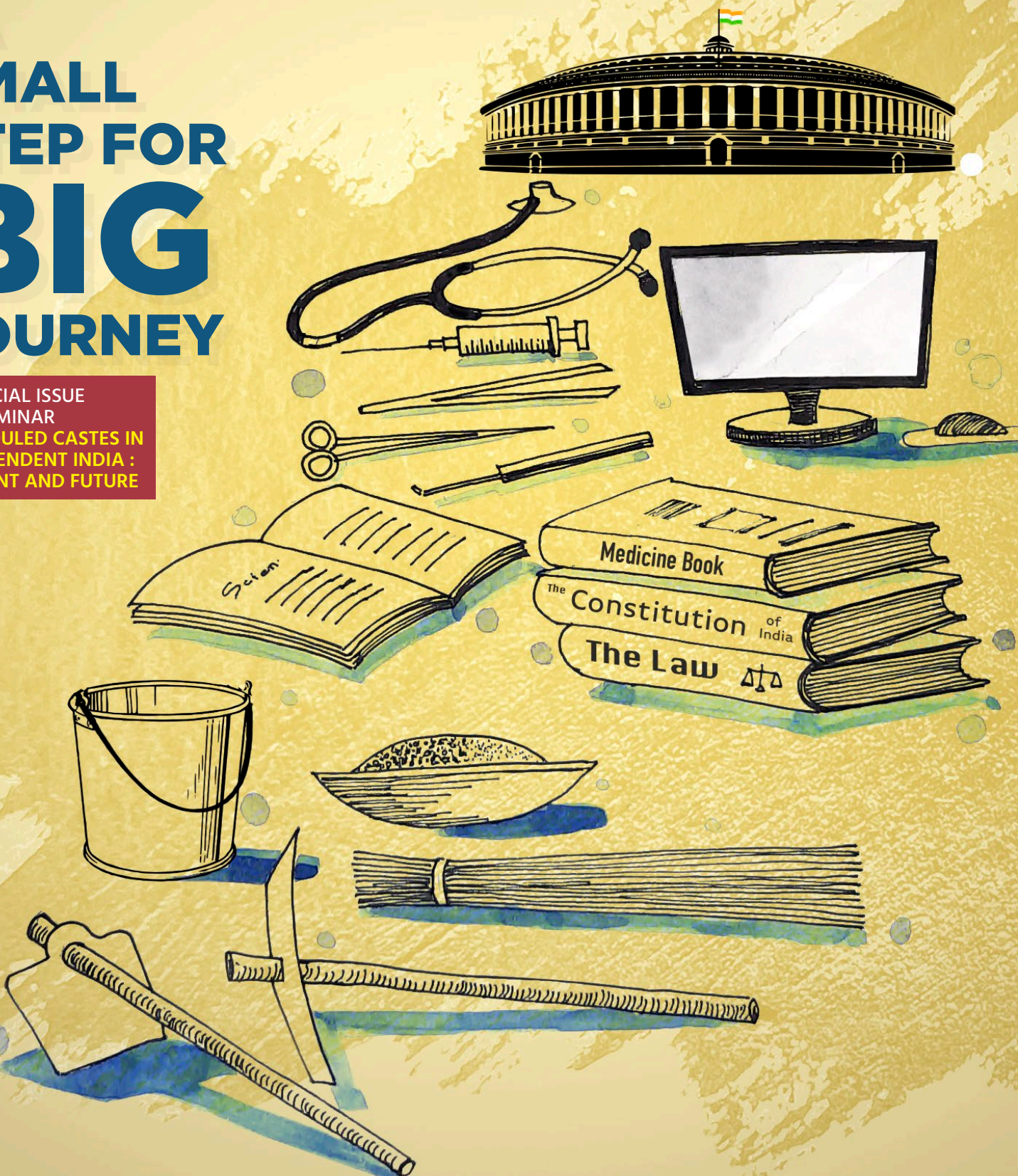


# UNHEARD VOICES

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## A SMALL STEP FOR BIG JOURNEY

A SPECIAL ISSUE  
ON SEMINAR  
SCHEDULED CASTES IN  
INDEPENDENT INDIA :  
PRESENT AND FUTURE





# A small step for a big journey

Social Studies Foundation (SSF) had taken a commendable initiative by organizing a series of seminars on “Scheduled Castes in Independent India – Present and Future.” Five seminars took place across the country so that ground realities from all the corners would be known. For example, difficulties in getting rental houses, inter-castes marriages and reservation came up during the discussion while some encouraging experiences from the field of research, education and job/working places were shared in the seminars.

Seminars were basically organized with two intentions. Firstly, to look for a new direction to find solutions to the conditions of deprived people. Their issues seem to be trapped in the past. As a result, current and future issues are not adequately addressed. Besides, an extreme position – ‘my way or no way’ is seen, which prevents other shades of ideology for participating in the process. We believe that this is not a healthy sign of democracy as SSF does not believe in ideological untouchability. Secondly, SSF intends to have an informal group, which is expected to lead the process of new direction from the forefront. This group is not merely expected to fight for the rights of SC communities but will also think on their overall development. We look forward to putting issues on a much bigger canvas with a holistic approach.

This does not mean that we neglect the past. We believe that India is mature enough to have its lessons from the past. Time has come to get rid of the unpleasant or undesirable past, which is now irrelevant. If we, as a nation, want to march ahead in tune with time. India is wise enough to work on itself to remove social ills, which proved to be the biggest obstructions for our growth. We also firmly believe that India has enough intellectual capacity in its own soil. This is the reason; seminars also discussed the current problems of SC communities and we have published them independently in this issue.

Seminar independently discussed strengths of SC communities. This is a path breaking exercise as

any individual or social group cannot change unless it realizes his strengths and weaknesses. We believe that this exercise was meant to make SC community members realize that they could change themselves after suffering for generations. To our satisfaction, several points like size of the population, traditional skills, intellectual capacity, physical capacity, commitment to the nation and its law and high-level awareness came up during the discussion. These are not merely strengths but assets.

A special session was designed to discuss the problems as chalking out strategy can never be possible without identifying the problems. Challenges and problems before SCs are no more the same as they were a few decades back. They are changed thanks to happenings all over the world. We believe that problems of SC community members need to be discussed and addressed in the changed scenario. As Tathagat Gautam Buddha used to say that the solution to the problem cannot be found outside but inside. This idea is a guiding principle as it is the beginning point for the process of self-realization and change. We look for a situation, in which all the weaker and deprived class people are self-reliant and living without any handicaps. We believe that it is the only sustainable solution.

It is beyond doubt that we still have a long way to go to achieve meaningful social equality, harmony, and cohesiveness. We need to have robust introspection to accelerate the process to establish equality and harmony. Time will not forgive us if we fail to attend the need of the hour. We firmly believe that India needs an integrated and organic approach with some inbuilt mechanism, which will take corrective steps from time to time. This is necessary to avoid mistakes in the past and to ensure a strong and healthy nation. We believe that Indians must stand up, brushing aside all the narrow considerations, as expected by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. SSF’s attempt in organizing seminars was to provide a platform to such like-minded people. It is a small beginning for a big journey.

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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.

CIT EXEMPTION, PUNE/80G/2020-21/A/10158

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MEDIA



DISCRIMINATION



# PROBLEMS



# New manifestations of casteism

Take away from the seminar is that intensity of caste sensitivity has been reduced but deeply rooted beliefs come to surface in various manners. For example, deprived classes are still prohibited from fetching water from public water sources. Deprived people face severe problems where a village or locality has only one public water source.



**Satyajit**



It was painful to know that untouchability and caste prejudices continue to be manifested in various forms. It was painful to realize that education and economic prosperity hardly had any impact in urban areas. It was painful to know that so called upper caste people are still reluctant or hesitant to accommodate 'Dalits' in their localities.

Five seminars of SSF, undoubtedly, was an encouraging experience in terms of signs of social reformation. For example, I came to know about a temple in Rampurwa village near Ayodhya, where people belonging to all castes perform all religious rituals, including daily pooja. However, problems narrated by the participants were eye openers, underlining the need for more serious, concentrated,

and honest efforts to walk on the path, which lead us to equality and cohesiveness.

A participant from Uttarakhand, who is a professor, narrated how he experienced caste bias while renting a house. He had successfully negotiated with the landlord. Rent and other conditions were mutually agreed by both the parties. However, he was denied house at the eleventh hour as the landlord had come to know about the professor's caste. Professor maintained that it was a very common practice not only in Uttarakhand but several other states as well.

Take away from the seminar is that intensity of caste sensitivity has been reduced but deeply rooted beliefs come to surface in various manners. For example, deprived classes are still prohibited from fetching water from public water sources. Deprived



people face severe problems where a village or locality has only one public water source. This denies the basic, fundamental and constitutional right to the deprived people. Like drinking water, people of particular castes are still not allowed to enter the temples. In many places, Dalits have separate temples in their respective localities.

While drinking water and temple entry is a perennial experience for ages, some new forms of victimizations are also seen. Child labour is one of them. Child labour is prima facie issue, which is very common in rural areas. This is mainly seen in the agriculture sector. But child labour among Dalits has economic and more social aspect. Majority of children from Dalit community come from poor economic background as their parents have lost traditional methods of earnings, unable to adopt new lifestyle and learn new skills, uneducated and illiterate. As a result, parents are forced to ask their kids to go for some money earning work so that the kid can at least take care of himself or help family economically. According to inputs, children, mainly working in the informal sector, are given inadequate

**We stumbled upon some inputs rather unexpectedly. This input involves Abrahamic religions. Participants from Kolkata raised concern over the increasing number of inter-faith marriages on the border of India and Bangladesh. They noticed that girls, particularly minor, were targeted by the youths belonging to other religions.**

payments and have to face several unpleasant experiences. As a result, they are deprived of formal education, making them unable to live in the competitive world of modern times. Consequently, they are forced to stay in a vicious circle of illiteracy and poverty, accompanied by inequality.

List of traditional restrictions is very long. Participants said that vertical split along the caste line is still seen in rural India. Dalits do not participate in the festivals and celebrations of upper caste people. Similarly, upper caste people stay away from functions or any social gatherings, which are organized by Dalits. This is absolutely ridiculous as this trend seriously reduces possibilities of social transactions/mobilization and makes current unhealthy practices more rigid.

A distressing experience was shared by a participant. He said that Dalit families have to conduct wedding ceremonies in a particular manner. Low profile wedding ceremonies normally take place in small pandals, which are outside the village. Dalit families are scared to take out traditional 'barat' (marriage procession) while groom is not allowed

to ride on a horse, which is a common practice in several parts of India. According to the inputs, upper caste people feel that Dalits are crossing their limits by riding on a horse. They perceive horse riding as a privilege of upper caste people only.

Women are the most vulnerable for all kinds of victimization of social evils. Participation of women in social activities is a matter of concern when women are leading in several walks of life everywhere. Women's health is never looked upon seriously. Women are forced to marry at very early stage, violating Child Marriage Act. As a result, women become mothers at this stage. She is forced to drop out from any formal education, if she has joined at all in very exceptional case.

According to inputs, several villages have separate crematoriums for upper caste people and Dalits. This is absolutely illegal and inhuman. But practice still continues, thereby denoting that caste does not end even after death.

Some issues, which directly impact the economic condition of Dalit community, also figure in the seminar. Shockingly, some incidents are taking place in which upper caste people never buy anything from a shop if it is owned by a Dalit. Many Dalit families are not aware about various government welfare schemes, which are introduced by the central and state government for them. Many Dalits are engaged in the informal/unorganised sector, because of which they are deprived of schemes like insurance, pension and health care facilities, etc.

While these are ground level realities, some issues pertaining to educated SC people also come up during the seminars. Several participants express their strong sentiments about the treatment, they being meted out at work places. A major suggestion came about the exclusion of surnames so that caste is not known. According to the inputs, the surname explicitly denotes caste and creates certain undesirable impressions even in normal healthy conditions. Roster and reservation are other contentious issues, which were expected to be addressed by the government. The main complaint on reservation and roster was administrative in nature and loopholes, which were giving excuses for non-implementation of reservation policy.

Representation in the judiciary was another sensitive issue, which was raised by several participants. Participants were particularly unhappy about collegium, which appoints judges for the High Court and Supreme Court. The main complaint was domination of particular families and nepotism in the judiciary.

Number of people also raised complaints against various types of harassment in educational institutions because of caste factors. Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, is a big weapon for the deprived to protect themselves. Even as the said act has become a point of debate, concern was raised about non-



implementation of the said act. This was raised, particularly, by the participants from West Bengal, which is always considered as progressive state, once ruled by Communists.

Number of participants were dismayed over political involvement and leadership of deprived classes in politics. They were particularly disappointed about factionalism in political outfits, which were mainly born to protect the interests of Dalits. Concern raised by participants was that Dalit leaders from all the political parties push the agenda of their political parties instead of Dalit agenda. A deep sense of pain was also experienced among the participants that SC leaders are elected only from reserved constituencies and not from the general constituencies.

