would not get it unless it is his domicile. Jatav, Chamhar, Adidharmis from Punjab to which I belong are SC in Punjab but I cannot avail benefit for SC in Haryana because I am listed in my area, my state and not in the rest of India. Therefore, my Scheduled Caste certificate will be eligible only in the place of my origin. I may appear for a scheme of centre but not in the list of any state outside Punjab. If I am to contest election from Haryana, I will have to file nomination in General category. Since the base is discrimination in area in 1950, there would be confusion but if we open the floodgates, there would be a problem. Many feel this confusion should not prevail but there has to be some basis. Let me clarify, centre only issues budget. Its list is state wise.

Q : For education, centre has different format and States have different format.

A : If there is a Central job, persons from all over will apply because its existence is everywhere. But when it is of State, a student of Haryana will take job in Punjab and nowhere else.

Q : Nature of atrocities is different in every state. You visit every state. Law and Order is a State List issue. Centre does not interfere in it. Since you are central institution, what problems you face while resolving these issues? In which State cases of this nature are reported in worst forms?

A : Rajasthan is at the topmost position in North India, though there is no state from where we do not receive complaints. Since Uttar Pradesh has high population of SC, number there too is high but in terms of percentage, Rajasthan is at the top. In South India, Telengana has high number of cases.

Q : What are powers of commission relating to enforcement?

A : Enforcement is done by the State. Schemes are designed by State or Central Governments at their level. If they are not implemented, someone comes and complains and then we intervene. This is our role. Law and order is function of police. We intervene only in cases specifically reported to us. Therefore, no specific problems are faced. Many cases are reported to us unnecessarily too. We convince them that your case does not merit our intervention.

Q : Do you plan to undertake an educational programme to promote awareness about your work?

A : We have finalised provision for awareness

About Helpline



- Recently, a National Helpline Against Atrocities (NHAA) was launched.
- This facility was started by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- The Helpline is available on a toll-free number "14566".
- It aims at ending discrimination and providing protection to members of SCs/STs.
- Key features of new Helpline:
- It is available round the clock.
- It is available in Hindi, English, and regional languages.
- The Helpline can be accessed by making a voice call from any Telecom Operator's mobile or landline number across the country.
- It is also available as a web-based self-service portal.
- The purpose of this Helpline is to ensure proper implementation of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.
- This Act came into force with effect from 30th January 1990
- This Helpline aims to end discrimination and provide protection to all by creating awareness about the provisions of the Act.
- NHAA's mobile application & web portal will also be available.
- web portal - <https://nhapoa.gov.in>

Call Process

- 1) Call on this number - 14566
- 2) Select your convenient language
- 3) There will be two options first is the information of the Helpline, and second, they will connect you to the officer to talk directly with them.
(if you want further details on this Helpline, dial 1. or if you wish to register a complaint, dial 2.

programme on this in the last couple of meetings. We have held meeting with law ministry in this regard. Social Justice Ministry will also be involved. Home Ministry will also have to get involved. Seminars would be organised in universities. We have also prepared plan to provide grants to universities to give lectures and write papers on this. Decision to hold meetings with universities has also been taken. We would undertake awareness programme, though the function of spreading awareness is of States. As per the rule, quarterly meetings are held there but states do little work in this regard. When I was in Tamil Nadu, I checked their chart. There were many lapses. I told them if no meetings are being held here, how there would be awareness? Our work is to monitor it. We hold review meeting of every state. I held review meeting of Chandigarh three days back. Our members too visit from time to time. Besides, quarterly meetings at block level, district level and state level over issue of SC and STs are to be held in every department. Every department has a SC-ST welfare association and every

department has a SC liaison officer belonging to either SC or ST category who would be of the rank of deputy secretary. In smaller offices, they are of smaller rank. They hold quarterly meetings with management and SC welfare association hear their grievances. This is already going on. But these are legal provisions and are not implemented fully and we need to intervene to get them implemented.

Q : Do you face problems while functioning due to political situation?

A : Yes. We do face problems. Just three days back, there were agitation at the commission office sponsored by political parties although the commission is a non-political entity. Demands are made to remove commission members because they are affiliated with a particular party. Such things would happen. It would not end so soon. It is a matter of mentality and perception.

*As told to Dr. Vivekanand Nartam
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Nahargadh Navyuvak Mandal in Jaipur made arrangements for the aspirants of Rajasthan Eligibility Examination for Teachers when they came in Jaipur for the written examination. Around 30 aspirants from all the castes including girls were benefited of this arrangement which was made in Valmiki Temple. The initiative is appreciated in the view of social conditions in Rajasthan.



Buddhist Circuit : A pilgrim within

Generally speaking, a Buddhist person would strive to undertake a pilgrimage tour to the important places which were associated with the Buddha’s life. The entire journey is called as the ‘Ashtamahasthanayatra’ (a pilgrimage of Eight Great Places). The places included in this pilgrimage include those four places where very important events took place in the life of Gautama Buddha. They are Lumbini, Bodh Gaya, Saranath and Kushinagara. The other four places are those where he performed great miracles. They are Rajagriha, Sankissa, Vaishali and Shravasti.

Dr. Manjiri Bhalerao



Gautama Buddha was the founder of Buddhism, which became a popular religion over the period of time. The religion, though born in India, crossed its boundaries and spread across the Asian continent and established itself. It, in many parts, developed into a new local variant of the original

local religion. This religion manifested in different manner in several parts of the world but its original concepts, philosophies, mythological episodes never dissociated themselves from India. Hence it has always been a dream of a pious Buddhist to visit the land of the Buddha. Generally speaking, a Buddhist person would strive to undertake a pilgrimage tour to the important places which were associated with the Buddha’s life. The entire journey is called as the ‘Ashtamahasthanayatra’ (a pilgrimage



of Eight Great Places). The places included in this pilgrimage include those four places where very important events took place in the life of Gautama Buddha. They are Lumbini, Bodh Gaya, Saranath and Kushinagara. The other four places are those where he performed great miracles. They are Rajagriha, Sankissa, Vaishali and Shravasti. Let us begin our journey of understanding the Ashtamahasthanas and their significance for a pious devotee of the Gautama Buddha.

