

UNHEARD VOICES

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Renting House?

WHAT IS YOUR CASTE ?





Message from Seattle

The Seattle City Council decision to outlaw caste discrimination has generated hot debate in India and the Indian diaspora. This is expected as Seattle has become the first city in the United States to enact a law involving caste discrimination. US law provides various grounds for discrimination, which include gender, age, race and sex. Caste, which has Indian origin, is a new addition to the list. Indian-American Kshama Sawant, who hails from Pune, took initiative to pass the act. It is a major victory for her as it is for the first-time that caste has been recognised as ground for discrimination outside South Asia.

The Indian diaspora is a global reality now. Thousands of Indians are migrating to foreign countries. It is not surprising if Indians are going overseas along with their traditional baggage and mind set. The Seattle Act has divided the Indian diaspora. This division is not restricted to the US but is visible in other countries as well. The main bone of contention is the necessity of such an act. Debate apart, all must note that Hindus, living outside US, have no locus standi to comment on Seattle Act as it is essentially an internal matter of US. We must remember how we react when any foreign country holds some view on any internal act in India. It is often described as interference in internal matters of India. The same logic applies here. Indians, who are not citizens of the US, must remember that they have no locus-standi to react to the Seattle Act.

Opponents of the Seattle Act have questioned its necessity saying caste discrimination does not happen at a place of work. They fear that the act would result in an adverse impact on the atmosphere at the place of work. This, they feel, would happen as the act is not necessary in the first place. The Seattle Act is also described as an attempt to set a narrative about Hindus in a particular direction. They even point fingers at some anti-Hindu forces. We need to take two facts into consideration. Firstly, it was enacted on the demand by an Indian-American politician Kshama Sawant, who is a member of Seattle City Council. She is associated with Socialist

Alternative. But the fact cannot be neglected that she was campaigning for the act for quite a long time. Naturally, it can be said that the act is a result of demand from Indians. It has not come out of the blue. Secondly, probably more important, why should one get scared of the act if caste discrimination does not take place? How will it harm them if they do not believe or practice caste discrimination? If they fear misuse of the act, they should ask for safeguards instead of opposing it. It is the responsibility of all Hindus living in Seattle or the US to ensure that equality is experienced. They also cannot run away from the responsibility of setting the narrative as desired by them.

The Seattle act is described as Hindu phobic. It is seen as a conspiracy against Hindus. We must remember in the first place that caste is an undesirable and disturbing reality of Hindu society. Its manifestation has certainly reduced but a lot more needs to be done. Equality is yet to be established as a human value. Opposition to the Seattle Act will be seen as a regressive step. It will provide another stick to the opposite camp to beat, that Hindus still believe in caste discrimination. This is more dangerous as it would come as a major obstacle in establishing any meaningful dialogue to have social harmony and social cohesiveness among Hindus.

Seattle Act supporters complain that they face caste discrimination at the workplace. If the complaint does not hold any water, we can easily infer that Hindus do not carry traditional baggage in their heads. Is it a reality? Responsible and sensible Hindus must remember that self-criticism, self-correction and uninterrupted continuous dialogue is the only way to deal with such critical issues. Such issues are bound to crop up till we take the entire society as the desired destination, which will be founded on social cohesiveness. Supporters and opponents of the Seattle Act should be aware that equality and unity is the goal and not the divided house.

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Appeal for financial assistance



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

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

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New manifestation of caste discrimination

Discrimination in housing against people from marginalised communities, including Scheduled Castes is a widespread problem in many parts of the world. There can be various reasons for the difficulty in getting rental housing for Scheduled Castes people. Some landlords may have biases and prejudices against people from certain communities and may refuse to rent to them. In some cases, landlords demand higher rents or security deposits from Scheduled Castes people, making it more difficult for them to afford housing.

Vijendra & Sumit



It is highly disturbing that caste-based discrimination continues to prevail in many parts of the country. While it is manifested in several forms – be it rural or urban - it is experienced in a shocking manner when it comes to renting a house. This happens when social transaction and mobilization has increased irrespective of caste. Landlords are seen refusing renting of houses to those people, who traditionally belong to marginalized communities. This discrimination is violation under the law but takes place in a very soft and sophisticated manner,

creating an impression that everything is going smoothly.

The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, prohibits discrimination against individuals from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in all spheres of life, including in housing. Article 15(2) in The Constitution of India 1949 states that no citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them, be subject to any disability, liability, restriction, or condition regarding access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of public entertainment; or the use of wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads and places of public resort maintained





wholly or partly out of State funds or dedicated to the use of the general public.