We stumbled upon some inputs rather unexpectedly. This input involves Abrahamic religions. Participants from Kolkata raised concern over the increasing number of inter-faith marriages on the border of India and Bangladesh. They noticed that girls, particularly minor, were targeted by the youths belonging to other religions. They observed that a systematic trap is laid for SC girls so that inter-faith marriage can take place. The girl is eventually married to the youth from another religion but her marital life is nothing but a big frustration. SC girls are treated with cruelty once she is married. In several cases, they pointed out, girls are estranged or divorced after a few months or years. The girl then

has to live a miserable life.

A participant explained that SC girls are more vulnerable to this phenomenon as the majority of them come from poor economic, education and social backgrounds. The youths are given all the support, including finance, once the girl is targeted, he said. In many cases, girls are not even aware whether the youth, with whom she is going to marry, is a citizen of India, Bangladesh or Rohingya. Reality of a husband, in many cases, is known only after getting married. The participant also complained that parents of girls are threatened by their son-in-law, their property is captured and are forced to carry out illicit activities. Participants also pointed out that Dalits, who had migrated to then East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) continue to live in miserable conditions as against the promise of better life at the time of partition.

Similar concerns were raised about massive conversions taking place. This is happening in both Abrahamic religions – Christianity and Islam. This was particularly from the participants from Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Deprived families are targeted by influential persons from two religions, they are promised a better standard of living including jobs, health care and education. But it was complained that none of the promises were implemented, which resulted in severe frustration of the converted family. This family faces a grievous situation as it has been disowned by his relatives and friends while he could never get space in the new condition. It was suggested that the government and other organizations ought to look into the issue on war footing.

Another socio-political issue, involving religion, surfaced in the seminar. The issue of efforts by some political and religious leaders to forge an alliance between Muslims and Dalits was raised by few participants. It was insisted that this attempt had to be discouraged. The main contention was that people, who are moving in this direction, have no faith in the Indian Constitution but consider religious text as the final word. They fear that money is being used at a massive scale to serve the purpose.

Hardships faced by deprived people made a serious ill impact on mental health of the deprived communities. Because of continuous rejection and humiliation, their self-esteem is extremely low. Participants complain that they are neither appreciated nor encouraged even after getting success. As a result, their motivation becomes seriously handicapped, affecting their decisions and actions. Hardships result in severe stress, which affects their mental and physical health. Several Dalits are forced to migrate to urban pockets – in search of jobs and to experience a new world. However, the situation is not much different from their native places.

*Author is a Senior Journalist in Pune.  
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*







Besides this, whenever a Scheduled Caste gets a better position or is shortlisted in any educational institute, scholarship or job posts, very confidently, we say that he/she must be shortlisted in SC category.

We always undermine their efforts to come this far and forget that he or she can also be as capable as we are. Though we call ourselves modern and do not believe in caste, the thinking of superiority remains somewhere in our unconscious mind. This is because of the environment in which we have grown up.

Despite the fact that the caste system and the practice of untouchability were legally abolished in India in 1947, caste identification remains a significant factor in Indian society, affecting social, political and economic relationships. Educational institutions, including higher education, continue to reflect biases and discrimination based on caste. The introduction of affirmative action policies, which provide reserved places for lower castes in higher education, has led to changes in the character of higher education in India. Research by Pathania and Tierney (2018) suggests that the structure of higher education in India may actually contribute to, rather than alleviate, tensions related to class and caste. He argues that the university system reinforces rather than challenges existing inequalities. Due to all these scheduled caste students and people are still facing psychological problems such as low self-esteem and low self-worth, depression and anxiety, trauma, and social isolation. They are often subject to discrimination

and social exclusion, which can lead to feelings of worthlessness and low self-esteem, they face high levels of stress and anxiety due to the discrimination and social exclusion they experience, which can lead to the development of mental health conditions such as depression.

Despite structural attempts at change, institutions do not yet guarantee the ability to get rid of preconceptions and biases related to caste. This is something of a psychological matter which depends on individuals' thinking. This can be better eradicated by giving the moral teaching to the children since their childhood. We all need to talk and discuss this serious matter together. Until and unless we start a conversation we can never think about an discrimination free society. In ancient times we all had a common goal which aimed for the prosperity of all and together. We have to inculcate again the sense of vasudhaiva kutumbakam (the whole world is a family), that is missing in current age. In modern times the concept of family is diluting. This causes the weakening of the bonding between child and family members, teachers, and society, who were the maker of a child's construct. A collective action with affirmative attitude is needed to dilute the caste consciousness in the society, it will be possible only if actual development and upliftment happens to the society.

*Author is a Junior Research Fellow in IIPS Mumbai  
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*

## Skin colour too matters for Dalits

Dr. Divya



We often hear people talking in length regarding the atrocities faced by the lower caste in the society, the injustice they have to endure and the socio-economic-political plight of them. But the root cause of all these problems is the psychological trauma one has to go through, just because they are born Dalit. From a very young age, a Dalit has to go through many situations where being Dalit leaves a lasting impression on them, obviously a negative one.

### **Casteism and Psychological Trauma: An excerpt from a Personal Diary**

When she was a young girl, she always wondered why some are fair skinned, while the others are dark skinned, nevertheless the young mind never brooded on it so much. For a special day in school, she was asked to be present on time - at 8.00 am. She went there and waited the whole day, but was not asked to be a part of anything that happened on that day. Apparently, it was for a photoshoot for the school magazine and why was she not asked to be a part of it? Now you know the answer. Yes, the skin colour. On the surface it is just about the skin colour. A day of shame and hurt for the young girl, all because of something irrelevant that happened on that single day.

Can we just take it this lightly? I will leave it to you to answer yourself! But before that let me tell you what happened to her from that day onwards. A day after being cast out from the photoshoot, the girl ended up being sad for a long time, wondering if the skin colour is that important and why she is dark skinned? The



answer was obviously within reach. The girl who was previously very confident and lively, now started to back out from activities, especially if it was a group and that too of a bunch of fair skinned ones.

You may be wondering, what is the big deal here. It is all about skin colour. Let me add another dimension here, she belonged to a lower caste. One of the so-called identities of the Dalit here is dark skin colour. The young girl was outcasted because of skin colour, but for her it was zeroing down to being a Dalit. As she found no reason why she was dark skinned, other than being Dalit. From that point onwards, she did her best to hide her identity as Dalit.

As the time passed, she grew up well, and her family also progressed in the society, attaining reputation and recognition. She kept climbing the ladder in terms of education. Nobody asked about her caste anymore. Various phases in her life, she kept on encountering embarrassing moments in life because of being a Dalit. Not knowing your caste, most talks often revolved around “why are these people given concession in fees, aren’t we done with it?”, where she often had nothing to counter or did not know how to respond. Filing out examination forms requires disclosure of caste. Now this highly educated girl is asked the question “Oh you are SC; I didn’t know it. I thought you belonged to upper-caste”. She could just smile and say “Yes I am SC” It took her nearly 12 years to be bold enough to say these words out loud, ending the shame of being a Dalit, ending the fear of being looked down upon and the disgusting stares from the society.

We often hear people talking in length regarding the atrocities faced by the lower caste in the society, the injustice they have to endure and the socio-economic-political plight of them. But the root cause of all these problems is the psychological trauma one has to go through, just because they are born Dalit. From a very young age, a Dalit has to go through many situations where being Dalit leaves a lasting impression on them, obviously a negative one.

The experiences an individual faces in life shapes their future. In life, what situations a child is exposed to will have a lasting impact in their mental and psychological orientation. Such situations, wherein their origin and caste are getting questioned, a child won’t know how to react. But that will be a moment which he/she will never forget. The aftermath will be the birth of low self-esteem, social withdrawal, embarrassment, social fear and isolation. Dalit minds were trained to feel a profound sense of shame about who they were and the work they were assigned. This ideology is nurtured from a very young age and when they personally go through such instances in life, their mind gets conditioned and the result will be them getting disinterested in studies and getting dropped out from schools. On top of that, they are also forced to find random jobs

to earn money and support their family. The result is psychological conditioning resulting in economic status of the Dalits.

With no proper education and only meagre incomes, their economic status remains down in the society and they have no means to climb the ladder of social hierarchy, the two stepping blocks being education and money. >From whichever point we observe, the socio-economic and political plight of them remains the same, all rooted from the psychological conditioning they experience in their childhood. Though in many parts casteism is not explicitly followed, there are traces of it left; there are people suffering; there are young minds getting hurt. Going forward, it is necessary to make



everyone aware, especially the Dalits themselves. The kind of awareness and education to be given to them regarding them being lower caste and making them confident enough to face the reality and rough patches in life. The only way out from the plight which they face during phases of life would be creating a confident young mind, brimming with self-esteem and realising the self-worth of the individual. Only proper education can ensure that they achieve these traits in life.

Yes, finally, the little girl is now bold enough to say out loud to the world that she is Dalit, she is confident enough to announce to the whole world by writing this article. This was possible only because of the magic of education and a persistent family who said never give up and face your reality.

*Author is an Assistant Professor in Sahrdaya Institute of Management Studies, Korakara, Thrissur, Kerala  
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*



# Caught in party and caste

Dr. Talwar Sabanna



Caste system has existed in India since time immemorial. This caste system was born out of profession-based social and economic reasons. Caste system plays an important role in any activity of society. Political activities in today's democratic system also rely on the caste system. In the political field, the major political parties and regional parties' use caste to come to power. And all the political parties prepare their own manifestos to win the elections and assure the people that they will deliver them in the near future.

On the other hand, if they want to enter the political field, the leaders have to develop leadership in their respective towns or constituencies. They rely on their caste to develop leadership. They grow up organizing people of their caste or their community. Thus, the leaders gain the trust of the people of their caste and come forward in the political arena. Then they try to win the trust of other castes and emerge as political leaders. He promises to enter politics in the near future and give social and political justice to his caste. The respective castes believe their words. Or political parties welcome them because of their caste support and dominance.

When caste-based leadership is developed, those who join political parties adhere to the ideology and objectives/agenda of the respective parties. Political parties try to implement their party's ideology and objectives/agenda after coming to power, even if they promised during elections to all castes separately as to help them in all respects. Even the political leaders are raised as leaders on the basis of caste but when they join political parties, they betray the trust and expectation of their caste. Due to this, the respective castes, especially the backward and lower caste people are disillusioned.

We see an irony in this background. That is, after assuming political leadership by the dominant caste's leaders, they control their respective political parties. Also, they succeed by fulfilling the aspirations and demands of their castes beyond the objectives/agenda of political parties. For example, recently Panchmasalis (Lingayats) and Vokkaligas in Karnataka succeeded in getting separate educational and job reservation for their castes. The Kuruba Samaja, which is strong in terms of numbers and organization among the backward classes, get a share of power in all parties through their leaders. The leaders of the Kuruba society fulfil the demands of their community directly or indirectly by putting pressure on the political parties. The Valmiki Samaja which had strong political leaders in the Scheduled Tribes,

fought a great non-partisan campaign through their Swamiji for increasing the percentage of reservation for STs. As a result of this, the rate of reservation in Karnataka for Scheduled Tribes including Valmiki Samaj has been increased to seven percent, which is now history.

In the name of providing justice to their castes, party ideologies were blown up and all parties supported these dominant castes. Politics became a natural platform for the dominant castes to get reservation facilities and fulfil their castes' aspirations. The problem in this case is the aspirations and demands of the most backward and lower classes. People of these castes are socially, educationally and economically backward. These castes have failed to gain political importance. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar said that if we want to bring about social, educational and economic change, political power is very necessary. Similarly, Late Sri Devaraja Urs pioneered change in Karnataka in 1970 with the provision of reservation facilities for the most backward castes. Unfortunately, even today, the backward and most backward castes are very much in the back seat in politics. Here too, the youth depend on their caste to gain political leadership. Even if they grow up with the support of their own caste, it is far from getting the help and cooperation of other backward castes and upper castes. After developing caste-based leadership and joining political parties, they desire to fulfil the demands of their caste and provide justice.

But the political parties do not respond to their wishes and show apathy. These leaders look back and forth to pressurize the demands of their caste on the parties. They are always scared that they would lose their political clout or position. Even among the backward classes, micro castes (whose population is very small) have not been able to get a place in the political arena till date. When hundreds of castes, which have the lowest population in Karnataka, are added, they constitute 18-20 percent of the State population. When will they fulfil their caste demands through political parties?

Recently, it is a matter of satisfactory that Shri Shantarama Siddi, who belongs to the less populated Siddi caste (ST) and myself, who hail from the most backward Kabbaliga/Koli caste, have been inducted as a member of the Vidhan Parishad (MLCs). Similarly, if other backward and most backward castes get a chance to enter the political field then it is possible to fulfil the dreams of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. All political parties should come forward to give such opportunities.

*Author is a Member of Legislative Council,  
Government of Karnataka  
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*



# casteism in education institutions

There is no environment, even in leading social science campuses in India, to debate or discuss about the caste system, discrimination, structural violence, segregation, humiliation, exclusion, dehumanisation and graded inequality encountered by the lower caste students. Moreover, the research on campus caste discrimination illustrates that there are few empirical studies conducted until now, and hence there is no rich data regarding issues and experiences of vulnerable sections.

