

UNHEARD VOICES

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Abrogation of article 370 : What it means for SCs and STs?





Don't neglect positivity

We often come across the news about injustice against the socially deprived class people. These incidents have no geographical boundaries. Such incidents are reported from all parts of the country, indicating that we, as a nation, have a long way to go to achieve social equality and harmony. But several signs of qualitative change in the society can be observed, which are encouraging and giving new hope. Unfortunately, such incidents are not highlighted or discussed but their significance can never be neglected. These changes are significant as they stand as strong signals of changing and aspirational youths of India.

For example, we can see several people, including male and female, who have given up their surnames. A good number of people use the names of their father and mother in their names. This change may sound small or minor but is important on two accounts. Firstly, dropping the traditional surname many times indicates that one does not believe in the caste system. It is a social reality in India that anybody's caste can be known because of the surname. Secondly, dropping of surnames and inclusion of mother's name also stands for equality in male and female.

One more un-noticed social change is inter-caste marriage. It is a reality that people still prefer to choose their life partner from their own caste. However, we ought to admit with open heart that the number of inter-caste marriages are gradually increasing. This is a big change and this trend needs to be strengthened and encouraged by all the people.

Both these trends stand for the testimony that people are giving up age-old traditional beliefs and accepting new ideas, which are essential for a healthy society. Social reality is that people are very sensitive about their surnames/caste and have pride about it. Both the factors go hand in hand. But the new trend, may not be strong enough, suggests willingness and mental preparedness to give up both the factors.

Of course, these kinds of changes are not enough to end social discrimination. However, we need to accept that social change can never be imposed.

Social change has to come from within. It has to come from self-motivation if it needs to be permanent. India has enacted several progressive laws but we have also experienced their limitations, when it comes to actual implementation. Therefore, such changes may appear to be small on the face of it but are important in achieving social equality and cohesiveness.

Modernity or social change or reformation cannot relate with modern infrastructure and technology. It has to be the modern belief system where social discrimination has no space and human value is utmost important. We also come across one equally noteworthy trend. The gap between cut off marks for open and reserved seats in the field of education is rapidly narrowing. This trend is more encouraging and healthier as it emerges as a strong foundation for equality. This trend also indicates that the people, who were deprived of education for generations, are not merely performing well but have potential to compete in open society. We also have to take serious note of the fact that this qualitative change has come only in two generations. Deprived class people have reached the top success in those fields, which were once prohibited for them for generations.

The number of entrepreneurs from scheduled caste is also rapidly increasing and the new generation, even in rural areas, is giving up traditional occupations, which mainly arise from the caste. A large number of students are opting to go abroad for education. In the Assembly elections conducted this year, caste factor seems to have impacted less on voting behaviour as compared to the past. This change can be seen in all the spectrums including cultural, literature and sports as well. Lot of changes can also be seen in the religious practices, which was once a monopoly of particular castes. This is a new identity of India wherein discrimination has no space. This is new India, where quality and not caste is the determining factor. This is the outcome of efforts of all those, who have been fighting to end social discrimination for centuries. We must have deep gratitude for them.

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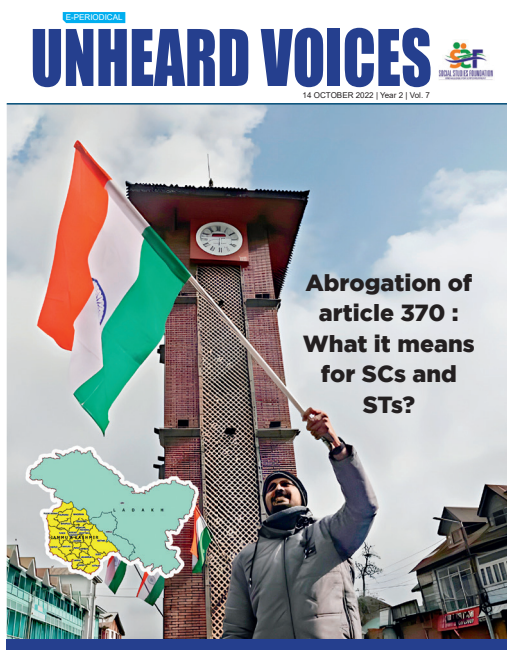
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Appeal for financial assistance



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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MAP OF UT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR AND UT OF LADAKH



The land given to SCs and STs is called ‘Custodian Land’ and individuals cannot claim ownership over this land, they can only use it for their living which they have been utilising from generations. The Sarpanch informed that if the state takes away the land for any reason such as road construction, school or any public utility, then the government is not liable for giving any compensation to the person who is in the possession of the custodian land. In this case, people are very much hopeful from the current government’s initiatives as it might help them to get ownership of the land they have been living in for generations.

