

UNHEARD VOICES



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SOCIAL AGENDA 2047

END CASTE DISCRIMINATION

DALIT LIVES MATTER

A word cloud of social and political terms including: racial, black, moral, protection, difference, employment, individual, superiority, work, individuality, idea, respect, reminder, different, workplace, discrimination, disability, inequality, workplace, against, excluded, equality, sexism, hate, rejection, discriminate, discrimination, racism, sex, rights, harassment, warning, gender, person, exclusion, racial, stop, rights, issue, outsider, white problem, abuse, discrimination, prejudice, diversity, minority, human, integration, employee, male, disabled, inequality, workplace, hate, rejection, discriminate, discrimination, racism, sex, rights, harassment, warning, gender, person, exclusion, racial, stop, rights, issue, outsider, white problem.



Social Agenda 2047

Recent spate of incidents reported in few parts of the country are worrisome. In Jalore in Rajasthan, a nine-year-old boy was allegedly denied water in a school, and was allegedly beaten up by a teacher. The innocent boy died after a few days. Incidents, involving caste, are reported from Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra. Such incidents took place over issues like entry in the temple, drinking water, land encroachment, riding horse by groom and so on.

All these incidents are being investigated. Different theories are being floated in all the incidents. All the sides claim their side to be true. Debate is going on which side is true and will continue even after completion of investigation or court judgement. Such debate is not a sign of healthy society.

State has to ensure that such incidents do not take place. It is also responsible to ensure that victims are delivered justice. But the state has some inbuilt limitations. More than the state, society as a large, has to share its responsibility. We cannot deny the existence of fire when there is smoke. As a member of society, it is the duty of everybody to take steps without any further delay. We must remember that the country will have to pay heavy costs if timely steps are not taken. Time has come to pinch ourselves every moment to check in what direction we are heading.

It is a reality that India is on the path of liberating itself from many unwarranted and outdated traditions or conventions. India is probably the only country to embrace changes in accordance with times. But pace of having radical change in social discrimination is absolutely slow, which is a really cause of concern. All the studies show that the majority of the people in India are using modern gadgets to keep themselves with the times. But our mindset continues to be stuck in the ideas of centuries ago.

Such incidents largely reflect changed social inspirations thanks to the education, awakening and continuous efforts to remove social discriminations. These efforts are going for centuries. As a result, deprived people are trying to find their own space. They are no more dependent on any individual or

any system. The new awakened people are eagerly looking for acceptance and respect from the society.

Therefore, such shameful incidents also have a serious cultural and religious aspect. We seriously believe that lot needs to be done on this front. The process for progress on education and economics has been set in motion, which nobody can stop now. The question arises about similar all-round steps to recognize new awakened class in socio-culture space. We need to check whether such incidents have their origins in the spirit of cultural domination or vested interests.

All Indians must realize that such attitude or mindset has no place in Independent India. Independence is not merely restricted to political freedom from foreign rulers. Independence has to be seen on a bigger canvas. It necessarily implies freedom from all the chains of slavery. Be it social or economic. Political and economic independence is meaningless unless it is founded on social equality and freedom. To achieve this, youths must be focused primarily. New interpretation of texts and traditions have to be looked while outright rejection of old, outdated ideas is equally important. All of us must remind ourselves that new ideas cannot be installed unless old ideas are given up. This process can be accelerated by promoting dialogue among different sections. This dialogue has to be based on principles of Indian constitution and Indian ideas. Time also has come to handle social media in more responsible manner as it causes social tensions and bitterness.

When India is celebrating 75th anniversary of Independence and chalking out way for centenary, all of must pledge that there would not be single atrocity by 2047. Various studies suggest that India is fastly emerging as an economic power. It is fifth economy in the world. But mere economic progress and upliftment is not solution to the Indian social problem. Social and cultural space to all sections of society and to each and every individual is the backbone of India. This has to be our national agenda to make India as a strong and vibrant nation.

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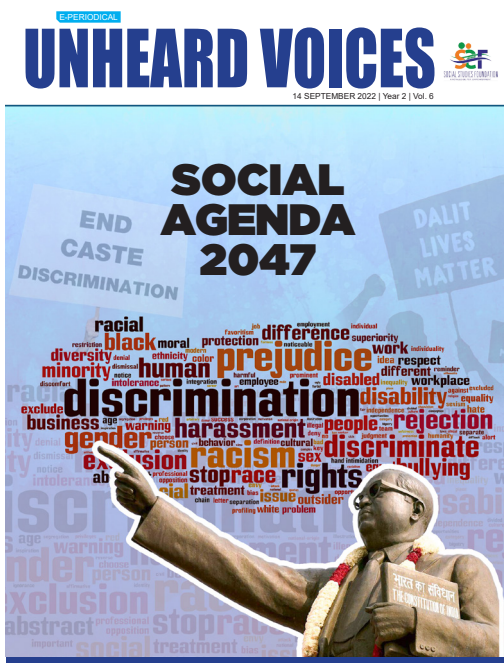
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Appeal for financial assistance



Social Studies Foundation (SSF) is working with the prime objective of conducting social studies and research of the society in a multi-disciplinary fashion. SSF focus, however, is on those people, who have been facing discrimination and are deprived of benefits of the development and democratic process. SSF logo, thus says, "Knowledge for Empowerment".

"UNHEARD VOICES" is a small step in this direction. It provides a platform to all those people, who have to be listened to by the Indian citizens to make this country united and integral. We will raise the voice of these people fearlessly. Social Studies Foundation has currently a small set-up to carry out its objectives. We, however, need financial support from our well-wishers, who agree with our objectives. We appeal to the readers and well-wishers to donate generously to the foundation.

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Dr. Ambedkar addressing his followers at Deeksha Bhoomi, Nagpur along with Mai Ambedkar.

Buddhism – Indian path of success : Dr. Ambedkar

On the occasion of 66th Dhammachakra Pravartan Din, Unheard Voices publishes portion of speech delivered by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. The speech was delivered a day before Dr. Ambedkar embraced Buddhism.

Conscious acceptance

I am surprised at only one thing. Much discussion has been going on everywhere. But not even one man has asked me, "Why did you accept Buddhism?" Putting aside all other religions, why was this religion accepted? In any movement to change religion, this is the main question. When one makes a change of religion, one has to test: which religion [should we take]? Why should we take it? The movement to leave the Hindu religion was taken in hand by us in 1935, when a resolution was made in Yeola. "Even though I was born in the Hindu religion, I will not die in the Hindu religion" –this oath I made earlier; yesterday I proved it true. I am happy; I am ecstatic! I have left hell –this is how I feel. I do not want any blind followers. Those who come into the Buddhist religion should come with understanding; they should consciously accept that religion.

Karl Marx's sect and we

Religion is a very necessary thing for the progress of mankind. I know that a sect has appeared because of the writings of Karl Marx. According to their creed, religion means nothing at all. Religion is not important to them. They get a breakfast in the morning of bread, cream, butter, chicken legs, etc.; they get undisturbed sleep; they get to see movies; and that's all there is. This is their philosophy. I am not of that



opinion. My father was poor, and therefore we did not get comforts of that kind. No one has ever lived a life as hard as mine! How hard a man's life can be without happiness and comforts, that I know. I agree that an economic elevation movement is necessary. I am not against that movement. Man must progress economically.

The origin of energy is a cultured mind

Why is there illness in man's body or mind? The reasons are, either there is bodily pain, or there is no energy in the mind. If there is no energy in the mind, then there will be no progress! Why is there no energy there? The first reason is this: man is kept down in such a fashion that he does not get an opportunity to come up, or he has no hope of climbing. At that time, can he be ambitious? He is a diseased person. A man who gets the fruit of his own work will be energetic. Otherwise, in school, if the teacher begins to say, "Hey, who is this? Is this a Mahar? And will this wretched Mahar pass with a first class? Why does he want first class? Stay in your fourth class! To get into first class is Brahmins' work!" –in these circumstances, how can that child be ambitious? What will be his progress? The place of creation of energy is the mind. The person whose body and mind are healthy, who is courageous, who feels that he will overcome all circumstances, in that kind of person energy will be created, and that kind of person alone excels. In the Hindu religion, such an extraordinary philosophy is found in the writings that one can't get any sense of possible achievement at all. If a man is left for a thousand years in poor circumstances, discarded, made hopeless, then at the most they will have no more ambition than to fill their stomachs with a minor job. What else can happen? There must be a big clerk to secure the protection of these little clerks.

If we were allowed to use arms...

