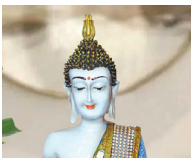


UNHEARD VOICES

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SACHITTA PARIYO DAPANANG

KEEP YOUR CONSCIOUS CLEAN



16th May
Buddha Pournima



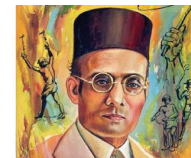
20th May
Sant Chokhamela
Death Anniversary



22nd May
Raja Ram Mohan Roy
Birth Anniversary



27th May
Mata Ramabai Ambedkar
Death Anniversary



28th May
Social Reformer
V. D. Savarkar
Birth Anniversary



31st May
Ahilyadevi Holkar
Birth Anniversary



EDITORIAL

Raising above ideological untouchability

Many times terms like 'atmanirbhar' or 'self-reliance' are taken at face value, denoting their materialistic or superficial aspect. However, the term atmanirbhar has deep intellectual and emotional meaning, which unfortunately takes back seat due to the traditional way of thinking, set by western philosophy. Social Studies Foundation (SSF), which publishes UNHEARD VOICES, was proud to host a two-day national seminar as it gave an Indian perspective to Indian problems, which were hitherto seen from foreign philosophy.

While we have extensively reported deliberations of the seminar in the current issue, we feel it necessary to highlight its achievements here. Seminar was unique in the sense that it had representatives from all the isms or ideologies. This itself is a great achievement as all of us are witnessing a charged atmosphere with intellectual egos. We are witness to intellectual terrorism and also unacademic atmosphere, where your truth versus my truth has become a major feature. Ideology and interpretations are used as tools to divide people or target a few sections of the society. This has seriously affected the credentials of Indian intellectuals as question marks are being raised on their honesty. Against this backdrop, it was elating to see intellectuals sharing one dais with genuine concern to Indian problems.

What brought them together? Of course, it was concerned with Indian issues. They came together forgetting their intellectual positions. Coming together does not necessarily mean agreeing on all the details. But it can surely be seen as a good beginning, which is in the true spirit of Indian philosophy. What India needs today is doing away with politics of exclusion and moving ahead with the aim of a culture of inclusion. Intellectual untouchability is the most unfortunate and undesirable part, which is not merely undemocratic but also unhealthy. The current atmosphere in the intellectual field alienates the majority of Indians from any intellectual exercises. Needless to say that any attempt to find solutions to Indian problems would be fruitless without active involvement of the people. We need to remember all the time that collective

subconsciousness, which is the most outstanding feature of true democracy, is honoured despite intellectual commitments.

The seminar discussed social ideas from a range of thinkers and leaders like Gautam Buddha, Sant Kabir, Bruhaspati and Veer Savarkar and so on. Prima facie, it looks that all of them are different poles. This is the impression that has been created for years. SSF believes that we need all thinkers like Gautam Buddha, Mahavir, Shankaracharya, Kautilya, Sant Kabir, Sant Ravidas, Dr. Ambedkar, Veer Savarkar, Pt Deendayal Upadhyaya and Ram Manohar Lohiya. We strongly believe in ancient Indian wisdom, which says – Eakam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti. Therefore, it would be unfair to judge these thinkers by comparison with each other. What we need to do is learn and absorb all the contemporary well-meaning elements.

This exercise is needed as modern complex society needs restructuring. This has been done in the past as well. Society does not become modern with availability of modern infrastructure and facilities but with modern ideas. For this, we need to give up old and outdated ideas and we also need to think about which path will take us to modernity. Some have great faith in western ideas and ideology while others believe that modernity can be gained from our own Indian soil. India was never hesitant to embrace new ideas. We believe in 'Aa No Bhadra'. It stands for indigenous intellectual foundation. This indigenous foundation covers social reformers and thinkers before the arrival of the British. Traditionally, they are called Sant or Seer. It is a reality of Indian life that these Sants have unbelievable influence over the masses. These Sants are free from any outside influence and have their roots in 2000-year-old Indian tradition. Reinventing ourselves with Indian foundation is the need of the hour as all other ideological models stand exposed because of their inherent limitations. We must liberate ourselves from denial mode to accept reality. 'Khandan-Mandan' has been an Indian tradition. We are never scared of any debate as we are honest to accept the errors and take corrective steps. Only consensus can pave the way in critical days today.

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CONTENTS



Glimpses of
SF Seminar
Page 19

- 04 Women disciples
of Tathagata
- 07 Bodh Gaya : Siddhartha became
the Buddha here
- 09 Social inclusion :
Indian perspective
- 10 Social harmony
is Indian DNA
- 12 Ahilyadevi Holkar :
Indian woman ruler
- 15 Nashik to Sheffield :
A journey of struggle
- 17 A story of inter-caste marriage :
Three decades back

Response

A two day's national seminar organized by Social Studies Foundation saw the culmination of various perspectives on a common platform. Academicians, young research scholars, and even undergraduate students got an opportunity to present their papers in sessions that were chaired by eminent academicians. It was the first seminar that welcomed the narratives of marginalisation and social inclusion in the Indian context, based on Indian thinkers and social reformers. The timeline spanned from bhakti and medieval era to contemporary social reformers.

There were six technical sessions catering to different specific themes under the umbrella theme of "Marginalisation and Social Inclusion: A Cultivation of Indian Socio-Cultural Thought". Each session had five to six presenters who would then be questioned by the chairs and the general audience. The unique aspect of this seminar was the special Women's panel that was organised especially for women participants. The papers covered Indian social revolutionaries like Veer Savarkar, Deen Dayal Upadhyay, Hari Chand Thakur, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Swami Vivekananda, Manto and many more. The diversity and in-depth research papers made the seminar worthwhile and opened new ways of viewing society.

Such initiative was remarkable as it heralded the beginning of changing dynamics in literature present in academia. The changing historiography which focused on leaders in a systematic manner taking references from different states and era, was highly appreciated, and encouraged into being continued. This was one of the first seminars to reflect and contextualize inclusion in multiple strands of Indian cultural traditions and intellectual thought. The need of the time being the critical reflection and focus on the contributions of great through leaders and thinkers and linking with contemporary concerns from inclusion in religious sphere, nation to the media etc.

Symposium speakers shared their insight on various notable personalities and also the overarching ideas or styles of portrayal of different communities in our society today. It was a highly successful event. With more than 200 people attending the seminar each day. It was a beginning of a series of seminars nurturing the cause of the downtrodden in our society and aiming to bring a change in the hegemonic nature of literature.

Prof. Y. Chinna Rao,
Chairperson
CSSEIP/SSS/JNU,
New Delhi



Bhagwan Gautam Buddha opened the gates for women to do worship and attain liberation without making any noise about the gender equality. Thus, he proved that women can also tread on the path of spirituality just like their male counterparts through his conduct. Mata Gautami's entry in the religious order (Sangh) with the help of Anand was indeed the moment which shall be written in gold in the history of Indian women.

Women disciples of Tathagata

Dr. Rama



In pre-Buddha era, India was witnessing brainstorming at a massive scale. Intellectual revolution started by the Upanishadas had begun bearing fruits. Authors of Upanishadas had undertaken the task of solving the issues left out in the Vedas. However, the number of people pursuing such quest of knowledge was not too large. Majority of the people were following the conventional way of pleasing the God by performing Yagyas.

