

# UNHEARD VOICES

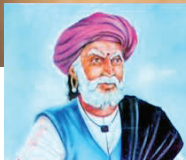
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## Tamil movies way ahead than Bollywood



**16th February**  
Sant Ravidas  
Birth Anniversary



**17th February**  
Vastad Lahuji Salve  
Death Anniversary



**18th February**  
Lokhitwadi Gopal Hari Deshmukh  
Birth Anniversary



**19th February**  
Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj  
Birth Anniversary



**19th February**  
Sant Narahari Sonar  
Death Anniversary



**23rd February**  
Sant Gadgebaba  
Birth Anniversary



**26th February**  
V. D. Savarkar  
Death Anniversary



**26th February**  
Swami Dayanand Saraswati  
Birth Anniversary



**10th March**  
Savitribai Phule  
Death Anniversary



**11th March**  
Maharaj Sayajirao Gaikwad  
Birth Anniversary



## EDITORIAL

# Bridge two thoughts

It was an unpleasant incident few days back when a small state of Uttarakhand was in news over suspension of a Dalit woman cook. The woman was working in a school. Few students refused to accept the mid-day meal cooked by the woman. Although, the issue later died down as the wisdom prevailed from both the sides, it underlined a strong necessity to accelerate the process of social reforms with more seriousness. It is shameful that such incidents are still taking place in India.

The students, who refused to accept the food, stand as a symbol for so-called Manuwadi tendency. Manusmriti can never be acceptable as it symbolizes discrimination even though whatever is the text. However, we must remember that Manu alone is not Bharat. India has an unending series of reformers, who set code of conduct for the society. They include Valmiki, Mahavir, Buddha, Kabir, Ravidas etc. These great reformers may not be speaking the language or terms established by western knowledge. But they were unequivocally working for equality, fraternity, justice and freedom. Their literature and work are testimony to this argument. It is, therefore, our duty to recognize the contribution of all the reformers. We should not be haste to brush aside tradition of social reformation movement because of one individual.

India has four schools of thoughts which can be categorized into conservative, abolitionist, nationalist reformist and reformist nationalist. Conservative group believes in social discrimination and refuses to change. This group is now very weak in India. Abolitionist are irrelevant in India as they have no takers here. This group does not believe in nationhood, which was and is a fact of world affairs. They may be living in their own world, which is disconnected with the rest of people.

However, nationalist reformist or reformist nationalist have considerable presence and following in India. In fact, the dividing line between two trends is very thin as they only differ on prioritising the issues. Both the schools have their roots in fight for freedom against British rule. It is a known fact that social or political freedom was a big debate in India for the past two centuries. For nationalist reformists, nation comes first while in the

case of reformist nationalist reforms is top on agenda while nation comes later.

Now imagine a scenario in pre-independence era, in which both the schools have come together and worked hand in hand. Any sane person would say with great amount of confidence that India would have been far different than what we are experiencing today. However, it is still not late. We need to have balance between two trends, which we feel, make India a vibrant and strong nation coupled with real democracy.

We also must remember that problem of any group is not restricted for that group. It is problem of all the society. Rich tradition of social reformers, which we mentioned earlier, can be a big source of inspiration for this. Nationalist reformists and reformist nationalist must remember that they will not be able to achieve their noble goals if they work separately by maintaining their separate agenda. What India needs today is evolving of a common ideological platform for both the trends. This, we believe, will bring about a major qualitative change in the reformation movement and thereby national life.

India has a number of social evils and we are fighting against them. But India is not the only country, which is captured by social evils. Manifestation of social evils in different forms all over the world. Indians should stop cursing themselves. Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia used to argue, "There is a long history of discrimination in our society and at the same time, we have an equally long history of sustainable efforts to eradicate this discrimination. It's a long history that our society's prejudice and reforms run parallel in all times".

Dr. Lohia's argument can be extended further by saying that Manu alone does not represent Bharat. We have a long list of social reformers, who challenged Manu. All of them opposed any kind of discrimination. India needs to have its own road map, which will lead the nation to justice and equality. Manu and his supporters have become absolutely outdated in terms of ideology and following. Ancient Indian society had never sheltered any form of discrimination. All of us ought to remind ourselves what Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar said – "We are Indian firstly and lastly".

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18th February  
Sant Narabai Senor  
Death Anniversary



28th February  
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## CONTENTS

04 On social issues, Tamil movies way ahead than Bollywood

07 Less known side of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar

10 Savitribai : A woman far ahead

13 Miracles in Buddha's life

15 संत रविदास : सांस्कृतिक चेतना का प्रतिक

17 धर्मान्तरितों का आरक्षण : एक प्रश्न

## Response

Thanks for sharing the latest issue of Unheard Voices. I read it thoroughly and found it very informative and knowledgeable. Mr. Pankaj has very well narrated the deplorable condition of Scheduled caste in J & K. His write-up also shows new hopes of improvement and positive developments of SC communities after removing Article 370. Interview of Chairman of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes, Mr. Vijay Samplaj is valuable and informative; launching a 24\*7 helpline is a useful decision by commission/GOI. In her article, Dr. Manjiri Bharerao has nicely highlighted Buddhist Circuit: A pilgrim within the importance of Ashtamahasthanayatra. Shri. Sunil Jadhav's article about 'Aadhyakrantiveer' Umaji Naik makes us feel proud. Dr. Sudhakar Navasagar has described an accurate picture of Marathwada Vidyapeeth Namantar Andolan.

**Mahendra Kamble**, Former chairman, BSNL SC ST welfare association.

Thanks for your email and posting an issue of Unheard Voices. I must note my compliment that it is going more interesting day by day.

**Priti Pohekar**  
Asso. Professor,  
Rajarshi Shahu  
Mahavidyalaya, Latur  
(Autonomous)

Respected, I went through the latest issue of Unheard Voices; Really, it's an unheard voices of India. I am particularly impressed by an article on Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad. Congratulations to the team and both the authors for their great contribution.

**Dr. Arun Vaghela**,  
Professor & Head,  
Dept. of History, Gujarat university,  
Ahmedabad

In the 10th issue, all the articles are very informative, especially about Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad. Sir, this Unheard Voices journal such making the voice of broken people. Thanks for giving me the opportunity to read this article.

**Ramkishan Manjre**,  
Asst. Professor,  
Shivaji Mahavidyalaya, Udgir

The articles in 'Unheard Voices' are progressive in nature. It is an attempt to bring homogeneity by making the voices listen. One of my doctoral research findings is that subalternity is universal and dynamic too. And I hope the Social Studies Foundation will leverage all the talent to make the voices listen. The attempts of the Social Studies Foundation are noteworthy.

**Dr. Ajit Mulajkar**, Asst. Professor, Maharashtra Mahavidyalaya, Nilanga

All the articles are very understandable and guide society.

**Manish Singh Gaikwad**,  
Gujarat.



A scene from Sarpatta Parambarai



Kaala

In Indian movies, Bollywood is a major player. But other vernacular films also has a major roles. A very few Bollywood films speak about the agonies, hardships and sufferings of the deprived communities in the contemporary period. In contrast, South Indian films are making a respectable number of films; that echo the voices of deprived people.

# On social issues, Tamil movies way ahead than Bollywood

## Aparaajith



Most would agree that older houses need maintenance and frequent renovation to suit time-based changes in lifestyle. Same is the case with India, which has a number of social ills which have been prevailing since olden times. These social ills are so inter-linked with each other that the process of renovation has become more complex. Even foreign powers, that ruled India for generations, had to accept this reality, and handle situations accordingly.

Indian films are no exception to this phenomenon.

Indian films, since their inception, have been dominated by Hindi because of various reasons. Vernacular films, on the other hand, are always seen as weak in terms of turnover and popular support. South Indian films, particularly, Tamil films, can be perceived as an exception to this phenomenon. They strongly reflect aspirations of the deprived communities, which connects with the masses. This makes them successful; commercially and by other parameters as well.