Before starting this journey, we should know the various names by which Gautama Buddha is known to us through the Buddhist tradition. We address him generally as Gautama Buddha. However, his birth name was Siddharth, his father's name was Shuddhodhana, and mother's name was Mahamaya (as she was the elder daughter of the family). He was born in the Shakya clan. His father was living in Kapilavastu. His mother had seen a dream of an elephant entering her womb before she realized that she was pregnant. For the delivery of the baby, she started for her parents' place. However, on her way, in the small park called as Lumbini (modern Rummidei near Nepalese Terrain), she gave birth to a child. It was a miraculous birth as the child took birth from the side of his mother from where the elephant had entered her womb. Immediately after the birth, the child could stand on his feet. He declared that it was his last birth and that he would be liberated. It is told to us that his mother expired after his birth. He was brought up by his maternal aunt Prajapita Gautami, who was also his

Siddharth's father was living in Kapilavastu. His mother had seen a dream of an elephant entering her womb before she realized that she was pregnant. For the delivery of the baby, she started for her parents' place. However, on her way, in the small park called as Lumbini (modern Rummidei near Nepalese Terrain), she gave birth to a child. It was a miraculous birth as the child took birth from the side of his mother from where the elephant had entered her womb.

step mother. Hence, he was also called as Gautama.

Later on, when the astrologers predicted that this child will either become a sovereign emperor or the founder of a religion, Siddhartha's father took all the care and provided him all the material pleasures of life. Eventually, he got married with Yashodhara. Both of them had a child called Rahul. At the age of twenty-five, one day, he saw a death procession along with the crying relatives. He then noticed an ascetic. Then he realized of the miseries of the world especially when one has relatives, family and social bonds. He realized that the ascetic seemed happy as he did not have any bondage and could

live his life freely. Hence, he also decided to cut all the bondage of his life by becoming an ascetic and become free. He joined various other groups and tried their ways to find the ultimate truth. However, he was not comfortable with those methods and decided to find his own way. He started his own meditation at Gaya near the river Niranjara. When he was on the verge of getting the enlightenment, he was attacked by the Mara, the God of evil. He wanted to disturb the meditation of Gautama and prevent him from getting the enlightenment. He sent his fierce army, sent his beautiful daughters to lure him but Gautama did not budge. Instead, he touched the ground and appealed the mother earth that she was the witness to his meditation, dedication and he deserved to get the enlightenment. With this appeal, all attacks were cleared and he got the enlightenment. This place became the most important place for any follower of Buddhism as it was at Gaya that Siddharth became the Buddha -- the Enlightened one. This is the most popular place for the pilgrims. Ashoka had erected a pillar at this place in third century BCE and even a stupa. Later on, in 7th century CE a huge temple was erected



during the time of Harshavardhan. Today's temple at Bodh Gaya is the same with a few renovations in some parts.

The Vajrasana stone slab in the campus of the temple is supposed to have been placed there during the time of Ashoka. The Bodhi tree that we see there today was replanted in eighth century CE as it was burnt by King Shashank. In third, century BCE Ashoka's daughter had taken a branch of that tree to Sri Lanka and it was planted there. Hence a branch of the same tree was back to India and was planted at Gaya at the same place. Hence the tree as well as the other monuments, are extremely sacred for a pious Buddhist follower.

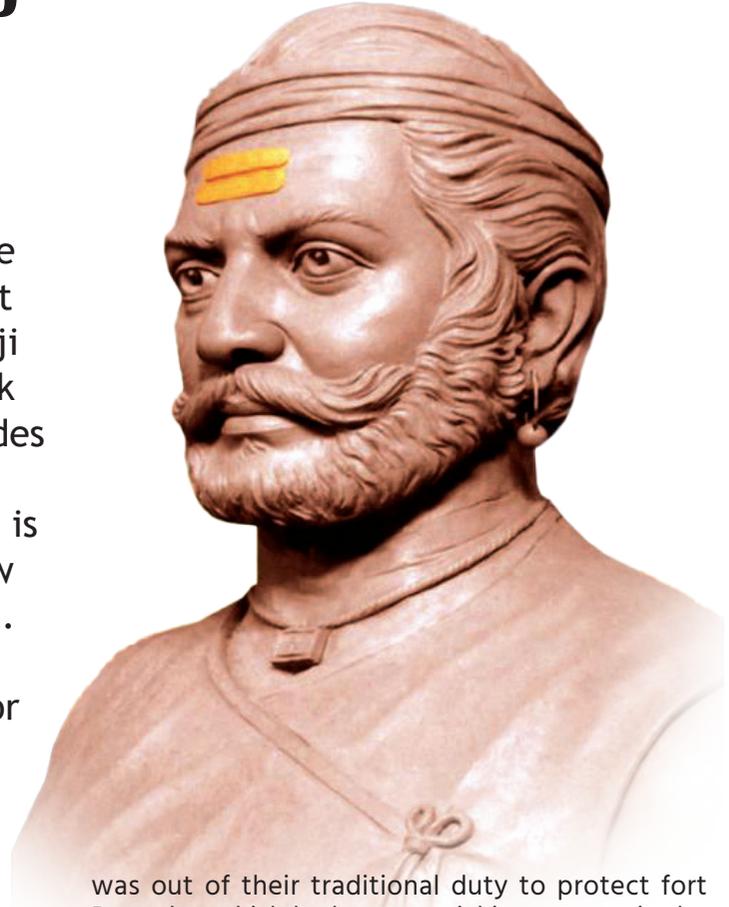
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Aadyakrantiveer

Umaji Naik

We have been taught that 1857 was the first armed struggle against the tyrannical British rule. But this is not the truth. Umaji Naik ignited the first spark of urge for freedom decades before 1857. His struggle lasted for 14 years, which is a very long period, in view of the prevailing situation. Umaji lived for 41 years and he spent all his life for freedom.