Why did our country go under the domination of another? In Europe, there were wars until 1945. Whenever a soldier was killed, a recruit took his place. No one said, "We have won the war" [before it was won]. In our country, everything is different. If Kshatriyas are killed, we are doomed. If we had been allowed to bear arms, this country would not have gone into slavery. No one would have been able to conquer this country.

Buddha's message on equality

In the Buddhist religion, 75% of the Bhikkhus were Brahmin; 25% were Shudra and others. But Bhagvan said, "O Bhikkhus, you have come from different countries and castes. Rivers flow separately in their own countries, but do not remain distinct when they meet in the sea. They become one and the same. The Buddhist brotherhood of monks is like the sea. In this Sangha all are equal. It is impossible to know Ganga water from Mahanadi water after both have merged in the sea. In that way, after coming into the Buddhist Sangha, your caste goes, and all people are equal. Only one great man spoke of equality, and that great man is Bhagvan Buddha.

Religion is necessary for the poor

For the poor, religion is a necessity. Religion is necessary for people in distress. The poor man lives on hope. 'Hope!'. The source of life is hope. If this hope is destroyed, then how will life go on? Religion makes one hopeful, and to those in pain, to the poor, it gives a message: "Don't be afraid; life will be hopeful, it will be." So poor and distressed mankind clings to religion.

The world respects only the Buddha

Some people will say, "This Buddhist religion is a religion for Mahar and Mangs." Brahmins used to say, "Hey, you!" [Bho Gautam] to Bhagvan. Brahmins thus spoke slighting of the Buddha. But if they take their images to a foreign country to sell them, they will find not many images of Ram, Krishna, Shankar will be sold. But if they take images of the Buddha, not a single image would be left. There has been enough talk by the Brahmins about India. They should show their worth outside! Only one name is proclaimed throughout the world, and that name is "Buddha." How can the Buddhist religion be stopped from spreading?

Our way is the way of the Buddha

We will go by our path; others should go by their path. We have found a new way. This is a day of hope. This is a way of success, of prosperity. This way is not something new. This path was not brought here from somewhere else. This path is from here, it is purely Indian. The Buddhist religion has been in India for two thousand years. Truly speaking, we regret that we did not become Buddhists before this. The principles spoken by Bhagvan Buddha are immortal. But the Buddha did not make a claim for this, however. There is an opportunity of making changes according to the times. Such open-mindedness is not found in any other religion.

Milinda and Nagasena

The chief reason for the destruction of Buddhism is the Moslem invasion. The Moslems in their onslaught broke and destroyed images. They at first encroached on the Buddhist religion in this way. Fearing the invasion, the Buddhist Bhikkhus disappeared. Some went to Tibet, some went to China, some went wherever they could go. For the protection of religion, laymen are required. In the Northwest Frontier state there was a Greek Raja. His name was Milinda. This king used to hold discussions regularly. Great delight was taken in these discussions. He used to say to the Hindus, whoever is an expert at debate should come to these forums. Many were at a loss for an answer [when they participated]. One time he thought he should have a discussion with Buddhist people; and he said, any Buddhist expert at debate should be brought to him. Therefore, Buddhist people asked Nagasena to go: "You should take up the cause of the Buddhists." Nagasena was learned. He was a Brahmin. The discussion that took place between Nagasena and Milinda is famous throughout the world as a book. That book's name is Milinda Panha.

(On page 16)

Looking at Indian democracy at 75



Since the Vedic times emphasis on people's consciousness has been an integral part of the political system. If the society lacks the social conscience, then the fundamental rights merely become the trappings of democracy. If the fundamental rights were not accepted by the society, then no law or government or state could safeguard them for the citizens in real terms. Thus, the fundamental rights should be such that they are inalienable to the individuals that fulfil two objectives. First all citizens should be in the position to ascertain their rights. Two, it should be binding on all governmental authorities to guarantee them.

Dr. Neha Singh

Prime Minister Narendra Modi rightly said, "Like the history of the freedom movement, the journey of 75 years after independence is a reflection of the hard work, innovation, enterprise of ordinary Indians. Whether in the country or abroad, we Indians have proved ourselves with our hard work. We are proud of our Constitution. We are proud of our democratic traditions. The mother of democracy, India is still moving forward by strengthening democracy. India, rich in knowledge and science, is leaving its mark from Mars to the moon."

Thus, this Azaadi ka Amrit Mahotsava is an initiative taken by the government of India to celebrate the people's movement. A movement that is completely dedicated to a common citizen's evolutionary power to realise Atma Nirbharta or self-reliance. The question that poses here is that what kind/notion of democratic structure are we as 75 years of independent nation celebrating? We all must agree to the fact that democracy is essential for sustainable human development. It aids in empowering people to seek for better policies, more participation in the

decision-making process and more accountability in the governance process. "The general picture of Indian democracy stands as a reminder that there is no linear progression to democracy, [that] India's post-transition history has produced multiple trajectories of democratisation."

Surinder K Shukla opined that "India strayed into democracy as a result of a long association with the British as a part of the British Raj. It underwent myriad adaptations." Caste, class, regionalism, language etc defined the social peculiarities of the country. The nation even saw the political journey from one party dominance to the multi-party system. Economically too, we moved from a centrally planned economy to the market economy seeking for self-reliance or Atma Nirbharta. Thus, India has undergone extensive political, economic and social metamorphosis. Still the uniqueness of Indian democracy is the fact that "India has preserved its ancient civilization and never lost sight of the ideals that gave her strength through countless centuries...the nation of over one billion continues to live with some of its traditions that go back 4,000 years, and more.... India has demonstrated its inherent resilience. This strength comes from its composite culture that has made India a truly vibrant



democracy.”

Since the Vedic times emphasis on people’s consciousness has been an integral part of the political system. If the society lacks the social conscience, then the fundamental rights merely become the trappings of democracy. If the fundamental rights were not accepted by the society, then no law or government or state could safeguard them for the citizens in real terms. Thus, the fundamental rights should be such that they are inalienable to the individuals that fulfil two objectives. First all citizens should be in the position to ascertain their rights. Two, it should be binding on all governmental authorities to guarantee them.

Thus, while understanding the plural nature of Indian society, “Ambedkar believed that democracy was inconsistent with the presence of suppressed classes in society. A strong opposition, equality before the law, administration, constitutional morality, a strong and active moral sense in society and the presence of public conscience were also essential prerequisites of democracy.

Further, there should be a real social democracy which was based on three main principles that were- Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Ambedkar felt that there was a need for national solidarity. He also argued the fact that how can people divided into thousands of castes be a part of a single nation.” To seek for a solution thereby the framers of the Indian constitution believed that it was only through the social democracy that policies like affirmative actions will be able to curb inequality, eliminate oppression of underprivileged groups, eradicate poverty and offer an equal access to the public services like health, child’s care etc.

A social democracy based on political democracy could only reconstruct the society. But again, Indian political democracy rests on the balance between an individual and the community. Political democracy will have no meaning if social democracy fails in the country. “The idea of representation therefore, carried within it the seeds of profound alteration in the existing configuration of social relations. Representatives not merely in the making of the public decisions, but also, largely deciding, how the public decisions have to be made. Besides, modes of decision making may prop up a social group to interact with others, seriously questioning the identity and strivings of another.”

Here, the concept of representation can be seen as a complex and dynamic phenomenon. Neera Chandoke in her paper Crisis of representative democracy writes that, “the marginalised groups find it difficult to directly engage with parties and representatives; there is the fact that the inclusion of representatives from disadvantaged groups in the legislature has failed to deliver policies for the well-being of their communities.” The best example of this argument could be the analysis of the inclusive approach of the women’s interests by the women

leaders or the effectiveness and efficiency of the 73rd and the 74th Amendment Act. According to Peter D Souza, “it is difficult to present a general macro picture on the achievements and failures of Panchayati raj because much depends on regional and localised factors.” To assert K.K. Kailash in his work explores how during the 1990s the Bahujan tend to express social opinions significantly more than they do political ones. This ‘paradox’ in the democratic upsurge may explain why increased rates of political participation by the Bahujan have not led to fundamental political change in India.”

In order to preserve the recognition of the individual and representation of the community, it’s fascinating to see how the use of e-governance has revived the bottom-up approach to Indian political democracy. The use of technology has aided in reformation of the justice system, has enhanced the institution’s efficiency, increased civic participation etc. The e-governance has the potency to draw parallel between development and democracy to which even emphasised in the 2020 anniversary of ministerial of the Community of Democracies.

Yet for drawing the parallel between development and democracy the economic basis of an Indian social democracy should target the creation of economic opportunities and social protections. “Without a social democratic vision as an electoral option, the desire for redistribution will be pursued in other ways.