Pleasurable life, pleasing God by performing Yagyas, hard work, afterlife in heaven, happiness and longevity, ample supply of milk and ghee meant prosperity in the Vedic era. Rituals had replaced these ideas. The social order, basis of which was on gender equality in the previous times, has turned patriarchy. History defines this period as post-Vedic era.

While great people were immersed in discussions

on complex topics like Universal Self (Atma), Splendour of the Absolute (Bramha) and whether the world is perishable or imperishable, causing intellectual cacophony, majority of common people were confused as to whether the spirituality meant for them. Condition of women was worse.

Under such circumstances, Gautam Buddha found out a simple way that was easy to follow for the common people to overcome sufferings and grief. Several people started following the way of Buddha and got connected. Initially this way was available only for men.

Although Gautam Buddha himself had overcome the gender discrimination, he was well aware of the prevailing social conditions. He was fully aware that opening the way to attain the state of liberation (Nirvana) for women is not an easy task in the patriarchal social order.

However, Mahaprajapati Gautami, Gautam Buddha's maternal aunt who has nurtured Siddhartha



Gautam after demise of his mother, insisted that Bhagwan Buddha permits entry of women in the monasteries (Sangh). Initially, he turned down this request on three occasions. However, later on, when he saw his maternal aunt donning the pious saffron clothes (Kashay Vastra) and her head tonsured, he agreed to permit entry of women in the monasteries (Sangh) and their consecration (Diksha), subject to a few conditions.

Gautam Buddha is often blamed of inequality for laying down these conditions because they treated male monks (Bhikkhus) superior to their women counterparts. However, those who level such a charge ignore that though these conditions appeared to be pointing towards gender inequality, Gautam Buddha did not treated women as lesser human beings when it came to the actual worship (Sadhana) in any manner.

Both male and women did the same worship (Sadhana). Both followed the same observance (Uposath). Every woman was capable to attain the same state of enlightenment (Bodhi). Every woman was capable of preaching the religion (Dhamma), compose verses (Gatha) and attain the state of liberation (Nirvana).

This equality in attaining the state of enlightenment (Bodhi), complete intellectual freedom that the religion (Dhamma) offered was a miracle in those times because women enjoyed subordinate status as against men in all spheres of life in the social order prevailing at that time. However, Gautam Buddha took the revolutionary step of permitting women prove their intellectual capabilities in the field of spirituality like the religion (Dhamma).

Roots of this revolution were in an incident, which took place before Buddha attained the state of enlightenment (Bodhi). The Nidan Katha, which is a part of the Jatak Katha, narrates the story of Sujata. There are many metaphors (Rupaka) in this story. Sujata was the first well-wisher of Gautam Buddha. After Bhagwan Buddha stated his penance and become skinny, he realized that the penance does not help in attaining the state of enlightenment (Bodhi). Therefore, he subsequently started consuming food. However, five of his fellows deserted him because they felt he had deviated from his way by taking such a decision. Under such circumstances, he was sitting under the shade of a Banyan tree when Sujata, a woman belonging to a rich family, brought Payas (Kheer) in a gold bowl to fulfil a solemn promise made to seek a son. She offered the sweet to Bhagwan Buddha. Since Buddha did not have a utensil made of wood or soil, he extended his bare hand to accept the offering. She handed over the gold bowl to him saying, "O noble man (Arya)! I offer this to you. Please favour me by consuming this. May this Banyan tree grant your wish the way it has fulfilled my wish." Saying this, she went away without even thinking about the gold bowl. After consuming the sweet, Bhagwan Buddha left the bowl

in the River and said to himself, "This bowl will flow in the reverse direction of the flow of water if I am to attain the state of enlightenment (Bodhi)." Behold, the bowl flowed in the reverse direction. Thus, the well wishes given by a selfless Sujata came true and Buddha attained the state of enlightenment (Bodhi). Later on, after he permitted entry of women in the monastery (Sangh), several women did their worship (Sadhana) and proved their competence. Several women proved their abilities by attaining the state of enlightenment (Bodhi) in the period from the 600 BC to 1st Century. Many women made history by composing verses of elder nuns in the Buddhist monastic order (Therigatha) and delivering lectures on the religion (Dhamma). They were able to address many subjects. Their compositions obtained a place of honour in Tripitak. Thus, they proved their merit.

The tale of Kisa Gautami is famous. Kisa means skinny. Gautami, who was skinny, was grief struck after demise of her child. She was asked to fetch mustards from a house where death has not struck. When she realised that there is no such house, she overcome her grief and became a nun (Bhikkhuni). The verse (Gatha) composed by her preaches that transient state if common quality of village, town, family, God and men.

Gautam Buddha is often blamed of inequality for laying down conditions because they treated male monks (Bhikkhus) superior to their women counterparts. However, those who level such a charge ignore that though these conditions appeared to be pointing towards gender inequality, Gautam Buddha did not treated women as lesser human beings when it came to the actual worship (Sadhana) in any manner.

The concept of Mar from Buddhist literature is famous. Mar is the ruler of passions. He arrives with the army of thousands of his daughters and sons when one starts his meditation and is about to attain indifference to worldly objects. There are several scriptural narratives of how Gautam Buddha won his war against Mar.

The Sanyuktanikaya narrates the tale of Soma Bhikkhuni. This nun was mediating at Shravasti when Mar arrived, possessed her mind and said, "Hey Soma, how a woman with intellect as less as two fingers would be able to attain the place that even great sages do not find? Leave all this."

Soma realised the intent of keeping her away from the enlightenment. She realised that Mar was saying that a woman had intellectual ability as less as the space in two fingers used to press rice to test



whether it is cooked just to make her feel inferior. In response, she recites a verse (Gatha) which is an example of gender-neutral thinking of a woman. Instead of feeling inferior, she firmly says, "O Mar! What womanhood would be able to do when one has his mind at comfort, when one is enlightened with knowledge and when one has understood the religion (Dhamma) fully? What you say would be applicable only to those who would have the sense of being a woman or a man or someone special. Your words carry no meaning for me. Take a note of this and go away."

There is also the tale of Khema, the beautiful wife of Bimbisara, the King of Magadha. She was proud of her beauty and her husband felt she should see Gautam Buddha at least once. However, proud of her beauty, she felt why she should visit someone to whom she has donated monasteries (Vihara) and forests.



Khema had gone to a monastery (Vihara) to make offerings to the monks (Bhikkhus) on an occasion. She had vision of her own images as a young woman, a patient and an old woman at that time. On seeing the vision, she gave up on her pride and accepted consecration (Diksha) from Tathagata.

Khema was another intelligent nun (Bhikkhuni). Her dialogue and question-answer session with King Prasenjit on birth as a human being, conditions of human beings and undefined or instable (Avyakrit) are in the Sanyukta Nikaya.

On an occasion, some worshipers asked a nun (Bhikkhuni) named Kajanglika about essence of the teachings of Tathagata. She explained it in details and said with all humility, "Do not consider my interpretation of essence to be final. Get it reviewed by Tathagat." Later on, the worshippers narrated the incident to Gautam Buddha. He said, "Nun (Bhikkhuni) Kajanglika is brilliant. I too would have told the same essence." This dialogue is in Vinaypitaka.