Sunil Jadhav

Umaji Naik is described as “Aadyakrantiveer”. In another words Umaji Naik was pioneer of the freedom struggle. All of us have been taught that 1857 was the first armed struggle against the tyrannical British rule. But this is not the truth. Umaji Naik ignited the first spark of urge for freedom decades before 1857. His struggle lasted for 14 years, which is a very long period, in view of the prevailing situation. Umaji lived for 41 years and he spent all his life for freedom.

Umaji Naik was born on September 7, 1791, in a Ramoshi- Berad family in a village called Bhiwadi, situated at the foothills of fort Purandar in Pune district. The Ramoshi is an Indian community, found mainly in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, and Karnataka. They are historically associated with great empires, historical conflicts/ battles and agriculture. The community is also described as the Bedar in parts of the country.

Laxmibai was Umaji’s mother while his father’s name was Dadaji Khomane. However, Khomane family was known as Naik out of respect. The respect

was out of their traditional duty to protect fort Purandar, which had very crucial importance in the war strategy of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Naik in Marathi means ‘leader’. Umaji was a bright and intelligent child. He was tall and well built. His father trained him in all the contemporary martial arts in the formative years. He soon became an expert in using swords, lances, bows and arrows. He also grew up in the traditional profession of his community – gathering intelligence and inputs for the rulers.

Ramoshi community usually helped the rulers to keep their fingers on the pulse of society and to control hostile activities. By this time, the British had started consolidating their empire in India. They began acquiring parts of the then-Maratha empire. Soon they captured Pune, which was the nerve center of the Maratha empire. In 1803 they appointed Bajirao Second as their representative. This was followed by a very important move by the British rulers to have their own intelligence gathering machinery for which trusted men were required. As a result, they appointed the persons, who can be relied upon. As a result of this policy, the traditional responsibility of Naik community to protect and take care of fort

Purandar, was taken away.

After the pink days were over, principles of good governance were over. Exploitation of people and suppression of voice became a feature of British rule. Umaji Naik was highly disturbed because of the situation around him. With Shivaji Maharaj as an idol, Umaji Naik resolved for self-rule. His determination was very clear – not allowing foreigners to rule the land of his forefathers. He, along with his colleagues like Vithuji Naik, Krishna Naik, and Babu Solaskar pledged to revolt against the foreign rule. They took this oath in the holy temple of Khandoba situated in the Jejuri town, which is very close to fort Purandar. Thus, he became the first freedom fighter in the history of British rule in India.

Umaji extended helping hand to the poor and downtrodden by robbing rich people. He did not spare both – the locals and the British in this regard. Umaji Naik left no stone unturned to ensure justice to the women, who approached him for help. He did not even hesitate to punish the guilty. Umaji Naik came under the British scanner because of his activities and was sentenced to one year imprisonment. But Umaji used his days in prison to learn reading and writing.

One year jail term did not deter Umaji from his struggle for freedom. He continued his activities after the release. Many people joined his movement because he was speaking and acting on their sentiments. People knew that he was not fighting for any selfish or individualistic motives but for the larger interests of the countrymen. This was bound to anger British rulers. His growing popularity had become a major headache for the rulers. The rulers tried to capture him again but Umaji escaped and thwarted all the attempts.

With all attempts getting futile, Britishers assigned this job to Captain Alexander Mackintosh. Captain Mackintosh ordered the local district administrator to arrest Umaji. The district administrator mobilized his forces. In the fierce battle that ensued, Umaji defeated the British troops. Umaji beheaded five soldiers and sent back their severed heads to the British. There was fear and consternation in the British camp. This incident took place on December 20, 1820 at Sonapur near Singhgad fort. Britishers killed Umaji's nephew. Umaji killed five soldiers as a revenge.

Umaji's soldiers were engaged in guerrilla warfare, safe in the hilly area they knew so well. They had inherited this from Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. In 1824 Umaji Naik raided the British treasure in Bhamburda, the then suburb of Pune city, and used the money to renovate temples. The money was also distributed among the poor people. In 1827, he declared that his attempt was not isolated but would spread from Sahyadri to Satpuda. On December 21, 1830, another battle between Umaji's soldiers and Britishers took place at Mandhardevi. This place is also close to Pune city and also the first capital of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj – fort Rajgad. The British army was headed by one Boyd.

Umaji and his soldiers used slingshots and guns to drive away from the British unit. On February 18, 1831, he announced a total revolution, appealing to people of all India to quit government jobs and launching mass protests. He urged people to raid the treasuries, deny paying all the taxes and thus to bring an end to the foreign rule. He believed that British rule was going to be short-lived. He did not hesitate to warn the people, who were helping the British rule, that they would be dealt severely once the British rule was over and self-rule was established.

British rule was not in position to ignore his activities because the situation was getting out of their control. They had fear that Umaji's activities may soon turn into a mass movement if it was not curbed immediately. They declared huge bounties on Umaji's capture. Kaloji Naik, who was punished by Umaji Naik in the past, decided to take revenge. Kaloji was punished by Umaji for abducting and abusing a woman. Kaloji decided to join Britisher for his selfish motive. In addition, Umaji's rivals were attracted for huge prizes like Rs ten thousand and 100 bighas of land. Umaji's trusted associate Nana Chavan also defected to the Britishers. A number of Umaji's followers were arrested because of this betrayal. Umaji started facing hardships like financial crunch and also trusted people.