Are we really following the provisions mentioned in this article? Enforcement of laws can be challenging and many incidents of discrimination go unreported. Additionally, caste-based discrimination is often subtle and difficult to prove. We talked about our rights every time, but whenever the time came to carry out our duties, we opted out. No one is concerned with his duty. We ignore the path shown by the makers of the Constitution of India. We treat our brethren differently while providing shelter, wells, or public places. Why am I saying this? There is a reason behind this. With the help of reservations, people from deprived communities became educated and empowered. But due to restricted opportunities at the local level, they are forced to move to metro cities or district places. At that time, they need to find homes for themselves. They start searching for places with good locality, security, and accessibility. While exploring the places, if they find feasible houses to stay, they start negotiating with the landlord. Before giving a final call, the landlord is found to be eager to know from which community he belongs to. This shows the typical upper-caste mentality of the owners. The owners also feel that the person who belongs to the deprived community is upgrading his standard of living, trying to be in a good place, and competing with the so-called upper castes.

Discrimination is a severe problem in India, affecting individuals and communities. Discrimination is based on various factors such as caste, religion, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Discrimination based on caste is one of India's most pervasive forms, affecting millions of people born into lower castes or Scheduled Castes. This discrimination can include social exclusion, denial of access to education and employment opportunities and violence. People intend to migrate because of education and better job opportunities. Various factors can drive migration, and a combination often influences the decision to relocate. Discrimination in housing against people from marginalised communities, including Scheduled Castes is a widespread problem in many parts of the world. There can be various reasons for the difficulty in getting rental housing for Scheduled Castes people. Some landlords may have biases and prejudices against people from certain communities and may refuse to rent to them. In some cases, landlords demand higher rents or security deposits from Scheduled Castes people, making it more difficult for them to afford housing.

Here are the few examples :

A student from the SC community from Jammu and Kashmir is willing to pursue further education. The course he or she wants to pursue is unavailable

in their native places. So, they have to decide to migrate from their village to the district place or other states. They start exploring the opportunities. Once they finalize their destination, they must enrol in the college for the desired courses. If the colleges have hostels, then the issue of their residence will be resolved. However, in some cases, the colleges have no hostel facilities or feasible hostel fees. In that case, they need to find a residence outside the college. Then the actual problem starts. When they begin searching for places, they are willing to have a place near their college so less time is spent on the journey and more time can be spent in the library or college premises. But the landlords are not interested in providing shelter without knowing the castes of the students. This leads to the rejection for getting the places, and then frustration starts for the students.

Students hide their caste identity from the landlord to resolve this issue and start residing in their homes. In some cases, the constant fear of getting caught because of hiding caste, leads to non-performance in academics. Somehow, the students managed to complete their studies and leave the place.

To address this issue, organizations such as the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) and the Centre for Social Equity and Inclusion (CSEI)

The intensity of the problem may be different from place to place but this kind of discrimination does exist in the country. The incidents mentioned here are just a few examples of the pervasive problem of caste-based discrimination in urban PG accommodations in India. Discrimination based on caste, religion, gender, and other factors can limit access to safe and affordable accommodation and can have a serious impact on the mental health and well-being of those affected.

have been working for awareness about caste-based discrimination and to provide support and advocacy for those affected by it. Additionally, some states have introduced measures to regulate PG accommodations and prevent discrimination, such as the Karnataka State Commission for Women's Initiative, which certifies PG accommodations that meet certain standards of safety and non-discrimination.

Appeal to readers to share their experiences on this issue with Unheard Voices. We will publish few of them. Our email id : uv@unheardvoices.co.in



Several incidents of caste-based discrimination in urban paying guest (PG) accommodations in India have been reported. These incidents are often difficult to track and document, but some examples are as follows:

In 2020, a student from a Dalit community in Delhi was allegedly denied admission to a PG accommodation because of her caste. The PG owner reportedly told her that they did not rent to people like her and that she should look for accommodation elsewhere.



In 2017, a student from a Scheduled Caste community in Chennai was allegedly beaten up by his PG owner and forced to vacate the accommodation because of his caste. The PG owner reportedly demanded that the student leave immediately, and when he refused, he was beaten up.

In 2019, I experienced a similar incident in Dehradun. The landlords refused to provide me with accommodation because of caste. Every landlord asked the same question in a similar manner. That is - name, from where you are and what is your caste. At last, I found accommodation by hiding my caste.