Already in rural India, Maoist unrest marks a sharp rejection of electoral politics. At industrial plants, labour activism is on the rise, with management the target of physical attacks.” 10 “Economic democracy based on social democracy thus proposes a component of larger socio-economic ideologies, as a stand-alone theory and as a variety of reform agendas. For example, as a means to securing full economic rights, it opens a path to full political rights, defined as including the former.”

“The societal reach of economic progress in India has been remarkably limited’, adding that the agenda for political, economic and social democracy remains unfinished because of continued disparity between the lives of the privileged and the rest and because of persistent ineptitude and unaccountability in the way the economy and society are organised. It is thus evident that ‘Democratic mobilization, while it has produced an intense struggle for

power, has not delivered millions of citizens from abject dictates of poverty.’ Thus, the de jure “WE, the people” in the first line of the Preamble is in reality a fragmented ‘we’, divided by yawning gaps that remain to be bridged.”

Thus, on the occasion of Azaadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, thinkers like Ambedkar need to be revised who talked of reform from social to political to economic to ensure the recognition of democracy in true sense.

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Dyal Singh College, University of Delhi.
uv@unheardvoices.co.in



Punjab has been in the news for some or other reasons. This time the reason is different. Issues involved are faulty utilization of scholarship amount, sent by central government. It was for the post-matric SC students. Secondly, Punjab denied reservation in the recruitment of law officers. Here is the report:

Scholarship issue of Punjab SC students

Ramesh Chander



These days Punjab Government is in the news for two wrong reasons – faulty utilization of amounts sent by the central government for post matric scholarships scheme and denial of reservation in recruitment of law officers. It is just a coincident that Punjab Government and National Commission for Scheduled Castes are engaged against each other in both the cases – NCSC, a statutory authority, which is mandated and expected to be the watchdog of the rights of SCs headed by a Punjabi himself, Vijay Sampla and Punjab Government of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) which boasts of the flag bearer of the legacy of Babasaheb Ambedkar with huge mandate of SC communities having 29 MLAs out of 34 reserved seats in the Assembly.

It might seem paradoxical but the problem is real which requires immediate attention and solution. First the scholarship issue; Post Matric Scholarship scheme is a centrally sponsored scheme by the Central Government and it is implemented through State Governments and UT Administrations. The Scheme provides financial assistance to the SC students studying at post matriculation or post-secondary stage to enable them to complete their education.

The amount of scholarship is Rs 2,50,000/- per annum. Income certificate of the parents/guardian of the beneficiary student is required to be taken once

only - at the time of admission to courses, which are continuing for more than one year. The income certificate shall be issued by the authority as decided by the State Government.

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment of the Government of India has explained the Objectives and Scope of the Post Matric Scholarship for the benefit of SC Students: -

Objective

1. The objective of the scheme is to appreciably increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio of SC students in higher education with a focus on those from the poorest households, by providing financial assistance at post-matriculation or post-secondary stage to enable them to complete their education.

Scope

2.1 These scholarships are available for studies in India only and the awardees are selected by the State Government/Union Territory to which the applicant belongs - the State/UT in which permanently settled or domiciled, as per the terms of domicile decided by the State.

2.2 This is applicable to all the students who are currently beneficiaries of the scheme as well as fresh admissions.

The Punjab problem - The scholarship scheme in Punjab has been marred by poor implementation and the delay in the release of the scholarship amount had become a major political issue in the last assembly elections in February, 2022. Now the new



AAP Government was expected to set the matter in order but failed. NCSC has taken up the matter with the Punjab Government.

The matter came up for discussion in the last session of the Punjab Assembly and the Times of India reported on June 29, 2022, "The disbursement of post-matric scholarship for SC students amounting to Rs 1,563.77 crore is pending for three years — 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20 — due to the central government withholding its share for want of utilization certificates and failure on part of Punjab government to get the scheme audited." The opposition MLAs raised the subject in the Assembly. The Governments, obviously, seem to be on the back foot on the issue. Chairman of NCSC, Vijay Sampla, speaking to the media informed that NCSC had taken a Suo-motu cognizance of the issue on getting complaints from students on non-payment of scholarships. He added that because of these difficulties more than two lakh SC students were forced to drop out during the period 2017-2020. Though the Central Government had given the money, an amount of Rs. 2000 crores, to Punjab Government yet the money was not paid to the colleges. Governor of Punjab, Shri. Banwari Lal Purohit has also written to CM Shri. Bhagwant Mann on the issue and has asked for a report. Responding to the matter, CM Shri. Bhagwant Mann clarified and informed that he had ordered a comprehensive probe into the alleged irregularities in the Post Matric Scholarship Scheme that surfaced in the previous Congress government. The matter rests on that.

Without going into the political motivations and considerations, the crux of the matter is that SC students and the poor parents are the direct sufferers of this slugfest between the governments and also the students and the colleges. The very objectives of the Scheme are defeated. Some anti-reservation elements in the society who generally shout from the roof-tops should speak out and get the scholarships to the SC students as they always tend to give the argument for education and not reservations to SCs. Why are they blissfully silent now?

SC students should not suffer that should be our approach. Some years before in 2016, I gave a solution to the problem in my open letter as an Aam Aadmi dated November 28, 2016 for consideration of the AAP leadership. I quote from the non-paper which I submitted in this regard, "The governments, both central and of state, should open an "ESCROW Account" in one of the public sector banks. On getting the requisite information and data from the schools and colleges, routed through the competent Education Department authorities of the state government, should transfer, twice in a year, the due and requisite amounts in the ESCROW Account maintained for the purpose along with documentation pertaining to the scholarship. The school and colleges will claim and get the due amounts from the concerned bank. It should be done in a time bound manner failing which the schools and colleges will be entitled to claim an

interest of 10% on the amounts due. It will end the blame game. The poor students will be saved from harassment and highhandedness by the educational institutions." The problem remains. Subsequently,

What is an Escrow Account? - An escrow is a contractual arrangement in which a third party receives and disburses money or property for the primary transacting parties, with the disbursement dependent on conditions agreed to by the transacting parties. I know full well that SC students are not interested in politics involved in the issue but in their education, pursuits as stipulated in the Scope of the Scheme. Let us hope the concerned authorities sit and find out a real and effective way out rather than hankering after 'brownie point'.

The second point, denial of reservation in the appointment of law officers by the Government of Punjab, also involves NCSC. NCSC advised the Punjab Government to provide reservations as per the existing rules and arrangements. In its own wisdom, said to be on the advice of Advocate General Shri. Anmol Rattan Sidhu, decided to challenge the decision and direction of NCSC in this regard in the High Court. Whether there should be reservation for SCs or not depends on decisions and matching legislation? Let us leave it at that. But the basic question of constitutional and political morality of both the Punjab Government and its Advocate General remains not only to uphold the constitutional arrangements but also personal honesty and integrity. Both the Government and the Advocate General have miserably failed on this account.

The AAP Government claims to be the flag bearers of Babasaheb Ambedkar and benefactors of SCs with 35 % share in the Punjab demography. They should have sorted out the matter with NCSC and other authorities but their decision to take the matter to the court on the ground that reservation cannot be given to maintain the so called 'efficiency and merit'. It is a shameful argument bereft of any constitutional and social norms. SCs can become judges of the Supreme Court, High Court and senior positions in lower courts without reservation but they cannot be appointed as the Law Officers of a State. Obviously, Dalits are upset and are up-in-arms. Better sense prevailed and the Punjab Government decided to take back its appeal in the court.