The Indian film industry is one of the strongest cultural products of the country. It is roughly valued at Rs. 183 billion, which makes it a major stakeholder



in the economy in terms of not only money but also popular support. Bollywood continues to be a major player but other vernacular films like Bengali, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Marathi, Gujarati etc. also play major roles. However, a very few Bollywood films speak about the agonies, hardships and sufferings of the deprived communities in the contemporary period. In contrast, south Indian films are making a respectable number of films; that echo the voices of deprived people.

Tamil films, particularly, are doing much better in this direction in the last decade. *Paradesi* (2013), *Madras* (2014), *Visaranai* (2015), *Kaala* (2018), *VadaChennai* (2018), *Pariyerum Perumal* (2018), *Sarvam Thaala Mayam* (2018), *Asuran* (2019), *Karnan* (2021), *Sarpatta Parambarai* (2021), *Mandela* (2021), and *Jai Bhim* (2021) are the plethora of mainstream films that have portrayed stories about disadvantaged communities.

In a diverse and charged country like India, films about specific communities are sure to attract controversy. *Jai Bhim* was entangled in such a controversy. The film undercut and twisted the 'Kuravar' community's identity, history, and pride. It did this by basing it on 'Iruilar' community characters and culture. The crew also did not inform its true-story inspiration (Parvathi-ammal) about the film. They even changed her name to Sengenni in the film.

Some say, the film negatively portrayed and hurt the Vanniyar community. For example, the character named 'Gurumurthy' was a harsh and vicious police officer in the film. The real name of this police officer who was allegedly involved in the custodial death of the wrongfully accused was 'Anthonisami' (a Christian). However, he was portrayed in the film as 'Gurumurthy' (a Hindu).

An 'Agni Kalasam' daily sheet calendar was chosen in a scene. Later it was changed to a Hindu Goddess after a legal notice was issued against the film. Following this, several Hindus accused filmmakers of causing injustice to all Hindus, resulting in a controversy.

A Popular Tamil dialogue writer wrote the dialogues according to the contemporary dialects of the films' focus region. He returned his payment, claiming that the filmmakers had betrayed him: as the original title 'Eli Vettai' (Rat hunting) was changed, along with the dialogues.

Some critics felt that the work of lawyer Chandru was overemphasized in the film, but overshadowed the contribution of other legal counsels. Throughout the film, there is a lot of communist iconography. Despite his tireless efforts, KR Govindan, a local CPI (M) leader, was eclipsed in this case. Notwithstanding all these controversies, the film has been doing pretty well for itself.

The Tamil film industry has a history of being star-powered. Therefore, it is a big event that Superstar Rajinikanth portrayed a disadvantaged community leader in *Kaala* (2018). Dhanush, another big commercial

name, plays a protagonist from disadvantaged communities in three films: *Vada-Chennai* (2018), *Asuran* (2019), and *Karnan* (2021). Bankable actors like Arya and Karthi have also portrayed such characters in *Sarpatta Parambarai* (2021) and *Madras* (2014), respectively. Upcoming actors like Atharvaa (*Paradesi*-2013), GV Prakash Kumar (*Sarvam Thaala Mayam*-2018), Kathir (*Pariyerum Perumal*-2018), and actor-comedian Yogi Babu (*Mandela*-2021) have also portrayed such characters. Even disadvantaged diasporic Tamil communities in the UK and Malaysia have been represented in *Jagame Thanthiram* (2021) and *Kabali* (2016), respectively.

This successful decade owes its roots to the films like *Ore Oru Gramathiley* (1987), *Virumandi* (2004), and *Paruthiveeran* (2007). The Supreme Court of India later allowed the release of *Ore Oru Gramathiley* after the initial ban for criticizing caste-based reservations. *Virumandi* is a non-linear 'Rashomon' style tale of caste-induced violence in the rural region of South Tamil Nadu. Its working title 'Sandiyar' created quite a ruckus among Dalit political outfits, since it was

"Everyone has the right to make films the way they want to and they should exercise it. There is no parallel movement in Tamil Nadu. Whatever you do is theatrical, and based on that, you will get another film. It is a boon and curse of Tamil cinema. We have to keep in mind what the audience will think."

presumed that the title is to glorify the caste pride of 'Thevar' community. *Paruthiveeran* is regarded as one of the landmark films in the history of Tamil cinema for its intense portrayal of honour-killing.

While contemporary socio-cultural issues find place and success in mainstream Tamil film industry, why is Bollywood ignoring them? The Tamil film industry has arguably the most euphoric viewership in the country. Most are privy to the grand celebrations during a big star's film releases, the numerous fan clubs and other means of hero-worship among the Tamil people. Like the rest of the country, Tamilnadu also has many layers of castes and sub-castes. When films manage to resonate with such communities: no matter how positive or negative the reaction; the effect will be heard across popular media just because of the sheer number and euphoric nature of the people.

There is also a template for Tamil filmmakers and marketing teams to deal with controversies since they have a record of navigating the controversy caused by different socio-political forces regarding films of this nature. Hence, this is both a blessing and a curse. It cannot be proven that there is maximum Casteism in Tamilnadu just because it churns out these kinds of films. Casteism is a socio-political-cultural-economic phenomenon and thus there is



no effective metric to measure it. However, it can be acknowledged that this subject finds many takers among both viewers and filmmakers.

Filmmakers Vetri Maaran (Vadachennai, Visaranai, and Asuran), Mari Selvaraj (Pariyerum Perumal, Karnan), and Pa Ranjith (Sarpatta Parambarai, Madras, Kaala, and Kabali) are at the forefront of this cinematic subject. They have interesting views on the subject.

Vetri Maaran says, “Everyone has the right to make films the way they want to and they should exercise it. There is no parallel movement in Tamil Nadu. Whatever you do is theatrical, and based on that, you will get another film. It is a boon and curse of Tamil cinema. We have to keep in mind what the audience will think.”

Mari Selvaraj says, “We all have certain responsibilities. We know that after a long time, we are doing something. Therefore, it should be done correctly; it should reach everyone. As an art form, it needs to get stronger. The emotion should be conveyed as you intend for it to.”

Pa Ranjith says, “It is foolish to deny that we live in a caste-based society. This is the truth and I am not afraid to speak this truth anywhere. If because of it I face problems, I am ready to confront it. Nobody should decide what I should speak or not speak.”

Mainstream Bollywood on the other hand has not made many films on this subject. Article 15 (2019), Masaan (2015), Aarakshan (2011), Khap (2011), Samar (1999), Chameli Ki Shaadi (1986), Sadgati (1981), Ankur (1974), and Sujata (1959) are some films about caste system in India. Some of these films are not even mainstream. Moreover, another observation is that there are very few of these films despite the age of the industry. One can think of the impact that Bollywood can have if it frequently bases films on this subject. However, it can also be argued that it

will be risky as it is the biggest industry in India and caters to a majority of the northern, central, western, and eastern regions. Any negative reception in terms of outrage or even general dislike might lead to colossal losses for a mainstream Bollywood film. Hindi filmmakers also do not have the experience of dealing with the socio-political backlash and cultural dominance of/by these huge geographical areas.

Case in point: Padmaavat is one of the most expensive Indian films ever made. Initially scheduled for release on December 1, 2017. Padmaavat faced numerous controversies. Amid violent protests, its release was indefinitely delayed. In December, the Central Board of Film Certification approved the film with few changes, which includes the addition of multiple disclaimers and a change from its original title Padmavati. Moreover, this was just based on opposition from the fringe group ‘Rajput Karni Sena’. It is scary to imagine the financial upset, if specific ethnic communities are depicted in Hindi films.

Caste based issues have been relegated to being Parallel cinema subjects and can even be perceived as dated. Therefore, a fresh and nuanced take should be a guiding principle. More so, for this subject to grow as a sub-genre, flag bearers of this issue would be required among mainstream actors, filmmakers, and studios.