In some parts of India, Scheduled Castes people use 'Ram' in their surnames. For Example, Vijay Kumar Ram and Ravi Kumar Ram. When they have to migrate from their native places to other places to explore job opportunities, they have to hide the 'Ram' from their respective names. Because in some areas, the landlord of the houses will not allow Scheduled Castes people as tenants.

Being Dalit person, we feel proud to have our first self-owned house. At that time, we keep statues of Bhagwan Buddha and Dr. Ambedkar. We click photos with those statues. Then we decided to rent out that property to the family. We upload those photos on the sites that help us to get tenants. The owner might receive good references. A recently married couple also wishes to visit the house through a local agent— the couple like the new fully furnished flat with ventilation. But when the owner shared the photos containing the images of Bhagwan Buddha

and Dr. Ambedkar, the couple did not respond afterward because they belong to the rural part of state Maharashtra, where they are the landlords and so-called upper castes. It is shameful for them to stay in a house owned by a Scheduled caste person.

There are few names which are in upper castes as well as in lower castes. Because of this we are not able to identify the caste of the person. In a few cases, married couples from Scheduled Castes use their pre-marital names for job purposes. One of the spouse's names falls under the upper caste category but they belonged to Scheduled Castes. But they are not much interested in changing their names. When they have to find out the houses for their residence, they simply tell their names to the landlord or the owners. But they also face the same kind of refusal from landlords because of their surnames which indicate that they belong to Scheduled Castes. So, the couple decides not to use the surname or name which indicates their castes. They simply use the name which can be seen as upper caste.

These are real life examples, actually narrated by the participants in the seminars held in Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Calcutta, and Lucknow. The intensity of the problem may be different from place to place but this kind of discrimination does exist in the country. These incidents are just a few examples of the pervasive problem of caste-based discrimination in urban PG accommodations in India. Discrimination based on caste, religion, gender, and other factors can limit access to safe and affordable accommodation and can have a serious impact on the mental health and well-being of those affected. It is important for individuals and organizations to speak out against discrimination and to work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable society.

To address this issue, governments and civil society organizations can take various measures, as suggested below:

Strengthening legal protections : Governments can enact and enforce laws that prohibit discrimination in housing based on caste or other social identities.

Creating awareness : Civil society organizations can work to create awareness among landlords and the general public about the harms of discrimination and the importance of treating everyone equally.

Providing financial assistance : Governments can provide financial assistance to Scheduled Castes people to help them afford rental housing and to provide incentives to landlords who rent to them.

Offering mediation services : Governments can provide mediation services to help resolve disputes between landlords and tenants, including those that may arise due to discrimination.

It is important to recognize that discrimination against Scheduled Castes people in housing is a complex issue that requires a multifaceted approach to address.

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J&K delimitation, paving way for social inclusion

After the delimitation of the constituencies of J&K, the Assembly seats of the Jammu region have been increased on the basis of the population, geography and other relevant parameters. Also, seats have been reserved for Scheduled Tribes for the first time. As it is well known that because of Article 370, Scheduled Tribes have been discriminated against for 70 years by not giving them political reservation. After new delimitation, the Dalits of J&K will get justice on the basis of their population. Communities like Gujjar, Bakarwal of the Scheduled Tribe community living in Jammu and Kashmir, whose counterparts get political reservation all over India, will be entitled to get political reservation.



Pankaj



The Supreme Court has upheld the central government initiative on delimitation exercise in Jammu and Kashmir. On February 13 this year the top court observed that the delimitation commission was constituted under the law passed by the central government in Jammu and Kashmir and stated that the Central Government has the right to form a Delimitation Commission. The court denied all the challenges raised by petitioners and observed that the central government has legitimately exercised its powers in constituting the Delimitation Commission.

In 2022, Haji Abdul Gani Khan and Dr. Mohammad Ayub Mattoo, both residents of Jammu and Kashmir, had filed a petition in the Supreme Court, challenging the setting up of the Delimitation Commission for the determination of Assembly and Lok Sabha seats in Jammu and Kashmir. They had challenged legality and validity of the action on constituting a Delimitation Commission for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir under provisions of the Delimitation Act, 2002 and the exercise of delimitation undertaken by the Commission.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta,



appearing for the Central Government in the court, said that the petitioner has not challenged the provisions of the law. The petitioner has not even raised a constitutional validity. Mehta further said that under Article 2, 3 and 4 of the Constitution, the Parliament has been given the right to make laws related to the formation and arrangement of a new state or administrative unit in the country. Under this provision, the Delimitation Commission was constituted in the past also.