On December 15, 1831, Captain Mackintosh arrested Umaji in Utroli village in Bhor near Pune. He was interrogated by the British very rigorously but they could not get any helpful information. The British were so furious that they decided to end Umaji's mass movement. Umaji was imprisoned in a dark room for a month while Captain Mackintosh interrogated him. He wrote down every minor information, which he extracted from Umaji. This was after continuous physical torture.

Umaji was sentenced to death by Judge James Tailor in due course. On February 3, 1832, Umaji Naik was hanged to death in Pune. He willingly gave his life for the freedom of his country. He was only 41-year-old at the time of death. But the Britishers did not merely stop after hanging Umaji Naik. His body was kept hanging for three days so that it would create terror among the people and would not dare to join any attempt like Umaji Naik.

Umaji Naik was so courageous that even British officers used to respect him. A British officer, Robert wrote to the East India Company in 1820: "Umaji's Ramoshi clan is up in arms against us. They are actively working for an alternate political dispensation. People are supporting their cause. Who knows, he might be another Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj". Captain Mackintosh, who arrested Umaji Naik, said: "Shivaji Maharaj was Umaji Naik's idol. If he was not hanged, he would have become another Shivaji".

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Visionary Sayajirao Gaikwad

Sayajirao gave scholarship to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar for eight years since 1910. He got the scholarship to complete the education from graduation to higher graduation. Sayajirao had said at that time, “After acquiring education, you should undertake the task of spreading education among the people of your caste and backwardness in education.” Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar could complete the education because of Sayajirao’s scholarship and the result is known to everyone.

Dr. Rajendra Magar

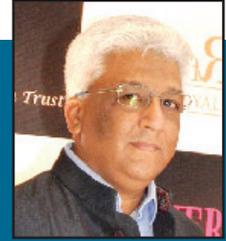
Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad, the King of Baroda made a lifelong effort to eradicate untouchability. Sayajirao Maharaj was adopted on May 24, 1874 and got the throne of Baroda. He was then educated for six years. Four years before he officially took the reins of the state, he had his food at the hotel run by an untouchable. This happened when he was going to Delhi from Ahmedabad. Scholars feel that this was the first revolt of Sayajirao against the established system. Sayajirao used to visit Dalits and tribals in the state very often. He came to know their plight and discussed the issue with his friend – Khaserao Jadhav. He came to the conclusion that education was the only way to bring untouchables and tribals into the mainstream.

In 1882, Sayajirao issued an order to open 18 schools, which included special schools for children from communities like Dhed and Bhangi. In response, 40 students joined two schools. Considering the

response from the children and parents, two more such schools were opened next year. It was the same year when Mahatma Phule submitted a memorandum to the Hunter Commission. Sayajirao faced opposition from orthodox people when he opened the schools for the children from deprived classes. He later confessed in a speech. “I had to deal with a lot of difficulties in this work. No matter how big a salary was offered, Hindu teachers could not be found for many years.” Sayajirao, however, continued his efforts. In two years, the number of students from deprived further rose to 284.

Sayajirao opened separate hostels for boys and girls where free clothes and other material was given. Local authorities were given targets to enroll students and ensure their presence in the schools. Authorities were held responsible if any deprived class student opted to drop out. A special hostel, on the lines of Gurukul, was built in the city of Baroda. Ancient Indian knowledge was also taught to these students at the hostel, which became a major attraction for the tourists. Sayajirao is

Publish work in all languages - Shrimant Samarjitsinh Maharaj



Maharaj Sayajirao's thoughts about India, as a nation, were very clear. He was adopted when he was 12-years-old when the Britishers were ruling the country. British rulers helped to complete the process of adoption and the Princely State of Baroda appointed a private British tutor for Maharaj Sayajirao's education. Along with the other education, Maharaj Sayajirao also learnt – how to rule and regulate the state. His thoughts became more mature after his world tour. His actions and thoughts were more meaningful. After the coronation ceremony he was very clear that India should become a free nation and that British rule needs to be ended quickly. He was fully aware that education was needed

to run an independent India. Therefore, we can still see his contribution in the field of education.

I believe the country is moving in the direction of what Maharaj Sayajirao had desired. Of course, some unfortunate issues are still there and we need to bring out Maharaj Sayajirao's work before the people. We still need to carry forward his work.

Maharaj Sayajirao granted scholarship to Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar. Maharaj Sayajirao helped him to complete his education and also gave him an opportunity to work with the Princely State of Baroda. We need to understand that whenever a person grows, he is not grown alone. The person, who takes him forward, also

grows. The people, surrounding the person, who grows, also contribute to the process. I believe it surely helped Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar. I strongly believe that the need of the hour is to carry forward Maharaj Sayajirao's work on education for underprivileged people. It suits the current scenario.

Reservation has become a political issue now and no more social issue. This is applicable to Gujarat also, where I have been staying. I feel that all economically backward people should get reservation. Incidents of atrocities on backward castes are also on rise in Gujarat. The current generation should work more on this front by joining politics and administration.

also credited for opening the temple of Khandoba, the deity of palace, for untouchables. This happened much before Maharashtra witnessed a movement over the issue of entry of deprived people in the temples. In 1886, Sayajirao made another major decision. Earlier palaces had a tradition to have separate rows for the people who came to have meals. It indicated the caste system. Sayajirao decided to have only two rows – vegetarian and non-vegetarian. Sayajirao used to invite students of deprived class for meals so that they should not carry inferiority complex. Sayajirao started a scholarship for deprived class students.