Vishakha was a girl from Angarajya. She was attracted toward the religion (Dhamma) at early age due to preaching of Gautam Buddha. Later on,

she married to Punyavardhan, who belonged to a rich family. She felt affection for Buddhist monks (Bhikkhu) and she would often provide them food, clothes and medicines. She has donated a huge garden to the east of Shravasti to the religious order (Sangh). She made huge financial contributions to spread Buddhism in its early days because of her generosity, religiousness and majesty. She also succeeded in creating her husband and in-laws' favourable opinion towards the religion (Dhamma).

Therigatha also consists of Utpalvarna nun's (Bhikkhuni) befitting answer to Mar. Mar, who represents talkative common people, has misconception that women can be reined in by praising their beauty and putting fear of threat to their fidelity in them. Utpalvarna's verse (Gatha) has been translated by Davis as following:-

"Where there are hundred thousand seducers-e'n such as thou art.

Ne'er would a hair of me stiffen or tremble- alone what canst thou do?

For, all my mind is self controlled.

Like Spears and jav'lins are the joys of sense.

That pierce and rend the mortal frames of us,

These that thou speak'st of as the joys of life- Joys of that ilk, to me are nothing worth."

Therigatha has several such tales and verses (Gatha) of many nuns (Bhikkhuni) from the era of Bhagwan Buddha. Nuns (Bhikkhuni) like Tissa, Dheera, Punna Mitta, Bhadda Sona, Sakula, Sheela, Sumedha, Isidasi, Sundari, Rohini, Vijaya, Anupama, Sujata, Patachara, Abhaya, Dhammadina, Uttara, Sumana, Sumangalmata, Chitta, Mettika, Nanda, Mittakali, Dantika, Uchchiri, Vimala, Jayanti, Sangha, Chala, Ambapali, Gupta, Shubha, Vashishthi chose to tread on the path of spirituality, made intellectual progress and proved that women have equal right to gain knowledge and attain state of liberation (Nirvana).

The flow of knowledge which started in 600 BC flew in India for several centuries. Several nuns (Bhikkhuni) like Sanghamitra, Uttara, Hema, Agnimitra have left their mark on Buddhism even in the later period.

Bhagwan Gautam Buddha opened the gates for women to do worship and attain liberation without making any noise about the gender equality and by giving full freedom to women to worship without observing any difference while including social etiquette in his conditions. Thus, he proved that women can also tread on the path of spirituality just like their male counterparts through his conduct. Mata Gautami's entry in the religious order (Sangh) with the help of Anand was indeed the moment which shall be written in gold in the history of Indian women.

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Bodh Gaya

Siddhartha became the Buddha here



Unlike most of the centres of northern India, this establishment survived the shock of the Muslim invasion of Bihar. It, however, did not escape entirely unscathed from the hands of these invaders, as we can gather from the biography of the Tibetan monk pilgrim Chag lo-tsa-ba Chos-rje-pal (the translator Dharmasvamin), who visited Vajrasana (Bodh-Gaya), Rajagriha and Nalanda in C.E. 1234-36.

Dr. Manjiri Bhalerao



Bodh Gaya, in modern Bihar state, is the most important pilgrim place for the Buddhists across the world. This is the site where Siddhartha became the Buddha. Today it is located in the Gaya district. This is a sacred landscape for both the Hindus as well as the Buddhists. The Hindus believe that at Vishnupada Gaya, there is a footprint of Lord Vishnu. This place is also considered as very auspicious as it is believed that if one performs the funeral rites of one's father here, he attains salvation. Hence, for the Hindus, this place is of utmost importance.

It was in the sixth century B.C.E. that after performing very rigorous meditation, Siddhartha

could not even move. At that time, Sujata, a village woman, helped him with some Kheer (rice and milk pudding). After that he gained some strength and then went to Uruvela, i.e. modern Bodh Gaya. There, he sat down under a pipal tree, on the bank of Niranjana (today's Lilajana) river. He started meditating and after some time, when he was on the verge of getting enlightenment; the demon Mara started his attack. He also sent his three beautiful daughters to seduce Siddhartha. In Buddhism, Mara represents death, rebirth and desire. It is also suggested by some scholars that Mara is the personification of the dilemma that Siddhartha was facing at that time. He had realised that it was the last point in his life when he had to take any decision as to continue with the ascetic lifestyle to go back to



the life of a prince with material pleasures.

It was considered figuratively as the attack of Mara. Siddhartha continued his meditation, touched the mother earth and appealed to her that his efforts are genuine and she has been a witness to them. Then immediately the attack weathered. Siddhartha got the enlightenment and became the Buddha i.e. the enlightened one. He sat there for a few more days and thought about the revelation. As Siddhartha got the enlightenment there, the place came to be known as the Sambodhi. It was popular by this name during the times of Ashoka, as he has referred to his visit to Sambodhi in one of his major rock edicts. Later on, the entire Buddhist establishment came to be known as Mahabodhi. The pipal tree, at the foot of which Gautama obtained his Bodhi, formed the nucleus of a great establishment. The tree which is now present at the back of the Mahabodhi temple is only its remote



successor. There is no record of the number of times it died but was revived through grafts and seeds.

The present tree sprang up out of the roots of its immediate predecessor which had fallen down in 1876. The earliest construction at the foot of the Bodhi tree was a polished sandstone throne (Vajrasana), with typical designs generally found on Mauryan pillar capitals. It is ascribed to Asoka. The establishment flourished tremendously throughout the early centuries of the common era but especially during the long rule of the Palas. Some of the available inscriptions recording dedications are dated in the reign of the rulers of this dynasty.

If the Buddhists resorted to Nalanda for learning, they flocked to Mahabodhi, the most sacred place of pilgrimage, for its special sanctity. The thought of every pious Buddhist, no matter Indian or foreign, was to perform pilgrimage to the sacred spot, offer his prayer at the foot of the image of Buddha at Vajrasana and erect memorials according to his capacity. Thus,

grew up the multitude of votive offerings, mostly in the form of stupas, the spontaneous and tangible expressions of devotion. Their number shows the magnitude of Buddhist devotional piety. Many of these stupas are monolithic, others are of stonework and still others of brick. Among the pilgrims & records are a few in Chinese characters.

Unlike most of the centres of northern India, this establishment survived the shock of the Muslim invasion of Bihar. It, however, did not escape entirely unscathed from the hands of these invaders, as we can gather from the biography of the Tibetan monk pilgrim Chag lo-tsa-ba Chos-rje-dpal (the translator Dharmasvamin), who visited Vajrasana (Bodh-Gaya), Rajagriha and Nalanda in C.E. 1234-36. This pilgrim furnished an eyewitness account of the unsteady condition of the area overrun by the Muslims who were still to establish a stable government. When he reached Vajrasana in 1234, the place was deserted and only four monks were found staying (in the Vihara). One (of them) said, "It is not good! All have fled from fear of the Turushka soldiery & they blocked up the door in front of the Mahabodhi image with bricks and plastered it. Near it they placed another image as a substitute. They also plastered the outside door (of the temple). On its surface they drew the image of Mahesvara in order to protect it from non-Buddhists. These monks, too, fled away and also with them Dharmasvamin. After seventeen days, when the Muslim forces were reported to have gone far away, they returned, and normal condition was restored. The partition-wall was removed and the image, which had been deprived of its emerald eyes by a Turuskha soldier on an earlier occasion, in the sanctum, came to be worshipped.