It remains to be seen if this situation will improve in future. These films might be seen as propaganda, but what should not be forgotten is that it is necessary as an idea for positive socio-economic change. In the words of Babasaheb Ambedkar: “Men are mortal. So are ideas. An idea needs propagation as much as a plant needs watering. Otherwise, both will wither and die.

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# Less known side of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar



On the occasion of the death anniversary of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (February 26), Akshay writes on some of the aspects of Savarkar's life, which, he feels, are not being attended enough. Akshay argues that Savarkar's concept of Hindutva was far progressive, which stood for equality, humanity and scientific temper.



Harijan Bhajan Mandal founded by Savarkar at Ratnagiri

**W**e should not forget that Savarkar who propagated Hindutva and Hindu Rashtra was also a social revolutionary. Dhanajay Keer, in his biography of Ambedkar, has described the difference between a social reformer and a social revolutionary. Keer says – 'A reformer rebuilds what is already present while a revolutionary demolishes the old and rebuilds from scratch'. Savarkar was not only a reformer, he was an active social revolutionary.

## Scientific Temper

**R**eligious texts had a great influence on the society, Savarkar called this tendency to take the word of these religious texts as the final word. "The days have gone where society is based on religious beliefs and religious texts.... In this scientific age, society should be based on scientific and practical principles. He advises that a nation should be built based on a sound scientific basis and not on the basis of any religious texts. 'Sound and practical scientific values should

be the Vedas of our nation in this era of global competition'

## Attack against casteism

**S**avarkar was a strong critic of the caste system and a dependency on religious texts. Advocates of "Chaturvarnya" points at fourth stanza of the Bhagvad Geeta, which says "I have created the four classes or categories i.e. Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra) to support the caste system. Savarkar says that these four classes are four categories and these are related to the work or job one performs and are not decided by birth. He says 'chaturvanya' in no way implies that people are born to do a particular kind of job nor does it imply that the job is passed on in heredity. As a result, he firmly said, this line from the Bhagvad Geeta cannot be used as a justification of the caste system.

In a letter sent to his younger brother from the Andaman, he writes "The practise of caste discrimination is a damning curse on Hindustan....



‘That we will make four castes makes no sense. This shall not happen and should not happen. It has to be eradicated from the roots.’

## Seven Practises – Seven handcuffs

Savarkar rigorously opposed the seven indigenous restrictions referred to as “sapta-bedyā” or the seven handcuffs just as much as he strived to overthrow the chaining of the people by the British. These restrictions were:

1. Restriction on access to Vedas – All Hindus would have equal rights and access to the Vedas.
2. Restrictions on pursuing a profession of choice – A person should have the freedom to pursue the profession which he or she were best at irrespective of what caste the person was born into. A person should not be prohibited from pursuing a particular



Having community or Inter dining at Ratnagiri

profession just because he or she was not born in a particular caste. 3. Untouchability – Savarkar was of the view that untouchability of a caste has to be abolished as it was a curse on humanity which was driven by mythology. 4. Foreign travel – Travel to a foreign land should not lead to a community boycott. 5. Restriction on religious conversion – Those who had previously relinquished the Hindu religion or those born in a different religion should be allowed to come back into the Hindu fold. Savarkar had himself overseen conversion / purification rituals.

## Ratnagiri Stay

Restriction on food habits – Savarkar ridiculed the idea that eating a certain kind of food damages your religion. He was of the opinion that Religion rests in one’s heart and not in the stomach. Savarkar took the lead to arrange several inter dining in Ratnagiri

Inter-caste marriage - Caste should not be criteria for marriage. Qualities, civility, love and health should be the driving force while choosing a life partner.

## Patitpavan Mandir

Savarkar was a practising intellectual and therefore he not only made his point through his writings

but the fight against untouchability was backed by actions. While undertaking the movement to grant access for ex-untouchables to temples he said that God, who becomes impure by worship by an untouchable, is not God. He firmly believed that worshipping God is the birth right of all the Hindus. Savarkar was also successful in ensuring entry of ex-untouchables in the temple in 1925.

Patit Pawan temple. Foundation of this temple was laid down March 10, 1929 with financial help from Bhagoji Seth Kir. This was the initiative of Savarkar and Hindus of all the castes were allowed inside the sanctum sanctorum. Shankaracharya Dr Kurtkoti was present on the occasion. Savarkar stressed that all the temples must be opened for all the castes. Patit Pawan temple had trustees from all the castes. It was constructed with the idea that people from all the castes should pray together. Children from all the castes were taught Sanskrit in the temple. This happened when Dalits elsewhere were fighting to get entry in the temples. The first inter-caste dining was held in the temple on September 21, 1931. As many as 75 women were present. Savarkar also started a restaurant in the temple premises in May 1933, which was open to all the castes. Ex-untouchables used to serve food in the restaurant. The people from so-called lower communities were at the forefront of all the activities. These activities had been mentioned by various newspapers like Times of India.

Savarkar rigorously opposed the seven indigenous restrictions (referred to as “sapta-bedyā” or the seven handcuffs just as much as he strived to overthrow the chaining of the people by the British.

## Humanity, a driving force

Critics argue that Savarkar’s social reformation was to achieve Hindu Rashtra. This is not the fact. He had friends from all castes since his childhood. He was deeply influenced and inspired by human values since early days. On the debate of social reformation and political independence, Savarkar had said, “If we get freedom and independence without social reform it will not last even three days”, thus underlining his conviction for equality. He had said on one occasion that people can forget his jump in the sea but not thoughts on social reformation. He had adopted a girl from a deprived class. Significantly, all the activities launched by Savarkar had great participation of women, which also explains his thoughts on gender equality.

In a letter to his brother Narayanrao on July 6, 1920, Savarkar writes, “I feel the need to rebel against caste discrimination and untouchability as much as I feel the need to fight against foreign occupation of India”. Eradication of the caste system was on the top agenda he had given to the workers of Hindu



Mahasabha. He had even asked them to stand for so-called lower caste people in case of any conflict. The issue found a prominent place in Hindu Mahasabha convention in 1939 at Kolkata (then Calcutta), 1941 at Bhagalpur and 1942 at Kanpur. Savarkar used to accept invitations of any programme with the condition that the function would be attended by people belonging to all the castes.

## Golden Day

When untouchability was banned in India by adopting the constitution, Savarkar expressed his sentiments saying that it was a Golden Day. He wrote two separate articles on the issue. He said this was the decision worth embossing.

## What do others say about Savarkar?

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar "I take this opportunity to give a favourable opinion about the work you are doing in the area of social reforms. If the untouchables have to become part of the mainstream Hindu society, then, merely abolishing untouchability will not suffice. The practice of Chaturvarna has to be abolished. I am happy to say that you are one of the few people who have recognised the need for this to happen.

Maharshi Vitthal Ramji Shinde "I am so pleased by the success of this social movement that I pray to God to give the rest of my life to him"

Prabodhankar Thackeray "After realising the need for a Hindu unity, it is necessary to handle the issue of eradication of caste however difficult it might be. Savarkar's efforts in this direction are worthy of praise.



Savarkar with colleagues working for social reforms, Ratnagiri

Keshav Narayan "The government should allow Savarkar to go anywhere in the country to take forward this great work. Such a demand should be made by the untouchable community"

Pune based leader P.N. Rajbhoj, "Savarkar's movement will have far reaching consequences. I am happy to say that the famous leader of political revolutionaries is also a great social revolutionary".

Bhai Bagal "I am amazed at the progress seen here. It is difficult to get even five-ten women for a community dining in even in Mumbai or Pune. We have not been able to achieve this in Kolhapur. But the credit of hundreds of women taking part in community dining goes to Tatyarao. If we had got such an influential person in our area we would have held him in high esteem".