SCs and STs in J&K - Much done, much needed

Dr. Sanjeev Kumar & Shailesh Kumar



Jammu and Kashmir assumed a new status of Union territory in 2019, which has been a historic development in the region since independence. The abrogation of Article 370 was propagated by the anti-government elements as a vindictive action against the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Interestingly, such narratives are found nowhere among the common people across Jammu and Kashmir. The people of Jammu and Kashmir are primarily engaged with the various fundamental issues pertaining to economic and occupational opportunities, employment, land and property ownership, education, infrastructural development, and the question of equal treatment and life with dignity.

These fundamentals of common peoples’ life and particularly the people from marginalized communities have rarely been studied, debated, and highlighted in the mainstream academics, media, and politics. Against this backdrop, this article endeavours to highlight some of the findings from the field.

This article is a part of a major research project sponsored by the Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR), whose objective is to study the conditions of SCs, STs, and other marginalized communities in Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh since independence. Under this project, a total of 24 villages of six districts from three regions (Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh) are being studied. Herein the inferences, data, and narratives from 2 districts: one from Jammu i. e. Samba and another from Kashmir i. e. Ganderbal are being presented.

This article primarily focuses on two issues i. e. educational and occupational status of the marginalised communities in the state of Jammu and Kashmir in general and Samba and Ganderbal in particular.

Demography

As per the Census 2011, in Jammu and Kashmir, the total number of Scheduled Castes is 924991 and Scheduled Tribes were 1493299. This means the SC population is 7.37 % and ST is 11.90 % of the total population of the state. And two districts whose field observation shall be placed in this article were



selected based on their highest SC and ST population in their respective regions of Jammu and Kashmir. Sambha's SC population is 9.9 % of the total SC population of J & K. Whereas Ganderbal has the highest ST population i. e. 4.08 % of the total ST population of J & K.

Education:

The literacy rate of male and female in Jammu and Kashmir is 73.76 % and 46.00 % respectively and the average literacy rate of J&K is 77.12 % (Census2011.co.in). The literacy rate of STs is higher than SCs in the state. Out of the total 924991 SC population only 560104 (which is 60.55 %) SCs are literate. On the other hand, out of the total of 1493299 ST population only 601703 (which is 40.29 %) STs are literate.

There have been three most pertinent reasons behind the lower level of literacy among the marginalized communities i. e. SCs and STs in Jammu and Kashmir. First is the landlessness, as many of the marginalized communities have no ancestral land and were discriminated against at the time of land redistribution. Thus, they were forced to become landless and consequently were kept aloof from the education sector.

Secondly, due to the caste differences, children of the marginalized communities remained outside the boundaries of the educational institutions. Thirdly, Gujjar and Bakarwal (STs) communities have been traveling from Valley to the lower plains in the winters and Jammu to Valley in the summers, therefore, pursuing education regularly have been difficult for them for long.

In this backdrop, the central and state governments have introduced various schemes as well as tried to strengthen the previous schemes such as the mid-day meal in schools, hostels for girls, scholarship, school infrastructure, mobile education etc. Post 370 abrogation, the J&K government has introduced a landmark scheme that is reservation policy. Many of the respondents from Sambha and Ganderbal emphasized that due to the reservation policy, now they could not only enter into the educational premises but also get higher education and jobs across the regions. However, after making reservations at the state level, some of the respondents also said that the local works which were reserved for the local district level people, now see it as a threat as these have opened doors for the people of the entire state which endangers their local skills.

The most recent development in this sector was done on 5th October, 2022 with the declaration of reservation for the Paharis in the valley by Home Minister Amit Shah. The current government's special emphasis on providing mid-day meals effectively and regularly has significantly increased the enrolment number and literacy rate of the state. It is important to consider that the availability of schools, infrastructure, transportation, and meeting the need of the local students are being taken very seriously by the government in the post- 370 abrogation period. One

of the problems of the hilly areas is transportation. Students could not travel long distances for attending school, even the local transportation for common people as well as students is the major bottleneck that reduces the enrolment at the school level. Due to the lack of adequate transportation and communication, the teachers could not give much time staying in the schools. Therefore, the concept of mobile education has also served the teachers and students simultaneously for better participation and regularity. It has been effective for the children of Gujjar and Bakarwal community. However, in the present times, these sheep herding communities have made a kind of double arrangement in which they keep their families in the plain areas for the purpose of education and male family members travel to the mountains to herd the sheep.

On the other hand, in order to ease the transportation to enable the students and people across the valley, several construction works are taking place in small and remote areas. The government has also initiated an important culture that is of documentation and record. Post 2019, all the offices are keeping records of their works. All the sites of construction or any development work has to display the details of work in progress at the site itself. Such public display of development work has ensured transparency and effectiveness at the local, officers and community's level. Such acts have also created a sense of trust in the government and officials.

Language has also acted as a barrier as students were made to learn the Kashmiri language and deliver a lecture in the same language which the communities such as Gujjar and Bakarwal found challenging to understand. This led to the decline of the overall score of the students. Herein the provision of the New Education Policy is much more beneficial for the students from the marginalized communities, especially from the hilly areas i. e. Kashmir Valley. In fact, one of the respondents, who is a school teacher in Gund village of Ganderbal, said that if NEP is implemented properly then it would benefit the children of Kashmir and Ladakh the most. It would also be beneficial to the students from other mountain areas because it promotes local languages at the primary level.