The temple was in use even in the fourteenth century, long after the Muslim conquest of northern India, as is evident from the records of pilgrims, inscribed on the pavement-slabs. Not long afterwards, it fell into decay. The present condition of the temple and its premises is the result of the thorough makeover completed in the eighties of the nineteenth century. In recent years a museum has been established near the site to house loose sculptures and other antiquities found at the site and its neighbourhood.

Today, one can see numerous Buddhist temples and monasteries constructed near the Mahabodhi temple. They were constructed by and for the devotees of Bhutan, China, Magnolia, Cambodia, Korea, Sikkim, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tibetan and many more. They were constructed according to the style of their native architecture. Thus, once a small village called Uruvela, later on became the world-renowned centre only because it was here that Siddhartha got enlightenment!

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Indian society, culture and history are the confluence of several schools of thoughts. Views adopted by Sants were deeply rooted in a philosophical base, aimed at providing an entry into not only philosophical and spiritual areas but also dealt with issues relating to the existence, power, self (Atma) and universe.

Social inclusion : Indian perspective

Dr. Pragya

Ancient Indian culture favours social inclusion. Promotion of thinkers who promoted integrity and such schools of thought is the need of the hour to ensure that the marginalized people become part of the mainstream and participate in the development process as stakeholders.

Two-day national seminar organized by SSF with Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), provided an opportunity to social scientists, who are studying social inclusion, to discuss the topic. This was with Indian context. The social scientists and researchers participating in the national seminar laid emphasis not only on the history of social marginalisation and integrity but also the relevance of an inclusive society in the present time.

An elaborate discussion on various aspects of social exclusion and integrity in the socio-cultural sphere of Indian society took place during various sessions of the seminar. Research papers presented at this seminar would prove useful to chalk out our social inclusion policy, understand and resolve the issues prevailing today and focus on all-inclusive development. Besides, the experiences shared by the researchers and research papers presented by them on various topics promoted discussion on social inclusion, which would no doubt promote the social and cultural

philosophy of India.

Indeed, India is one of the ancient cultures of the world, which has a long cultural history due to its strong, rich and diverse cultural heritage. Our ancient Indian traditions encourage social inclusion, integrity and harmony. A glance at the history reveals that the rich and long succession of Sants starting even before the evolution of the Bhakti movement, not only put across their points of view to the masses in the languages and dialects used by the common man but also worked on inclusion of marginalised people who were left out from development in the mainstream Indian society.

Thus, Indian society, culture and history are the confluence of several schools of thoughts. Points of view adopted by these Sants were deeply rooted in a philosophical base which aimed at providing an entry into not only philosophical and spiritual areas but also dealt with issues relating to the existence, power, self (Atma) and universe (Brahmand). Prominent among them were the Vedas, Buddhist, Jain and Shringa thinkers, Mahaveer Jain, Charvaka, Nagarjuna, Brihaspati, Ved Vyas and Kumari.

Theories and musings of these philosophers are on not only the worldly life and afterlife, but they also make a strong effort to create an inclusive and comprehensive society and environment where justice and welfare prevails. These Sants from the time before the era of the Bhakti movement laid stress on the need



for brotherhood and equality in the country. Besides, they boosted the confidence of the marginalised people and encouraged them to make progress. They condemned the caste system that existed from a prior time and encouraged women to participate in various religious movements.

All these Sants adopted a theological approach and promoted matriarchal religious traditions. Besides, among these Sants were extraordinary personalities like Ved Vyas coming from the backward castes who worked on restructuring and reforming the Hindu religion. Charvaka, popularly known as Lokayat, debunked the caste system prevailing in the society. This school of thought declared the caste system to be fake, false and unacceptable and argued that the evolution of the caste system was unscientific. Charvaka promoted the theory of equality and brotherhood on this basis. Moreover, the principle of independence advanced by Charvaka not only defined the dignity of marginalised women but also advocated it. This, at a time when challenging the prevailing misconceptions about women was a mammoth challenge.

However, the Charvaka school of thought not only strived to give equal status to the backward castes and women in the society but also to include them in the mainstream development. Besides Ved Vyas, Krishna Dwaipayana was a Sant of the inter-caste community who represented the principles of the Hindu religion. Gautam Buddha, the founder of the Buddhist religion also debunked the caste system. Moreover, he gave priority to the principle of Karma and called out the system that decided one's caste on the basis of birth as irrational. Buddha argued for equality for people belonging to backward castes and women in the society. According to him, men and women are useful

to society in the same manner and therefore they are equal. A woman is the mother of a man and nobody is more revered and honourable in society than the mother.

Another Indian thinker Kumaril Bhatt was a follower of Buddhism in his early days. However, later he embraced the Hindu religion. He emphasized rituals for freedom from the cycle of death and rebirth and focused on the concept of Moksha. He argued with his rivals all over the country in favour of the immortality and imperishability of the self (Atma). Thus, he revived the Hindu religion and worked on the inclusion of the marginalised people in the mainstream.

Thinkers of the Shraman school of thought too criticised the complex caste system and promoted equality. Jain religion advocates equality and strives to protect the rights of all living beings. It accorded equal status to backward castes and women, who were marginalised. These thinkers opposed the caste system and strived to bring equality. While arguing for equal rights for all living beings, the Jain religion puts forth that women can play their role in attaining Nirvana. Jain religion adopts the approach of equality towards various points of view and underlines that naturally, women have less violent tendencies compared to men.

Promotion of social inclusion becomes more important given the conditions prevailing in society in the present times. Therefore, the Social Studies Foundation had organised the two-day national seminar along with the Centre for the Study of the Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, JNU to mark the birth anniversary of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. This seminar was an attempt to advance our ancient tradition of social inclusion and integrity.

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Social harmony is Indian DNA

Pramod Gosavi



The current discourse on Marginalisation and Social Inclusion that prevails in the present-day Indian society, mainly revolves around foreign inspired ideas. This seminar was an attempt to find out solutions to the Indian problems in Indian soil. This was a different attempt as most of the problems and their solutions, which the country is facing, are being looked at from western or leftist ideology perspective. Western or Left perception has some inherent limitations in understanding Indian problems and their solutions.

The seminar was jointly organized with the Centre for the Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy (CSSEIP), Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi.

SSF, jointly with the Centre for the Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, Jawaharlal Nehru University, had organized a seminar on marginalisation and social inclusion. The current discourse on Marginalisation and Social Inclusion that prevails in the present-day Indian society, mainly revolves around foreign inspired ideas. The two-day seminar tried to deliberate upon this.



Minister of State, Ms. Pratimaji Bhoumik, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment at inaugural session.

The current discourse has been critical of Indian socio-cultural thought and has tried to undermine the rich social and cultural aspects of the inclusive thought that existed in the ancient, medieval and modern Indian society.