*Author and researcher on Savarkar.  
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Distribution of the sacred thread (yagyopavita or janeu) and granting right to recite vedas to by the Purva ashpryushya (translated as ex-untouchables) Parishad, Malvan, 1929



Uniqueness of the Phule couple is proved by their various actions. Jyotirao was born in 1827 and Savitribai in 1831. It was when the Peshwai had just come to an end and the British had begun setting up their foothold in India. The winds of new reforms had begun to blow. But the old customs and traditions had their firm roots.

# Savitribai : A woman far ahead

Pooja



On the occasion of Savitribai Phule's 125th death anniversary, I went down memory lane. My mother's ancestor Bhau Kondaji Patil Dumbre was an active member of Mahatma Phule's Satyashodhak movement. He had a very close relationship with Phule Family when Savitribai was staying at Otur in Junnar tehsil of Pune district for drought relief work. She stayed at Bhau Dumbre's house. For the work regarding Satyashodhak Committee.

Savitribai and Jyotirao lived in Otur village for some period. Coincidentally, I was born in the same house in Otur. As it is my maternal grandfather's house, I spent most of the holidays in the school days in that village. This is my first acquaintance with Mahatma Jyotiba and Savitribai. In school life, I met Jyotiba in a dhoti, pagote, woollen blanket (kambal) on the shoulder, a wooden stick in his hand, and the excerpts from 'Shetkaryancha Asood'. Savitribai appeared in the first school for the girls in Bhide Wada, changing the damaged sarees by the mud and cow dung thrown by the people and forgetting the pain of the wounds caused by the



stones in the joy of enlightenment.

Once again, they were seen opening the water tank in their courtyard to the untouchables. Later, when I consciously tried to know them, they just amazed me every time. Jyotirao cannot be separated while reviewing Savitribai's work and the glorious description of her struggle because she learned on his insistence. Of course, this incident is not surprising. It was the time when the wife could become literate only because of her husband's insistence or initiative. But the uniqueness of the Phule couple is later proved by their various actions. Jyotirao was born in 1827 and Savitribai in 1831. It was when the Peshwai had just come to an end and the British had begun setting up their foothold in India. The winds of new reforms had begun to blow. But the old customs and traditions had their firm roots.

In such a struggling environment, the Phule couple spent their life. When Jyotirao was introduced with the alphabet, the path towards knowledge became accessible for him. Additionally, his thoughts became firm because of his innate wisdom and analytic attitude. He adopted a lifestyle based on the principles of truth, equality, and humanism. He also inculcated this lifestyle in Savitribai. In 1840, at the age of nine, Savitribai was married to Jyotirao. At that time, Jyotirao was 13 years old. Savitribai's education began at the age of ten, immediately after marriage.

The subsequent fifty-year journey of their togetherness is ideal for any socially active couple. The Phule couple started a school for women and Shudras and worked for their enlightenment. This incident is very important in view of the prevailing time. It is well known that Lakshmibai Tilak, the wife of Reverend Narayan Tilak, said, "Tilak's bones went into the coffin (he was a Christian), and then I became aware of my independent existence".

Also, consider the work of Ramabai Ranade, the founder of 'Sevasadan'. It flourished after the death of her husband, Mahadev Govind Ranade. India's first woman doctor Anandibai Joshi fell ill after completing her medical education. But she had to depend upon traditional and superstitious ways for her treatment. She died at the age of 22. This was the condition of upper-caste educated women, which throws light on the plight of people, particularly women.

Lack of knowledge was not restricted to merely men. Only upper caste people used to get some education while women from all the castes continued to be illiterate. Unfortunately, knowledge of few people, was being used for exploitation. Many unhealthy and oppressive practices like child marriage, shaving off a widow's hair (Keshvapan) and sati were being followed because of encouragement of people with knowledge. There was nobody to raise voice against these practices.

Jyotiba was aware of potential and strength of knowledge. He said education and power of thinking

would awaken the society to fight against injustice. Jyotiba began his belief from his own house and introduced Savitirbai with the books. Savitribai also has realized strength of education and knowledge. She went a step ahead and took the education to other women. This exercise was to enlighten them. Of course, her attempts were mainly focused on the exploited, illiterate and ignorant people.

For Phule couple, education was not merely literacy. They aimed at all round development of human being through education. They never expected illiterate and ignorant people to read and recite orthodox books. They looked beyond it. Jyotiba was 21-year-old while Savitribai was 17-year-old when they started first school. Savitribai did not merely followed Jyotiba but walked shoulder to shoulder with him. She took all the responsibilities in Jyotiba's work. Savitribai can never be considered as an obedient woman, who got herself educated because of her husband's wish. She began her formal education at the age of ten but started teaching others when she was 17. 'Poona Observer'

The couple was so ahead of times that they allowed her daughter-in-law Radha Gyanba Sasane to stay at their home before the marriage. Savitribai also looked after domestic work so that Radha's study was not affected. Jyotiba, himself had written this in a letter to Radha's father.

has written on May 29, 1852, "The number of girls in Jyotirao's schools is more than the number of students in government schools. That's because the system of girls' learning is far more superior to the system of boys' education in government schools – if this situation remains same, girls in Jyotiba's school will be superior to boys in government schools." We must remember that Jyotiba started the school in 1848. Poona Observer reported four years after beginning of the school.

Phule couple also started school for untouchables along with the women. Their mission to eradicate caste-system was far ahead in view of situation, which prevailed time. They strongly supported widows, who were re-married. They even extended financial help for re-marriage of widows.

Jyotiba Phule floated Satyashodhak Samaj Movement in 1873. It was mainly formed to bring to an end to dominance of one caste in religious traditions and rituals. It was meant for simple marriage, without dowry. No expenses. Some priests dragged the couple in the court but the couple continued their work without any compromise. They also conducted inter-caste marriages. Their adopted son – Yashwant – also had inter-caste marriage.

The couple was so ahead of times that they allowed her daughter-in-law Radha Gyanba Sasane



to stay at their home before the marriage. Savitribai also looked after domestic work so that Radha's study was not affected. Jyotiba, himself had written this in a letter to Radha's father.

All the activities of Phule couple invited wrath of established people. Despite strong opposition, they did not succumb to any pressure and opposition. Setting up of 'Juvenile Prevention Home' shows that their work was not against any group of people but to establish humanism, truth and equality. Savitribai worked tirelessly for empowerment of women by trying to free from widowhood and abuses at domestic level.

Despite stiff opposition from all the quarters, Savitribai did not allow herself to deviate from the path, she had chosen. She had deep faith in her husband and his work. The decision to leave home



is not an easy for an ordinary woman that time. I was just wondering what the couple would have discussed that time? Who might have convinced him? Who supported whom? There is no evidence to answer these questions but any sensible person can imagine them.

The couple was so committed to the cause, they had undertaken that Savitribai also had tough job to convince her mother and brother. Three letters, written by Savitribai to Jyotiba are available. But these letters also had no personal reference. One letter by Savitribai has been written from Naigaon in Satara district, which was her parents' home. It mentioned about her conversation with her mother and brother on the cause, they had undertaken. Her brother, apparently was upset.

Savitribai says, "From this, you (Jyotiba) will know that there are many clowns in Pune, who are spreading evil about us. They are present here also.

Why should we be afraid of them and give up the work we have undertaken? Always get involved in the work. Future success is ours".

Another letter by Savitribai is about an incident, involving a girl, who got pregnant by a Brahmin man. Villager got furious over this and started beating them up. They also tried to kill them. Savitribai, however, intervened and rescued the couple. The couple later agreed to leave the village. The incident finds place in Savitribai's letter. She says, "After rigorous consoling, they have been sent to you. What else to tell".

The incident throws light on the fact that how Savitribai was convinced and determined to her cause. We can imagine a situation in which an unmarried Dalit girl getting pregnant by a Brahmin man. Savitribai was so courageous that nothing stopped her from continuing her work in the incident. She had so deep faith in her husband that she sent the couple to Jyotiba without getting his approval. The incident shows how great humanitarian she was.

All the activities of Phule couple invited wrath of established people. Despite strong opposition, they did not succumb to any pressure and opposition. Setting up of 'Juvenile Prevention Home' shows that their work was not against any group of people but to establish humanism.