The central government's flagship program of pre and post matric scholarship has been very successful as it has helped the children of the marginalized communities in their educational endeavours. One of the respondents from the Gujjar community, from Kangan block, Ganderbal highlighted important observation that "pre aur post matric scholarship ke karan hame bahut suvidha mili hai, ab bacche ke school ke kharche ke liye chinta nahi rahti..ab hum log do jagah par rahte hain, sardiyan me Jammu aur garmiyon me Kashmir.. bacche Jammu me hi padhte hain".

Areas That Needs More Attention

Though the government has made significant



steps since 2019 in improving the accessibility and enrolment of the students at the primary education, at the secondary level,

Education in Jammu and Kashmir needs more attention. Due to the lack of transportation, girl students are facing difficulty in traveling far distances. Currently, the population ratio of the students and the availability of hostels is very nominal. It certainly requires special attention of the government for the construction of more girls' hostels, school infrastructure and the transportation facility need to speed up.

In this direction, the government has allocated funds for repair and the construction of more such hostels is a very appreciative step for improving the educational system and ensuring enrolment of

Many of the scholars and researchers have produced that land reform in Jammu and Kashmir has been a successful story. But the people from the marginalised community have provided the other side of the stories as well. There is no doubt that many of the landless people got benefited from the land reform, but certain communities such as Gujjars and Bakarwal as well as SCs of Jammu and Kashmir did not get enough benefit.

the girl students both at the primary and secondary levels. On the other hand, SC people of Jammu reported that the infrastructural development of the villages and educational institutions of reserved constituencies need special attention as the children of the marginalised categories go to the government schools. In many cases, the schools and infrastructure of the SC and ST populated areas are neglected by the district administration.

Occupation

Employed population of SCs and STs in Jammu and Kashmir are 34.64 percent and 35.71 percent respectively whereas the unemployed population of SCs and STs is 65.35 and 64.28 percent respectively. This shows that there is a high unemployment rate in the state. The employed or working category is again bifurcated into two categories- Main workers and Marginal workers. In the main worker category, 22.32 percent of the population comes from SC, and 16.14 percent of the population belongs to ST. For the Marginal worker's category, 12.32 percent of people are SC, and 19.57 percent of people are ST. The following data states that STs are more engaged in marginalized work in comparison to the SCs.

With the absence of the ownership of land and a higher number of illiteracies in the marginalized

community, most of them find employment in the tertiary sector, such as unskilled labourers, drivers, maids, or units provided by the government which is again open to every section of the society and not dedicated to a particular community. Few of them engage themselves in cultivation, but the problem lies in irrigation facilities as they are not getting access to clean tap water so irrigation is a major challenge in the hilly region.

As the above picture shows that a ST woman is collecting fallen apples from the field at Shopian and preparing packets for the market. She informed us that one packet containing 10 KG would cost 300 Rs in the market. That means an apple at the orchard costs Rs. 30 Per KG. The lady from ST community also informed that, the cost she gets in the market needs to increase, however, she said that with the formation of the new government some stability in the market has been observed and a better future is expected for the landless, marginalized and unskilled labourers of Jammu and Kashmir. With the absence of employment in the native region, the majority of the workforce travelled the valley, leaving their families away as soldiers knowing if they did not earn during that specific period, their families would not be able to survive winters. Even girls living in higher terrain move to the valley to find employment during vacations as household servants. A teacher from Ganderbal said that post 2019, "due to government's heavy investments in various development projects, the youths of J&K have thrown away the stones and working for the personal as well as the development and growth of the state"

Land Issue

Many of the scholars and researchers have produced that land reform in Jammu and Kashmir has been a successful story. But the people from the marginalised community have provided the other side of the stories as well. There is no doubt that many of the landless people got benefited from the land reform, but certain communities such as Gujjars and Bakarwal as well as SCs of Jammu and Kashmir did not get enough benefit. As these communities have migrated for the purpose of sheep herding from the hill to the plane and vice versa, they never maintained any permanent resident card or landholding record. They are always mobile and travel in valleys and the hills with their animals. This also remains one of the reasons for the double marginalization of the communities as they do not have ownership rights. In case some developmental activities are brought to a particular region, and the state wants to lay a foundation for school building or Panchayat Ghar, in such a scenario state in the name of maximum benefit takes over the land from the communities without any compensation.

Claiming land ownership has its own issue as they need to be rectified by the revenue department, and their title should be mentioned in the revenue list in order to claim benefits. **(On page 10)**



One fifth jail mates belong to SC

NCRB report includes information on prison inmates by age group and sex. The study also includes a description of undertrial and convicted prisoners by offences, penalties, and length of incarceration. There are all total 5,54,034 prisoners in India, out of which 21.22% are from Scheduled caste, 10.78% from ST communities, 35.83% are from OBC category and 26.39% are others.