SSF, therefore, wants that the discourse be brought into within the Indian context and boundaries. The seminar was therefore held with this as prime objective. Besides the inaugural and valediction sessions, the seminar had six sessions wherein selected papers were presented by the authors themselves. This included an 'all women' session wherein all the presiding authorities and the presenters were women. It was very encouraging that over one hundred papers were received from 50 different institutions, affiliated to 15 Universities across India. Out of those received, 28 papers were selected by a panel of experts for presentation.

The seminar also had a symposium, where experts on the subjects discussed various aspects of Indian inclusive thought. The inaugural session of the seminar was graced by Smt. Pratima Bhoumik, Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment. She was the chief guest. Dr. Prakash Bartunia, Chancellor Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Lucknow rendered the keynote address and Prof. Kaushal Kumar Sharma, Dean, SSS/JNU, Prof. Y. Chinna Rao, Chairperson, CSSEIP, SSS, JNU, Prof. Ajay Dube, Rector, JNU were also present on the dais.

Smt. Pratima Bhoumik strongly expressed confidence in the Indian socio-cultural thoughts on inclusivity. She emphatically maintained that social harmony is in the DNA of India. Citing various examples, she clearly brought out how the youth and other population was deliberately kept away from the rich Indian thoughts and tradition. Hon. Minister also spelt out various initiatives taken by the present government that promote inclusivity. Chancellor Prakash Bartunia, while delivering the keynote address, maintained that Indian thought has always been all-inclusive. He lucidly explained

how 'social harmony' was the core value in the Indian value system and how it was nurtured by various saints and social reformers by giving examples from ancient, medieval and modern Indian history. Prof. Bartunia explained how Indian thought has always revolved around the idea of 'Total Development'.

The symposium held during the seminar had participation of Prof. Surinder Jodhka, SSS/JNU, Prof. Y.S. Alone, SAA / JNU, Prof. Prakash Singh, Dept. of Political Science, University of Delhi, Dr. Priyadarshini Vijaisri, Associate Professor, CSDS, Dr. Omkar Joshi, Department of Sociology at University of Maryland, USA and Dr. Harish Wankhede, CPS, SSS/JNU.

Prof. Surinder Jodhka, while chairing the session, welcomed the idea of cultivating the Indian socio-cultural thought and underlined a need to make 'cultivation' a continuous process. Even when compared with his contemporaries, Dr. Ambedkar stands out distinctly as a social scientist, historian and a critical philosopher rather than just being a social reformer and a thinker. While bringing out this aspect of Dr. Ambedkar's personality, Prof. Jodhka said that Dr. Ambedkar was a much bigger a personality than what he is perceived to be.

Prof. Alone dealt with the inclusivity that prevailed in the Vedic and Non-Vedic tradition of Indian thought. Prof. Prakash Singh, in his speech, urged the intellectuals to refrain from outright rejection. He further expressed the need to have debates on the positive aspects of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. This would immensely benefit the society. He stressed on the need to read Dr. Ambedkar's works without any prejudice and with an impartial mind.

Dr. Priyadarshini, while speaking on the social work done by Veer Savarkar, more particularly in respect of abolition of untouchability, brought out the lesser-known aspects of Savarkar's works. Prof. Omkar Joshi emphasized on the need to study the subject with the help of contemporary data and with an empirical facet. Dr. Harish Wankhede, while giving an account of Dalit manifesting cinema, expressed his regret that the Dalit issues are not presented in the same language as they are discussed in the real-life society.

The paper presentations on Marginalization and Social Inclusion were divided broadly into the following themes. 1. Cultivation of Indian socio-cultural thought 2. Marginalisation and Social inclusion during Bhakti Movement 3. Modern Indian Thinkers on the Indian thought 4. Intellectual contributions of leaders 5. Social cohesion: A way forward.

A special panel for women participants was also formed to highlight the importance of women participation in the seminar. The papers to be presented were selected by a panel of experts in the subject. A total of 28 papers were presented in these sessions. **(On page 20)**



Author stresses that mere making of laws solves no issue. Making women who strive for liberation and gender equality mentally strong is more important than giving strength to the hands giving freedom to her, she argues in this article.

Ahilyadevi Holkar : Indian woman ruler

Pradnya

Pious and competent queen Ahilyabai Holkar's name is inked in golden letters in the Indian history. Punyashlok Ahilyabai Holkar's work and her qualities are relevant in the wake of the issues faced and developments in post-independence India. Her life and work provide guidance to solve several issues.

The process of liberation or change begins in one's mind. Liberated actions become possible only when the thoughts are liberal.

For the last century, issues of women have been in focus. There have been several attempts to empower women while blaming patriarchy for the gender bias. Women in many countries have struggled for a long time to secure their rights. Even in the so-called liberated, modern, democratic nations in Europe and USA were granted franchises

after 1928, following a 100 to 150 year-long struggle.

The feminist movement had its impact on Indian society too. Social reformers including Raja Rammohan Roy, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Swami Vivekanand, Mahatma Phule, Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, Lokhitwadi Gopal Hari Deshmukh, Nyaymurti Mahadeo Govind Ranade, Maharshi Dhondo Keshav Karve, Karmaveer Vitthal Ramji Shinde and many others started movements to curb the evils like sati, child marriage, and remarriages of widows. Participation of women in the independence movement underlined the importance of the woman power and that it is essential for creating a liberated society too.

The year 1975 was observed as the International Women's Year and the decade from 1975 to 1985 was observed as the Women's Decade. Concepts of Women's Liberation, Women's Freedom, and Feminism became popular during this period. However, women's empowerment and the



expression of woman power had begun 250 years before that. Incidentally, the year 1975 marked the 250th birth anniversary of Ahilyabai Holkar.

Ahilyabai was born on May 31, 1725 in a backward caste family. There was little possibility of her getting an opportunity to pursue education. She spent her childhood living life of a sheep keeper. However, Bajirao Peshva and Malharrao Holkar, the King of Indore noticed the potential and qualities in the eight-year-old and married Malharrao's son Khanderao to Ahilya.

Malharrao treated his daughter-in-law like a son. He trained her in diplomatic manoeuvres. He ensured her participation in politics and social work. Resultant, Ahilyabai could govern skillfully for 27 years. Her character was so strong and her achievements were so towering that she got the status of Revered Queen Mother.

People bestowed the title "Punyashlok" to Ahilyabai due to her political, social and religious work. She was an ideal daughter, wife and homemaker, a loving mother and a ruler alert to protect the interests of her subjects. She was personification of strong character, purity of thoughts and action and due diligence.

Her husband Khanderao was a sensualist addict. Notwithstanding his flaws, Ahilyabai would treat him affectionately. She was particular in discharging her duties.

Though women of royal families observed 'Purdah' in those days, Ahilyabai did not follow the regressive practice. She prevented her daughters-in-law, rival wives and daughter from following the practice of Sati. She had the courage to oppose such regressive practices and stand up in arms against the fundamentalists whenever the need arose.

Though she embraced the modern outlook, she displayed no undue rebellious combativeness. Instead, she worked to bring about the change with courage and patience while maintaining her decency and could make tall achievements.