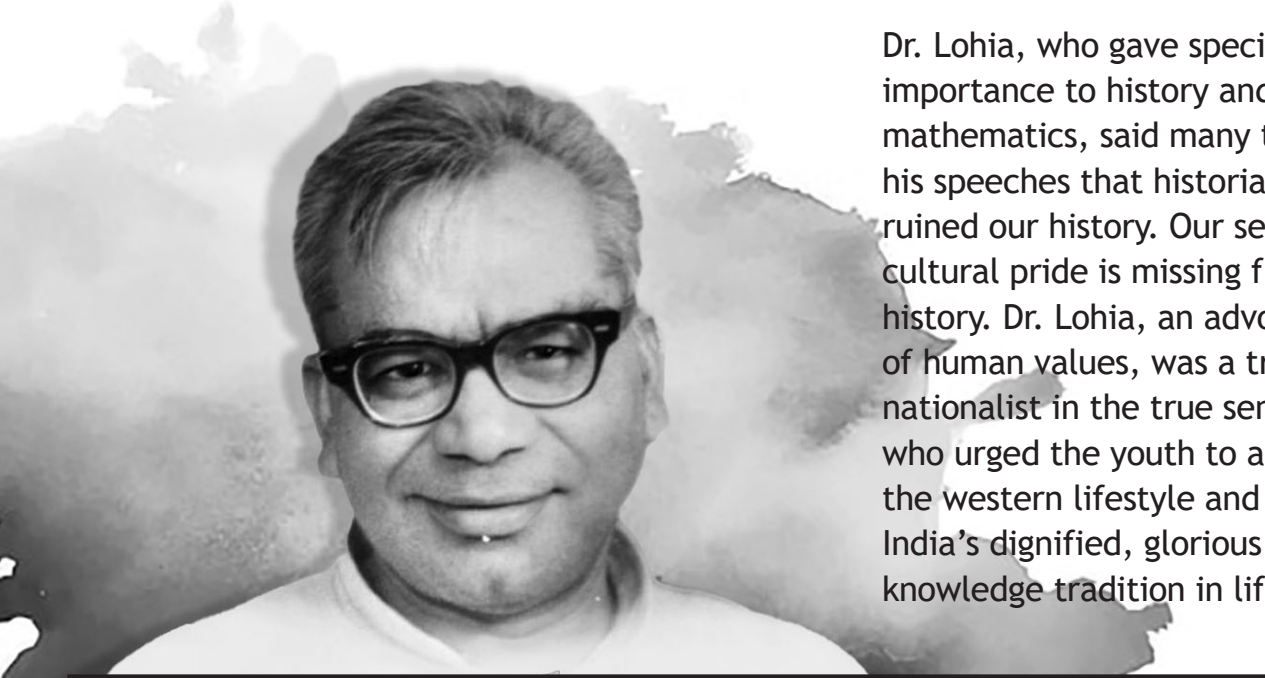
Shri. Anmol Rattan now resigned from the post of Advocate General on 'personal grounds'. But action should have been taken against him instead of asking to resign. Government should take legal action against him for wilfully hurting SCs. The Punjab Government should have been careful in dealing with sensitive matters. They may ignore this caution at their own peril. Reservation to SCs is no charity but a solemn pledge to raise the social standards of Dalits as an 'affirmative action' stipulated in the Constitution of India.

*Author is a retired diplomat
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*



Dr. Lohia's idea of Inclusive Nationalism

Dr. Lohia, who gave special importance to history and mathematics, said many times in his speeches that historians have ruined our history. Our sense of cultural pride is missing from history. Dr. Lohia, an advocate of human values, was a true nationalist in the true sense, who urged the youth to abandon the western lifestyle and imbibe India's dignified, glorious knowledge tradition in life.



Dr. Alok Kumar Chakrawal



There have been very few persons in Indian politics regarding the epithets and the number of epithets put before whose names nobody has ever registered any protest. During the fourth to sixth decade of the 20th century, the glory of such a personality radiated to the whole world and the name of this person was Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia.

The one who conceived the idea of resistance to all kinds of oppression with the slogan of 'Sangharsh hamara nara hai', and one who has with his name innumerable epithets like 'freedom fighter', 'famous face of socialist fraternity', 'original intelligence', 'multidimensional', 'philosopher', 'ardent nationalist', 'spokesperson of Dalits and the oppressed', and 'eminent scholar'—such was Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia who engraved new paradigms while enriching the nation ideologically. Dr. Lohia considered the partition of India to be a reality that had to be accepted due to circumstances. The British have ruled India through guns and the English language, we must learn to take pride in the nation and its language, Hindi, by coming out of Englishism, he believed. He held the belief that India is one entity by nature, so even after being fragmented, it will definitely become single again one day.

Away from the worldly hypocrisies of flattery, lust

for authority, and self-glorification, Lohia believed that the ancient ideal of 'Satyam Shivam Sundaram' and the three-point ideal of socialism, freedom, and non-violence of the modern world would have to be synergized in such a way that they complement each other as well as prove to be better versions.

Dr. Lohia, who strongly supported the democratic system, believed that the control and guidance of the state power should be done by the people. He also motivated the youth to voluntarily do 'Shramdaan' in the reconstruction of the country. Efforts for the upliftment of the exploited, the downtrodden and that last person gave birth to new experiments, theories and ideas, which have always been the primary basis of inclusive nationality. Dr. Lohia presented such a model of social and economic development in which the aspirations of the common people along with those of the poor, farmers, landless agricultural labourers, youth, and women can be fulfilled in entirety.

Dr. Lohia, an advocate of human values, was a true nationalist in the true sense, who urged the youth to abandon the western lifestyle and imbibe India's dignified, glorious knowledge tradition in life.

As the Vice-Chancellor of the Central University and a teacher of commerce and management studies, when I see the principles, ideas and experiments of Dr. Lohia ji, I find that he thought fifty years ahead of his times. There is not even a trace of orthodox or



narrow nationalistic mindset in his thoughts. He seems to identify with Gandhian and Marxist ideas to achieve the noble goal of liberty, equality, economic-social harmony, and global integration.

Dr. Lohia, who gave special importance to history and mathematics, said many times in his speeches that historians have ruined our history. Our sense of cultural pride is missing from history. He believed that there are two types of coordination in history in which one is the coordination of the slave and the other is that of the master. From the history of the last one thousand years, we have not learned the coordination of the master but the coordination of the slave. Dr. Lohia believed that the future of India depends on two subjects, History and Mathematics. History is the understanding of the past. We have to know our history well for the sake of the coming generation and if we do not succeed in doing this then it will be unfortunate for the country. On the other hand, mathematics is the basis of science. The combination of both takes us to the sky. Developed countries are an example of this.

Dr. Lohia always preferred Hindi over English as the official language of India. He believed that English has created a gap between the educated and the uneducated masses. The use of Hindi will promote the spirit of unity and ideas related to the creation of a new nation. Attempting to attack the roots of ill-traditions in Chanakya style, Lohia started his famous movement which declared "Angreji Hatao" When English is removed, the ill influence of English too, will go away. This was the concept of Gandhiji too. The Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi had said that go tell the world that Gandhi has forgotten English. We are not slaves to any other language or culture to develop our nation. We have our own rich history of knowledge and tradition which we have to preserve and promote.

Dr. Lohia was in favour of providing free and compulsory education up to primary and middle school levels and for free or inexpensive availability of facilities for education and research, especially to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other poor sections of the society so that they can be ready for the minimum level of competition. National Education Policy 2020 seems to be realizing all these ideas of Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia in which education for all, inclusive education, value-based education, skill development, training and mental preparation of students for employment and entrepreneurship.

Dr. Lohia, who was a staunch opponent of caste discrimination, suggested to remove caste discrimination through roti and Beti. According to him, people of all castes should eat food together and if marriages take place between families of higher and lower caste, the gap can be removed.

Dr. Lohia, who prepared a complete roadmap for the future by scouring the principles and ideas according to the apprehensions and opportunities, put forth his unrestrained views on epoch-making

and serious issues emphasizing on the development of indigenous languages, opposing caste and gender discrimination, improving the reservation system, opposing women's inequality. Dr. Lohia, who gave priority to the development of language and its relevance, had prepared a concrete blueprint for shaping the future of India. To achieve this overarching objective, he tried to make better use of modern and traditional measures so that people are mobilized for social empowerment and economic development.

Dr. Lohia envisaged the concept of 'Chaukhamba' state and conflated the conflicting ideas of centralization and decentralization, accepting the importance of villages, divisions, provinces and the centre all. Dr. Lohia, in favour of spending twenty-five percent of the entire expenditure of the government's schemes through various government and other means for the development of the rural areas, vocally supported the government to govern projects like agriculture and industry. He believed that the goals of Asian socialism can be achieved by democratizing administration, employing small machines with little capital, socialization of wealth, and economic and political socialization.

Dr. Lohia stressed on giving practical form to the universal seven principles of socialism, which include acceptance of gender equality, elimination of caste-related and birth-related inequality, elimination of inequality based on apartheid, the end of oppression by foreigners and the creation of world government, opposing economic inequalities based on personal property and planned increases in production, opposition to the encroachment of individual rights and weapons of war, and acceptance of the principle of civil disobedience. Present government is trying to implement his ideas, inspired by Antyodaya.

New National Education Policy for women equality, skill development, employment-oriented education, education in mother tongue, pride on traditions, heritage, and history, importance to Hindi, training to make youth entrepreneurs, Kisan Samman Nidhi for farmers' development, dynamic economy and the spirit of sacrifice for the sake of the self-respect of the nation carry the quintessence of Dr. Lohia's work and vision. It is quite an experience to see Dr. Lohia's three decades of theoretical and ideological struggle come to the ground in a meaningful form.