**Prakash Raj**



Caste is a notion; it is a state of mind. It is a disease of the mind. You cannot build anything on the foundations of Caste. You cannot build up a nation; you cannot build up morality. - Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

The prevailing caste discrimination and exclusionary practices in the Indian education system is rooted in the prejudices of the existing social order of Indian Society. It is well evident that the pervasion of caste hierarchies in the institutional and social spaces of elite institutions like IITs, IIMs, IISCs, central universities, AIIMS, TIFR etc. In brief, lower castes or oppressed castes comprising OBCs, SCs and STs students experience a ubiquitous hostile campus climate in higher education institutions. Every day for the marginalised section of the students, survival in academic spaces is the struggle of psychosocial conflict. This article examines the pertinent question regarding the caste domination of higher castes or oppressor castes in Indian higher education institutes. Further, I decipher the notion of constructed meritocracy in academics apprehending the imperative of social justice. I argue that the adequate representation of the lower castes in Indian academia is the only panacea to curb the structural inequalities.

The argument presented here is to answer this question and critically comprehend the functioning

of Caste as social capital. The harsh reality is caste identities dominate the consciousness of Indian Society, from educational institutes to determining marital relations. Often, oppressed community students are perceived and treated as stigmatised on campuses. Today caste is reiterated through institutional practices and reinforced in a structural design.

## **Casteism in Indian Academia**

Since the last two decades, the significant entry of lower castes into higher education has been perceived as a threat to upper castes, cultural and historical hegemony. The study conducted by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), reported that Indian Universities are the novel breeding ground for caste discrimination towards lower castes and Dalits were the most affected among the social groups. In India, despite the political spectrum of people like Gandhian, left, right, linguistic Nationalist, Dravidian, democratic-liberal, constitutionalist, conservative, radical, revolutionary, feminist, agnostic, atheist, non-practising etc; caste mentality is deeply ingrained in them. Hence in the Indian context, we should measure the progressiveness of a person by not his mere political affiliation, but by the nature of anti-caste practices and the outcome of caste annihilation.

It is outrageous to ascertain that the Indian government consistently denies in the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) that caste



is a discriminatory and exploitative social hierarchy entrenched in the social psyche of Indian culture. Nevertheless, caste discrimination and systematic subjugation is sustained in administrative structures of academics which is strengthened by the monopoly of oppressor castes. Due to this, we must note that the conditions and circumstances that stand in the way of equal access to the enjoyment of basic rights of lower castes is at stake. Interestingly, in academic space, no one asks about your caste directly, but they find your caste through other methods. In an educational ecosystem, the practice of casteism is a subtle quotidian affair where it is convoluted to manifest the mechanism. Therefore, it is strenuous to substantiate caste discrimination by professors, colleagues and administrative staff in campuses. They rarely express casteism bluntly, as they were aware that would provide concrete evidence to the victims.

Comprehending the empirical studies, we can understand that Indian institutions are cognizant of the perpetuating caste discrimination in the campuses. For example, the Thorat committee report in 2007 and the University of Hyderabad's report between 2008 and 2013 evince the prevailing casteism. Even educated minds presumed in the popular imagination that caste discrimination is perpetrated through affirmative action and non-exist prior to affirmative action policies. More importantly, there is a flawed argument that caste perpetrates through reservation and it kills merit. Such concerted weaponised propaganda used to unleash by privileged castes about merit discourse. Renowned scholar Satish Deshpande articulates that merit is an exchange of caste capital into a modern capital. In the 2022 Supreme Court Judgement, (Neil Aurelio Nunes and Others Vs Union of India), they upheld that reservation did not contradict merit, which is not reflective of the excellence, capabilities and potential of an individual. The bench observed that social conditions and circumstances that stand in the way of equal access to the enjoyment of basic rights or claims; is discriminatory towards lower castes.

It is ironic that there is no environment, even in leading social science campuses in India, to debate or discuss about the caste system, discrimination, structural violence, segregation, humiliation, exclusion, dehumanisation and graded inequality encountered by the lower caste students. Moreover, the research on campus caste discrimination illustrates that there are few empirical studies conducted until now, and hence there is no rich data regarding issues and experiences of vulnerable sections.

#### **The necessity of social representation**

The idea of representative democracy is codified as the cornerstone of India's constitutional democracy. Indeed, reservation policy is a cardinal social justice instrument to provide representation and salvage the historically underrepresented oppressed castes in higher education. The expert in Indian constitutional law, Prof. G Mohan Gopal, states that, merit is big

fraud in India, which is not defined at all. The diversity and lived experience of individuals should be the core idea in the framework of merit. Considering around 500 years of historical oppression of blacks, the United States of American Government issued an executive order as a strategic affirmative action public policy to promote a model of equal opportunity, diversity, and inclusion in all public and private institutions. However, in India, the premier institutions evade reservation from student admission to faculty recruitment despite the 2500 years of historical backwardness and social disability. Various reports and recent RTIs expose that even constitutionally guaranteed seats are not filled and implementing authorities are reluctant to do it. The first Hispanic to serve as a United States Supreme Court Judge, Justice Sonia Sotomayor, proclaimed, "I would hope that a wise Latina woman with the richness of her experiences would more often than not reach a better conclusion than a white male who has not lived that life".

Apparently, a plethora of global research projects attempts to understand that diversity and inclusiveness will transform institutions into a place of democratic learning and social integration. Only diversity embraces all kinds of differences, and diversity means equal access and equity in education. However, the acceptance of diversity in India has been in the context of its history, constitution, Society and demographic composition. Prof. Smith and Prof. Schonfeld pointed out through the extensive meta-analysis of diversity concluded that diversity acts as a catalyst to enhance social engagement and foster vibrant democracy.

#### **How to encounter casteism in Indian educational institutions?**

There is a need of more institutional mechanisms, public policy and diligent initiatives to foster diversity to enrich the campus climate of higher education institutions in India. The University Grants Commission (UGC) should enact a law that makes caste-based discrimination in educational institutions a criminal offence like they did for ragging and gender discrimination. In addition, the Union Government of India should initiate holistic pedagogical strategies, grievance redressal mechanisms, caste annihilation workshops, diversity-building training, support framework and affirmative action policies to cultivate inclusive and diverse campuses. The Father of Modern India and Chief architect of the Indian constitution, Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar remarked that, "Equality may be a fiction but nonetheless, one must accept it as the governing principle." Eventually, we must acknowledge that, whenever a structural inequality in society exists, there is a deprivation of rights, and it could lead to the violation of human rights and the dignity of an individual.

*Author is a Doctoral Candidate in the Department of Political Science at the University of Hyderabad.  
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*



# Human face needed for technical research

**Dr. Chandrashekhar**



Harmony comes from equal efforts. If the lower class extends its hand in an attempt to rise, then the upper class is expected to hold its hand. We have some ideal examples in this connection but there is a gap in mental acceptance. The downtrodden class are supposed to be skilled at service and physical work not in intellectual work. It was seen that they were being disqualified for technical research in several cases.

In 2021, according to the Ministry of Education, ST/SC/OBC students have not got a single seat in some of the PhD courses of Indian Institute of Technology (IITs) even after qualifying the written exam. Vacant seats for this course were 275 in IIT Delhi, 369 of SC in IIT, Mandi and 73 of ST, 248 OBC students in IIT Hyderabad and Tirupati and 128 OBC students in Material Science department of IIT, BHU none were found to be eligible for PhD admission.

Broadly speaking, the SC category acceptance in 2017-18 is only 3. It stood at 3.2% in 2021-22. Whereas according to the Central Education Institution (Reservation in Admission) Act 2006, the reservation is only 15%. These figures are a mix of marginalized sections and only a few IITs. Situation in other courses is likely to be the same.

It may be known that the students of downtrodden classes would have been successful in the PhD entrance examination but they do not get any guide or supervisor to get his research work supervised. Under UGC norms, the students who qualify the entrance exam have the option to choose their research supervisor on their own. In this situation, it is in the hands of the research guide to get completed the PhD under his direction and it seems like a relationship between guru and his disciple. It has been present since ancient times that the right to choose a disciple is in the hand of the guru, resulting, the special class people became experts and the rest of the class people were deprived.

Although the reservation of SC category was already there, in many places, appointments were not made on the pretext of not getting qualified candidates. It is to be seen here that the criteria of eligibility are only PhD and PhD is necessary to become an assistant professor. The posts of thousands of teachers reserved for these classes are vacant in universities and technical institutions across the country even after the implementation of reservation. It is a reality that the number of students from Dalit, backward and tribal society are still very less, especially in higher education.

People belonging to the Scheduled Castes have a basic instinct of engineering because they are associated with some skill or the work of service. Their efficiency at skilled work just needs research-oriented direction.

Here is a commendable scheme of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, under which a SC class engineer, after being rejected from many Indian institutions, tries for PhD abroad. They do their PhD in England in a fixed time period without facing any caste discrimination. They are professors in a reputed institute and have successfully completed many research projects along with publishing several papers, patents, books etc. Of his many PhD students, some of the students may come from deprived sections but in this case, students of one type of class shall have to work with the guide of the same class, resulting in polarization not harmony.

According to the rules, a supervisor can guide a maximum of eight PhD students at a time. Therefore, it is suggested to form a rule that two students should also belong to the deprived classes. PhD is a course of about 3-4 years, working with other class people will bring harmony in the field of research together they will learn and complete their research.

*Author is a Professor of Mechanical Engineering in Madhav Institute of Technical and Science, Gwalior Madhya Pradesh  
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*



# Fill backlog : It's long time now

The 200 points rosters are followed in the CEIs. Despite clear directions from the Department of Personnel and Training and the Ministry of Education, many CEIs are not adequately maintaining the rosters. IITs are not maintaining the rosters and stating that they are recruiting faculty members round the clock with flexible cadre strength. Even today, there is a proper definition of flexible cadre strength. The roster points intended for the reserved categories are not followed or side-lined. The National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) has observed issues in the roster points at the University of Hyderabad and English and Foreign Language University (EFLU).

**Kiran Kumar**



The Ministry of Education sent the letter on August 23, 2021, to all Central Education Institutions (CEIs) like Central Universities, Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), National Institute of Technology (NITs), Indian Institute of Sciences (IISc), Indian Institute of Sciences and Research (IISERs), Indian Institute of Management (IIMs), etc., to fill all the vacant backlog Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) posts in one year. The Ministry termed it the special recruitment drive intended to make educational institutions as inclusive as possible. Most of the CEIs notified the positions for the first time and attempted to fill the vacancies. After one year, the number of vacancies in CEIs is a matter of concern.

According to the information provided by the Ministry of Education in the Lok Sabha, as on December 12, 2022, in all Central Universities, at the professor post level, 75.24% of SC posts, 87.32% of ST posts, 84.74% of OBC posts, 90.99% of EWS posts, and 91.9% PwD posts are vacant. In IITs, 40% of faculty positions are vacant. In another question,

the Minister of State, Ministry of Education, replied that 3753 backlog positions are still vacant in higher education institutions.

These numbers need to be analysed critically to identify loopholes hindering the faculty recruitment process despite letters from the Ministry of education to higher education institutions. Four levels of discrimination are happening in the recruitment process of SC, ST, and OBC faculty members. The four levels are as follows (1) During the allocation of faculty positions (2) During the roster preparations. (3) During the faculty notification (4) During filling the notified posts.

(1) During the allocation: All the Central Government Education Institutions must follow reservation policy strictly according to the Central Education Institutions (Reservations in Teachers' Cadre) Act 2019. The Central Government is currently implementing 15%, 7.5%, 27%, and 10% SC, ST, OBC, and EWS reservations, respectively. But out of the total sanctioned positions in Central Universities, only 12%, 6%, 18%, and 4% are allocated to the SC, ST, OBC, and EWS posts out of all sanctioned posts.

# India in 2047

100 Years of Independence

	Gen	SC	ST	OBC	EWS	PwD	Total
Professor	1564	307	142	367	111	62	2553
Associate Professor	3073	620	302	752	233	130	5110
Assistant Professor	6099	1357	698	2332	486	321	11293
Total Sanctioned Posts	10736	2284	1142	3451	830	513	18956
Sanctioned Posts (in%)	56.63	12.04	6.02	18.20	4.37	2.70	100

In IIMs, the situation is more serious. 6.19%, 2.5%, 11%, and 3.0% posts are allocated to SC, ST, OBC, and EWS, respectively, out of 1566 all sanctioned posts in IIMs. In another answer by the MoE, the Reserved categories constitute only 12% of the 6511 teaching posts of IITs, and only 237 reserved positions are recruited out of 4370 vacant posts.

(2) During the roster preparations : The 200 points rosters are followed in the CEIs. Despite clear directions from the Department of Personnel and Training and the Ministry of Education, many CEIs are not adequately maintaining the rosters. IITs are not maintaining the rosters and stating that they are recruiting faculty members round the clock with flexible cadre strength. Even today, there is a proper definition of flexible cadre strength. The roster points intended for the reserved categories are not followed or side-lined. The National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) has observed issues in the roster points at the University of Hyderabad and English and Foreign Language University (EFLU).

(3) During the faculty notification: Whatever faculty positions are sanctioned and rostered are not notified in the employment notifications in some Universities. Moreover, positions are created and notified in the general category. The issues in the notification of the Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi University, and University of Hyderabad etc., are challenged in the courts. But there is a delay in the justice process. The Vice-Chancellors are responsible for not notifying the identified rostered posts in the job notifications of the universities.