Suman & Souvik



According to the 2011 census, scheduled caste contributes 16.6% of the total population in India. For the protection of their interests, growth, and development, they need special attention. At the time of describing SC people, we normally focus on politically oriented socio-economic issues of scheduled caste peoples; such as untouchability, public disabilities, education problems, economic problems, poor health and demographic status etc.

While discussing the socio-economic condition of people, we generally focused on education, health, equity to the depressed and disabled class. We rarely discuss the situation behind the metal bars. The situation and problems of inmates in India is one of the most ignored topics. The management of prisons is a state matter covered by item 4 under the State List in the seventh schedule of the Indian Constitution. Prison management and administration are solely the responsibility of the State governments, and they are governed by the Prisons Act of 1894.

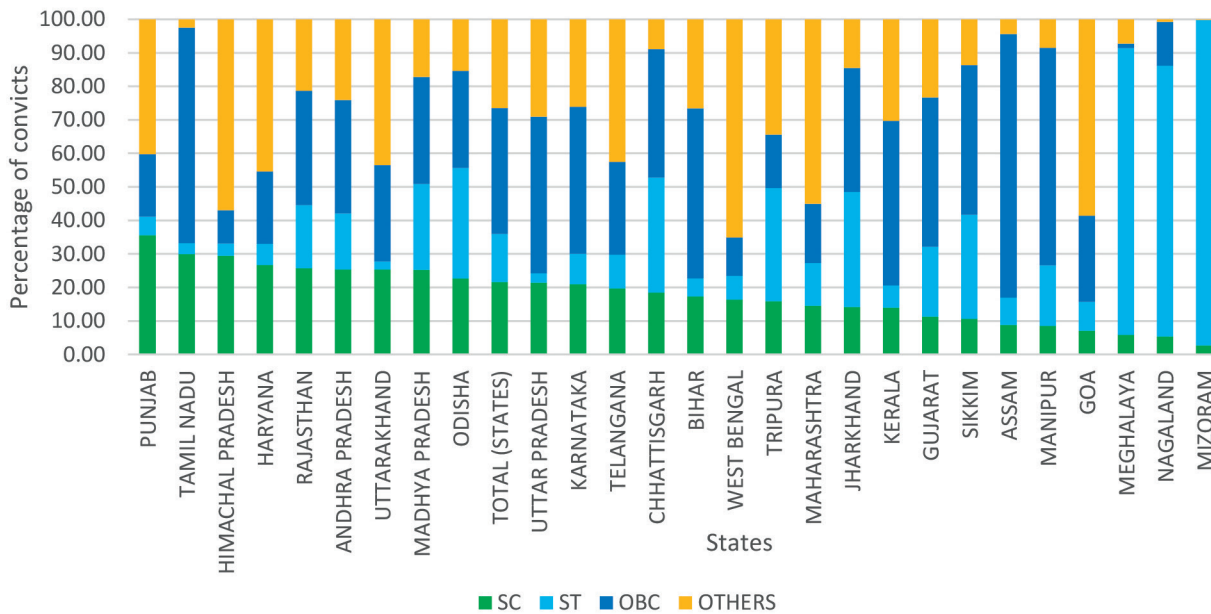
Therefore, it is primarily up to the states to alter the existing prison laws, rules, and regulations. The central government helps the states by providing aid for betterment of prison and prisoners.

In India the prisoners are categorized in four classes; Convicts, under trial, détentes and others, who are housed in different jails. A person who has been found guilty of a crime, given a sentence by a

court of law, and is currently imprisoned is referred to as a convict. An individual who is currently being tried in court is known as an undertrial. Any person who is detained in custody legally is detente. The Other category, however, refers to any individual not included in the aforementioned groups.

The study includes information on prison inmates by age group and sex. The study also includes a description of undertrial and convicted prisoners by offences, penalties, and length of incarceration. There are all total 5,54,034 prisoners in India, out of which 21.22% are from Scheduled caste, 10.78% from ST communities, 35.83% are from OBC category and 26.39% are others. As per the prisoner statistics report, 2021. Out of total convicts 21.69% are SC convicts, 14.09% are ST, 37.32% are OBC and 26.90% are others. Similarly, out of total undertrial, détentes and others 21.08%, 23.05% and 12.25% are SC, 9.88%, 5.62% and 6.22% are ST, 35.42%, 36.97% and 17.18% are OBC and 26.19%, 27.44% and 64.35% are others respectively. Also, the percentage of under trial prisoners are very high, 76.60% of the total prisoners. According to Prison Statistics in India report the number of under trial prisoners are increasing because of lack of speedy disposal of cases, which refer to the pitiable condition of courts in India.