In true sense, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia had guessed the needs and expectations of the present period 70 years ago. According to Lohia's ideas and principles, active and dedicated efforts are being made to convert education, language, the image of the nation on the international stage, and economic and social change into ground realities, the positive results of which are express conspicuously the success, significance, and totality of Lohia's ideas.

*Author is Vice Chancellor of Guru Ghasidas
Vishwavidyalaya, Bilaspur
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*



Maharshi Valmiki : More than a poet

On the occasion of
Maharshi Valmiki Jayanti...

Ms. Deepali

Maharshi Valmiki is considered as the Adi Kavi. He was the first person to compose poetry. He was the inventor of the meter called 'Shloka'. He was the writer of the first ever epic – Ramayana. The Sanskrit word Kavi is generally translated to English as 'Poet'. But 'Kavi' is a non-translatable word. It means many things including - wise, enlightened, gifted, skilful, knowing, thinker, bard, seer, prophet, and a man of knowledge, understanding and intelligence.

Valmiki is also called a Maha-Rishi. Rishi is generally translated as 'Seer', he who sees, he who is a visionary. Again, Rishi is a non-translatable word. It means not only seer, but also an ascetic, a composer of Vedic hymns, a ray of light, a sage, an inspired poet and an enlightened being.

Valmiki is described as Maha-Rishi, a Great Rishi! It is such an enlightened one who writes about the journey of Rama. In his work, Valmiki suggests three names for the epic –

काव्यं रामायणं कृत्स्नं सीतायाश्चरितं महत् ।

पौलस्त्यवधमित्येवं चकार चरितव्रतः ॥ १-४-७ ॥

He says this work can be titled as – Ramayana (The Journey of Rama), SeetaCharita (The Life and Deeds of Seeta) or Paulatsya-Vadh (The assassination of Ravana, a descendant of Pulatsya Rishi). This only highlight that for the writer Valmiki, Seeta was as important as Rama. In Valmiki's Ramayana, Seeta did not play a supporting role, but she played the lead role along with Rama. It is thus the birth place of the slogan "जय सियाराम", Victory to Sita-Rama! When one reads Valmiki Ramayana, he is amazed not only by the subjects it covers, but also by the micro details that are provided. Ramayana speaks of the geography of Bharata, of the rivers and mountains, of the seasons, of the flora, of

the history of Ikshavakus, of the Social Institutions, of war strategies, of Dharma, of spiritual practices, of human behaviour, psychology and even about mathematics. Do note that this is not an all-inclusive list of the subjects covered by Valmiki's Ramayana.

Valmiki describes the geography of Bharata from the kingdom of Kekay (today's Northern Pakistan), kingdom of Videha (today's Nepal) and Hastinapur (on the banks of Ganga) in the North to Dandakaranya, Kishkindha and Lanka in the South. Through Sugreeva, Valmiki describes the geography of areas that are further off and beyond those mentioned above. He describes the mountain ranges like the Himalayas, the Vindhya, the Malaya Parvat, Rishyamukh Parvat, Mandadri and others. He also describes the Indian rivers. He speaks of their depth, their waters and their speed. He describes the birds on the banks. He also describes the plants and trees that the trio, Rama-Lakshmana-Seeta encounter in their journey.

He is an excellent reader of human character and behaviour. While reading the feelings of his characters tears well up in the eyes of the reader. The brotherly love of the four brothers, father's love of Dasharatha, Dasharatha's pining for Rama, the guilt that Bharata feels due to his mother's deed, Rama's heart of lion, Rama's pangs of separation from Seeta, Seeta's composition of steel, the shades of jealousy Kausalya feels towards Kaikayi, the anger Bibhishana feels when insulted by Ravana, the loyalty of Hanuman ... the list is simply unending.

When a messenger of Ravana describes the army of Sugreeva, he tells - "This Sugreeva, the king of monkeys, having great strength and valour, always surrounded by a colossal army, is approaching you to make war. He is accompanied by the valiant Vibhishana and the ministers, as also a hundred thousand crores of Shankas, a thousand Mahashankus,



a hundred Vrindas, a thousand mahavrindas, a hundred padmas, a thousand Mahapadmas, a hundred kharves, samudras and Mahaughas of the same number, and a crore of Mahaughas whole army as such is identical of an ocean. "

Valmiki speaks extensively of the Dharma, that is the duties and responsibilities, of a King, of a warrior, of a minister, of mother, father, brother and son etc. Here is one example where Valmiki speaks about the duties of a King. When Bharata goes to see Rama at Chitrakoot, Rama inquires upon him if he was following the duties of a king. He asks – "Dear Bharata, are you taking care of the subjects of Ayodhya? Are those who live by farming and cattle rearing taken care of by you? Are you ensuring protection to the women folk of Ayodhya? I hope you are also taking care of the animals and the trees that stand at the cross roads in our kingdom. I hope you are holding in high esteem the teachers, elders and the doctors. Pray, tell me you are treating our mothers and teachers and ministers with respect. I hope you are honouring the Brahmins, but not those who are materialistic. I hope you have appointed valiant, incorruptible and learned ministers because for a king, the source of victory comes from a counsel by ministers, who are well-versed in political sciences. I hope you do not take excess of sleep and do wake up early. I do hope that you use the night hours to contemplate on your actions. Do make sure that you take up welfare projects that have minimum cost but maximum benefit, and do not delay them in anyway. I hope you are giving salaries to the army and your employees without delay. I hope you are keeping a watch on the happenings within the state and beyond through a good network of spies. O mighty Prince! A wise and a learned king, who rules the Earth with righteousness ascends to heaven after discarding the body.

Such detailed are the instructions about Dharma in Ramayana, that the reader will be influenced by it. India has seen a great many kings who were influenced by Ramayana and had Rama as their ideal king. Not just in India, but wherever Ramayana was read, the kings there wanted to be like Rama. The shining example being the old capital of Thailand that was named Ayutthya (Ayodhya) and her kings who still call themselves 'Rama'. An inscription of King Yashovarma of Cambodia reads, "My capital is like that of Rama's Ayodhya." While another 10th century inscription of Rajendravarma reads "... like Sriram this king took care of his subjects like a father." As a poet Valmiki is the king of similes. He gives not one but many similes to describe one thing. Example - when Sage Vishvamitra comes to visit King Dasharatha, the King says he is delighted to receive the Sage. He says, "Your arrival brings me delight that can be likened to the delight of a mortal attaining ambrosia, or the coming of rains in dry land, or a barren father begetting a son, or regaining of long-lost treasures, and the gladness at a great happening! Oh, great saint, welcome to you."

Valmiki generously uses elements of nature as

similes. Example to say, "Rama and Lakshmana are arriving." he writes, "Rama whose complexion is like that of a blue lotus, and Lakshmana whose complexion is like that of the moonlight, came together." His description creates a live picture for the eyes of the mind, and gives goosebumps to the skin. Valmiki describes himself as – the 10th son of Prachetas. Further he says, in my life I have never hurt anyone through my deeds, my words or even in my thoughts!

प्रचेतसोऽहं दशमः पुत्रो राघवनन्दन।

मनसा कर्मणा वाचा भूतपूर्वं न किलविशम ॥ ७.९३.१७ ॥

It is this tender-hearted, pure souled Valmiki, who we see throughout the pages of Ramayana. Once the sage was at the banks of river Tamsa, happily watching a pair of krounch birds (Curlews), who were flying about together merrily. Suddenly a hunter shot the male bird with his arrow. The bird fell to the ground in agony. The female bird wailed at his plight. Her piteous utterances moved the Sage to utter a curse in form of a Shloka -

मां निषाद प्रतिष्ठां त्वमगमः शाश्वतीः समाः।

यत्क्रौंचमिथुनादेकम् अवधीः काममोहितम् ॥ १.२.१५ ॥

Oh violent hunter (निषाद), for killing one bird, when it was infatuated by passion, you shall not (मां) achieve fame for everlasting years to come!

This verse when read in a different way means – Oh Vishnu (at whose feet Lakshmi seats herself मां निषाद), for killing one bird (Ravana) who was infatuated by lust, you shall achieve fame for everlasting years to come!