Various structures of temples, stairs along the riverbanks and caravan sarais built by Ahilyabai dot the entire map of the country. This is standing proof of her financial freedom and mastery of economic planning. It would be relevant to understand how she could raise funds to finance so many public works. Her fund reserve amounted to Rs 16 crore and it all was accumulated 'Stree Dhan'. As per the practice followed by the Dhangar community in those days, if the master of the house handed over Re 1 earned by him to his wife, she would have her right to keep 4 Annas, i.e. 25 Paisas, of the total amount for herself as 'Stree Dhan'. She had the sole right to spend the wealth amassed as 'Stree Dhan'. Malharrao Holkar was a potent man who had earned the position of Subedar of Malva, established his dominance over the Rajputs and would collect revenue for Peshvas from the North India. The fund reserves of women in the Holkar family were amassed since the time

of his head-wife Gautamibai. When Bajirao granted the charter of Malharrao's post in 1733, he suggested that earnings from some provinces in the Jagir of Holkars be given to the women of the family perpetually. After Gautamibai's demise, Ahilyabai became recipient of these privy rights and also Gautamibai's Stree Dhan. Thus, Ahilyabai had annual privy earnings of Rs 1,13,800. This shows how the Dhangar community practiced gender equality by adopting such practices. Instead of spending this fund to carry out public works only in her state, Ahilyabai used it to provide amenities all over the country. This shows how she was concerned about the welfare of people across Hindustan.

Ahilyabai was well aware that scientific developments can be achieved only in the nations which are protected by the weapon. Though she had appointed Tukojiro as her general, she would keep a keen eye on her army. When Raghoba Dada headed a campaign against the Holkars in 1761, she successfully deescalated by using her diplomatic skills with him. However, she had also kept her army battle-ready and sent the message to Raghoba Dada through Tukojiro that if he crossed the

People bestowed the title "Punyashlok" to Ahilyabai due to her political, social and religious work. She was an ideal daughter, wife and homemaker, a loving mother and a ruler alert to protect the interests of her subjects. She was personification of strong character, purity of thoughts, action and due diligence.

Kshipra River, a war would break out. Consequently, Raghoba Dada had to withdraw. Besides, Ahilyabai sternly dealt with the rebel of Rampur and awarded the death sentence to the rebel leader Sobhag Singh. This impressed Nana Phadnavis to such an extent that he awarded a gun salute to her and praised her saying, "Ahilyabai is the only woman I have seen who is capable to destroy the enemy either with a curse or an arrow."

She implemented Kautilya's maxim that the interest of the king lies in the interest of the public while acting as a ruler. She never discriminated on basis of caste and religion. Her politics and religious work were both aimed at public welfare.

Her several decisions as a ruler were amazingly far-sighted and her policies are still relevant. She believed that the king is the protector of his subjects and he rots in hell if his subjects are dissatisfied. Accordingly, she made several systemic changes. She changed the revenue system. She held the charge of state's treasury herself. She would pay



surprise visits to her subordinates so that they would work diligently. She was well aware that agriculture and trade make a state wealthy and prosperous and treated matters relating to agriculture and trade with due importance. She encouraged the trade and adopted measures to promote business. She abolished the practice of confiscating the wealth of widows. She was the first ruler in the country to grant the right to adopt a child to the widows. Ahilyabai had faith in woman power and provided opportunities for women by raising a platoon of women warriors.

Lokhitwadi mentions an incident where she adopted a compassionate approach while adjudicating a case. After Khemdas, a moneylender from Sironch died, his wife sought permission to adopt a son. The administrators recommended that since the estate was huge, permission to adopt be granted to her while charging duty. Ahilyabai took a firm stand that charging such a duty when the widow has the right to adopt would be an act of plunder.

On another occasion, Ahilyabai had fearlessly questioned the then gallant ruler Mahadaji Scindia, "Mahadaba, you take out campaigns across the country. But are you aware that the British have sneaked into our country and are making the country hollow by scooping?"

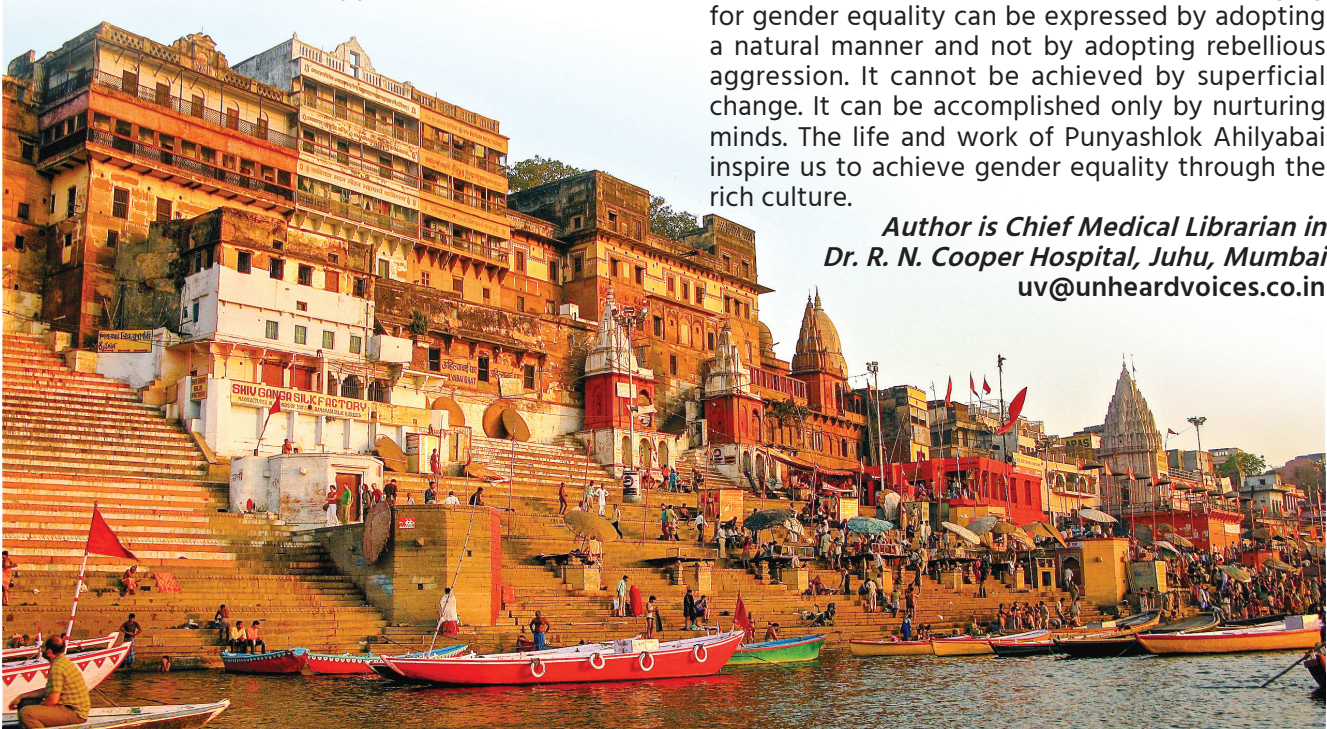
Members of the Bhil community used to rob travellers passing through forests in the regions of Vindhya Mountain. Besides, they used to collect a tax called Bhil Cowrie. Ahilyabai summoned their chief. When he failed to appear before her, she

arrested him and his accomplices. She awarded a death sentence to some of them. But when the community surrendered, she granted pardon and provided concessions for them to start farming and business activities to earn a livelihood. In return, she obtained surety of travellers passing through the forest from them.