There prevails a relationship between the number of undertrial prisoners and total population of that particular caste. The percentage of undertrials of that particular caste is high where the total population of that particular caste is high irrespective of the



State wise caste of convicts as on 31st December, 2021

geographical location of that particular state. The percentage of undertrials from SC caste is higher in Punjab than its percentage of SC population to the total population and it is common for most states. In the case of Chhattisgarh and Tripura, the percentage of SC's under-trials is lower than the percentage of SC's population. Only in west Bengal, the percentage of undertrials from the other caste is higher than its percentage to total population. There is a need for reform in the judiciary system to provide justice in a faster way to mitigate this undertrial problem.

Prisons are an essential component of the nation's criminal justice system; however, they are currently in unsatisfactory condition. Over the years, prisons and convicts have not received enough consideration. The prisons in India are a lack of proper food, and characterized by overcrowding, discrimination and inequality among the prisoners based on their religion, socioeconomic background, and other factors.

The conditions of under trial prisoners are far more pathetic than living a life as a convict. Also, most under trial prisoners are too poor to afford a lawyer or bail. There must be a quick trial so that no one suffers unnecessarily because, anguish of being imprisoned intensifies if there is any delay, which keeps the accused in constant anxiety and psychological torment.

The recently released Jails Statistics of India (PSI) 2021 paints a depressing image of India's prisons, which are overcrowded, have delays in legal proceedings, and lack adequate medical facilities for the prisoners. The judicial system must immediately assess the hazards it is exposing the jail population to and come up with solutions as we watch for future Covid-19 waves. It is critical to decongest prisons and implement policies that safeguard the convict's

rights to life and health. The ideal policy prescription of transforming jails into correctional institutions and places of rehabilitation will only be realized after the problems of an unreasonably small budgetary allocation, heavy workloads, and the disregard of the police for procedural safeguards are solved.

To protect inmates, human rights and improve their chances of reintegrating into society, jail reform is required. It is crucial to have sufficient medical facilities. To protect the rights of inmates with mental health needs. The current central Government has taken many measures to improve the conditions of the prisons and health-conditions of prisoners. The Union home Minister also emphasized the importance of Prison modernizations to all states. He also said India's incarceration system was prone to abuse because it was set up by Britain to suppress political prisoners, and called for a view of prisoners and prison rehabilitation. To make prisons modern and technologically advanced, to provide stringent security measures, to provide better living and medical facilities, libraries, educational programs to support prisoners' reintegration into society, and to promote intellectual development. Initiative should be introduced. It is very important that the state gives prisons a lot of value.

The government considered aspects such as human rights, rehabilitation of prisoners, rights of women prisoners, prison inspection laws, and the right to education, including those sentenced to death. Government has set up a committee to give a report and proposal on the improvement of Prison status in India.

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College was not easy for Anup Nath. He had to face tremendous caste discrimination in his college. During his junior college days, the teachers gave good grades in practical to only those who would please them. One day during school, Anup Nath was explaining physics problems to his friend on the blackboard. When the teacher entered and saw a student of lower caste explaining the problem, he started beating him real hard, he also banged his head on the wall saying you are creating nuisance in the class.

Man, who was beaten up for teaching in class

A responsible human being is not the one, who takes care of just himself and his family, but the one who expands his boundaries and takes care of his country, society, family and himself. He thinks about society before himself and irrespective of how society treats him, he keeps on taking efforts to make it better.

Here's a story of such noble and pure hearted Dr. Anup Nath, who's been working inexorably for the betterment of unprivileged people around him.

Born in 1969, Anupji was the third son of J. P. Nath and Mrs. Premlata Nath. J. P. Nath had shifted to Shahdara for a better future. His Father performed well in his higher secondary at Aligarh College and received a scholarship also at that time. The situation was not good at the financial level. He made sure that his kids study hard and do better in their lives. Nath's family was struggling financially as J. P. Nath did not have a proper job. Anupji's elder brothers studied in private schools but by the time Anupji started attending school the financial conditions worsened again and he had to attend the government school. After working hard, Anup Nath's father could not manage school fees for their children. It was an embarrassing moment for Anup Nath when the school teacher asked whose fee is pending. But Anup Nath was aware of his father's struggle; he considered J.P.Nath as his Guru.

When Anupji was in high school, his father got sick and started attending yoga therapy in Vishwayatan Yoga Ashram. He used to take Anupji along, this was the time when Anupji found his predilection

towards yoga. He started doing yoga on daily basis and took part in state level yoga competitions. Five times winner of state level gold medal in yoga, Anupji continued his passion for yoga and pranayama forever. He also won the Yog Ratan award later.

During school days, one incident changed little Anup's life forever. While dancing in a festival, Anupji broke his heel bone. It was painful, and he kept on going to the government hospital for treatment for over a month but nobody attended to him, as the doctors were unavailable. One day the HOD noticed this little kid and checked his foot and realised that he had been functioning with a broken leg for over a month, and finally treated him. This conjuncture got him thinking about the pain of the poor in society, and he decided to become a doctor.

He started studying and improving his academics to achieve his goal. But unfortunately, he couldn't get enough marks in his 10th standard exam that were required to get into the science stream. Due to lack of resources and exposure, he couldn't get admission anywhere and had to repeat the year. He didn't lose hope and studied even harder to secure a seat in the science stream.