(4) During the filling of the posts : After clearing various hurdles, even if the SC, ST, and OBC posts are notified, the selection committees either reject the applications based on the scrutiny of the Academic Performance Indicators or keep the not-found suitable option. Even after the scrutiny of the applications, NFS is creating significant issues.

Mission Amrit Kaal: Social Justice in CEIs Though the Government of India is asking the CEIs to strictly follow the reservation policy and encouraging the Universities and institutes to fill the backlog positions in a mission-mode project, the CEIs are not concerned

about the social justice aspects of the recruitment drive. The social inclusiveness of the faculty members in CEIs is crucial for promoting equality and building a just society. The Government of India should consider various strategies for filling the vacant SC, ST, and OBC posts in CEIs. The Ministry must appoint an independent committee to look into the faculty recruitment drive and recommend corrective actions. The Universities and Institutes must follow

**Four levels of discrimination are happening in the recruitment process of SC, ST, and OBC faculty members.**

**The four levels are as follows :**

- 1) During the allocation of faculty positions.
- 2) During the roster preparations.
- 3) During the faculty notification.
- 4) During filling the notified posts.

the rosters correctly. There must not be any human intervention to identify and allocate the roster points of the faculty positions. The computer-based roster allocation must be followed strictly. The government shall restrict the usage of the non-found suitable or no candidate-found option. Such options must not be used if there are applications. The Universities and Institutes should understand the importance of the SC, ST, and OBC faculty recruitment in promoting inclusiveness in the academic spaces. We must critically introspect the 75 years of independence and formulate strategies for social justice in the country for the next 25 years. The Amrit Kaal shall reflect our commitment to the empowerment of SC, ST, and OBC and the transformation of society.

*Author is National President of All India OBC Students' Association and Research Scholar, Department of Political Science, University of Hyderabad  
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*





# Roster System: time to take call urgently

Dr. Aditi



The roster system is a method of reserving a certain percentage of positions for candidates belonging to certain socially and economically disadvantaged groups, such as Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs), and persons with disabilities (PWDs). The roster system is intended to ensure that these groups are represented in the workforce and to promote diversity and inclusivity in the recruitment process.

However, the roster system has been the subject of much debate and controversy in India and there have been recent changes to the system that have generated significant criticism. In 2018, the Supreme Court of India delivered a judgment modifying the roster system for appointments to teaching positions in higher educational institutions. The judgment modified the way in which the roster is applied and it has been suggested that the changes may have a disproportionate impact on the representation of certain groups, including Dalits, in the teaching workforce.

Before the 2018 judgment, the roster system operated on a department-wise basis, with each department maintaining a separate roster for reservation. The 2018 judgment changed the system to operate on a point-based basis, in which the roster is applied to each individual post rather than each department. This has led to concerns that the changes will result in a dilution of the reservation system, as the percentage of reserved posts may be lower on a point-based basis compared to a department-wise basis. There have also been criticisms of the point-based system on the grounds that it may lead to a situation in which reserved posts are concentrated in certain departments or institutions, rather than being distributed more evenly across the system. This could result in a situation in which certain institutions have a higher proportion of reserved posts, while others have a lower proportion, leading to a concentration of disadvantaged groups in certain institutions and a lack of diversity in others.

There have been calls for the government to intervene and restore the department-wise system or to introduce other measures to ensure that the reservation system is effective in promoting diversity and inclusivity in the higher education sector. One of the main criticisms of the point-based system is that it may lead to a situation in which candidates from disadvantaged groups are only able to compete

for a limited number of reserved posts, rather than being able to compete for all available positions. This could result in a situation in which candidates from disadvantaged groups are less likely to be selected for certain positions, even if they are qualified for them. This is a concern because it could lead to a situation in which the representation of disadvantaged groups in the workforce is not proportionate to their representation in the population, and it could also result in a situation in which candidates from disadvantaged groups are less likely to be promoted or to advance in their careers.

## Recommendations:

- A central Roster committee should be formed and a state wise roster committee should be constituted. The committee should have representation from SC, ST and OBC. The Central committee should have five members and the state committee should be five members. The Central committee shall review the roster approved by respective universities and the first screening shall be done by State committee members. The central Roster committee should be working with the Education ministry to ensure smooth functioning and implementation of the Roster.
- A central redressal committee should be formed to look into any discrepancies while implementing the Roster in universities. The Roster officials from all universities should submit a report to the central Committee to ensure transparency.
- NAAC in one of its criteria should make it mandatory for the colleges to highlight on the Roster adherence. In the NAAC presentation college has to showcase the past five years of all activities. NAAC C6 Criterion deals with management of the college and NAAC C3 deals with teachers, now if in one of the criterion of NAAC Presentation in either C3 OR C6, it should be mandated to give a presentation of Roster implementation. This will serve two purposes. Firstly we will get data of each college and secondly the colleges will be mandated to implement rosters because there will be transparency. If Implemented, These steps would help to ensure that the representation of the marginalised groups is more evenly distributed across the higher education sector.

*Author is an Assistant professor in Dept. of Sociology, Lakshmibai College, University of Delhi.  
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*



# For clean lives of waste pickers

In India, women are on top for waste picking from backward classes. They are mostly illiterate and their socio-economic status is abysmal.

They stay in slums in deplorable conditions. Their standard of living is unimaginable. They are unable to avail various government schemes due to illiteracy and their inability to provide identity and residential proof. They are vulnerable to various diseases and physical and social abuse.

India has around 15,00,000 waste pickers doing work as a civic service. Still no waste picker is an employee of a government. Somewhere they are organized and somewhere they are unorganized to fight for their bread and butter. It's the responsibility of people and the government to change the attitude towards them with their rights and social values.

India's rich natural diversity cannot be sustained unless the problem of waste is addressed. Garbage cleaning is a basic and very important work and for making any new intervention, it is indeed necessary to undertake a thorough investigation of the status of the waste picking community. It is necessary to bring the garbage picker in front of society in a new form and make people understand how life would be in the absence of garbage pickers.

In India, women are on top for waste picking from backward classes. They are mostly illiterate and their socio-economic status is abysmal. They stay in slums in deplorable conditions. Their standard of living is unimaginable. They are unable to avail various government schemes due to illiteracy and their inability to provide identity and residential proof. They are vulnerable to various diseases and physical and social abuse.

From metros to rural areas, waste pickers face different local challenges at social, commercial, and personal level.

Neeta is a garbage collector in Delhi. She told me that she was picking up garbage since she was six-years old. She has been picking up garbage to satisfy her hunger. She has no formal education but still has knowledge of all recyclable materials and non-recyclable materials from waste. She predicts the trash mountain fire. "My mother disowned me when I fell in love with a boy who did the same job. My mother used to tell me that her father died





tragically of an infection in a mountain of garbage”, she said.

Sanjeevani from Nelamangala, Bangalore earns money by picking garbage for her son and daughter after the death of her estranged husband. When families from both sides did not accept her, she started garbage picking for her living. She stays outside the village limits where garbage is dumped. She said that even scrapwalla does not treat her well. “I live in the corner of a dirty garbage dump and eat people's leftovers”, she says. She also mentioned that there are no organized efforts for garbage collection. I was surprised, when her bright-eyed six-year-old son told me that in the future he dreams of becoming a scrap dealer where he can buy all kinds of garbage and pay the garbage collectors a lot of money.

Hanba from urban Maharashtra said, “My family has been working since the last two generations. Now my children are trying to do business in the same work but we don't have enough assets to avail loan and no legal documents to get benefit of government schemes”.

Worshipping Sant Gadge Baba, who is credited for spreading a sense of cleanliness and is a guiding force for me. When I went on vacation to the Himalayas, many garbage collectors were seen in similar situations. Spending some time with the waste pickers led them to realize solutions to justice.

#### **Challenges :**

1. Their daily earnings are not constant/fixed : No legal recognition as workers. Job Security and Formal Education Needed.
2. They are prone to health issues/hazards.
3. Being unskilled, they cannot opt for alternative livelihood : safe, sustainable, and dignified livelihoods, No Social Protection.
4. No organization of waste pickers at village level.
5. No legal documents to avail government schemes: No income, caste, unable to link bank accounts with adhar card or occupation certificate. Proactively reaching out to the workers for enrolment in government schemes, minimizing paperwork, and a greater awareness among waste pickers about their entitlements are essential for linking them to government programs.
6. No medical check-up camps.
7. Lack of insurance protection/coverage. Less than five per cent of those surveyed had any health insurance, indicating very high degrees of health-shock vulnerabilities.
8. No Free medical treatment.
9. No Provision for old age pension.
10. No Anganwadis for Waste Pickers.
11. No Basic facility at the workplace (water supply, ladies' toilets, baby feeding etc.)
12. No provisions like pre-matric and post matric scholarship scheme for children of waste pickers.
13. No start-ups businesses, industries through start-ups to waste pickers.
14. No small-scale loans to start their scrap shops,

transport facilities or up- cycling business etc.

15. When we talk about temporary or semi temporary houses it means cement, mud huts, thatched roofs, houses covered with flex or palm leaves as their roofs etc. The study reveals that each family has an average six members.

#### **Possible solutions for Waste Pickers**

Incorporating waste pickers into waste management and recycling programs can, in many cases, be socially desirable, economically viable, and environmentally sound. For this, decision makers need to recognize that waste pickers can be an asset, and municipalities need to engage with them as potential partners.

1. There should be an organization of waste pickers from village level to city level to protect and raise their voice.
2. They need to get legal recognition as workers.
3. Government should provide some free training and certification for waste pickers.
4. Creating opportunities for safe, sustainable and dignified livelihoods through formal waste collection services.
5. Enhancing access to social protection.
6. They should get legal documents to avail government schemes.
7. Government Special Health check-up camps: Health check-up camps at frequent intervals are must as waste pickers are a vulnerable group and have a lot of health problems.
8. Government Special Health Care Kit.
9. Insurance.
10. Free medical treatment.
11. Provision for old age pension.
12. Encouraging use of centres for child health, anganwadis among waste pickers.
13. Beneficial provisions like pre-matric scholarship scheme for children of waste pickers : Immediate enrolment of children of waste-pickers in schools. Summer camps to keep their interest in education, scholarships for children studying in school to ensure zero drop outs.
14. The waste pickers should be provided with better dwellings and proper hygienic toilets.
15. They should have all equipment for collection, segregation and disposal.
16. They should have all basic infrastructure such as water supply, storage room, toilets and baby feeding room and facility to store their segregated waste.
17. Children of waste pickers should get first priority to start new businesses, industries through start-ups.
18. They should get small loans to start their scrap shops, transport facilities or up-cycling business etc.

*Author is a Research Scholar doing her Ph.D in Solid Waste, Business Administration, Commerce Department from SPPU.  
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*



# STRENGTHS



# Understanding strengths

The population of Scheduled Castes needs to be considered as a strength. The scheduled Castes constitute a significant portion of the population of India; regarding the Census 2011, the Scheduled Castes make up approximately 16% of the country's total population. This large and diverse population represents a significant strength for the Scheduled Castes. Here are a few ways in which the size and diversity of the Scheduled Castes population can be seen as a strength.

## Vijendra



Scheduled Castes are a group of historically disadvantaged castes in India. They are listed in the constitution of India and are eligible for affirmative action measures, such as reservation in education and government jobs. The Scheduled Castes are one of the several categories of backward classes that the Government of India recognizes. The term 'Scheduled Castes' refers to those castes listed in the Scheduled Castes order, 1950, which is a legal document that specifies these castes.

It is essential to recognize that Scheduled Castes, also known as Dalits, are a diverse group of people with a wide range of strengths and abilities. Like any other group, they have unique talents, skills, and

strengths. We can say that there are a few strengths which are often associated with Scheduled Castes in India:

**Resilience** : Many members of the Scheduled Castes have faced significant challenges and adversity in their lives and have had to learn to be resilient in the face of these challenges. This resilience is a strength that has helped them overcome obstacles and persevere in the face of adversity.

**Adaptability** : Due to many challenges they have faced, members of Scheduled Castes have often had to be adaptable and resourceful in order to survive and thrive. This adaptability can be a great strength in the face of change and uncertainty.

**Strong Community ties** : The Scheduled Castes have often faced discrimination and social exclusion, and as a result, they have developed strong bonds



of solidarity within their communities. These strong community ties are a source of strength and support for other members of the Scheduled Castes.

**Determination and perseverance :** Despite facing significant challenges and obstacles, many members of the Scheduled Castes are determined and persevering. They are committed to working hard and to overcome any challenges that come their way. This determination and perseverance are a strength that has helped them to achieve success in their personal and professional lives.

**Strong work ethic :** Many members of Scheduled Castes have a strong work ethic and are willing to work hard in order to improve their situations and those of their families.

Holding high offices by members of Scheduled Castes in India, it is a strength in several ways. It can be a sign of progress in terms of reducing discrimination and promoting equality. In the past, members of Scheduled Castes were often denied opportunities and faced significant barriers to advancement. They can now hold high offices, which is a positive step towards a more inclusive and equitable society.