For a long time, Valmiki was unable to forget the sad mourning of the female bird. In that state of melancholy, Brahma advised him to write the Ramayana. Valmiki wrote the Ramayana in 24,000 verses. It is divided in 7 sections called Kanda. Each Kanda having many chapters called Sarga. Brahma said -

यावत् स्थास्यन्ति गिरयः सरितः च महीतले ।

तावत् रामायण कथा लोकेषु प्रचरिष्यति ॥ १.२.३६ ॥

As long as the rivers flow on this Earth, as long as the mountains remain immovable, until then O Sage, your Ramayana will remain popular amongst the people!

It is this Ramayana of Valmiki that has inspired many a kings and rulers to be righteous. It has inspired many brothers to be like Rama, Lakshmana and Bharata. It has taught one to be a friend like Sugreeva and Vibhishana. It has taught not only how the family relations should be, but also how an ideal society should be. Valmiki's Ramayana is considered as a Upajivya Kavya, a work that has provided livelihood to many for generations together. Story tellers, writers, actors, artists, singers, dancers, poets and so many have made a living by retelling Ramayana through various mediums. Not just India, the world owes its humanness to Valmiki, had he not written the Itihas of Rama, we would have never known about it.

*Author is a Writer, Columnist and Illustration Artist
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*



Rashtrasant Tukdoji Maharaj : the Nation builder

Rashtrasant Tukdoji Maharaj not only a spiritual guru but also a visionary leader. The concept of transforming the society through devotion and the social programmes envisaged by Rashtrasant Tukdoji Maharaj and explained in his Gram Gita are timeless...

Dr. Vijay



Maharashtra is famous for being the land of Saints. Rashtrasant Shri Tukdoji Maharaj was born in the same state. He was born as Manik Bandoji Ingale at the tiny Yavali Shahid village in Amravati district of Vidarbha Region. His father was Bandoji aka Namdeo Ganeshpant Ingale and his mother was Manjula Devi, the daughter of Tukaram Buva Wankhede from Warkhed village. Both Bandoji and Manjula Devi were proud and hardworking. Bandoji worked as a tailor and Manjula Devi would grind flour using the stone grinding wheels. Although both Bandoji and Manjula Devi were illiterate, they were staunch believer.

It is believed that Rashtrasant Tukdoji Maharaj was born on Friday, 30th April, 1909 _ i.e. Vaishakh Shudh 9, Shaka 1831 as per the Hindu Calendar. It is said that a great storm was being witnessed when Rashtrasant Tukdoji Maharaj was born. Incidentally, the social crusader too spent his entire life storming Maharashtra, delivering discourses and performing Kirtans to create public awareness against various social evils. Rashtrasant Tukdoji Maharaj rescued the society from the clutches of regressive practice of casteism, superstitions and communalism.

Manik was still a young child when his mother had



to leave their house with him. However, it proved a boon in guise for him as it allowed him grow up in the company of Adkoji Maharaj, a well known Saint of Nath Sect, at Warkhed. This association proved immensely useful in moulding young Manik spiritually and intellectually and transforming him into Rashtrasant Tukdoji Maharaj. Encouraged by his mentor, Manik started composing poems and singing them.

Adkoji Baba left for heavenly abode in 1921 and Manik was torn in grief. Somehow, he completed his primary education to keep the promise he had given to his mother. But then he left for Pandharpur and reached the pilgrim centre facing several hardships. However, he was not to settle down in Pandharpur. Impressed by the tale of Bhakta Pundalik, who is said to have kept Lord Vitthala waiting for his visit because he was busy nursing his parents, Manik returned to Yavali, where his mother was. However,



his spiritual longing was so strong that he sold his mother's stitching machine in 1925 and went to the dense forest of Ramtek to do his penance. There is self-learned Hatyog. Later on, Shrimant Balkrishna Bhute, a rich devout from Chimur area, took this young master of yoga to his Neri village.

While at Neri, Tukdoji Maharaj read ancient scriptures written on Bhojpatras which were preserved at the Bhuteshwar temple and did penance in nearby forests of Godunda, Tadoba and Ramdidhi while practicing Prem Yoga and Raj Yoga. During this period, he experienced oneness of the world. Enlightened with the great philosophy, he became the mentor for the local Adivasis who started calling him 'Dev Baba'. He also convinced some sages camping at Niri that their efforts to practice as Godmen was vain. Rashtrasant Tukdoji Maharaj was camping at Chimur when the first compilation of Hindi bhajans composed by him, Swanandamrut, was published in 1929. Later, he visited various pilgrim centres such as Kashi, Prayag, Omkareshwar, Haridwar, Pushkaraj, Pashupatinath and met a number of saints including Lashkari Baba, Varishtha Maharaj, Dadaji Dhuniwale etc. During his pilgrimages, Rashtrasant Tukdoji Maharaj observed the social conditions minutely and realised the need to integrate the society. He started spreading message of social integrity through his Bhajans.

People got impressed with the well-maintained physique of Rashtrasant, his expertise in Yoga, his skill of playing musical instruments like dhol, conch, tambourine etc, his knowledge and effective singing of self-composed bhajans. This helped him form a unique bond with his followers and charged with his thoughts on social reforms and patriotism.

In 1930, Rashtrasant Tukdoji Maharaj participated in the Gondvan Satyagraha in Vidarbha and inspired his followers to become Satyagrahis themselves too by singing his self-composed patriotic bhajan 'Jhuthi Gulamshahi Kya Dar Bata Rahi Hain'. This resulted in a failed attempt to arrest him.

Later in 1933, he organised a Chaturmas fest at Chimur displaying his unmatched abilities as an organiser and a manager. In the year 1935, he performed a Maha Yajna at Salbardi in Amravati district. Such a Yajna was never performed in the past. He used all these occasions to spread awareness. He would preach, "Indian society is blinded by superstitions and ignorance. The British and other foreigners are exploiting the Indians. There is an immense need to spread awareness these evils. Addiction to tea and smoking is harmful to health and destroys lives. Therefore, we must steer the people, especially the youths to constructive work."

In his efforts to invigorate the youth, Rashtrasant Tukdoji Maharaj held a number of programmes. He visited various organisations and addressed the volunteers there. In 1941, he conducted special training camps for youths to promote patriotism. He used his bhajans and daily discourses skilfully to

reach out to thousands of people. He made invaluable contributions in the Quit India movement of 1942 by leading his followers into it. The Satyagraha's at Chimur, Ashti etc towns became successful due to his active participation in them.

Infuriated, the British rulers arrested him and jailed him at the prisons in Nagpur and Raipur for four months. Later, he was restricted from entering inside Chandrapur and Wardha districts. He defied these violations and went to Chandrapur and Wardha districts to stage Satyagraha's. Almost every jail in the region was filled with followers of Rashtrasant Tukdoji Maharaj during his period. So much, that the then colonial rulers banned recital of the 'Aate Hain Nath Hamare' Bhajan composed by him.

Later on, after his release from the jail, Rashtrasant Tukdoji Maharaj organised a Vishwashanti Nam Saptah ceremony to charge his supporters across the nation again. In 1943, he launched Shri Gurudev monthly and relaunched the thousands of Shakhas of his followers in the form of Shri Gurudev Seva Mandal. He also undertook a tour across India delivering discourses and lectures in various conventions.

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After India attained her independence, Rashtrasant continued his social work by undertaking tours to spread awareness against the evil practice of animal sacrifice. During his tours he inaugurated a number of temples which he envisaged as centres to spread public awareness. He brought the wrestling Akhadas together to inspire the youths to do exercise and become strong to fight back injustice meted out by the Razakars. He worked hard for the cause of de-addiction. He organised several conventions of spiritual gurus to involve them for the social cause. He organised several Bhudan Yajnas. He undertook the Adarsha Gram movement to create the concept of Ram Rajya envisaged by Mahatma Gandhi. He also penned 30 boos in Hindi and Marathi.

Several great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Sane Guruji, Mahamana Malviya, former President of India Dr Rajendra Prasad, Acharya Krupalani, Acharya Vinoba Bhave, Bhai Jaiprakash praised him for his incessant work for the social cause. Peace workers from 18 nations across the world praised his Bhajans

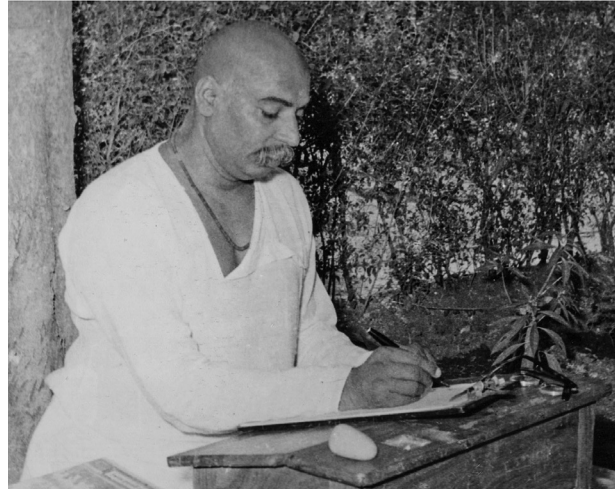


at a convention held at Wardha in 1948. Rashtrasant Tukdoji Maharaj was also invited to Japan to spread his message among the peace workers there. He was appointed honorary consultant to the peace committee formed by 18 nations.