Junior college was not easy for him either. He had to face tremendous caste discrimination in his college. During his junior college days, the teachers gave good grades in practical to only those who would please them. One day during school, Anupji was explaining physics problems to his friend on the blackboard. When the teacher entered and saw a student of lower caste explaining the problem, he started beating him



real hard, he also banged his head on the wall saying you are creating nuisance in the class. This shattered Anupji's world. He did not attend school for three days. When his father got to know about the incident, instead of saying anything to the teacher, he made Anupji join a coaching class at this teacher's place, so that he will get better grades in practical's. Now the next challenge was paying fees for tuition. To pay the fees, Anupji started tutoring children. He earned and learned. After 12th, he couldn't get admission for MBBS, so he opted for a diploma in pharmacy. But the urge of becoming a doctor was still there, so he appeared for the exam again and got admission for MBBS.

MBBS first year was a tough task. Teachers failed him because of his caste. As disheartening it was, he kept his hope alive. His yoga and spirituality helped him overcome this trauma. He enrolled for a diploma in homeopathy at the British institute of homeopathy. He simultaneously completed his MBBS and HMD.

He was so passionate about medicine, that he wanted to explore each and every avenue of every branch. He pursued his MD in alternative medicine. He also developed a new approach of treating patients, using allopathy, ayurveda and homeopathy along with Naturopathy, Yoga, Medical Astrology etc. After one diploma in pharmacy, two bachelor's degrees of MBBS and homeopathy, two MD degrees, his inclination towards yoga and pranayama motivated him to enrol for PhD program. He completed his PhD in "Influence of pranayama on aggression, adjustment and insecurity feelings of school going adolescents."

Degrees reflect a person's academic knowledge,

but his actions reflect his wisdom. After excelling in all the academic fields, Dr. Nath did not forget his duties towards society. He started his organisation called Maa aadhayeshakti Holistic Health & Care foundation, to help the economically backward class. He started the organisation to treat patients in a holistic approach. Currently, he visits rural areas with a well-equipped ambulance to treat patients free of cost. He does it all without any funding from the government or any other sponsorer.

He always had immense interest in Indian ancient literature. He always thought that knowledge of Veda and Upanishads should not be limited to Brahmins. So, he studied Vedas and received a Ved Nipun Award from Maharshi Sandipani National Vedic Foundation.

In future he wants to open a hospital where patients from economically backward class will be treated free of cost with integrated medicinal therapies. Secondly, he wants to open a university which will focus on teaching Indian culture, Vedabhyas and Yogabhyas. He wants to pass on this knowledge to the youth of India to keep the Indian culture alive.

There is a saying, 'When life gives you a hundred reasons to cry, show life that you have a thousand reasons to smile.' Despite all the hardships in life, all the hatred he received from society, Dr. Nath is still spending his every day working for unprivileged people. He has evolved beyond religion and caste. He believes good deeds bring you peace and happiness. He wants to work towards betterment of society. For him even the sky is not the limit...

*As told to Chinmayee
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SCs and STs in J&K

(From page 6) Supposedly, if the name of a person is XYZ, his name also includes titles such as Gujjar or Bakarwal, and then only he can claim. The issue of land reform from 1948 to 1976 and the previous government's policy has deeply impacted the ownership prospect of SCs across the regions. One of the SC sarpanches of Samba District informed that the land transfer to most of the SCs and STs have been a mirage in Jammu and Kashmir. The land given to these communities is called 'Custodian Land' and individuals cannot claim ownership over this land, they can only use it for their living which they have been utilising from generations. The Sarpanch informed that if the state takes away the land for any reason such as road construction, school or any public utility, then the government is not liable for giving any compensation to the person who is in the possession of the custodian land. In this case, people are very much hopeful from the current government's initiatives as it might help them to get ownership of the land they have been living in for generations. It is also said that, under the land

reform and refugee rehabilitation program, people who came from Pakistan got the land but the native marginalised people's ownership is still awaiting. The overall observation of the field research team has been that the abrogation of 370 has been appreciated by the common people and disliked by the political and higher caste people, who were the beneficiaries of this act. The expectation of the common public has improved to a greater level along with their satisfaction with the government's policies. However, many areas which have been ignored for the last 70 years, require collective attention of the government, civil society and common people to work together for the regeneration of the most beautiful space, people and culture of India i. e. Jammu and Kashmir.

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Bhutan : Buddhist Land of Happiness

Dr. Manjiri Bhalerao

Bhutan is a tiny country sandwiched between India and Nepal. The name Bhutan has been given by the foreigners to this beautiful land. The native people call this country as 'Druk - Yul or the Land of the Thunder Dragon.' The country is well known today for preserving its rich heritage and natural beauty. This country was considered as the happiest country of Asia, according to a survey in 2006.