**The population of Scheduled Castes looks at it as a strength.**

The scheduled Castes constitute a significant portion of the population of India; regarding the Census 2011, the Scheduled Castes make up approximately 16% of the country's total population. This large and diverse population represents a significant strength for the Scheduled Castes. Here are a few ways in which the size and diversity of the Scheduled Castes population can be seen as a strength:

**Political power :** The Scheduled Castes constitute a significant voting block, and as such, they have the potential to wield substantial political power. This can be seen that political parties often target the Scheduled Castes during elections and that the government is usually responsive to the needs and concerns of the Scheduled Castes.

**Cultural diversity :** The Scheduled Castes are a diverse group of people with a rich cultural heritage. This diversity is a source of strength for the Scheduled Castes, as it allows them to draw on a wide range of cultural traditions and practices and contribute to India's cultural richness.

**Economic potential :** With a large and diverse population, the Scheduled Castes have the potential to be a significant economic force in India. As more

and more members of the Scheduled Castes gain access to education and employment opportunities, they are likely to contribute to the economic growth and development of the country.

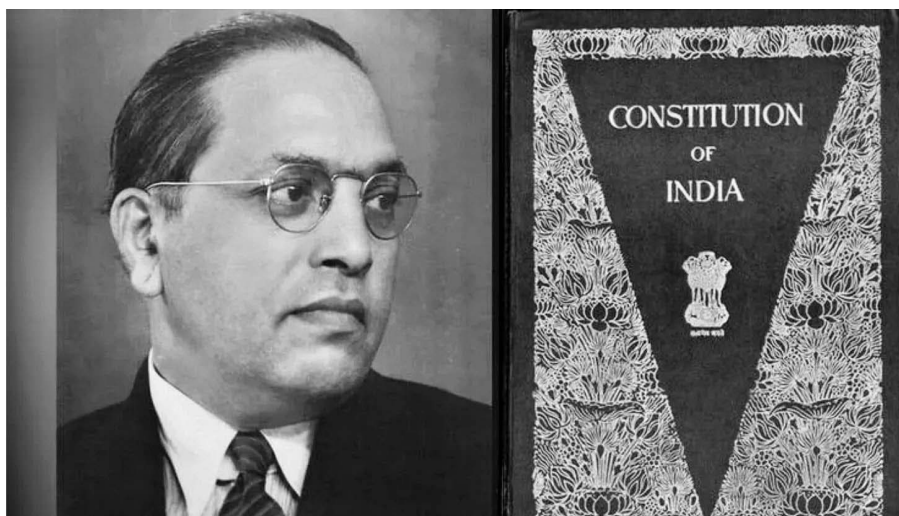
**Social and cultural influence :** The Scheduled Castes have a long and rich history in India, and they have played a significant role in shaping the culture and society of the country. This social and cultural influence is a source of strength for the Scheduled Castes and allows them to contribute to the broader discourse on issues of national importance.

**Dr. Ambedkar - Source of inspiration**

Dr. Ambedkar was a leading figure in the movement for the rights and emancipation of the Scheduled Castes in India. He was born into a Dalit family and faced discrimination and social exclusion throughout his life. Despite these challenges, he became one of the foremost leaders of Scheduled Castes and a driving force behind the drafting of the Constitution of India. As a member of the Constituent Assembly, Dr. Ambedkar played a crucial role in shaping the provisions of the Constitutions that relate to the Scheduled Castes. He was a strong advocate for the inclusion of provisions that would protect and promote the rights of the Scheduled Castes. He worked tirelessly to ensure that these provisions were included in the Constitution's final draft. In addition to his work on the Constitution, Dr. Ambedkar was also a leading social reformer and educationist. He played a vital role in the development of a system of higher education that was more accessible to the Scheduled Castes and marginalized communities. Dr. Ambedkar's contributions to the cause of the Scheduled Castes have had a lasting impact on Indian society. He is remembered as a hero and a strength of the marginalized. His ideas and writings continue to inspire social and political movements worldwide, and his legacy lives on as a source of inspiration and hope for those who struggle for justice and equality. Dr. Ambedkar is one of the strengths of communities in fighting against injustice.

**Education :** Education is a strength for members of Scheduled Castes communities, as it provides opportunities for personal and professional development and advancement. Education can also help break the cycle of poverty and social discrimination many Scheduled Castes individuals and families have faced. There are many examples of individuals from the community who have achieved success through education despite facing challenges and discrimination. These individuals can serve as role models and inspire others in their communities to pursue education and achieve their goals.

However, it is essential to note that access to education is different for all members of communities, and there are still significant barriers that prevent some individuals from obtaining a quality education. However, this education remains a vital strength and source of empowerment for many members of communities.



The Constitution of India provided several measures to protect and promote the interests of Scheduled Castes, also known as Dalits, who have historically faced discrimination and social exclusion. These measures are outlined in Part XVII of the Constitution, which deals with the “Special Provisions Relating to Certain Classes.

Article 341 defines the term “Scheduled Castes”

**Education is a strength for members of Scheduled Castes communities, as it provides opportunities for personal and professional development and advancement. Education can also help break the cycle of poverty and social discrimination.**

for the Constitution and empowers the President of India to notify the Scheduled Castes for each state or union territory. The President can also modify the list of the Scheduled Castes in consultation with the Governor of the concerned state.

Article 341(2) empowers the President to specify the areas inhabited by the Scheduled Castes in any state or union territory and to specify the castes, races, or tribes or parts of or groups with castes, races, or tribes that shall be deemed to be Scheduled Castes to the state or union territory.

Article 15(4) allows the state to make special provisions for advancing any socially and educationally backward class of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.

Article 16(4) allows the state to make any provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens, which, in the opinion of the state, needs to be adequately

represented in the services under the state.

Article 46 directs the state to promote the special care of the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and to protect them from social justice and all forms of exploitation.

Articles 330 and 334 provide for the reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in the house of the people (Lok Sabha) and the Legislative Assemblies of the states.

Article 338(1) establishes the National Commission for Scheduled Castes to monitor and evaluate the measures taken by the Government for the welfare of the Scheduled Castes and to report on the working of those measures. This helps to ensure that the Government is accountable for its actions and policies affecting the Scheduled Castes and that their needs and concerns are considered.

Holding high offices by members of Scheduled Castes in India, it is a strength in several ways. First, it can be a sign of progress in terms of reducing discrimination and promoting equality. In the past, members of Scheduled Castes were often denied opportunities and faced significant barriers to advancement. They can now hold high offices, which is a positive step towards a more inclusive and equitable society.

Second, it can also be seen as a sign of the strength and resilience of members of Scheduled Castes. Despite facing discrimination and adversity, they have overcome these challenges and succeeded in their fields. This is a testament to their determination and hard work. Finally, having members of Scheduled Castes in high offices can also be a source of inspiration and role models for other members of these communities. It can show that they can achieve success and positively impact in the face of barriers and discrimination.

*uv@unheardvoices.co.in*



# Role of universities



There are a number of activities that universities in India can engage in to help support and assist students from Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST). Some examples of such activities include undertaken by Delhi University and Jawaharlal Nehru University which can emulated by other universities for ensuring equal representation of Dalits in higher education.

**Dr. Aditi**



Universities play a crucial role in promoting the inclusion of Dalits in higher education. Dalits, also known as Scheduled Castes (SCs). One way that universities can promote the inclusion of Dalits is by implementing reservation policies in admissions. The Government of India has reserved a certain percentage of seats in central and state universities for Dalit students. These reservation policies have helped to increase the enrolment of Dalit students in higher education, but there is still a significant gap in the representation of Dalits at the higher education level compared to their population. In addition to reservation policies, universities can also offer special scholarships and fellowships for Dalit students. These financial assistance programs can help to remove financial barriers and make higher education more accessible to Dalit students.

There are several ways in which universities can promote the inclusion of Dalits in higher education. These include implementing reservation policies, offering special scholarships and fellowships, providing support services, promoting a culture of inclusivity and diversity, partnering with community organizations, and supporting student groups that work to promote Dalit rights. By taking these steps, universities can help to create a more inclusive and equitable higher education system for all students.

There are a number of activities that universities in India can engage in to help support and assist students from Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST). Some examples of such activities include undertaken by Delhi University and Jawaharlal Nehru University which can emulated by other universities for ensuring equal representation of Dalits in higher education can be as follow:

- Providing financial assistance : Universities can provide financial assistance to SC and ST students





to help them cover the costs of tuition, books, and other expenses related to their studies.

- Offering academic support : Universities can offer academic support to SC and ST students, such as tutoring and study groups, to help them succeed academically.
- Providing counselling and mental health support : Universities can offer counselling and mental health support to SC and ST students to help them cope with the challenges of higher education and to promote their overall well-being.
- Hosting cultural events and activities : Universities can host cultural events and activities that celebrate the diversity of their student body, including events specifically geared towards SC and ST students.
- Partnering with community organizations: Universities can partner with community organizations to offer support and resources to SC and ST students, such as mentorship programs, internship opportunities, and career guidance.
- Offering support for student organizations: Universities can offer support for student organizations that are focused on promoting the interests of SC and ST students, such as by providing funding and other resources.
- Creation of Equal Opportunity cells and ensuring the smooth functioning of these cells

We have Equal opportunity cells(EOCs) which are offices or departments within Indian universities that are responsible for promoting equal opportunity and diversity on campus. These cells typically work to ensure that all students, regardless of their social or economic background, have equal access to education and other opportunities. They may also work to address issues related to discrimination and inclusion on campus, and to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all students' typically offer a range of services and resources to support students from marginalized or underrepresented groups, including counselling, academic support, and financial assistance. They may also provide training and resources for faculty and staff to help them better understand and address issues related to diversity and inclusion .

EOCs often work closely with other offices and departments on campus, such as student services, academic affairs, and human resources, to promote equal opportunity and diversity across the university. They may also collaborate with external organizations, such as civil rights groups and community organizations, to advocate for greater equality and inclusivity in higher education. The role of EOCs in Indian universities has become increasingly important in recent years, as the country has sought to promote greater diversity and inclusivity in higher education. India has a long history of social and economic inequality, and marginalized groups, such as Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC), have

often faced discrimination and exclusion. EOCs have played a critical role in addressing these issues and in promoting greater equality and inclusivity on campus. In addition to their work with students, EOCs also often play a role in promoting diversity and inclusion in the hiring and promotion of faculty and staff. They may work with human resources departments to develop recruitment and retention strategies that are designed to attract and retain a more diverse faculty and staff. They may also provide training and resources for faculty and staff to help them understand and address issues related to diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

EOCs often work closely with other offices and departments on campus, such as student services, academic affairs, and human resources, to promote equal opportunity and diversity across the university. They may also collaborate with external organizations, such as civil rights groups and community organizations.



Despite the important role that EOCs play in promoting equal opportunity and diversity on campus, they have also been the subject of criticism and controversy. Some have argued that EOCs are not effective in addressing the root causes of inequality, and that they do not go far enough in promoting genuine equality and inclusivity. Others have argued that EOCs can create a climate of division and resentment on campus, and that they can lead to reverse discrimination against students from more privileged backgrounds.

Overall, EOCs remain an important part of the landscape of higher education in India, and they play a critical role in promoting equal opportunity and diversity on campus. While they have faced criticism and controversy, they have also made significant contributions to the goal of creating a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all students.

*Author is an Assistant professor in Dept. of Sociology, Lakshmibai College, University of Delhi. uv@unheardvoices.co.in*

# Need for Spiritual awakening

Dr. Shraddha

As India strives to make great strides in its economy and infrastructure, it is constantly reminded of its social reality that is based on an age-old caste system. The history of India has seen sporadic incidents of discrimination against a particular group of people, mostly under the attestation from the traditional systems of caste and untouchability. The most recent incident is when Dalit man's parents were shot dead in Damoh district in Madhya Pradesh by upper caste men. It is interesting and informative to know about the origin of such social stratification that has affected the discourse of Indian society and politics in some manner.

**Origins of the Caste System:** The caste system as we see it today has not been pronounced in just one book; in fact, it has been shaped by multiple texts. The most ancient mention of the caste system is found in the Purusha Sukta verse of the 10th Mandal in Rig Veda, believed to be developed between 1500-800 BC, where it was called the Varna system. It classified the society into four varnas: the Brahmins: priests, scholars and teachers; the Kshatriyas: rulers, warriors and administrators; the Vaishyas: cattle herders, agriculturists, artisans and merchants; and the Shudras: labourers and service providers.

Some scholars believe that this clause was added much later than the Vedic period. But similar laws were articulated in Manu Smriti, which is believed to be written

between 200 BC-200 AD and which served as the guiding text for formulating Hindu laws by the British government. Even Mahabharata, the text of which was completed by fourth century AD, had mentions of the four-tier Varna system. All of these texts associated particular traits with each class: Brahmins were considered to be pure, wise and gentle; Kshatriyas were linked with anger, pleasure and boldness; Vaishyas were deemed to be hard-working people living off the plough; and Shudras were associated with violence and impurity, worthy of contempt.

As such, their social status began to be perceived in the declining order – Brahmins were highly respected and obeyed while Shudras were despised and ordered. Over time, particular castes were placed even below Shudras and were called Avarnas – not belonging to any class. They were supposed to do menial jobs as sweepers, gutter cleaners, scavengers,

watchmen and farm laborers. People from such castes are called Dalits (meaning oppressed) in modern times. Although many of them have moved to other professions over time, yet the general perception against them has remained to be one of hatred and loathing. According to the ancient text of Bhagavad Gita, the Varna system was not considered to be hereditary and was assigned on the basis of karma.