Rashtrasant Tukdoji Maharaj firmly believed that key to a prosperous nation was in spreading feeling of patriotism and improving conditions at the villages. He preached, "The most dedicated and effective workers are found in villages. Patriotism must be inculcated in them."

Rashtrasant Tukdoji Maharaj organised several programmes of Bhajan recital, Kirtan and discourses through Gurudev Seva Mandal to eradicate superstitions, social evils and inequality and to promote social integrity. He tried to improve the social life of people to the standards of the new era. Uniting people to promote devotion, creating social commitment among them and integrating the society through it was his objective.

He authored Gram Gita on the lines of the philosophy of Shri Bhagvat Gita to spread this awareness. The Gram Gita proves to be a guiding light in all aspects of life. It also promotes scientific approach and denounces various social evils. Rich



with his experience of building a strong, healthy and prosperous nation, the Gram Gita contains the gist of Rashtrasant's philosophy. It envisages his vision of the daily life in villages in a democratic rule and lays emphasis on industriousness, discipline and building national character by eradicating segregation. It preaches the need for action. The concept of transforming the society through devotion and the social programmes envisaged by Rashtrasant Tukdoji Maharaj and explained in his Gram Gita are timeless.

*Author is a Marathi teacher at R. S. Mundle Dharampeth Arts and Commerce College, Nagpur
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*

Buddhism – Indian path of success

(From page 5) Milinda asked this question: "Why does religion languish?" Nagasena gave three reasons in his answer.

Three reasons for religious decline

(1) The first reason is that some religion is immature. In that religion, the basic principles have no depth. That makes for a temporal religion, and the religion will hold fast only if it suits the times.

(2) The second reason is that there may be no learned men to spread the religion. If there are none, the religion languishes. Learned men should preach religious wisdom. If the propagandists of a religion are not ready to hold discussion with opponents, the religion will die.

(3) The third reason is this: [if] religion and religious philosophy are only for the learned - the religion will not survive. For common ordinary people, there are temples and shrines. They go there and worship supernatural power. [If this is the case, the religion languishes.]

The only generous religion

We should remember these reasons as we take the conversion to Buddhism. No one can say that Buddhist principles are temporal. Even today, two thousand five hundred years afterwards, all the world respects the principles of Buddhism. In America there are two thousand Buddhist institutions. In England, at an expense of 300,000 rupees a Buddhist temple has been built. Even in Germany there are three or four

thousand Buddhist institutions. Buddhist principles are immortal. Nevertheless, the Buddha did not make the claim that this religion is from God. The Buddha said, "My father was a common man, my mother was a common woman. If you want a religion, then you should take this religion. If this religion suits your mind, then accept it." Such generosity is not found in any other religion.

Buddhism's role

The work of Buddhism is to lessen the suffering of the poor. What is the original foundation of Buddhism? Other religions and the Buddhist religion are very different. In other religions, change will not occur, because those religions tell of a relationship between man and God. Other religions say that God created the world. God created the sky, wind, moon, everything. God did not leave anything left over for us to do. So, we should worship God. According to the Christian religion, there is, after death, a Day of Judgment, and all depends on that judgment. There is no place for God and soul in the Buddhist religion. Bhagvan Buddha said there is suffering everywhere in the world. Ninety percent of mankind is distressed by sorrow. Suffering mankind should be freed from sorrow - this is the basic work of Buddhism. What did Karl Marx say that was different from the Buddha's sayings? [However,] what Bhagvan said, he did not say via a crazy, crooked path.

uv@unheardvoices.co.in



Vaishali : One of the Most ancient cities in India

Dr. Manjiri Bhalerao



According to the record of the Tipitaka's (the Buddhist Canons), the Buddha is said to have performed various miracles at different places. It was in Vaishali that Buddha was offered a bowl of honey by a monkey. It is believed that when Buddha had come to Vaishali, people gathered to worship him and listen to his sermons. When the monkeys living in the nearby forests came to know about this, they were collecting honey for their own consumption. But considering the greatness of the Buddha they wanted to express their reverence towards him. So, they went to see him and offered their bowl full of honey to him.

Vaishali, today, is the part of the Tirhut Division in the modern state of Bihar. Muzaffarpur is the district headquarter. In ancient times it was the capital of the Lichchhavi clan. It was one of the largest cities at the time of Buddha, who visited it several times and stayed at some of its shrines and chaityas which were present there. This city was the capital of the Lichchhavi Ganarajya, prior to 6th century B.C. It was the first republican state in India and also probably in the world.

The city has got a lot of importance in the political, social, economic and religious spheres. Being the capital city of the Lichchhavi Ganarajya, it has been a prosperous trade centre. Buddha is believed to have performed a miracle at this place and hence this is a very sacred place for the Buddhists. The Shvetambara Jainas believe that Bhagwan Mahaveer was born at Vaishali to King Siddharth and Queen Trishala. Hence for the Jainas also this is a very sacred site. Thus, from all perspectives, this city has enjoyed a very important status in ancient India.

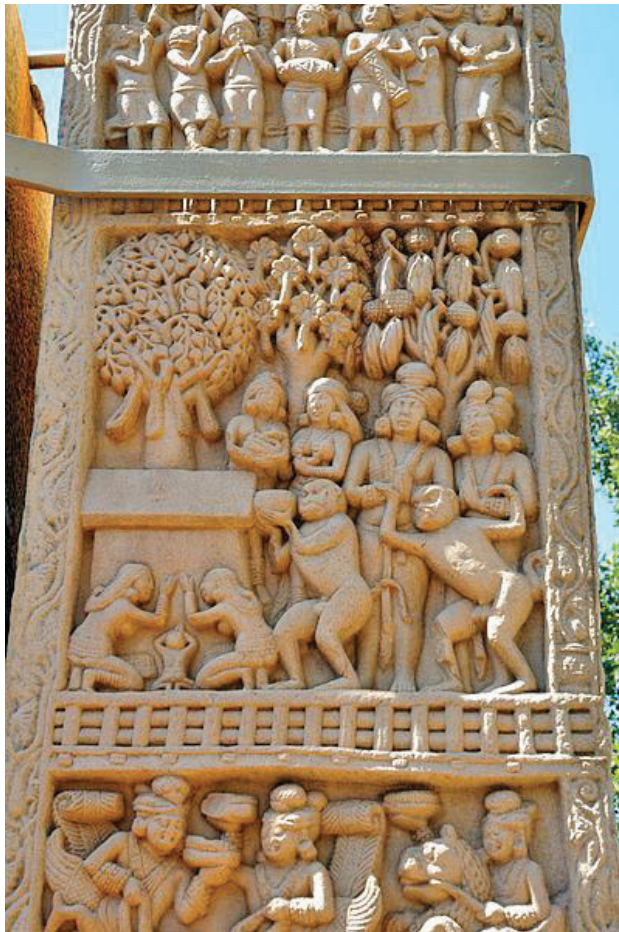
According to the record of the Tipitakas (the Buddhist Canons), the Buddha is said to have performed various miracles at different places. It was here that Buddha was offered a bowl of honey by a monkey. It is told to us that when Buddha had come to Vaishali, people gathered to worship him and listen to his sermons. When the monkeys living in the nearby forests came to know about this, they were collecting honey for their own consumption. But considering the greatness of the Buddha they wanted to





express their reverence towards him. So, they went to see him and offered their bowl full of honey to him. This event is considered as a miracle and is known as the Miracle of Vaishali. The spot, marking the miracle, was honoured, according to Hiuen Tsang, with a stupa located by the side of the Markata-hrada (tank of the monkeys). This event is depicted in a few sculptures at the stupa sites like Sanchi.