Sayajirao delivered a speech in Mumbai in 1904, which motivated many of the attendees. Motivated by his speech, organizations like Servants of India Society, Social Service League, Seva Sadan, Depressed Class Mission were formed to eradicate untouchability and bring in social reform. After that, the annual award ceremony of Prathana Samaj schools in the Pune-Mumbai area was held by Maharaj. A boy from chamhar community (cobbler) spoke at the function. The same boy – Shivarkar – later became private secretary of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Sayajirao awarded scholarship to Maharshi Vitthal Ramji Shinde, who was working through Deccan Maratha Education Association. He also extended financial help to Maharshi Shinde for foreign education. Later, he invited Maharshi Shinde

to Baroda and asked him to inspect the schools to introduce more improvements. In 1907, Maharshi Shinde delivered a lecture in the palace courtroom, which was published in a book – Bahishkrut Bharat. One thousand copies of the book were distributed among the citizens as a part to awaken them.

Sayajirao gave scholarship to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar for eight years since 1910. He got the scholarship to complete the education from graduation to higher graduation. Sayajirao had said at that time, "After acquiring education, you should undertake the task of spreading education among the people of your caste and backwardness in education." Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar could complete the education because of Sayajirao's scholarship and the result is known to everyone. Sayajirao was present at prize distribution ceremonies of Depressed Class Mission Schools in Pune and Mumbai and donated Rs. 3,000. Bhatkar, an untouchable student in a depressed school hostel, was awarded a scholarship of Rs. 25 per month. During his Pune visit, some untouchable women greeted him and Sayajirao paid them gold coins as return gift. On his return from Pune, Sayajirao continued to be haunted by the problem of untouchability. Sayajirao invited Shivram Janaba Kamble and Shripatrao Thorat, the leaders of untouchability prevention movement in Pune, to visit Baroda. He had a long discussion with

them at the palace. They discussed efforts needed to eradicate untouchability. He was thinking not only of Baroda state but also doing some efforts in other parts of the country as well. Sayajirao constructed separate wells for deprived class and poor as they were not allowed to fetch water from public water sources, causing severe hardship even for basic needs like water. In the 1906-07 budget, he made a provision of Rs 5.5 lakh for the purpose. Sayajirao opened a palace for untouchables, which did not happen in the past. Special credit societies for deprived people were formed in Baroda to make them financially self-reliant. At one point, more than 100 such societies were working in Baroda. These societies had around 2,500 members at one time.

Sayajirao was way ahead of his contemporaries and had a studied approach towards untouchability. He was well aware of causes, effects and remedies for the problem. In 1909, Maharaj wrote a scholarly article in 'The Indian Review', a magazine published from Madras. He says at the beginning of the article, "This article is written with the fervent hope that it may do something towards causing those of this country who are truly patriotic to realize how harmful the theory of untouchableness is to us, as a people and as a nation." He believed that reconstruction of India was highly dependent upon the question of untouchability. He observed in the article that the issue was not restricted to a particular community but involves the entire society. "In the political world a struggle has commended for wider self-government and greater racial equality. Some principles which impel us to ask for political justice for ourselves should actuate us to show social justice to each other", he had said in the article. Throughout the article, Sayajirao gave a simple and thought-provoking commentary on the efforts to be made for the elimination of untouchability, unity of thought, progress and overall salvation. Lack of education is not the only reason for the backwardness of the untouchables, but also the widespread perception of corruption by touch. Sayajirao also wrote about restrictions on the untouchables on doing business. The article reflects his approach towards the problem.

Sayajirao expressed his views on the issue from time to time. They included Social Council (1904), Depression Mission School Awards Ceremony (1909), Unveiling of the statue of Gautam Buddha in Jubilee Garden (1910), Amreli Kathi Parishad (1911), Baroda College Award Ceremony (1912), Feast given to the members of Sayaji Club (1914), Social Council, Mumbai (1918) and Anand Vihar inauguration, Mumbai (1931). Speaking from the chairs of the Second World Council of Religions held in Chicago, Maharaj spoke in detail about the religion. Regarding what is true religion, Maharaj said, 'What can true religion do? It is the pursuit of absolute values, and so it can insist that in an age of transition and chaos, certain values such as faith, hope, love, certain great principles such as partnership and self-sacrifice, abide. Religion is also the quest for reality and life. It must get

rid of shams, and the dead hand of tradition and taboo, if it is to live and to be real. Again, it must express itself simply and clearly, so that the wayfaring man and the needy masses see it as bread and not a stone. It must remember the poor and the ignorant.' Sayajirao used all the platforms to push this agenda.

As a ruler, Sayajirao enacted several laws in this direction. The first religion department was established during his time. He enacted many laws for education of women, widows, prohibition of polygamy, prevention of caste discrimination, inter-caste marriages, freedom of emigration, banquets, untouchability, and prohibition of alcohol. Some of them are: Compulsory Free Primary Education (1892 and 1906), Vedokta Law (1896), Widow Remarriage (1901), Religious Freedom (1901), Child Marriage Prohibition (1904), Public Charity (1905), Hindu Code Bill (1905), Hindu Marriage (1905), Philanthropy (1907), Special Marriage Act (1908), Hindu Adoption (1910), Child Protection (1912), Priest (1915), Waff (1927), Hindu Divorce (1931) and Mata Kalyan (1932). Many laws related to marriage, rights of Hindu Women to Property, abolition of caste persecution, Sannyas Diksha-Jain, Parsi Marriage and Divorce (1933) and Protection of Backward Classes (1938) were either enacted or amended.

Many prominent persons used to respect Sayajirao for his work and views. Maharshi Vitthal Ramji Shinde expressed his feelings writing, "Nowadays (1933) the movement for the elimination of untouchability in the Indian subcontinent has spread all over the country. Its roots and legacy are on the shoulders of Sayajirao Maharaj. This iron man initiated the beginning of the untouchable emancipation in India, its expansion continued." Mahatma Gandhi sent a letter to Maharaj from Yerawada Central Jail on March 8, 1923. The letter reads, "There can be no doubt that His Highness the Maharajah Saheb Gaikwad of Baroda deserves the warm congratulations of all of us for his treatment of Harijans and his withdrawing of untouchability".