Even after 75 years of Independence, India is still facing caste-based discrimination and the situation in rural areas is even worse. Higher caste dominates the lower one and make them feel they are slaves. Because of discrimination they are forced to live on the outskirts of villages. They are not allowed to enter temples or any other religious place. They are not permitted to use public water resources such as wells or canals. Dalit students encounter constant bullying on a daily basis. People live in fear, they get threatened and humiliated just because of their origin. This kind of discrimination is causing hard times for them in earning livelihood.

In a struggle for survival, these vulnerable people sometimes force their kids into illegal acts of child-marriage, or selling their daughter as sex-slave (devadasi). Apart from this, Dalits have to come up with mental pressure as well. Not rare, that those youngsters, who are hardworking and lucky enough to make it to the university (Dalits in higher education are only 14.4% out of total) are committing suicide because of the constant bullying and harassment by other students or even by professor.

The situation becomes even worse when the act of untouchability is being done by the educated class of our society. It can be called Intellectual Untouchability. It is mostly observed in urban areas. This intellectual untouchability is more harmful as it attacks the psychological aspect of the human brain which results in low self-esteem, downgrading the performance and further decrease in productivity.

As said by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, "Caste cannot be abolished by inter caste dinners or inter caste marriage. Caste is just a state of mind." Therefore, educating people is not enough to prevent these heinous acts of discrimination and untouchability. There is a need of spiritual awakening so that the feeling of love and compassion can be infused in the minds of people.

*Author is Associate Professor of Social Work,  
At Gyanodaya institute of Management and  
Technology, Neemuch Madhya Pradesh.  
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*





# SOLUTIONS



# SOLUTION

## Exploring solutions for future

The solutions suggested in this article are mainly of short-term nature, a need is therefore felt to present the broader perspective and drive the thought accordingly. The participants were overwhelmingly happy for providing them the stage to express themselves.

**Avinash**



Pune based Social Studies Foundation (SSF) made a successful attempt to organize five conferences in Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Lucknow, covering 28 regions from PAN India. They were held from July to November in 2022. This was the first of its kind attempt arranged by SSF.

The theme of the conference was 'Scheduled Castes in Independent India – Present & Future' and intellectuals from Universities/Colleges were invited to present their views on the strengths of Scheduled Castes, Problems and Challenges of SCs and probable Solutions to the problems and challenges faced by SCs.

As many as 314 participants from about 81 Universities / Colleges, including professors, associate professors, assistant professors, research scholars from Scheduled Caste communities participated. As these intellectuals are in regular touch with the younger generation, it is obvious that they are expected to know the current generations problems and suggest better solutions to the various psychological, socio-economic, educational and political problems.

While designing the entire discussions, it was aimed that the younger of the intelligentsia (male/female below the age of 45 years) need to be involved. Each conference had four sessions and every session had two persons (pre-decided) from among the participants to work as discussion initiator and a concluder. The discussion initiator was assigned the task to initiate and moderate the

discussion. The concluder was assigned the task to conclude the discussions with his remarks based on the deliberations made in the session.

It is a fact that the government has a restricted role. It can only partially solve the problems of the SC community by making the policies for their upliftment. However, it is required that the society at large and SC community in particular, should come forward to resolve the issues plaguing the community. Hence, an appeal was made to those present to actively come forward with the solutions. During the discussions following solutions emerged for various problems, which would create the situation of equality of opportunity for SCs, if implemented.

### 1) Implementation of Zero Admission Fee Policy

It is a common feature in India that the percentage of school dropouts is extremely high in case of SCs due to poor family background. After passing such hurdles, some students reached up to the stage of higher education. They also successfully pass the entrance examination and get listed for taking the admission in colleges. But due to paucity of financial resources; as they are coming from lower middle class or some time from poor families, they are unable to take admission for college education or higher education and deprived off from their right to education.

To overcome this situation, some states have introduced the scheme of Zero admission fee policy. Under this policy, though a student does not have sufficient money to pay off his college fees, he would be admitted to the college and later on his fees would be reimbursed by the concerned State Government. But due to failure of the scheme at implementation



level, the scheme was stopped. The Colleges faced a major time lag in getting the reimbursement of fees from the Government and hence the colleges were reluctant to give admission to the students under the scheme. The ultimate result was not encouraging due to poor implementation.

Many participants emphasized that the above scheme should be reintroduced with amendments and continuous monitoring for successful implementation of the same would enable capable students to complete their higher education. It is a common observation that people belonging to scheduled castes communities, especially from backward areas of the country, are not aware of these schemes. Local government bodies as well as NGOs working for positive social causes should arrange programmes for creating awareness and sensitize the students as well as the working class from Scheduled castes communities on Government schemes.

Many suggested to remove the usage of word 'Dalit' and caste column from admission forms as well as surname culture to be abolished as many times examiners while giving the grade or marks to the student in internal exams, make discrimination on the basis of his surname which denotes his caste. Due to such discrimination, a student from the SC community may lose his opportunity of higher education.

Another positive solution emerged during the discussions was the role being played by SC members, who have achieved significant success in their lives. It was suggested that they should help their SC brethren in their upliftment. Students, as well as some employees from SC community, face a big problem when they do not get rental houses because of their caste. Suggestion was made to make a provision of the hostel for SC students or employees be made at district or tehsil level. It was also underlined that social harmony and participation of all the people, irrespective their castes, must be ensured. Such incidents, though rare, take place in some parts of the country, which were shared in the conference.

Another suggestion was made that implementation of New Education Policy 2020 (NEP) should be monitored from SC point of view.

## **2) Introduction of Audit of Budgetary Provisions for SCs**

It is observed that many times central / state Governments introduced new schemes / scholarships for upliftment of SCs and are making provisions for new as well as existing schemes in the annual budget. Though the purpose behind making such provisions is noble, due to absence of proper monitoring by the concerned departments, either provision made under the specific head is diverted or remains unused, resulting in defeat of the purpose. To avoid such a situation, effective monitoring at implementation level and audit of budgetary provisions for SCs needs to be conducted.

## **3) Review of Article 17 of Constitution**

During the deliberations, some participants shared their experiences, which were astonishing and unbelievable. After 75 years of independence, the citizens belonging to scheduled castes communities, especially from rural and semi urban areas are facing social problems in spite of various rules and laws. Untouchability is still in practice in some areas. Similarly, the Varna system is also in practice in many places. There are various theories which are provided in support of these practices. For example, untouchables are not allowed to drink / take water from a common place, enter into the temple used by the general category population, or separate cremation grounds for SC community. This is a case of dire discrimination, which is made even after the death of a person. On this background, it was strongly demanded and suggested by the participants that the government must monitor the abolition of malpractices like untouchability, non-availability of a common water place, entry to temples, irrespective of their castes, provision of a common cremation ground.

While hearing the various experiences shared by participants, who are having well educated backgrounds, it is felt that psychological intervention at all levels is required for eradication of caste-based discrimination. Article 17 of the constitution states that Untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of Untouchability shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.

On the background of above experiences faced by SCs, only inclusion of 'Untouchability' is not sufficient. Hence, it was also further suggested that the government should take a review of Article 17 of the Constitution and make amendments to include caste and varna in this article to abolish this system along with untouchability, to create an atmosphere of discrimination free society.

This was an eye-opener experience for SSF to understand the on-ground realities and situations faced by SCs in their day-to-day life. Further during the discussions, it was realized that problems faced by SCs differ from state to state and caste to caste. It was observed that the benefits for the SCs have not percolated to the castes which are at the lowest level of development.

Though the solutions suggested above are mainly of short-term nature, a need is therefore felt to present the broader perspective and drive the thought accordingly. The participants were overwhelmingly happy with the initiative and expressly stated that this was the first of its kind platform provided to them for expressing themselves. This should continue further also.

*Author is a Pune based social worker.  
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*



Most of the students are from rural areas and their source of income and livelihood is farming. But those studying in college get away from agricultural work. Their main goal is a job. With the level of education and the manner of teaching, it is not easy for them to get a better job. As a result, after graduation, students do jobs worth ₹5,000 to ₹10,000 in the private sector or shop in the city, or migrate to other states. Eventually, they suffer oppression and exploitation throughout their lives.

## 'Sathi hath badhana'

Indal Kumar



It is absolutely important and significant to have serious discussion on what role we can play at the individual or collective level in addressing the present problems of Dalits. At present, economic backwardness is the biggest problem of Dalits. The social system established in the past is certainly the basis of today's economic backwardness, in which Dalit were placed at the bottom of society, and were, for centuries, deprived of the basic facilities necessary for their advancement. Due to many social and political reforms carried out before and after independence, recently, the situation has changed and now there are no obstacles that halt progress. But even today, the impact of the social system could be experienced in Dalit society visible in the form of economic backwardness.

Cooperation has remained a special feature of Indian society. We can see many examples in history and in the present where students from weaker economic sections genuinely interested in studying were supported by people of society and

were helped educationally and financially to achieve positions. Such support has been continuously received from some sensitive, rich, and elite people in society.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar also got such support and could complete higher education. In another way, the people of the family and community, somehow, with little education were engaged in a small job or profession. These people suffered to help the children of their families or community. I could complete my education and become a teacher in a college only because of my elder brother Suraj Paswan. He had cleared the intermediate and went away from the village to Ranchi, where he temporarily joined a government office, as a commander, with the help of a maternal uncle late Rajendra Prasad. Hardly Rs 300/400 were available monthly. Even in such a harsh situation, they brought me from the village to Ranchi, kept me together, taught me, and saved me from degeneration due to which I could settle in Ranchi and could achieve something. Anyone from the Dalit community, who got educated and got a better place, must have gone through a similar process.



In March 2008, I was appointed as an assistant teacher at Ghatshila College. In April 2008, after a lot of effort, I brought five friends from Ranchi to Ghatshila to prepare for competitive exams. They all were my childhood friends and classmates. All of them were Dalits. Due to economic conditions, they were forced to leave their studies and look for employment in the private sector. I suggested that they take a break for one year from the work and prepare for studies to get a government job. I also suggested that they join private jobs again if they do not succeed in getting a government job. They listened to me and came to Ghatshila. Within two years, three of my friends were appointed as clerks in the banks. The other two friends started their work. Today all of us are helping many needy children of the Dalit community.

Another major development happened in 2008. Sanjay Kachhap, who was working as a market supervisor in the Chakulia Market Committee near Ghatshila. We share the same thoughts and temperament. Sanjay also used to help underprivileged students to his capacity. On Gandhi Jayanti of October 2, 2008, he started a library study centre at his ancestral home. Local students, not having a suitable environment at the house and were deprived of basic resources, used to study in the library. I also joined the activity. It has become our mission now. Today, around 200 library-study centres have been opened all over Jharkhand, including Kolhan, in which

government colleges is also very pathetic. Students who do well definitely have their hard work. We have made two types of categories for college students. First, for students, who want to make a career through studies. We conduct a test for them. This group is known as Promising- 40 (P-40). For them, arrangements have been made to read and teach in the college library itself. In this category, preparation for competitive examinations is done with the regular syllabus. Other teachers of the college also help with this work.

Secondly, most of the students are from rural areas and their source of income and livelihood is farming. But those studying in college get away from agricultural work. Their main goal is a job. With the

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level of education and the manner of teaching, it is not easy for them to get a better job. As a result, after graduation, students do jobs worth ₹5,000 to ₹10,000 in the private sector or shop in the city, or migrate to other states. Eventually, they suffer oppression and exploitation throughout their lives.

By forming a group of 15-20 students, we have made efforts to impart training concerning agriculture. The work goes on continuously. Horticulture, poultry, goat nurturing, mushroom production, and fish farming are part of the training. Because of this, students do better in farming in their village, earn sufficiently and do not need to migrate from their villages.

Another attempt has been made that Dalit students studying in colleges do not drop out due to a lack of money. For this, the staff sitting at the fee collection counter of the college has been instructed to contact us if they find any student facing financial problems while filling the admission or examination form. We, a group of teachers, constantly help such students. We make every effort to ensure that Dalit and backward students make their careers through studies.

*Author is an Assistant Professor In  
Ghatshila College, Ghatshila Kolhan University,  
Chaibasa, Jharkhand.  
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*



many working friends are associates. Our Library Mission has also been discussed by the Prime Minister in his Mann Ki Baat on November 27, 2022.

Today, with the help of those libraries, many students have found jobs in government and non-government sectors. I teach in a government college. The college is in a rural area. First, most of the students are tribal and Dalit. There is a severe lack of resources for better education. Consequently, students are deprived of quality education. Secondly, most students come to university after studying at government colleges. The standard of education in



# EQUAL OPPORTUNITY



The British government's policy of appeasement towards India in the 1930s involved making concessions to Indian nationalists in an effort to maintain control over the country.

The Indian government's policy of appeasement towards minority groups, such as Muslims or Dalits (formerly known as untouchables), in an effort to maintain social harmony and prevent the outbreak of violence or conflict.