Amrapali, the famous courtesan in the court of the king of Vaishali was a contemporary of the Buddha. Later on, she became a devotee of the Buddha. During one of his visits, not long before his death, Buddha accepted the gift of a mango-grove from



the Amrapali. After the death of the Buddha, his relics were distributed into eight parts. The Lichchhavis received a share of the relics of Buddha and enshrined it in a stupa near Vaishali. The excavations carried out at a mound at the site has revealed the remains of an ancient stupa containing relics. In fact, it was observed that the stupa was opened once and some relics were taken away and the remaining were kept over there only. It is a known fact that Emperor Ashoka had opened seven out of the eight stupas that were constructed on the relics of the Buddha. Hence this stupa can be considered as one of the oldest stupas constructed over the relics of the Buddha.

It is also told by the Tipitakas that after the death

of the Buddha, there was a need to standardize the teachings of the Buddha. Hence three religious councils were called for by the political and religious authorities from time to time. The first council (Sangiti) took place at Rajagriha, when King Ajatashatru was ruling there. The Second Buddhist Council took place when King Kalashoka was ruling at Vaishali, a century after the death of Buddha. After the Sangiti, the Buddhist Sangha was divided into two categories 1) Sthaviravadin, 2) Mahasanghikas. This was a very significant development in the history of Buddhism. This split in the Sangha, in fact, paved the way for the future major split into Hinayana and Mahayana, that took place after 1st and 2nd century A.D.

The Chinese travellers, both Fa-hien and Hiuen Tsang visited the place. The latter saw a large number of Buddhist monuments, including the stupa which had been erected by the Lichchhavis and which had been opened up by Ashoka for its relic-contents and also the stupa built by Ashoka himself. In the town today one can see many relics of the monasteries, a big stupa and many small stupas and a tall pillar with the lion capital, but without any inscription. Even though it does not have the inscription of Ashoka, it is considered as one of his pillars, due to the stylistic similarities.

From the finds of images, it may be presumed that Buddhism survived in this place up to the 12th century A.D. The image of Tara of this place was particularly famous as evident from a miniature painting of Tara of Vaishali (Tirabhuktau Vaisali-Tara) illustrated on a manuscript of the eleventh century. Dharmasvamin, who, on his way to Vajrasana from Pa-ta, the capital of Tirhut, passed through the town of Vaishali, which was deserted at that time due to the apprehension of Muslim attack, did not refer to any Buddhist establishment in the country except to a female lay-supporter and a miraculous stone image of the Arya Tara with her head and body turned towards the left, foot placed flat, and the right foot turned sideways, the right hand in the varada-mudra and the left hand holding the symbol of the Three Jewels in front of the heart. The image was known to be endowed with great blessing, and the mere beholding of the goddess' face relieved devotees from distress. Other than this there are no other records of the presence of Buddhism in Vaishali.

Even though the Jainas believe that Mahaveer was born in this vicinity, there are hardly any archaeological remains present there today to support this belief. However, this faith of the Jain devotees marks this place as one of the most important pilgrim places of the Jainas.

Thus, the modern town of Vaishali, still enjoys the status of an important town for both the Buddhists and the Jainas all over the world and has become a very important tourist place.

*Author is Associate Professor of Indology,
Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*



Felicitation of Descendants of Freedom Fighters

An Honour never to be missed



Shri. Karnail Singh



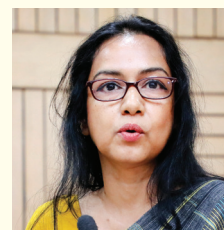
Shri. Tulsiram



Ms. Meena



Shri. Shalin Poddar



Ms. Swati Kumar

Pramod & Avinash



Certain events bring honour to the organization. When the Social Studies Foundation, along with University of Delhi, felicitated the descendants of freedom fighters from deprived classes, in a seminar held on 8th and 9th of August, 2022, some such feelings of we being honoured swept the minds of Team SSF. It all happened in the seminar on 'Marginalization and Social Inclusion: Contribution of Deprived classes to the Freedom struggle' held at the conference hall of Delhi University.

The seminar had in all, seven sessions planned for presentation of papers authored by professors, asst. professors and scholars on the theme of the seminar. Besides these sessions, a symposium on 'Idea of Nation' from the view point of Mahatma Gandhi, Veer Savarkar, Dr. Ambedkar, Swami Vivekananda and Yogi Aurobindo and a special session to felicitate the descendants of freedom fighters belonging to the deprived classes were also planned. While the entire seminar was a great success, the special session to felicitate the descendants proved to be the jewel in the crown!

SSF had identified and invited descendants of seven such freedom fighters who belonged to the deprived classes – Mangu Ram (freedom fighter from Punjab), Sardar Udham Singh, who assassinated General O'Dwyer, Savitri Devi and Putli Maya Devi (fought for independence of Darjeeling), Dakshayani Velayudhan (the first and only Dalit woman in the Constituent Assembly), Gangu Baba (freedom fighter of Kanpur), Babu Jagjivan Ram (freedom fighter and Politician) and Nand Ram Kangda (Soldier of Azad Hind Sena founded by Subhash Chandra Bose). Of these, descendants of Mangu Ram and Dakshayani Velayudhan could not attend the function due to health reasons.

Sardar Udham Singh's descendent Shri. Karnail

Singh, Putli Maya Devi Poddar's descendent Shri. Shalin Poddar, Shri. Tulsiram descendent of Gangu Baba, Ms. Swati Kumar, granddaughter of Babu Jagjivan Ram and Smt. Meena, a descendant of Nand Ram Kangda, was present at the seminar.

In the session chaired by Prof. Kattimani, Vice Chancellor of Central Tribal University of Andhra Pradesh, all the descendants were felicitated at the hands of Prof. Kattimani and dignitaries from DU and SSF. In his address, Sardar Karnail Singh (descendant of Sardar Udham Singh) took the audience through how Udham Singh patiently waited for 21 long years to find the right moment and place to assassinate General O'Dwyer who was responsible for the Jallianwala Baug massacre.

Udham Singh wanted to kill O'Dwyer not just silently, but openly in daylight and in the presence of people so that the world should know why he was killed. Sardar Karnail Singh also read out the last letter written by Udham Singh in which he famously said, "I will be re-born in India".

Shri Tulsiram, descendant of Gangu Baba, through his representative gave an account of how Gangu Baba fought along with Nana Saheb Peshwa and managed to kill about 150 English soldiers. Ms. Swati, grand-daughter of Babu Jagjivan Ram, made the audience relive by sharing the experience of Babu Jagjivan Ram's fight in the Quit India Movement. The other two, descendants of Putlimaya Devi and Nand Ram Kangda, were so overwhelmed by the event that they could not express their joy and satisfaction in front of the audience.

While thanking the descendants, Shri Jitendra Pawar, Director, SSF, rightly said that it is not that we have honoured them but it is the organizing institutions that have been honoured. It is therefore a matter of pride that SSF was a part of this event – an event which has helped SSF to gain new insights and rise in its stature!

Author's are Directors of Social Studies Foundation.

DIN VISHESH

As readers of Unheard Voices are aware that we publish special features of the days, which fall during the publication between two issues. This we have been doing since the first issue with a simple but honest intention to remind ourselves of the contribution of all those social reformers, who shaped the Indian mindset. Some of them are political but their role in social work and ideas remains undisputable. This, from the current issue, will be published in some different manner and prominently to underline their social message and thoughts.

The issue of September-October 2022 gives us a glimpse of rich and matured Indian tradition. At the face value, they sound representing different ideas as their agenda was different. But the core point remains the same – Indianness. For example, we have political leaders like

Mahatma Gandhi and Ram Manohar Lohia, who are well recognised for their social agenda apart from political ideology. Maharshi Valmiki stands as a big symbol of ancient Indian philosophy while Sant Meerabai of the medieval age represents the Bhakti Movement, which fought for social equality. We also have Shankardev from Assam who is attributed for bringing religious revolution. Sant Tukdoji Maharaj continues this legacy in 21st century. Raja Ram Mohan Roy is the symbol of the social reformation movement, which began in the colonial period. We also have Dhammchakra Parivartan Din in October. This was a major milestone in Indian history, having far reaching consequences. But again, Indianness was the core point behind this movement.

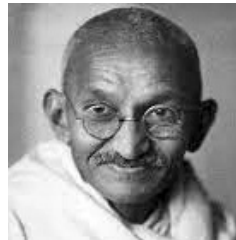
We are confident that readers would welcome this change.



26th September
Shankardev
Birth Anniversary



27th September
Raja Ram Mohan Roy
Death Anniversary



2nd October
Mahatma Gandhi
Birth Anniversary



5th October
Dhammachakra
Pravartan Din



9th October
Maharshi Valmiki
Birth Anniversary



9th October
Sant Meerabai
Birth Anniversary



11th October
Sant Tukdoji Maharaj
Death Anniversary



12th October
Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia
Death Anniversary