Early history of Bhutan and Beginning of Buddhism

The story of this country becomes clearer from the 7th century CE. Guru Padmasambhava moved to Bumthang. There he was welcomed by the followers of the old sect, the Nyingmapa (rNying- ma pa), who called him Guru Rimpoche (the Precious Teacher). This mission proved very successful and as a result Buddhism took firm grounds in Bhutan. This period is also ascribed the earliest foundations of the religious stupa-like structures called the 'Eye-Chortens' of the eastern Bhutan. Thus, Guru Padmasambhava became very popular. In fact, the most important and most widely featured figure after the Buddha is Guru Padmasambhava.

Many legends came into being and some of them even resembled the incidents in the life of

Gautama Buddha. Bhutanese people regard him as the second historical Buddha. They believe that the first Buddha i.e. Shakya Muni revealed the Sutras and Guru Padmasambhava revealed the Tantras. Developing from the Mahayana Buddhism the modern Bhutanese religion has a pantheon of various gods and goddesses. Lord Buddha is the supreme lord but there are a number of Bodhisattvas, female forms such as Tara, protecting deities and a host of fearful gods. Even some Hindu deities, especially Shiva and his consort Mahakali have been included in the all-embracing Bhutanese pantheon.

The important Buddhist temples in Bhutan

Out of the Buddhist monuments in Bhutan, two are the most ancient temples 1) sKyerchu- lHa-khang in sPa-gro valley and 2) Byamspl lHa-khang in the Bum-thang province. These temples conform to the known character of the most ancient Tibetan temples and are the part of an elaborate system of temple construction devised by King Srongbtsan sGam-po, who ruled over Tibet from 627 CE to 649 CE.

1) sKyer-chu-lHa-khang – This temple is near the top end of the sPa-gro valley in the hamlet of the same name. The main sanctum contains a beautiful south facing image of Crowned Buddha known as sKyer-chu Jo-bo which is surrounded by standing images of Bodhisattvas.



2) Byamspa lHa-khang – This is a temple of Byaspa (Maitreya) in Bum-thang. This temple is quite similar to the sKyer-chu-lHa-khang. A number of other shrines have been added to the main temple over a period of time. However, the outward similarity between these two shrines is not matched by the interior. The main image is of Byamspal lHa-khang i.e. the Future Buddha Maitreya.

Buddhist Architecture

1) The Dzongs of Bhutan – The Dzongs and monasteries dominate the secular and temporal life of Bhutan. Without them the life of the people would be incomplete. They are integrated in the history of Bhutan and tell us the stories of antiquity. Dzongs – The word 'Dzong' literally means a fortress. However, the Dzongs combined in themselves the functions of an administrative centre and a monastery and in olden days, were the citadels of defence against any attack. That is why they are located at all strategic points, particularly at points in valleys which were prone to outside attack. Today, the major Dzongs are the seats of district administrations.

The Bhutanese Dzongs gradually became the strongholds of later Bhutanese powerful governors. They were called Penlops. They controlled their respective regions from these Dzongs. The capture of a Dzong, held by a Penlop, by a rival inevitably meant a victory in battle for supremacy. The whole population of a valley used to take protection in the Dzongs in the event of a war. The Dzongs are usually rectangular buildings surrounding a hollow square, in the centre of which is a large tower several storeys high, surmounted by a large copper cupola. The entrance to the Dzong, usually by the side of a river, is over a bridge and has a single gateway lined with iron plates. Some of the Dzongs had special arrangements made for the times of emergency. The Dzongs contain some of the finest statues of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas. The meditative (Dhyani) Buddha Vairochana and his female companion / consort or Shakti is one of the most popular themes of Bhutanese sculpture. The Dzongs are generally designed as parallelograms, divided into several courts. The construction is mostly of beaten mud and the structure is of timber making them highly susceptible to fire. A number of them were rebuilt after catching fire but the old style was retained.

2) Buddhist Monasteries – Monasteries are the most common feature of Bhutan. Besides those located in the Dzongs, most of the others are located some distance away from settlements or villages. Some of them are located at extremely isolated places. The most important reason behind this was the isolation from the world to avoid the temptation for the monk and to provide a peaceful environment for concentration and meditation. A number of prayer flags, inscribed with pious words, charms and religious prayers, flutter most picturesquely from long poles all around the monasteries. The prayer flags do not

merely confer merit on the planter but are for the benefit of the whole country side. The flags carry the message of "Dharma" to all. The last sentence on the flag is usually "Let the doctrine of the Buddha prosper."

3) Chortens – Chortens or stupas are the most visible sites on the Bhutanese landscape. We find these religious structures on mountains, hillocks, passes, cross-roads and river banks. The word Chorten literally means a receptacle for offerings. They are solid structures of conical masonry and were intended to be relic holders. Often known as burial mounds, chortens are built in memories of eminent lamas, kings. They are also built to protect a place or a region against evil spirits which are potentially dangerous; such as crossroads and high passes as well as landslide and accident-prone areas. In the modern times they are mostly built as cenotaphs in the memory of Lord Buddha or another saint. Some of them also commemorate the visits of various saints. The whole countryside of Bhutan is full of chortens. Miniature chortens of metal, wood and clay are also made.