## Shun appeasement for equal opportunities of development

Souvik



Public finance in India refers to the financial management of the government's revenue and expenditure. This includes the collection of taxes, borrowing money, and the allocation of public funds for various development and welfare programs. Development in India refers to the country's economic, social, and physical progress. The government of India has implemented various policies and programs to promote development in the country, including initiatives in the areas of education, healthcare, infrastructure, and poverty reduction. Some of the key challenges facing public finance and development in India. India is a developing country with a large and growing population, which means that the government has to allocate its resources carefully to meet the needs of its citizens. This can be a challenge given the limited

resources available to the government.

India has a high level of income inequality, which can hinder development and make it difficult for the government to allocate resources in a fair and effective manner.

Appeasement politics refers to the practice of giving in to the demands or wishes of another party, often at the expense of one's own principles or interests. In the context of development, appeasement politics might involve a government making concessions or sacrificing long-term development goals in order to appease certain groups or stakeholders. Appeasement politics has been used in India by governments at various times in the country's history.

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minority groups, such as Muslims or Dalits (formerly known as untouchables), in an effort to maintain social harmony and prevent the outbreak of violence or conflict. There have been a number of criticisms of appeasement politics in India. Some argue that it has led to a lack of strong leadership and a lack of progress on key issues, as governments have been unwilling to take bold action or make tough decisions. Others have argued that it has perpetuated social and economic inequalities, as certain groups or interests have been prioritized over others.

In this discussion we will try to understand how the religious appeasement deprived the marginalized sections of the society mainly to the Scheduled Caste in India. The Scheduled Castes (SCs) are a group of historically disadvantaged communities in India. According to the 2011 Census of India, the SC population in India was approximately 200 million, which is about 16% of the total population. The SC population is distributed throughout the country, although they are more heavily concentrated in certain states, such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu. According to the 2011 Census of India, the Muslim population in India was approximately 176 million, which is about 14% of the total population. The Muslim population is distributed throughout the country, although they are more heavily concentrated in certain states, such as Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Assam.

The Indian government has implemented a number of policies and programs to support the development of Muslim communities, including affirmative action policies in education and employment. Many times, the central and state governments take initiatives to give special benefits on religion and caste basis to get some special electoral benefits. The political parties mainly target the minority or any selective religion in India with some politically motivated agenda.

The Union Budget for 2022–23 included Rs. 5020.50 crore for the Minority Affairs Ministry, which is Rs. 674.05 crore higher than the revised sum for the last year. Nirmala Sitharaman, the finance minister, has proposed allocating Rs. 5020.50 crore to the Ministry of Minority Affairs in the proposed budget for 2022–2023. The Ministry of Minority Affairs had a budget estimate of Rs 4810.77 crore for the fiscal year 2021–2022, which was later revised to Rs 4346.45 crore.

Despite the Union government constantly voicing the need for the development of Dalit and Adivasi communities, the Union Budget for the fiscal year 2022-23 spoke otherwise. For FY 2022-23, the allocation for the Scheduled Caste community stands at Rs 1,42,342.36 crore, and the Scheduled Tribes at Rs 89,265.12 crore. The NITI Aayog's guidelines on the Allocation for the Welfare of Scheduled Caste (AWSC) and the Allocation for the Welfare of Scheduled Tribe (AWST), which the Union government continues to ignore, require that

an amount be allocated that is proportionate to the population, according to NCDHR's analysis of the Dalit Adivasi Budget.

The SC and ST budgets, respectively, have holes of Rs 40,634 crore and Rs 9,399 crore, according to the Dalit Arthik Adhikar Andolan (DAAA). Over 13,000 educational institutions have been granted the status of minority institutions on the basis of religion only (National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions) where the social reservations rules (Constitutionally given) are not properly followed which is acting like a big wall for the reserved needy students and scholar to access quality education just because of religious identifications. Scheme for Providing religious Education in Madarsas (SPQEM) and in fracture development in Minority Institutions (IDMI) were being implemented throughout the country.

The quotas of SC and ST reservation are intended to help address past discrimination and social and economic disadvantages faced by these groups and to promote their inclusion in education and employment. The religion specific (mainly minority religion specific) budget is hampering the development and upliftment of the needy one in the society which is leading to the vicious circle of development syphoning in India. People's self-respect, entrepreneurial spirit, willingness to take chances, and sense of responsibility have all been stolen by protectionist policies. We reject mistakes and anticipate government intervention if our choices prove disastrous. Politicians cater to the whims of every voting constituency, which just leads to more irrational demands that ultimately leads to appeasement political practice. The politicians we have are entirely deserved. A democratic government owes a duty to help distressed individuals. A welfare state's noble objective should be to provide a social safety net. While there is no social security in our nation that is deserving of the name, the idea of welfare has been taken to insane extremes. It goes without saying that the only reason politicians are in politics is to acquire and hold onto power. As a result, when seeking support, they offer a variety of promises by targeting any particular group or by promising special protection on religion and say anything the electorate wants to hear. Sometimes they also deliver in order to maintain their faith.

The quality of government, the provision of services like health and education, the operation of institutions, and the general well-being of the populace are all impacted if scarce resources are diverted to satisfy this or that section, as Punjab has observed. Demoralizing effects of a bankrupt government are compounded by the burdensome accumulation of unproductive debt that will be paid for by future generations by compromising the social benefits.

*Author is a M.Phil. Scholar, CSRD, JNU New Delhi  
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*

# Leaving a positive note

Pramod

As mentioned elsewhere in this issue, Social Studies Foundation made a successful attempt to organize a one-day seminar on the subject – ‘Scheduled Castes in India – Present & Future’ at five places in India. A thorough churning of thoughts occurred in all five seminars. The participants enthusiastically came forward to express themselves and effectively put forward their points on various subjects of the seminars. The seminars were attended by a host of dignitaries and eminent speakers. We give below the gist of the points made by them in their address:

**Hon. Prof. B.J. Rao, Vice Chancellor, University of Hyderabad (UoH)**



Hon. Prof. B.J. Rao VC, UoH, said in his speech that India is the fifth largest economy. However, about 82% of the contribution to the GDP comes from the non-formal sector. Therefore, there is a need to create more jobs in the field of Farming. In developed countries, the GDP contribution is high from the

farming sector. Focus on increasing the contribution from the farming sector would be of great help in the creation of jobs. Also, income from Farming needs to be supplemented from income from allied activities or by augmenting the skills of the people. We must therefore bring Scheduled Castes into skilled employment.

Job security is also one of the major concerns. Conscious efforts should be taken to provide the SC community security of jobs. Job security will help them to worry less about their day-to-day requirements and contribute more to society. In Prof. Rao's opinion, we failed to do so as a nation.

There is, therefore, a need to provide high-skill, value-added products to the SC community. As the saying goes, 'God helps those who help themselves', the educated and enlightened SC community members should come forward to help young ones, do the hand holding and help them rise in their life. There is a need to motivate the students from the SC community and help them improve their power of expression. Along with this, the SC community and universities should work together on various initiatives to boost the SC students' confidence. To achieve this, we should boldly ask hard questions and get answers in true spirit and practice.

**Prof. Alok Kumar Rai, Vice Chancellor, University of Lucknow (UoL)**

In his address, Prof Alok Kumar Rai, VC, UoL welcomed the idea of holding such seminars on



topics that are very important from the social harmony point of view. The discussions in the seminars will lead to certain ideas and solutions which need to be implemented. Implementing the solutions in educational institutions is the job of people working in such institutions.

Prof. Rai made a valuable difference in the cause of the symptom and the symptom itself. He said that while the symptom cannot be treated, the cause of the symptom can be treated. Hence there should be an effort to identify the cause and seek solutions to treat the same.

He also emphasized the importance of having a scientific and data-based approach to address the problems and solutions.

One of our objectives is to find a solution to the problems. Prof. Rai, therefore, cautioned against being too critical as being too critical may make you lose focus and miss the solution. He said such seminars would bring out certain points that can be useful as guiding policy-making principles. It is, therefore, essential to look for such points and work suitably on them later.

**Dr. Swarup Prasad Ghosh, Director, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Kolkata**



Dr. Swarup Prasad Ghosh, Director, MAKAIAS, said that we are in the era where soft diplomacy has become very important. Narrative creation, propaganda war, and creating a mindset are three important aspects of the present-day order. MAKAIAS, concentrating hitherto in Central

Asia, is now focusing on SE Asia. He drew attention to the fact that we have been tutored based on western thought and ideology. As such, we need to bring back the intellectual mind to our nation. India-centric thinking needs to become a thrust area. Outreach programs are being conducted in universities and educational institutes centering around Unsung heroes. While speaking about the work being done by MAKAIAS, Dr. Swarup Prasad also narrated how programs are being conducted for the benefit of the SC community. He ended his talk with some anecdotes of Swami Vivekananda's life and highlighted his contribution to social harmony.

**Shri Bhagayya – National Committee member of RSS and veteran social worker**

Veteran Social Worker and member of the National Committee of RSS - Shri Bhagayya, in his concluding remarks, said that all the points raised and discussed in the seminar are important and would contribute significantly in giving direction to



the effort and thought on various issues, challenges, and solutions related to the SC community. He said there are only two types of people in society – those who believe in untouchability and those who do not. People who don't believe in untouchability



should all come together to fight untouchability, irrespective of any other difference of opinion. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar adopted the principles of liberty, fraternity, and equality not from the French revolution but from the philosophy of Tathagat Gautam Buddha. He further said liberty and equality could be achieved only with a

fraternity – the feeling of brotherhood and nothing else. Fraternity is a value, the ultimate truth, which we should nurture.

He emphatically maintained that Varna Vyavastha is outdated and we should not talk about it in any way. He drew attention to the fact that times have changed, and so have the challenges. Stating that change is coming gradually, Bhagayya cited the examples of various social reformers who have strived hard to develop the SC community. Very recently, around 500 temples have been built in multiple areas in Andhra Pradesh, where there is a preponderance of people belong to the SC community. The temples have been built with contributions from all sections of society, whether SC or not. The people, in collaboration with the

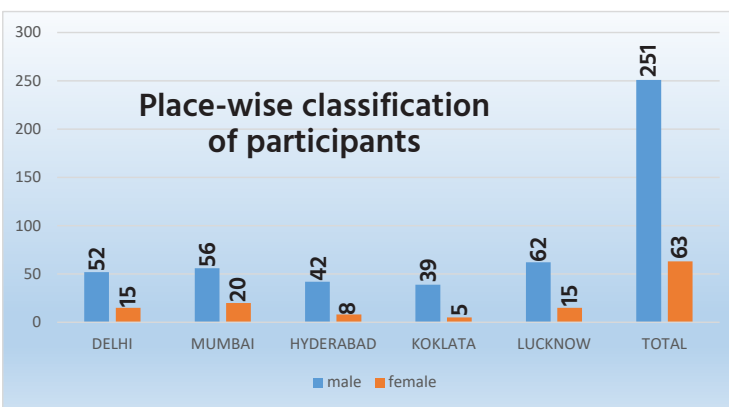
authorities of Tirupati Devasthanam, took the initiative. It is encouraging to know that the Tirupati Devasthanam trained members of the SC community to work as the temple pujari. The pujaris are not only accepted by all but also respected by all sections of society. Such initiatives, he said, depict the social change that is coming through in Indian society.

Bhagayya is confident that change will come and that we all should become the agents of such change. Working together as a team, leaving aside personal and social egos, and devoting time is necessary to take up challenges and resolve them. The problems of the SC community are not only the problems of the community but of the society as a whole. Therefore, we should all resolve to work together to find a solution for them.

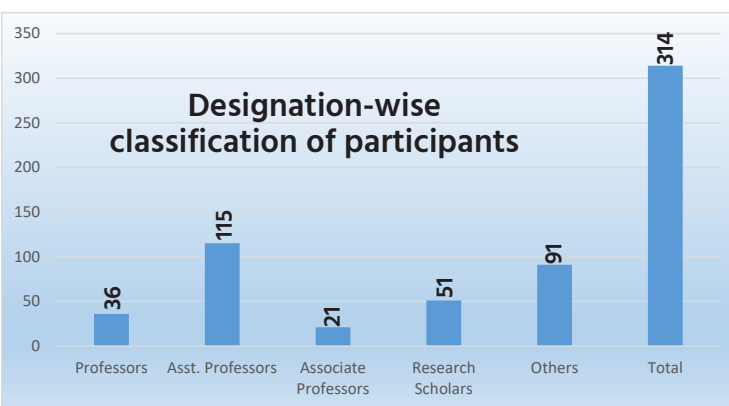
A few other dignitaries - Dr. Baliram Gaikwad, Director, Sahitya Ratna Annabhau Sathe Study Centre, University of Mumbai (Mumbai seminar), Prof. Vishnu Sarwade, Head, Centre for Dalit and Adivasi Studies & Translation, University of Hyderabad, Pro. Vice-chancellor. Dr. Sarraju, University of Hyderabad, Prof. V. Krishna, Dean, School of Humanities, University of Hyderabad (Hyderabad seminar), Mr. Kumar Chandra Parbat, Dakshin Banga Pranta Pramukh, Taposili Utthan (Kolkata seminar), Prof. Dr. Rakesh Dwiwedi, Chief Proctor, University of Lucknow, talked about their institutes, universities, and centre's work towards social cohesion.