Sayajirao died on February 6, 1939. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar wrote in Jansatta, "The demise of Maharaj has been a great loss to me. I will never forget his gratitude. The education he gave me made me qualified for today's remediation. He has done great favours to the untouchable caste. No one else has worked for an untouchable caste like him. He was a great social reformer and the laws enacted for social reform in the State of Baroda were superior to any other relevant law in Europe and America. He studied all the social evils and took the initiative to remove the defects." Sayajirao stands as the tallest example in the social reforms as he was not merely a preacher but a man in action. Unlike others, he practiced what he preached.

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मराठवाडा विद्यापीठ नामांतर

विश्व विद्यालय को नाम देने के लिए महाराष्ट्र सरकार ने एक समिती गठीत की थी। इस समिती ने इस विश्व विद्यालय को नाम देने के लिए मराठवाडा, पैठण, प्रतिष्ठाण, औरंगाबाद, दौलताबाद, देवगिरी, अजिंठा, शालिवाहन, सातवाहन ऐसे नाम महाराष्ट्र सरकार को सुझाये थे। इनमें छ. शिवाजी महाराज और डॉ. बाबासाहेब अंबेडकरजी इन दो महापुरुषों के नामों की शिफारस भी समिती ने सरकार से की थी। लेकिन महाराष्ट्र सरकार द्वारा मराठवाडा यह नाम स्विकृत किया गया और इस विश्व विद्यालय का नाम मराठवाडा विश्व विद्यालय, औरंगाबाद ऐसा कर दिया गया।

डॉ. सुधाकर नवसागर

महाराष्ट्र के औरंगाबाद स्थित मराठवाडा विश्व विद्यालय के नामविस्तार को आज २१ साल पुरे हो चुके हैं। १९७७ से १९९४ यह नामान्तर आंदोलन चला। इस सतरह वर्ष के काल में नामान्तरवादी और नामान्तरविरोधी इन दो वर्गों में महाराष्ट्र सुलगता रहा। इस काल में मराठवाडा प्रदेश तो रणभूमि बन गया था। नामान्तरवादियों के खून, उनके मकान जलाना ऐसी घटनाएँ हमेशा घटती थी। यह आंदोलन मराठवाडा विश्व विद्यालय को डॉ. बाबासाहेब अंबेडकरजी का नाम देने के लिए हुआ था। ये आंदोलन प्रतीकात्मक स्वरूप में सामाजिक समता का आंदोलन है, ऐसी अंबेडकरवादियों की भावना थी। जिस महापुरुष ने दलितों के झुग्गी झोपडी में ज्ञान के दिए जलाए, उस महापुरुष को यह एक अभिवादन था। इसलिए नामान्तर करोड़ों दलितों की अस्मिता का प्रतिक बन गया था।

नामान्तर आंदोलन की पार्श्वभूमि

उच्च शिक्षा यह मानवी जीवन के उन्नति का प्रभावी माध्यम है। इसलिए डॉ. बाबासाहेब अंबेडकरजी ने १९५० में महाराष्ट्र के

औरंगाबाद में मिलिंद महाविद्यालय की स्थापना की थी। इसी साल स्वामी रामानंद तीर्थ ने नांदेड़ में पिपल्स कॉलेज शुरू किया था। मराठवाडा यह पिछडा हुआ प्रदेश है, इसलिए इस प्रदेश में एक विश्व विद्यालय का निर्माण हो, ऐसी डॉ. अंबेडकरजी की चाहत थी। उनके महानिर्वाणोत्तर काल में २३ ऑगस्ट १९५८ में मराठवाडा के औरंगाबाद में विश्व विद्यालय की स्थापना हुई। इस विश्व विद्यालय को मराठवाडा विश्व विद्यालय, औरंगाबाद ऐसा नाम दिया गया।

उससे पहले इस विश्व विद्यालय को नाम देने के लिए महाराष्ट्र सरकार ने एक समिती गठीत की थी। इस समिती ने इस विश्व विद्यालय को नाम देने के लिए मराठवाडा, पैठण, प्रतिष्ठाण, औरंगाबाद, दौलताबाद, देवगिरी, अजिंठा, शालिवाहन, सातवाहन ऐसे नाम महाराष्ट्र सरकार को सुझाये थे। इनमें छ. शिवाजी महाराज और डॉ. बाबासाहेब अंबेडकरजी इन दो महापुरुषों के नामों की शिफारस भी समिती ने सरकार से की थी। लेकिन महाराष्ट्र सरकार द्वारा मराठवाडा यह नाम स्विकृत किया गया और इस विश्व विद्यालय का नाम मराठवाडा विश्व विद्यालय, औरंगाबाद ऐसा कर दिया गया। इसके बाद १८ नोव्हेंबर १९६२ में महाराष्ट्र के



मराठवाडा विद्यापीठ नामांतर के लिए निकाला गया लाँग मार्च

कोल्हापूर में महाराष्ट्र सरकार द्वारा शिवाजी विश्व विद्यालय स्थापित किया गया। अभी बाबासाहब का नाम मराठवाडा विश्व विद्यालय को देने की आस महाराष्ट्र के अंबेडकरवादीयों को लगी थी।