John Malcolm, a British officer and historian, writes about Ahilyabai, "Such, at least is the account which the natives of Malwa give of Ahilyabai; with them her name is sainted, and she is styled an Avatar, or incarnation of the divinity. In the soberest view that can be taken of her character, she certainly appears, within her limited sphere, to have been one of the purest and most exemplary rulers that ever existed; and she affords a striking example of the practical benefit a mind may receive from performing worldly duties under a deep sense of responsibility to its Creator."

Today, we speak passionately about gender equality. Many movements have been launched across the country and the world to liberate women suppressed by the patriarchy while blaming culture, traditions and customs for it. This weakens women firmly rooted in their cultures and makes them redundant. Women are awakening to these calls to rebel and become aware of their rights. Laws are also being made to help women. Still, the solution to the issue is not in sight because mere making of laws solves no issue. Making women who strive for liberation and gender equality mentally strong is more important. Besides being resolute, a woman needs to observe self-restraint because the longing for gender equality can be expressed by adopting a natural manner and not by adopting rebellious aggression. It cannot be achieved by superficial change. It can be accomplished only by nurturing minds. The life and work of Punyashlok Ahilyabai inspire us to achieve gender equality through the rich culture.

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Ahilyabai Ghat, at Maheshwar in Madhya Pradesh. It was constructed by her daughter-in-law Krishnabai to continue her mother-in-laws legacy.



Nashik to Sheffield : A journey of struggle

Tushar's father worked as a construction labor, while his mother stayed home to look after the kids. He and his two sisters attended a Marathi Medium school Adarsh Vidya Mandir. In very early age he realized the What is poverty, and how education is the solution.



From Nashik to Sheffield is a story of a boy who paved his way to Sheffield University against all odds. Determined to achieve great heights, Tushar More, from Nashik is studying really hard to pursue his MS in Advanced Mechanical Engineering from The University of Sheffield, UK.

Tushar's family belonged to Chalisgoan in Maharashtra, where his grandfather used to work as farm labour; later moved and settled in Nashik. Having been raised in deprived background, Tushar's father was well aware of the importance of education. He himself being uneducated, knew one thing, if one wants to become successful and grow in life, education is the only way. He never went to school, but was tenacious about schooling his kids. To overcome the difficulties faced in slum area where he was living, he left his home to ensure the education prone environment for his children.

Tushar's father worked as a construction labor, while his mother stayed home to look after the kids. He and his two sisters attended a Marathi Medium school Adarsh Vidya Mandir. In very early age he realized the What is poverty, and how education is the solution. Tushar adds "I consider myself fortunate

to have had the opportunity to read about Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and his quest for education in school, which has always inspired me". Tushar didn't have many friends, but his father was enough for him. His father was a mentor, philosopher, and friend to him.

Tushar's sisters were also bright and did good during their school days. His eldest sister became a teacher and middle one became an Engineer. Seeing them study hard during his growing years, Tushar followed their steps and stood first in his school in 10th std. and got admission in Government Polytechnic, Nashik for Diploma in Mechanical Engineering. He completed his diploma with flying colors and entered in NDMVP college of engineering, Nashik.

During his engineering days when Tushar was willing to do part time jobs during vacations, to help his father financially, his father forbid him from doing so and instead ask him to focus on studies. His philosophy behind it was, if a person gets to know about earning sources in a tender age, he is likely to quit education.

Tushar's father wished him to see as an IAS officer because all he knew was the dignity and respect



for an officer in the society. Because of indifferent circumstances, the life guided Tushar to some another direction. After graduation he chose to start a job in Pune to support his family.

In six months of job period, Tushar was fed up and realized there's no progress he leading to. He mentions he always believed that he has the potential that he can achieve something big in life. He left the job with messed mind but was afraid to tell his father because the family was dependent on him. His father supported him and called him back to Nashik. At that



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time MS seemed like an impossible goal due to financial conditions, he mentions. After going to Nashik, he was confused about what next, when he heard of MS course in foreign universities with help of Government Scholarship or Crowd funding.

This was the time when he came to know about NATIONAL Overseas Scholarship Scheme. The NOS is a scholarship given by

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, India to facilitate the low-income students belonging to the Scheduled Castes, De-notified Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes, Landless Agricultural Labourers and Traditional Artisans category to obtain higher education viz., Master degree or Ph.D courses by studying abroad thereby improving their Economic and Social status. Only the students who have obtained scores in respective exams, enough to study in top 150 universities get this scholarship. Every year the government of India grants scholarships to 100 students across India. Once aware of this opportunity, Tushar tried hard to get this scholarship.

He came to Pune and lived with his sisters who were married by then, to prepare for IELTS. Once he got his results back, he started applying for universities. In 2020 he got his acceptance letter from Sheffield University. The term was supposed to start in September, but due to Covid situation Tushar had to postpone his joining. Last year Tushar joined the one-year MS program in advance mechanical engineering at The University of Sheffield.

When asked whether being from Marathi medium school makes it difficult to adjust in Europe, Tushar said, "When you believe in yourself, everything seems possible. Till graduation, we hardly use full English to learn a subject. All I had to do was practice my English language to make it perfect. Still sometimes it becomes difficult to understand the local language due to the accent but I am getting used to it."

In spite of all the hardships faced, Tushar's future plans are very interesting. He doesn't want to work for a long in Europe. After moving to India, Tushar wishes to repay society in his own way. He wants to work for education awareness among underprivileged people and to address social issues with it. When asked for the reason behind it, he said, "I want to percolate the thoughts of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar about education in the society, deep enough to motivate kids of lower caste for studying, as the education is only way to elevate their standard of living."

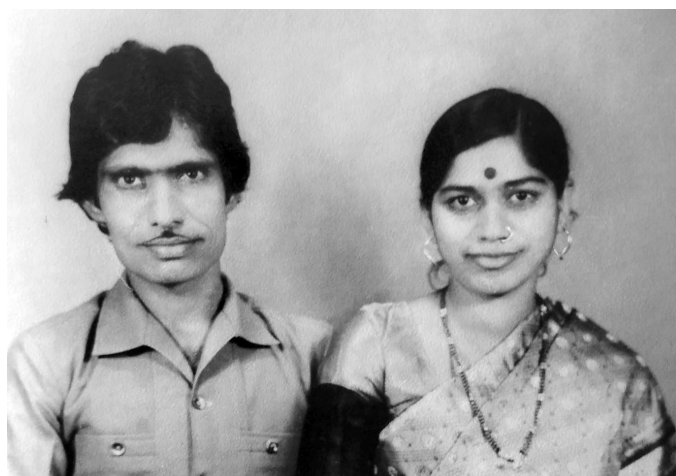
Currently Tushar is in Sheffield completing his Masters. Let's hope to see a fine engineer shaping the society in a different way soon enough.