During the drought in 1877, Savitribai stayed at Otur. She had described horrible drought situation in the letter. She also says how Satyashodhak activists were working for drought affected people. The letter is proof that she was involved in all kinds of social work.

In 1887, Jyotiba fell ill and passed away on November 28, 1890. Savitribai stood against the injustice against their adopted son Yashwant and set fire to the corpse in the cemetery despite being in mourning. She ensured that Jyotiba's work did not stop after his death. She presided over 20th conference of Satyashodhak Samaj, which was held at Saswad near Pune in 1893. She was active in Satyashodhak Samaj till her last breath

In 1897, during the plague, while serving the same society that consistently rejected her, she passed away.

Savitribai was opposed as her work challenged vested interests of the established people. She worked in all kinds of adverse conditions. Savitribai did never expect cosmetic changes in the lives of women. It will be a real tribute to her if one tries to understand her thoughts and walk on her path.

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Mara's attack at Gaya and enlightenment.

# Miracles in Buddha's life

Over the period of time, Gautama Buddha became a very popular leader. However, there were people who were jealous of his popularity. One such person was his cousin Devadatta. He was an ascetic. He wanted to become the chief of the Sangha. Hence, he tried to kill the Buddha by sending a drunk and mad elephant towards him at Rajagriha. But a miracle occurred. After approaching the Buddha, the elephant realized the Buddha's greatness and prostrated in front of him. This event is known as the Miracle of Rajagriha.

**Dr. Manjiri Bhalerao**



After the enlightenment, Gautama, the Buddha, went to different places. At Sarnath near Varanasi, he met five of his old ascetic acquaintances. He told them about his enlightenment. On their request, he gave them a lecture, which was the first lecture after his enlightenment at Gaya. That lecture is called as the First Sermon. The location was that of a Deer Park. There were many of them moving around. Hence, they also got the opportunity to listen to the Buddha. Thus, whenever it is shown in the sculpture or painting depicting this event, the deer are also depicted in the scene. This event is generally described as the Dharmachakrapravartana. It is believed that by giving this lecture, the Buddha 'Set the Wheel of Law into Motion'. This also led to the



establishment of the Sangha i.e., the monastic order. Hence, Saranath is considered as a very important place in the history of Buddhism. This also is a must visit place for the pious Buddhists.

Over the period of time, Gautama Buddha became a very popular leader who gave the Middle Path to the people as compared to the extreme ways proposed by his contemporaries. However, there were people who were jealous of his popularity. One such person was his cousin Devadatta. He was an ascetic and also came from the Shakya clan. He wanted to become the



**Mahabodhi temple,  
Bodh Gaya**

chief of the Sangha. Hence, he tried to kill the Buddha by sending a drunk and mad elephant towards him at Rajagriha. But a miracle occurred. After approaching the Buddha, the elephant realized the Buddha's greatness and prostrated in front of him. This event is known as the Miracle of Rajagriha. Rajagriha was one of the favourite places of the Tathagata (another name of the Buddha, by which he is often addressed in the Pali literature). He spent many rainy seasons at Rajagriha near the Gridhrakuta (Vulture's

peak). Hence it is also a very significant place for the Buddhist devotees. While spreading his religion, the Buddha once thought of sharing his knowledge with his deceased mother, who was staying in the Thirty Third Heaven among the Gods. So he went to the heaven, preached her and came back to the earth after three months. It is believed that he was escorted by the Gods Brahma and Indra to descend at Sankissa. People, who were witness to this event, recorded that tall staircase came from the heaven and Buddha came to the earth. This is also considered as the Miracle of Sankissa and hence this place is included in the Buddhist Pilgrimage Tour. Later on, the Mauryan Emperor Ashoka erected a pillar here.

As Buddha was moving from one village to another, he once went to Vaishali. When he was meeting people, the news of his arrival reached the monkeys in the jungle. They were collecting honey for themselves. They came to meet Gautama in Vaishali and offered the honey to him. This is called as the Miracle of Vaishali in the Buddhist tradition and hence Vaishali is considered as a sacred place for the inclusion in the Ashamahasthanas. Even though Gautama emerged as a leader, he was often challenged by the people from established religious system. He answered them by performing certain miracles. Once at Shravasti, in the religious conference, he was challenged by such people. There he performed two miracles. The first one was that he created fire by one hand and started the rains by other hand. By doing this he showed that he had control over two of the great elements of nature i.e. the fire and the water. The second miracle was that he appeared in one thousand forms in front of the people. This event is known as the Miracle of the Thousand Buddhas. Buddha also spent many of his rain retreats in Shravasti. This made Shravasti a very popular as well as important pilgrim place for the devotees of Buddhism. The last but an extremely significant place for the Buddhist pilgrims is Kushinagar. It was here that the Buddha was liberated from the bondages of life and death and attained the Mahaparinirvana. This place called as Kushinara, was then known as Kushinagara. It was under the rule of the Malla rulers. It was at the age of eighty, that Gautama Buddha took his last breath. That is why this one of the most sacred places of Buddhism. Every Buddhist would want to visit these eight places during his lifetime. It is also popularly known as the Buddha Circuit. There are numerous other places, where Gautama Buddha went during his life time and something or the other happened there. However, these above mentioned eight places are unanimously considered as the Ashtamahasthanas.

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# संत रविदास : सांस्कृतिक चेतना का प्रतिक

रविदास जी अपनी प्रसिद्ध वाणी आरती में कहते हैं कि पुरणों आदि ग्रन्थ द्वारा बतलाए गए कार्यों तथा तीर्थों पर स्नान करने से भी लोग आवागमन के चक्कर में घूमते रहते हैं। रविदास जी ने बहुदेववाद की स्वीकृती प्रदान नहीं की। इस प्रकार रविदास जी ने हिंदू धर्म की परम्पराओं और दिखावे के कार्यों का खंडन किया है।

## डॉ. हरमहेन्द्र सिंह बेदी

वि विधता में एकता यही भारत की खुबसुरती है और इस खुबसुरती को बनाए रखने का काम संतो ने किया है। इसका एक प्रमाण है, १६०४ ई. में सिंखों के पाचवे गुरु अर्जुन देव जी ने भाई गुरुदास की सहाय्यता से संपादित किया हुआ आदिग्रन्थ। गुरु नानक देव जी से लगभग १५० - २०० साल पहले के संत शैख फरीद से लेकर कबीर, रविदास, नामदेव इत्यादि प्रमुख विचारकों को वाणी का पहला प्रमाणिक दस्तावेज के रूप में भी इस ग्रन्थ को देखाना चाहिए। इस ग्रन्थ में जहां गुरुओं की रचनाएं एकत्रित की गई हैं वहाँ पंजाब के भट्टों के श्लोक सवैये और भारतीय सुफी सन्तों और महापुरुषों की वाणी को आदर स्थान दिया। वहां की नीच जाति के भारतीय भक्त कबीर, रवीदास, संधना और से आदि को भी उस पंक्ति में रखा गया है। ऐसे मत हजारीप्रसाद द्विवेदीने व्यक्त किया है। गुरु अर्जुन देव जी ने गुरु नानक, गुरु अंगद, गुरु अमरदास, गुरु रामदास तथा अपनी वाणी, शैख फरीद, कबीर, नामदेव, रविदास, रामानंद, पोंपी, धन्ना, संधना, सेन, त्रिलोचन, जयदेव, सूरदास, परमानंद, वेणी तथा भसीन इन १५ सन्तों की वाणी, ११ भाटों तथा ४ अन्य कवियों की वाणियों को संग्रहित किया। इस ग्रन्थ में भक्ति, ज्ञान और कर्म इन तीनों की सहजता पर बल दिया गया है।

भारतीय चिंतन में जीवात्मी को जानने और समझने का प्रयास बहुत प्राचीन काल से होता आ रहा है। रविदास जी ने आत्मा