महाराष्ट्र में २९ मई १९७२ में दलित पँथर नामक दलित युवाओं का एक संघटन स्थापित हुआ। इस संघटना के कार्यकर्ताओं ने महाराष्ट्र के दलितों को चारागाह जमीन मिलना, दलित स्टुडेंट की शिष्यवृत्ति बढ़ाना, देहातों में दलित लोगों के उपर होनेवाले अत्याचार को प्रतिबंधित करना आदी मांगों के साथ मराठवाडा विश्व विद्यालय को डॉ. बाबासाहब अंबेडकरजी का नाम देने की मांग की। सन १९७४ में हो चुके मराठवाडा विकास आंदोलन में भी यह मांग आंदोलनकर्ता द्वारा की गयी थी। १९७७ साल में वसंतदादा पाटील महाराष्ट्र के मुख्यमंत्री थे। उन्होंने मराठवाडा विश्व विद्यालय का नामान्तर करने का आश्वासन दिया था। लेकिन १९७८ साल में उनकी सरकार चली गयी और शरद पवार महाराष्ट्र के नये मुख्यमंत्री बन गये। अंबेडकरवादीयों के नामान्तर की मांग को सकारात्मक प्रतिसाद देते हुये महाराष्ट्र विधानसभा के दोनों सदनों ने डॉ. बाबासाहब अंबेडकर मराठवाडा विश्व विद्यालय ऐसे नामान्तर का प्रस्ताव पारित किया।

लेकिन दलित पँथर को इस नाम में जो 'मराठवाडा' शब्द था, वह खटक रहा था। पँथर कार्यकर्ताओं को नामान्तर में डॉ. बाबासाहब अंबेडकर विश्व विद्यालय ऐसा नाम चाहिए था। इसलिए दलित पँथर के प्रा. अरुण कांबले ने सरकार के नामविस्तार को पहला विरोध जताया। नामान्तर विरोधियों ने इसके प्रति विरोध

प्रकट करना शुरू किया।

नामान्तर के विरोधियों में शिवसेना प्रमुख बालासाहेब ठाकरे और गोविंदभाई श्राफ ऐसे जानेमाने नेता थे। 'खायला नाही पीठ आणि मागतात विद्यापीठ' (आटा नहीं खाने को और नाम चाहिए विद्यापीठ को) ऐसा मराठी में कहकर बालासाहब ठाकरे ने नामान्तरवादीयों की अवहेलना की थी। लेकिन नामान्तरवादीयों के समर्थन में अलग-अलग विद्यार्थी संघटन इस आंदोलन में उतरे। इनमें युवक क्रांती दल, अभाविप, जनता युवक आघाडी, दलित युवक आघाडी, समाजवादी क्रांती दल, एसएफआय, युवा रिपब्लिकन ऐसे संघटन थे। १७ जुलै १९७७ को इन सभी संघटनाओं के कार्यकर्ताओं ने विद्यार्थी कृती समिती की स्थापना की। इसी दिन इस समिती ने औरंगाबाद के गुलमंडी पर नामान्तर के लिए पहला जाहीर आंदोलन किया। लेकिन इसके दुसरेही दिन १८ जुलै १९७७ में मुसलमानों द्वारा इस विश्व विद्यालय को मौलाना आझाद का नाम दिया जाए ऐसा निवेदन मराठवाडा विश्व विद्यालय को दिया गया। इनमें अहमद रझा रझवी, सिराज देशमुख, एस.एन.काद्री, मिर्जा शाहीन बेग इनका अंतर्भाव था। अंत में १७ वर्ष के अथक संघर्ष के बाद १४ जनवरी १९९४ को मराठवाडा विश्व विद्यालय का नाम डॉ. बाबासाहब अंबेडकर मराठवाडा विश्व विद्यालय ऐसा नामविस्तार किया गया। उसके दुसरे दिन 'सामना' इस मराठी अखबार में 'मराठवाडयाच्या पाठीत नामांतराचा खंजीर (मराठवाडा के पीठ में नामान्तर का खंजर) ऐसा हेडिंग छपा था। इससे नामान्तर विरोधियों का क्या

मानस था इसकी कल्पना आयेगी।

महापुरुषों के स्मारक या पुतलें खड़े कर के मनुष्य के जीवन में जो ज्वलंत प्रश्न होते हैं, वह छोटे हो जाते हैं ऐसा नहीं है। लेकिन ऐसे स्मारक मनुष्य जीवन को प्रेरित करते हैं। इसलिए स्मारक या पुतले खड़े कर के उस महापुरुष के विचारों का गौरव करने की परंपरा विश्व में सब तरफ रुढ़ है। नामान्तर के माध्यम से महाराष्ट्र का अंबेडकरी समाज भी यही करना चाहता था। हजारों साल आत्मसम्मानहीन जीवन जीनेवाला दलित समाज बाबासाहब के वास्ते आत्मसम्मान के साथ जीने की चाहत रख रहा था। लेकिन नामान्तर विरोधियों ने किए हुए नामान्तर विरोध से उनका आत्मसम्मान ही छिना जा रहा था। रोटी से भी जादा आदमी का आत्मसम्मान महत्वपूर्ण रहता है, यह बाबासाहब का संदेश आत्मसात किया हुआ दलित समाज बाबासाहब के नाम को विरोध होते हुए संघर्षसिद्ध हो गया। अपनी जान की परवाह न करते हुए सतरह साल ये समाज विरोधियों से संघर्षरत रहा। अनेक लोगों ने नामान्तर आंदोलन में आत्माहुती दी। अनेक लोगों की हत्या की गई। नामान्तर होने के बाद इन दलित लोगों को सरकारी नौकरी मिलनेवाली नहीं थी, या जमीन जायदाद भी मिलनेवाली नहीं थी। इसकी जानकारी आंदोलनकारी दलितों को भी थी। यह आंदोलन दलित लोगों के आर्थिक उन्नती के लिए नहीं था। यह आंदोलन उनके अस्मिता का था।