**As told to Chinmayee
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A story of inter-caste marriage : Three decades back

Both of us have told families about our love and our plan to get married. My family has no issue. Rajani used to come to my home. It was acceptable to my family. Rajani's family was not in opposition to marriage but certainly had some concerns and anxiety because of inter-caste marriage. They love me but not my caste. They were also under some social pressure, which made them rigid. But we were clear.



Mr. Pralhad Kachare & Mrs. Rajani Kachare

I am Pralhad Vishwanath Kachare. I belong to Hindu Kolhati (NT B) community and my spouse Mrs. Rajani Gopinath Vipradas belongs to Hindu Brahmin (Deshasth Rugvedi). Both of us come from poor family backgrounds. Both of us have big families. I have seven sisters and three brothers (including me we are 11), my spouse had four sisters and two brothers and parents. When we completed HSC in 1977 it was time for us to take over responsibilities. We were in search of job-oriented courses. I opted for English stenography after completing 12th standard in ITI Ahmednagar. My spouse who had completed 12th in Arts also got admission there.

Thus, we were in ITI Ahmednagar in the class of English stenography in the academic year 1978-79. We had a very formal relationship during this period and were in touch with each other even after completing the course. I used to visit her home also. Her family was very lovely. Somehow our friendship turned into love by the end of 1979 and it took seven years for us to marry. We got married in April 1986. Our marriage was registered under the Special Marriage Act.

I used to work as an office assistant in a private factory in Kedgaon Ahmednagar. Also, I worked in the office of superintendent of police in Ahmednagar and zilla parishad in Ahmednagar and district court in Sangamner. During the same period I completed M. Com and LLB and worked as a lecturer. Then I prepared for competitive examinations. I was selected as Tehsildar, got promotion as Deputy Collector and so on. I retired as Additional District collector in 2017.

Rajani – my wife took a private job after completing her graduation in arts. Then she joined as a civilian in defence MIRC, Ahmednagar and then in Military Engineering Service as lower division clerk and retired as Office Superintendent. She served in Ahmednagar, Nagpur, Deolali Nashik, Colaba (Mumbai) and Pune. She retired in January 2020.



Mr. & Mrs. Kachare with their family.



We do not repent having inter-caste marriage, on the contrary we are a very happy couple and we promoted many successful inter-caste marriages.

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

A : We were in the same class for about one year and our friendship and company continued thereafter. Maybe at the end of 1979, we started meeting and feeling attracted to each other. Though I used to visit her house, we hardly got time to talk to each other. It was then difficult to meet outside also. So, colleges, offices and sometimes temple areas were our meeting places. Our meetings and coming together was not an accident, it was through our companionship.

Q) What was your self-talk when you decided to marry, given the current social conditions?

A : I found it almost impossible but love was strong and my spouse was strongly committed to what was decided. Initially self-talk was full of uncertainty but slowly we could gather courage.

Q) How was the actual marriage ceremony?

A : I approached her family with my friends but they were not in the mood to listen. I tried to convince them but in vain. Then we sent a served notice under the Special Marriage Act. Our marriage was registered in presence of six-seven well-wishers. This happened in Ahmednagar.

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

A : Both of us have told families about our love and our plan to get married. My family has no issue. Rajani used to come to my home. It was acceptable to my family. Rajani's family was not in opposition to marriage but certainly had some concerns and anxiety because of inter-caste marriage. They love me but not my caste. They were also under some social pressure, which made them rigid. But we were clear. We had told them categorically that we would be getting married lawfully even if they do not accept it. Fortunately, our marriage was accepted very early. Within two days after marriage, I got a message from her family that they had arranged reception for our marriage. Both of us invited friends and relatives and

it's been going smoothly since then.

Q) Who were the people who supported your decision?

A : Our friends Manvendra Birulkar, Sanjay Landage, Sudhir Kher, Ranganath Wadekar, Gokul Rasal, Ambadas Unde, my brother Ramchandra Kachare, Chandrakant Kachare and Rajendra Kachare were closely supporting while there were many others. Her brother's friend late Satish Gharu was our staunch supporter and unbreakable link between both of us.

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

A : Fortunately, we did not face any problem. Maybe because Brahmins are by nature liberals, none of her relatives including her close family members have asked me what my caste is yet.

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

A : I feel inter-caste marriages create a new space of gradual liberal acceptance of residing in social diversity in terms of cultural issues, traditions, ideologies, opinions, skills and thereby two different ends come together unconditionally and live together peacefully and without tensions. This may not be exact cohesion but not less than cohesion. My community i.e., Hindu Kolhati stands for social interaction. My father happens to be Kasar while my mother is from a Maratha background. My grandmother – father's mother – was a Kolhati and we are known as Kolhati. But this did not cause any problems for us. My marriage also did not cause any problem. My son – Abhay married to a Koli girl while my daughter – Pooja – married to Koknastha boy. My personal experience with inter-caste marriage has been very encouraging. Problems are always there, maybe it is an arranged marriage or inter-caste marriage. For problems it is not just to blame such a system. Both sides have now understood the need to cross the boundaries.

*As told to Ankita
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Social harmony is Indian DNA

(From page 11)

The valedictory address was made by Prof. P. Kesava Kumar, Dept. of Philosophy, University of Delhi. Prof. C. Sheela Reddy, Principal, Venkateshwara College, University of Delhi was the Guest of Honour and Prof. Kaushal Sharma, Dean, SSS/JNU chaired the session.

SSF considers this event as very successful in terms of initiating a debate on the Indian Socio-cultural thought and the overwhelming participation from scholars, academicians and intellectuals. The wide variety of topics handled under the subject and a presence of about 200 people each day

can also be considered as an important parameter of success. The seminar, therefore, is a leap forward towards the objective of providing an intellectual discourse based on Indian thought!

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Glimpses of SSF Seminar



Participation of Bauddha Bhikhu



Inaugural Session



Audience



Special women session in seminar

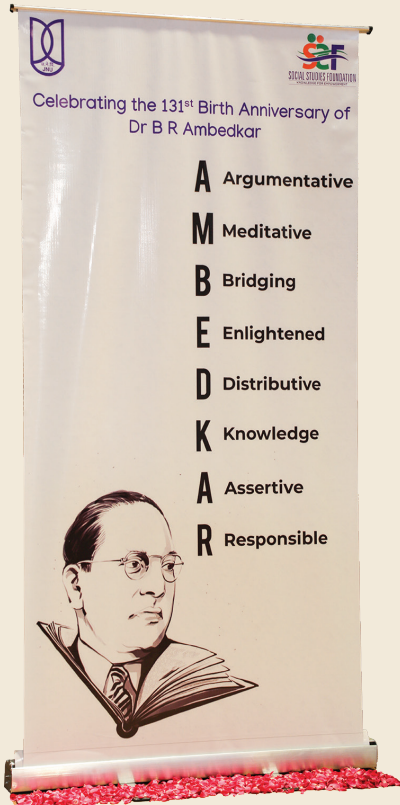


SSF Team with panelist of Symposium

Glimpses of SSF Seminar



1st issue of Unheard Voices displayed at Seminar



Glimpses of women session



Ms. Pratimaji Bhoumik addressing in inaugural session



Paper presentation session



Paper presentation session



Team CSEIP and SSF with Chief Guest