का वर्णन अद्वैत वेदावत के अनुसार किया है। इन्होंने कहा है कि, ब्रह्म और जीवात्मा एक ही हैं। जैसे सोने और सोने के गहने तथा जल और उनकी लहरों में कोई अन्तर नहीं होता। वैसे ही जीव और परम तत्व में मूलतः अंतर नहीं है। यही विचार उनकी वाणी में स्पष्ट कहे गए हैं

**तोही मोही तोही मोही अंतरू वैसा।**

**कनक कटिक जल तरंग जैसा ॥**

आत्मा को परम तत्व का अंग माननेवाले गुरु रविदास सही अर्थों में एक महामानव थे। इनके समय सहज धर्म का सामान्य और साधारण रूप प्रायः लुप्त हो चुका था। रविदास जी अपनी प्रसिद्ध वाणी आरती में कहते हैं कि पुरणों आदि ग्रन्थ द्वारा बतलाए गए कार्यों तथा तीर्थों पर स्नान करने से भी लोग आवागमन के चक्कर में घूमते रहते हैं। रविदास जी ने बहुदेववाद की स्वीकृती प्रदान नहीं की। इस प्रकार रविदास जी ने हिंदू धर्म की परम्पराओं और दिखावे के कार्यों का खंडन किया है। मध्यकालीन भारत में ऐसे खंडन करनेवाले रविदास जी चमार परिवार में जन्मे थे। उन्होंने पुरी जिंदगीभर अपना चमार का काम करते करते आपसी जाती, वर्ण, नस्ल, धर्म भेद नष्ट करने के लिए लोगों को जागृत करने का काम करते रहे। रविदास जी अपने समाज में रहकर ही वाणी की सृजना करते थे।

गुरु रविदास जी ने समाज सुधार के सद्व्यवहार, कथनी करनी में एकता, परनिन्दा का त्याग, अहंकार आदि बातें कही हैं। समाज में रहते हुए समस्त आयु चमार का काम करते रविदास जी ने श्रम करने पर भी बल दिया है। रविदास वाणी में सांस्कृतिक राष्ट्रियता अपने उदात्त रूप में मिलती है। मध्यकालीन भारत में सर्वप्रथम नीच

जातियों को आत्म संस्कार का अवसर प्राप्त हुआ ये महत्वपूर्ण है । संत रविदास वाणी का कोई एक विषय नहीं बल्कि उन्होंने समाज में रहते हुए अपनी संस्कृति को साथ लेकर अनेकों विषयों पर वाणी की रचना की है । रविदास जी ने भी जीव की अद्वैतता को स्वीकार किया है । परमात्मा और जीवात्मा उसका अंश, इनके अनुसार ब्रह्म पति है तो जीव पत्नी, हस स्वामी है ती जीव दासी । दोनो एक ही स्थल पर निवास करते हैं । ईश्वर मे असीम श्रद्धा तथा उसके अस्तित्व में दृढ विश्वास रखने वाला व्यक्ति ही प्रभु भक्ति की ओर उन्मुख होता है । इसलिए तो रविदास जी का कथन है कि भाव अर्थात श्रद्धा – विश्वास प्रेम के बिना प्रभु भक्ति नहीं हो सकती । इसके साथ ही वे काम करते हैं कि गोविंद मे मेरी अपार श्रद्धा है ।



संत रविदास जी की जन्मस्थली

### संघर्षमय जीवन

गुरु अर्जुन देव को भक्त रविदास वाणी के लगभग १०० हस्तलिखित ग्रन्थ पढ़ने का अवसर मिला था । आदिग्रन्थ में गुरु रविदास जी के चालीस श्लोक दर्ज हैं । भक्त रविदास वाणी का प्राचीन प्रमुख और प्रभावित स्रोत श्री गुरु ग्रन्थ साहिब है जिसका संपादन गुरु अर्जुन देव जी ने किया। गुरु रविदास का संपूर्ण जीवन संघर्षमय था । जहां पर भी वो गए, तत्कीलन समाज में फैली छुआ-छुत का सामना करना पडा, परन्तु उनका साहस एवं अटल ईश्वरीय विश्वास सदा उन्हें अपने आध्यात्मिक मार्ग पर चलने की प्रेरणा देता रहा । इसलिए रविदास जी की वाणी का कोई एक विषय नहीं है, बल्कि उनकी वाणी अनेक विषयों को स्पर्श करती हुई जाती है ।

आचार्य शंकराचार्य अथवा रामानुज की भ्रांती महात्मा रविदास दार्शनिक नहीं थे तथापि वह एक मौलिक और महान विचारक अवश्य थे । भारतीय चिंतन परंपरा में मिलनेवाले व्यक्त और अव्यक्त ब्रह्म के दो रूप में से गुरु रविदास जी मुख्यतः ब्रह्म के अव्यक्त रूप

का वर्णन जादा तर किया है । निष्कर्ष के रूप में कहा जा सकता है कि रविदास जी निगुण निराकार ब्रह्म के उपासक थे । इनकी अधिक तर वाणी इसी विषय के अन्तर्गत आती है ।

सत्संग और राम नाम

गुरु रविदास जी ने अपनी वाणी में सत्संग की महिमा मुखर होकर गाई है । इनका कहना है कि यदि भाव के बिना प्रभु भक्ती नहीं हो सकती तो साधु संगती के बगैर मनुष्य में भाव भी उत्पन्न नहीं होता । इसलिए जो लोग दुष्ट और कुमार्गामी है उनके पास नहीं बैठना चाहिए, ऐसा रविदास जी का स्पष्ट उद्देश था । उनके अनुसार साधु वही है जो संसार से निर्लिप्त है, परमात्मा मे अनुरक्त है और प्रभु के अतिरिक्त अन्य किसी को नहीं जानता । तथा जिसकी वाणी निर्मल और जिसके दर्शन एवं स्पर्शन से सुख और शांति प्राप्त होती है । ऐसे संत साधक के विषय में वे कहते हैं ऐसा भक्त स्वयं भगवान के समान होता है । और इसी महिमा के कारण वे भक्तों को भी सत्संग करने का उपदेश देते हैं ।

सत्ययुग के सत्य का, त्रेता युग के यज्ञ का औस व्दापार युग के पूजाचार का आधार था, लेकिन कलियुग में तो केवल नाम का ही आधार होने की बात रविदास जी ने कही है। अन्य भक्तों के भांति रविदास जी भी प्रभु भक्तीवाणी में नाम कि महिमा स्वीकार करते है । इस नाम को राम, नारायण, हरि, मुकुंद, माधव आदि अनेक नामों से पुकारते हुए वे कहते हैं कि चौंतीस अक्षरों में राम नाम के दो अक्षर ही वास्तव में एक मात्र सत्य है । मैं राम का व्यापारी हूँ । मैंने तो राम नाम का धन लादा हुआ है जबकि लोक माया ममता का विष लादने में लगे हैं । नारायण ही मेरा जीवन धन है । नाम जप सबसे बड़ा लाभ गुरु रविदास जी ने बताया है कि जो राम नाम का जप करता है वह जन्म मरण के बंधन से मुक्त हो जाता है । प्रभु का नाम निरंतर स्मरण करने वाला भक्त परमात्मा को प्राप्त होता है । जैसे पारस को छूने से लोहा सोना बन जाता है उसीप्रकार भक्त भगवान एकाकार होता है ।

गुरु रविदास भक्ती आंदोलन की उपज थे । आदिग्रन्थ में संकलित गुरु रविदास जी के विषय में डॉ. रामकुमार वर्मा के विचार महत्वपूर्ण है । सिखों का धार्मिक ग्रन्थ होने के कारण गुरु ग्रन्थ साहिब अत्यंत प्रामाणिक पाठ है । यह सिखों के द्वारा देवस्वरूप पूज्य होने के कारण अपने रूप में अक्षणिक है और इसके पाठ को स्पर्श करने का साहस किसी नहीं हो सका । यहां तक कि एक-एक मात्रा को मंत्र शक्ती को युक्त समझकर उसे पूर्वत ही लिखने और छापने का क्रम चला आ रहा है । व्यवहारिक रूप में यही संसार विधेयात्मक तथा कर्म क्षेत्र के रूप में माना गया है । रविदास जी इस दुःख भरे संसार को कर्म क्षेत्र मानकर मनुष्यों को सत्कर्म करने का उपदेश देते हैं.....