4) Lhakhangs (Temples) - The word Lhakhang means houses of God. A Lhakhang is generally the central most building in a monastery and is separated from other buildings. But a Lhakhang can also be the only building at any auspicious place. The roof is furnished with one or two ball-shaped domes, which are normally of gilt-copper. It has rows of prayer wheels, which are inserted approximately three feet above the level of the path. These wheels are turned by the visitor sweeping his hands over them as he proceeds.

Buddhist art

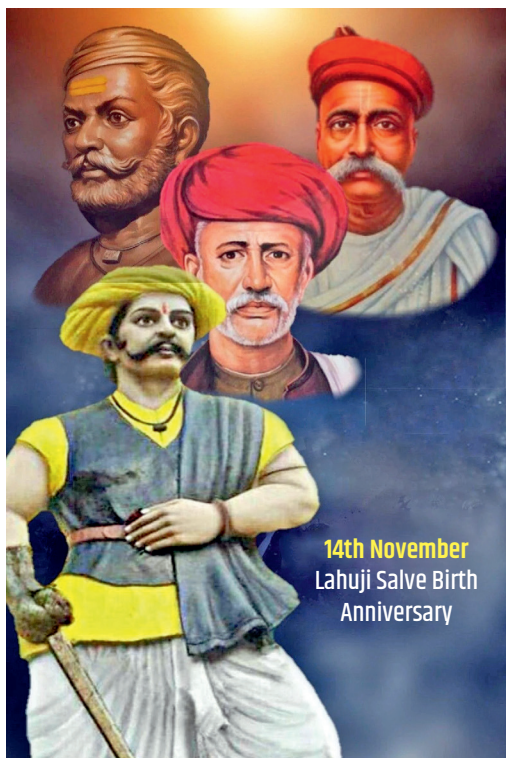
Like the other countries in the world, Bhutanese art is also predominantly religious in nature. It was not created only for aesthetic appeal. Its primary aim was to provide support to meditation and devotion. The basic function of Buddhist art in Bhutan was to serve as a visual aid for understanding the complex tenets of Buddhist philosophy and religion. One of the main subjects of the Bhutanese art is the mandala or the khyilkhor. This is basically a mystic pattern used for the purposes of initiation and meditation. It was introduced in Bhutan together with all the teachings and methods of the Northern Buddhist traditions, and its complex geometrical patterns can be seen all over the country in various combinations. The zenith of the Bhutanese art is achieved in the religious paintings or scrolls known as thangkhas. These art treasures are famous all over the world because of their great beauty, divine themes and portable size.

Thus, Bhutan gives us a picture of a country that is happily living embracing all forms of religion under one umbrella of Buddhism, setting a wonderful example for the rest of the world for peace and happiness.

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DIN VISHESH



14th November
Lahuji Salve Birth
Anniversary

Remembering Vastad Lahuji Salve

double-edged sword because he had firm belief that country's freedom alone would not solve the problem. He was of the view that social and economic equality would be required, inviting wrath of both foreign and Indian orthodoxy. Lahuji Salve had set up an armed force for the Indian freedom struggle, which can be seen further in the uprising of 1857. In 1847, Mahatma Jyotirao Phule entered Lahuji's training centre to learn weapons. He considered Lahuji Salve as his master and studied social equality and wrestling under his armed training.

Lahuji Salve encouraged Mahatma Phule and brought about educational awareness among the untouchables. Similarly, he became the propagator of the school for untouchables and promoted women's education. Although Lahuji Salve was born in a caste known as untouchables, he was influenced by his national and social thought, and the youth of the upper castes and the untouchables participated in large numbers and took lessons on social equality.

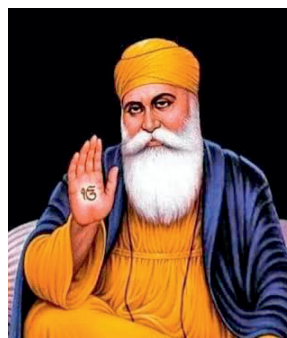
The period 1794 to 1881 is famous for the Renaissance in Indian history. Revolutionaries sacrificed everything for the country, but Lahuji Salve had to fight against external and internal forces. Lahuji Salve's revolutionary act was like a



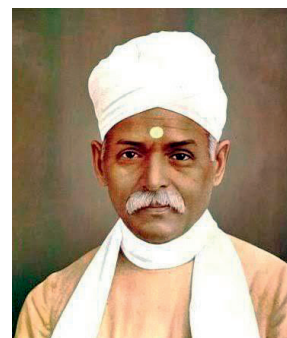
28th October
Bhagini Nivedita
Birth Anniversary



4th November
Sant Namdev
Maharaj Jayanti



8th November
Guru Nanak Devji
Birth Anniversary



12th November
Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya
Birth Anniversary