*Author is a Pune based Social worker.  
uv@unheardvoices.co.in*

Place	Male	Female	Total
Delhi	52	15	67
Mumbai	56	20	76
Hyderabad	42	8	50
Kolkata	39	5	44
Lucknow	62	15	77
<b>Total</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>314</b>



Designation	Number
Professors	36
Asst. Professors	115
Associate Professors	21
Research Scholars	51
Others	91
<b>Total</b>	<b>314</b>





Ankur Koundel



Dr. Amita



Speakers at seminar



Dr. Hari Krishan



Dr. Kuldeep Singh



Dr. Manish Kumar



Dr. Partho Biswas



Dr. Pradeep Kumar



Dr. Sanjeev Kumar



Dr. Vimla Dunkwal



Gouranga Biswas



Ishwar Ram



Jai Kumar



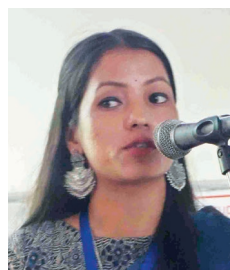
Kesu Ram Panwar



Kumar Parbat



Dr. M. K. Baharwal



Parul



Sapna



## Speakers at seminar



**Dawinder Singh**



**Dr. Aditi Paswan**



**Souvik Mandal**



**Sunita Devi**



**Sushma Rani**



**Dr. C. L. Banga**



**Dr. C. Mathur**



**Arun Gaikwad**



**Avadhut Wankhede**



**Baby Kamble**



**Barnita Das**



**Devendra Makwana**



**Dhananjay Bhise**



**Dr. Asha Rani**



**Dr. Baliram Gaikwad**



**Dr. Dharmaji Kharat**



**Dr. Govind Masure**



**Dr. Maya Gaikwad**



**Dr. Naresh Chauhan**



**Dr. Chakradhar**



**Dr. Sanjay Gaikwad**



**Dr. Shivaji Kalwale**



**Dr. Sneha Ingle**



**Dr. Ujwala Hatagale**



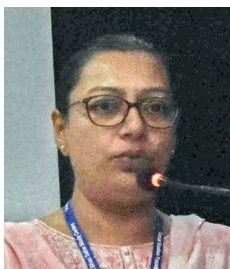
**Dr. Vijaybhai Jhala**



## Speakers at seminar



**Dr. C. S. Malvi**



**Jigna Patel**



**Machindra Sakate**



**Nagendra Dhondwe**



**Nikhil Athwale**



**Rekha Goyal**



**Shraddha Arya**



**Suman Singh**



**Vinod Suryawanshi**



**C.Vairavasundaram**



**Ch. Yellaswamy**



**Dr. Anbuselvam**



**Dr. A. K. Gaurav**



**Dr. B. S. Nagaiah**



**Dr. D. Goutam**



**Dr. D. Velayudhan**



**Dr. P. Boomi**



**Dr. Rakesh Davella**



**Dr. Yuvraj**



**Dr. Nagamani**



**Dr. Sridevi**



**K. G. Hadimani**



**M. Honnakkalavar**



**N. Suryanarayan**



**Prakash Raj**



## Speakers at seminar



**Prof. Komala M**



**Prof. M. Gangadhar**



**Prof. Ramraju**



**Sanjivrayappa**



**Sindhu S**



**Subbachari**



**Sudarshan Reddy**



**Ajay Kumar**



**Aparna Sinha**



**Dr. Babulal Bala**



**Dr. S.Jyotiranjana**



**Dr. S. K. Ram**



**Dr. Swapan Biswas**



**Prof. V. Sarwade**



**Hridoy Mete**



**Indal Paswan**



**Krishna Sarkar**



**Meghnath Naskar**



**Prof. M. Joddar**



**Prof. Prodip Das**



**Raktim Das**



**Sunil Kumar**



**Sunita Kar**



**Akhilesh Verma**



**Dr. Bhupendra**



## Speakers at seminar



**Dr. G. Bharti**



**Dr. Manoj Jatav**



**Dr. Neha Singh**



**Dr. Pravish Prakash**



**Dr. Ratan Lal**



**Dr. S. C. Tamta**



**Dr. D. K. Dohare**



**Dr. R. K. Bharti**



**Dr. Pankaj Lal**



**Adv. Akash Pushkar**



**Prof. R. Dwivedi**



**Prof. Shobha Gaur**



**Sanjeet Kumar**



**Sumit Johar**



**Dr. Ravi Ambe**



**Dr. Suryanarayan**



**Dr. Sushma Goriyal**



**Pro. VC. Prof.  
Sarraju**



**Prof. Krishna**







## Speakers at seminar



Paid floral tribute to Bharat mata and Dr. Ambedkar photos at seminar.



Delhi seminar was organised on 17th July 2022 The Mumbai, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Lucknow seminars were organised in collaboration with the following Institutes.



**Sahitya Ratna Annabhau Sathe Study Centre, University of Mumbai**

Centre has been an initiative of the University of Mumbai since 2020. The Centre provides opportunities to learn more about and research the exceptional contribution Anna Bhau Sathe gave. Anna Bhau Sathe's life, social work, and literary contribution are taught through Post-Graduation, Diploma courses, and Certificate Courses. The seminar was held at September 18, 2022.

**Centre for Dalit and Adivasi Studies & Translation, University of Hyderabad**

The Centre was established in June 2011 to keep national integrity and emotional binding with the community in mind. It allows the Dalit and Adivasi students through teaching, allowing them to learn the languages, research, and translate into Hindi. The Centre will enable students to translate literary texts from the Indian language to Hindi and further studying and research. The Centre emphasizes the translation of Dalit and Adivasi literature. The seminar was held at October 30, 2022.



**Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS), Kolkata**

The Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS), an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, is a centre for research and learning with focus on life and works of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and on modern and contemporary affairs in South Asia, Central Asia, Eurasia, West Asia, South East Asia and Far East Asia. MAKAIAS is a research Institute which studies with due emphasis the cultural relations with Asian countries.



**Taposili Utthan, Kolkata**

Taposili Utthan's primary goal is to research, support, and empower the Scheduled caste community in West Bengal. This organization was established in 2015 at Magrahat in the district of South 24 Parganas, namely Taposily Swamaj Adhikar Raksha Manch (i.e) TSARM. However, in 2020 TSARM became Taposili Utthan. The organization regularly conducts block conferences, district conferences, provincial training classes, and organizational outings.

The seminar was held at November 6, 2022.

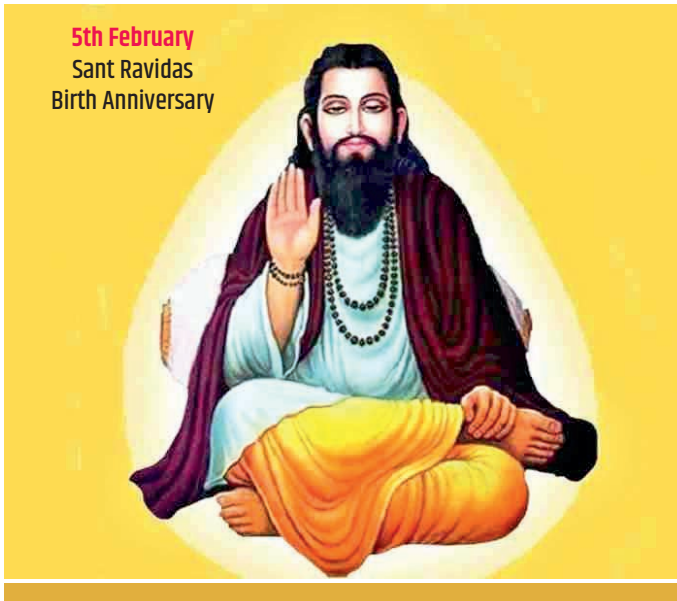


**Sanskritiki, University of Lucknow**

Sanskritiki, the Cultural Activity Board, functions as the central cultural activity point for the students of the University of Lucknow. Cultural and literary activities are conducted around the year. Every year a considerable number of students participate in these activities. Gone are the days when only academic programs were the only activities organized in colleges, and all students focused on that. With the changing trend, we have noticed a significant difference in the field of academics too. Students do not want to be bookworms; they look for other options to help them in the future. Besides this, in this high-tech world, every student wants to acquire knowledge in every field to stay updated. Co-circular activities play a vital role in students' life; read on to know how. The University of Lucknow is a Hundred years old Institution serving India Notable among them are the completions during Convocation Week, the performance of students in the cultural evening on Convocation Week every year, and the Annual Cultural and Literary Mini-Fest. The seminar was held at November 27, 2022.

# DIN VISHESH

## Remembering Sant Ravidas



**5th February**  
Sant Ravidas  
Birth Anniversary

Sant Ravidas was India's saint, poet, and social reformer during the 15th and 16th centuries. He is considered one of the most influential figures in the Bhakti movement, a religious movement emphasizing devotion to God as the path to salvation. Ravidas's teaching stressed the equality of all people and rejected the caste system. Sant Ravidas strongly criticized the caste system and worked towards its abolition. He believed that all people were equal in the eyes of God and that the caste system was a human-made construct with no basis in religion. He preached that devotion to God was the only true path to salvation and that one's caste or social status should not be a barrier to spiritual progress. In his teaching and poetry, Sant Ravidas emphasized the importance of treating all people with respect and compassion, regardless of their caste. He encouraged people of all castes to come together to worship God. He also advocated for the education and empowerment of lower-caste people to break the cycle of poverty and discrimination.



**16th January**  
Mahadev Govind Ranade  
Death Anniversary



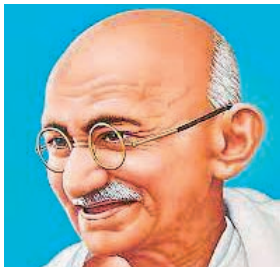
**23rd January**  
Subhash Chandra Bose  
Birth Anniversary



**26th January**  
Republic Day



**28th January**  
Lala Lajpat Rai  
Birth Anniversary



**30th January**  
Mahatma Gandhi  
Death Anniversary



**2nd February**  
Subhedar Ramji Sakpal  
Death Anniversary



**3rd February**  
Umaji Naik  
Death Anniversary

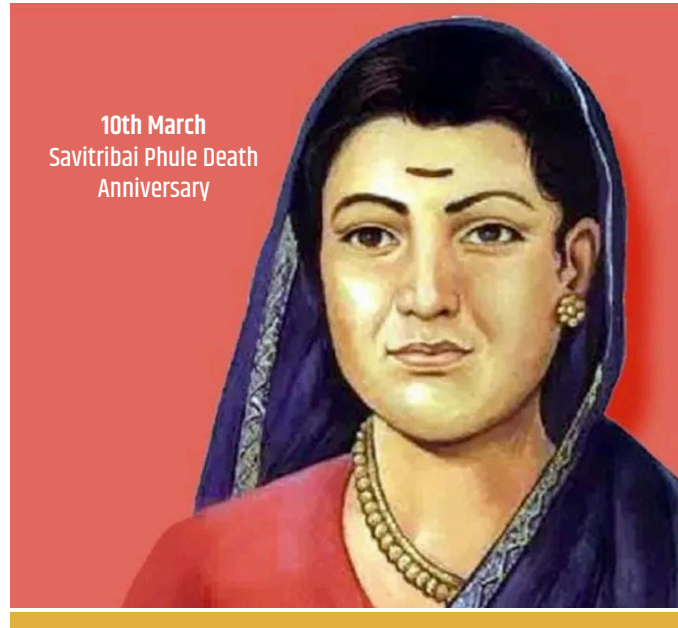


**6th February**  
Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad  
Death Anniversary and 11th  
March Birth Anniversary

# DIN VISHESH

Savitribai Phule was an Indian social reformer and educator from Maharashtra. Who is considered one of the most important figures in the Indian women's rights and education movement of the 19th Century. She was the first female teacher in India, and along with her husband, Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, they established the first school for girls in Pune in 1848. She also worked towards the abolition of the caste system and advocated for the education and empowerment of lower caste people, particularly women. She was also actively involved in the welfare of widows and orphans. Savitribai Phule wrote poetry and books on social issues, education, and women's rights. She was also an active member of Satyashodhak Samaj, a social reform organization that worked towards empowering lower caste people, and was a strong advocate for the rights of women and the oppressed. Savitribai Phule's contributions towards the education and empowerment of women and lower caste people in India were significant. They had a lasting impact on the social and educational landscape in India.

## Remembering Savitribai Phule



**7th February**  
Mata Ramabai Ambedkar  
Death Anniversary



**8th February**  
Sant Narhari Sonar  
Death Anniversary



**11th February**  
Baba Tilkha Manjhi  
Birth Anniversary



**12th February**  
Swami Dayanand Saraswati  
Birth Anniversary



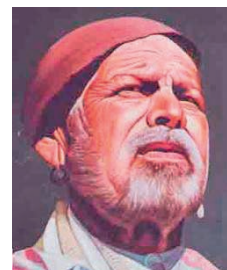
**17th February**  
Lahuji Salve  
Death Anniversary



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



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



**23rd February**  
Sant Gadgebaba  
Birth Anniversary



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