**जैसा रेणु कुसुंभ का तैला इहु संसारु ।**

**मेरे रमईए रंग मजीतु का कहू रविदास चमार ॥**

अब की बेर सुकित करी जा । बहुरि न यह गढ पाय हो ॥

अंत में कहा जा सकता है की जितने भी संत कवि हुए हैं उन सब में रविदास जी के पद सरस और भावपूर्ण हैं ।

**प्रोफेसर, हिंदी विभाग, गुरु नानक विश्वविद्यालय अमृतसर।**

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# धर्मान्तरितों का आरक्षण : एक प्रश्न



एक विवाद चल रहा है की समीर वानखेडे ने सरकारी नौकरी में अपनी जाती तथा महजब छिपाया, अपनी जाती के आधारपर प्रमोशन लिया वगैरा वगैरा। यह विवाद पिछले कुछ महिनो से चल रहा है। इस विवाद ने न्यायालय में दस्तक दी है। लेकिन क्या अनुसूचित जाती के किसी ने धर्म परिवर्तन के बाद उसकी मूल जाती का लाभ उसे मिल सकता है या नहीं? ये विवाद सन १९५० से चल रहा है। उसका अभी तक स्पष्ट हल नहीं निकाला है। धर्म परिवर्तन करनेवाली संस्था एवं संघटनो ने अपना कार्य आगे बढाने हेतु अब इस विवाद का आधार लेना शुरू किया है।

## मिताली

संविधान (अनुसूचित जाती) आदेश (क्र.१९), १९५० के पैरा-३ के नुसार, 'पैरा २ में अंतर्विष्ट किसी बात के होते हुए भी, कोई व्यक्ति जो हिन्दू, सिख धर्म से भिन्न मानता है, अनुसूचित जाती का सदस्य न समझा जाये' यह आदेश परमपूज्य बोधिसत्व डॉ. बाबासाहब अम्बेडकरजी के भारत के कानून मंत्री रहते हुए जारी किया गया था। सन १९५० के इस आदेश में बाबासाहब ने बौद्ध धर्म का समावेश नहीं किया। वह इसलिए की, देश के पूर्वोत्तर राज्यों में तथा लद्दाख में पारम्परिक बौद्धों की जो मूल जातिया हैं, वह संविधान की धारा ३४२ के नुसार भारत के महामहिम राष्ट्रपति जी को प्राप्त अधिकारों के तहत उनके द्वारा जारी आदेशानुसार अनुसूचित जनजाति के सूचि में समाविष्ट है। इसलिए भी, बाबासाहब को संविधान (अनुसूचित जाती) आदेश (क्र.१९), के पैरा ३ में हिन्दू व सिख बंधुओ के साथ बौद्ध मतावलम्बियों का समावेश करने की आवश्यकता महसूस नहीं हुयी।

बाबासाहब ने, सन १९३५ में धर्मांतरण की घोषणा की थी और उनके मन में भी यह निश्चित था की, 'वे बौद्ध धर्म ही अपनाएंगे'। इसलिए बाबासाहब ने संविधान की रचना करते वक्त, संविधान की धारा २५ (२) के स्पष्टीकरण २ नुसार 'खंड (२) के उपखंड (ख) में हिन्दुओ के प्रति निर्देश का यह अर्थ लगाया जाएगा की उसके अंतर्गत सिख, जैन या बौद्ध धर्म को माननेवाले व्यक्तियों के प्रति निर्देश है और हिन्दुओ की धार्मिक संस्थाओ के प्रति निर्देश का अर्थ तदनुसार लगाया जायेगा', इस तरह का प्रावधान किया। १४ अक्टूबर, १९५६ को बाबासाहब ने नागपुर में अपने लाखो अनुयायियों के साथ बुद्ध धम्म की दीक्षा ली।

परमपूज्य बोधिसत्व डॉ. बाबासाहब आंबेडकर जी द्वारा, संविधान की धारा २५ में किये गए प्रावधानों के आधार पर,

संविधान (अनुसूचित जाती) आदेश(क्र.१९), १९५० के पैरा ३ में, सन १९९० में सुधार करते हुए 'हिन्दू, सिख के साथ-साथ बौद्ध धर्मावलम्बियों का भी समावेश किया गया। तब से देश में पुनश्च एक बार ईसाई व इस्लामिक संगठनो द्वारा अनुसूचित जाती से ईसाई व इस्लाम बने धर्मान्तरितो का भी अनुसूचित जाती का दर्जा कायम रहे, इस तरह की मांग उठने लगी व न्यायालयों में दावे भी पेश होने लगे।

इसलिए सामाजिक न्याय व अधिकारिता मंत्रालय (अल्पसंख्यक प्रभाग) द्वारा २९ अक्तूबर, २००४ को जारी संकल्प संख्या सं १-११/२००४-एमसी(डी) के तहत, राष्ट्रीय, धार्मिक व भाषायी अल्पसंख्यक आयोग गठित करने का निर्णय लेकर,

(क) धार्मिक और भाषाई अल्पसंख्यकों के बीच सामाजिक और आर्थिक रूप से पिछड़े वर्गों की पहचान के लिए मानदंडों का सुझाव देना;

(ख) धार्मिक और भाषाई अल्पसंख्यकों के बीच सामाजिक और आर्थिक रूप से पिछड़े वर्गों के कल्याण के लिए उपायों की सिफारिश करना, जिसमे शिक्षा और रोजगार में आरक्षण शामिल है;

(ग) इनकी सिफारिशों को लागु करने के लिए यथा अपेक्षित आवश्यक संवैधानिक कानूनी और प्रशासनिक तौर-तरीकों का, सुझाव देना और इनके विचार-विमर्श और सिफारिशों की रिपोर्ट प्रस्तुत करना, इत्यादि विषय आयोग की कार्यकक्षा में शामिल किए गए और १५ मार्च २००५ के आदेश के तहत न्यायमूर्ति रंगनाथ मिश्रा जी की अध्यक्षता में डॉ.ताहिर महमूद, डॉ.अनिल विल्सन एवं डॉ.मोहिंदर सिंह (निदेशक-नेशनल इंस्टिट्यूट ऑफ पंजाब स्टडीज, भाई वीर सिंह साहित्य सदन, नई दिल्ली) इन्हे सदस्य के रूप में नियुक्त किया गया।

इसके पश्चात् २८ सितम्बर २००५ को, भारत सरकार द्वारा, आरक्षण के प्रयोजनार्थ, ईसाई या इस्लाम धर्म अपनाने वाले अनुसूचित जाती के सदस्यों की सामाजिक व आर्थिक स्थिति की



जांच करने के लिए आयोग से कहा गया।

तत्कालीन कांग्रेस सरकार द्वारा, जस्टिस रंगनाथ मिश्रा आयोग से यह भी कहा गया की, संविधान (अनुसूचित जाती) आदेश(क्र.१९), १९५० के पैरा ३ से 'या तो धर्म की शर्त हटा दी जाये या फिर इस आदेश के पैरा ३ में हिन्दू, सिख व बौद्धों के साथ-साथ, ईसाई व इस्लाम मतावलम्बियों का भी समावेश किया जाये या नहीं इस हेतु, राज्य सरकारों, गैर-सरकारी संगठनों और आम जनता से इसकी सार्वजनिक सूचना के प्रकाशन की तारीख से छःसप्ताह के अंदर उनके विचार/सुझाव मांगे जाये।