लेकिन सतरह साल विरोधियों के हिंसा का बली गये हुए दलित समाज की इस आंदोलन में बहुत बड़ी हानी हो गयी। राजकीय लोगों को समाज में ऐसे प्रश्न जलते हुए चाहिए। यही जलते हुए प्रश्नों के उपर उनको अपनी राजनैतिक रोटी सेंककर अपना राजनैतिक मकसद साध्य करना आसान होता है। यह बात नामान्तरवादी अंबेडकरी समाज के विचार में नहीं आई। नामान्तर के प्रश्न में दलितों को झुजते हुए रखकर, दलित और सवर्ण समाज में झगड़े लगाकर इस प्रश्न के उपर राजनीती करना यह कुछ नेताओं का एक षडयंत्र ही था। इस सतरह साल के काल में अंबेडकरी समाज ने अपनी स्वतंत्र राजनैतिक ताकद पैदा की होती तो उनका स्वतंत्र राजनैतिक चरित्र देखने को मिलता। लेकिन ऐसी अलग सोच महाराष्ट्र के दलित नेताओं में नहीं थी। आज भी नहीं है। बसपा के तत्कालीन सर्वेसर्वा कांशीराम ने महाराष्ट्र के अंबेडकरी समाज को आवाहन किया था, 'नामान्तर चाहिए या सत्तान्तर'। उन्होंने ऐसा भी कहा था की, नामान्तर मांगने के बजाय सत्ता हासिल कर लो और डॉ. अंबेडकर जी के नाम से दस विश्वविद्यालय का निर्माण करो। लेकिन महाराष्ट्र में ऐसा नहीं हुआ।

नामान्तर विरोधी ऐसा भी कहते थे की, उनका विरोध डॉ. अंबेडकर जी के नाम को नहीं है तो मराठवाड़ा की प्रादेशिक अस्मिता संरक्षित रखने के लिए था। लेकिन यह प्रतिपादन झूठा था। मराठवाड़ा की अस्मिता कहनेवाले लोगों ने इस प्रदेश के विकास के लिए कुछ भी प्रयास नहीं किये। अगर कुछ किया होता तो आज महाराष्ट्र के अन्य प्रदेशों की तुलना में मराठवाड़ा पिछड़ा नहीं रहता। आज भी इस प्रदेश में सिचाई, बिजली, खेती, रास्ते, औद्योगीकरण के प्रश्न उपस्थित हैं। डॉ. अंबेडकर जी ने मराठवाड़ा के सर्वांगीण विकास के लिए मराठवाड़ा को स्वतंत्र

राज्य का दर्जा दिया जाये और उसकी राजधानी औरंगाबाद को बनाया जाये, ऐसा कहा था।

स्वतंत्र मराठवाड़ा राज्य के निर्माण के लिए उस काल में कुछ आंदोलन भी हुए थे। लेकिन इस आंदोलन का स्वरूप बहुत ही कमजोर था और तो और यह आंदोलन सर्वसमावेशक भी नहीं था। नामविस्तार के बाद यह आंदोलन भी बंद पड़ गया। मराठवाड़ा अस्मिता की पुकार करनेवाले भी गायब हो गए थे। इसका सीधा मतलब यह था की, मराठवाड़ा की प्रादेशिक अस्मिता को सामने रखकर नामान्तर की प्रक्रिया का विरोध किया जाये। इसके पीछे जातीय मानस भी था। इसी वजह से दलित और सवर्ण इन दो समाजों में जातीय वितुष्टता का निर्माण किया गया। परिणाम स्वरूप इन दो समाज में व्यापक कटुता भी निर्माण हुई। इस जातीय कटुता के दुष्परिणाम अंत में दलितों को ही भुगतने पड़े।

कोई भी आंदोलन सत्य, न्याय और नीति इन्हीं मूल्यों के पृष्ठभूमि पर खड़ा होना चाहिए। विश्व में अलग-अलग समाज गुटों ने अपने निसर्गदत्त अधिकार प्राप्ति के लिए ऐसे आंदोलन किये

स्मारक या पुतले खड़े कर के उस महापुरुष के विचारों का गौरव करने की परंपरा विश्व में सब तरफ रुढ़ है। नामान्तर के माध्यम से महाराष्ट्र का अंबेडकरी समाज भी यही करना चाहता था। हजारों साल आत्मसम्मानहीन जीवन जीनेवाला दलित समाज बाबासाहब के वास्ते आत्मसम्मान के साथ जीने की चाहत रख रहा था। लेकिन नामान्तर विरोधियों ने किए हुए नामान्तर विरोध से उनका आत्मसम्मान ही छिना जा रहा था। रोटी से भी जादा आदमी का आत्मसम्मान महत्वपूर्ण रहता है, यह बाबासाहब का संदेश आत्मसात किया हुआ दलित समाज बाबासाहब के नाम को विरोध होते हुए संघर्षसिद्ध हो गया। अपनी जान की परवाह न करते हुए सतरह साल ये समाज विरोधियों से संघर्षरत रहा।

है, जिसका उल्लेख इतिहास में है। मृतप्राय अवस्था को गया हुए समाज अगर अपने अधिकारों के लिए आंदोलन भी नहीं कर सकता है, तो इसका परिणाम ऐसा समाज प्रस्थापित वर्ग का सिर्फ गुलाम बन जाता है।

इसलिए समाज ने अपने हक और अधिकार के लिए आंदोलन करने चाहिए। लेकिन किसी भी आंदोलन में जीवितहानि, वित्तहानि अथवा सामाजिक एकता भंग नहीं होनी चाहिए। इसकी जिम्मेदारी प्रस्थापित और विस्थापित इन दोनों समाज गुटों ने लेनी चाहिए। क्योंकि सामाजिक एकात्मता कायम रखना कोई एक समाज गुट के ऊपर निर्भर नहीं रहता। दुर्भाग्य से नामान्तर आंदोलन में दलितों की जीवितहानि हुई, उनके घर उध्वस्त हो गए और सामाजिक एकात्मता भी भंग हो गई। ये सब दुखदायी था।

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