आयोग ने, विविध समुदाय तथा धार्मिक नेताओं से इस सन्दर्भ में विचार-विमर्श किया, जिसमें पि.डी.एम भी शामिल था। इसलिए आयोग द्वारा प्रकाशित रिपोर्ट के खंड २ की पृष्ठ संख्या ४९ पर पि.डी.एम का नाम दर्ज है। जिन्होंने अनुसूचित जाती से, ईसाई और इस्लाम धर्म ग्रहण किया है 'ऐसे लोगों को अनुसूचित जाती का दर्जा देना व कायम रखना, अनुचित होगा' पि.डी.एम की ऐसी स्पष्ट धारणा होने से पि.डी.एम ने आयोग के समक्ष अपनी बात रखते हुए अपना कड़ा विरोध जताया था। लेकिन 'अनुसूचित जाती के,

तत्कालीन जस्टिस रंगनाथ मिश्रा आयोग (राष्ट्रीय धार्मिक व भाषायी अल्पसंख्यक आयोग) के एक सदस्य डॉ. अनिल विल्सन ईसाई थे तो दूसरे सदस्य डॉ. मोहिंदर सिंह, यह कम्युनिस्ट होने की जानकारी रही। डॉ. ताहिर महमूद इनके मुस्लिम होने में कोई शक नहीं। अगर हमारी याददास्त सही है तो, तत्कालीन सरकार को अपेक्षित रिपोर्ट देने के लिए, तत्कालीन सरकार ने पुरस्कार स्वरूप डॉ. अनिल विल्सन को हिमाचल विश्वविद्यालय का वाईस-चांसलर तथा डॉ.ताहिर महमूद को इंडियन लॉ कमीशन के सदस्य के पद से नवाजा था।

ऐसे लोगों को अनुसूचित जाती का दर्जा देना, जिन्होंने ईसाई व इस्लाम धर्म ग्रहण किया है', इस विषय के तहत तारीख, १८ व १९ अगस्त २००६ को आयोग द्वारा मुंबई के टाटा समाज विज्ञान संस्थान में, एक कार्यशाला का आयोजन किया गया था।

इस कार्यशाला से निकले हुए निष्कर्षों के आधार पर, आयोग ने अपनी रिपोर्ट के खंड १ का अध्याय १० के अंतर्गत १६.१.६ से १६.१.८ नुसार, अनुसूचित वर्ग से ईसाई व इस्लाम धर्म में धर्मान्तरितों का अनुसूचित वर्ग का दर्जा कायम रखने के लिए, संविधान (अनुसूचित जाती) आदेश के पैरा-३ में संशोधन कर, या तो धर्म की शर्त हटाने या फिर उसमें ईसाई व इस्लाम धर्म को जोड़ने के आशय की सिफारिशें की। आयोग की पूर्ण रिपोर्ट भारत सरकार के अल्पसंख्यांक मंत्रालय द्वारा, १० मई २००७ को २ खंडों में (खंड १ पृष्ठ सं १९२, खंड २ पृष्ठ सं २५०) प्रकाशित की गयी। आयोग की, इन सिफारिशों से सेंटर फॉर पब्लिक इंटरैस्ट लिटिगेशन द्वारा उच्चतम न्यायालय में, इसके लिए दाखिल पिटीशन को और बल मिला।

तत्कालीन जस्टिस रंगनाथ मिश्रा आयोग (राष्ट्रीय धार्मिक व भाषायी अल्पसंख्यक आयोग) के एक सदस्य डॉ. अनिल विल्सन ईसाई थे तो दूसरे सदस्य डॉ. मोहिंदर सिंह, यह कम्युनिस्ट होने

की जानकारी रही। डॉ. ताहिर महमूद इनके मुस्लिम होने में कोई शक नहीं। अगर हमारी याददास्त सही है तो, तत्कालीन सरकार को अपेक्षित रिपोर्ट देने के लिए, तत्कालीन सरकार ने पुरस्कार स्वरूप डॉ. अनिल विल्सन को हिमाचल विश्वविद्यालय का वाईस-चांसलर तथा डॉ.ताहिर महमूद को इंडियन लॉ कमीशन के सदस्य के पद से नवाजा था।

सी.पि.एम की वेबसाइट से यह पता चलता है की, ४ से ९ अप्रैल २०१२ को कोझिकोड में संपन्न सी.पि.एम की २० वीं कांग्रेस में, रंगनाथ मिश्रा कमीशन की सिफारिश को लेकर एक प्रस्ताव पारित हुआ, जिसमें उन्होंने, अनुसूचित जाती वर्ग का दर्जा पाने के लिए संविधान अनुसूचित जाती आदेश, १९५० के पैरा-३ में रखी गयी धर्म की शर्त को अनुचित बताकर धर्मांतरित दलित-ईसाई-मुस्लिमों का अनुसूचित जाती का दर्जा कायम रखने के लिए, समर्थन की बात कही। इसी प्रस्ताव में यह भी कहा गया है की, सरकारी तथा सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र एवं पुलिस फ़ोर्स में रोजगार के सन्दर्भ में, अनुसूचित जाती, जनजाति समुदाय से भी ज्यादा, देश के मुस्लिमों के साथ अत्याचार होता है। इस पर भी उन्होंने चिंता जताई है। इससे ऐसा लगता है की सी.पि.एम को, अनुसूचित जाती/जनजाति से ज्यादा मुस्लिम भाइयों की चिंता रही है। उसी तरह २३ मार्च, २०१० को महिला आरक्षण बिल पर संसद में चर्चा करते समय, कांग्रेस सांसदों ने 'रंगनाथ मिश्रा आयोग की सिफारिशों नुसार, अनुसूचित जाती से ईसाई व इस्लाम में धर्मान्तरितों को अनुसूचित जाती का दर्जा बहाल करने की वकालत की।

संविधान (अनुसूचित जनजाति) आदेश(क्र.२२), १९५० में अनुसूचित जनजाति का दर्जा पाने के लिए धर्म की शर्त नहीं रखी गयी। इसलिए, शायद पूर्वोत्तर राज्यों में बहुत बड़े पैमाने पर और कम-ज्यादा मात्रा में क्यों न हो देश के अन्य राज्यों में ईसाई मिशनरियों को अनुसूचित जनजाति समुदाय में ईसाई धर्मांतरण की मुहीम चलाना आसान हो गया। जिसके परिणाम, हम आज भुगत रहे हैं। लेकिन, संविधान (अनुसूचित जाति) आदेश, १९५० में अनुसूचित जाति का दर्जा पाने के लिए, इस आदेश के पैरा-३ में व्यक्ति का हिन्दू, सिख या बौद्ध धर्मीय होने की शर्त रखी जाने से ईसाई मिशनरियों को, अनुसूचित वर्ग में ईसाई धर्मांतरण की मुहीम चलाना उतना आसान नहीं रहा। इसलिए ईसाई मिशनरी अपने संगठनों के माध्यम से संविधान आदेश से धर्म की शर्त को हटाने की या तो संविधान (अनुसूचित जाति) आदेश, १९५० के पैरा ३ में हिन्दू, सिख और बौद्धों के साथ-साथ ईसाई व इस्लाम धर्मावलम्बियों के समावेशन की मुहीम चला रही है। ईसाई व इस्लाम संगठनों की यह मुहीम संविधान की धारा २५ को छेद देने के प्रयासों का एक हिस्सा है।

अब जरूरत है, देश के अनुसूचित जाती(एस.सी) वर्ग को ईसाईकरण से बचाने हेतु संविधान (अनुसूचित जाति) आदेश, १९५० में अब बदलाव की किसी भी असंवैधानिक कोशिश को नाकामयाब करने की तथा देश के अनुसूचित जनजाति(एस.टी) वर्ग को ईसाईकरण से बचाने हेतु, संविधान (अनुसूचित जनजाति) आदेश (क्र.२२), १९५० में धर्म की शर्त के समावेशन की।

लेखिका मुंबई और ठाने जिला न्यायालय में वकील हैं।

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