Equal representation and geographical areas

It is relevant here to note that on August 5, 2019, Parliament of India brought some constitutional changes in Jammu and Kashmir and formed the erstwhile State of J&K into Union Territory of J & K. Similarly, UT of Ladakh also came into existence.

These changes were made with the intention to bring people of J&K closer to the rest of India and serve justice and equality to them. Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act was also passed along with supplementary orders thereby introducing the people of J&K to their fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution of India. In this line of development, a commission was formed for the delimitation of Assembly constituencies

This new delimitation award will hopefully bring democracy in true spirit for those, who were neglected and deprived of equal political rights over seventy years. Thus, Delimitation is very important for the people of Union Territory of J & K because the success of democracy lies in the fact that every person living in any part of the region, however remote it might be, is equitably represented in the Assembly which is responsible for their welfare.

in Jammu and Kashmir on March 5, 2020. This Delimitation Commission, created on the basis of the Representation of the People Act 1957, performed its work under the chairmanship of Justice Ranjana Desai, a former judge of the Supreme Court. The Commission was given the task of completing the delimitation in States like Jammu and Kashmir, Assam, Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh to bring fair division of geographical areas and proportional representation of each section of society in polity of State. But in the new notification, the names of the States like Assam, Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh were removed.

The commission submitted its report after having a large number of meetings and discussions with political parties, peoples' representatives and the administration. Delimitation was done in Jammu

and Kashmir in the year 1995. During that time it took seven years for the commission to submit its report, but this time the deadline for submitting its final report to the commission was set by May 6, 2022. The commission submitted its report a day before the deadline.

Opposition parties not happy

It is worth mentioning that when the process of delimitation was in progress, some of the opposition parties in J&K - National Conference and PDP, refused to attend the meetings regarding this delimitation, questioning the legality. They observed that the issue of abrogation of Article 370 was still pending in the court. Mufti's party asked for more seats for Kashmir region on the basis of higher population of Kashmir. Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh lashed out at the opposition parties saying that these people in the House talk about restoring the Assembly in Jammu and Kashmir and resuming the democratic process. But when the democratic process is starting, these people are doing politics.

The last delimitation was done on the basis of the 1981 census. This time the Delimitation Commission did the work of delimitation on the basis of the 2011 census. Population remains the main basis in the delimitation of Assembly constituencies. Apart from this, area, geographical condition, facility of communication etc. are also taken into consideration. As per section 9, for the exercise of delimitation, population is not the only criteria. Section 9(1) (a) of the delimitation Act, reads as,

"9 (1) (a). all constituencies shall, as far as practicable, be geographically compact areas, and in delimiting them regard shall be had to physical features, existing boundaries of administrative units, facilities of communication and public convenience;"

Thus, it is very clear that delimitation of a constituency should be done, while keeping in mind physical features, existing boundaries of administrative units, facilities of communication and public convenience; apart from population. Delimitation in J & K was earlier done in 1963, 1973 and 1995.

Delimitation ended discrimination

After the delimitation of the constituencies of J&K, the Assembly seats of the Jammu region have been increased on the basis of the population, geography and other relevant parameters. Also, seats have been reserved for Scheduled Tribes for the first time. As it is well known that because of Article 370, Scheduled Tribes have been discriminated against for 70 years by not giving them political reservation. After new delimitation, the Dalits of J&K will get justice on the basis of their population. Communities like Gujjar, Bakarwal of the Scheduled Tribe community living in Jammu and Kashmir, whose counterparts get political reservation all over India, will be entitled to get political reservation. Now onwards, the people of these communities will be able to get political representation in proportion to



their population.

There are currently 90 Assembly constituencies in J & K, not 83 (excluding 24 seats reserved for occupied territories by Pakistan). Nine seats have been reserved for Scheduled Tribes and 7 for Scheduled Castes. The Delimitation Commission has also reshuffled the Lok Sabha seats in Jammu and Kashmir. According to the Commission, out of five Lok Sabha seats, two seats will be in Jammu and two seats in Kashmir division while one seat will be in the common area of both. Earlier Udhampur and Doda were in Jammu division and Baramulla, Anantnag and Srinagar were in Kashmir division. Under the new arrangement, Anantnag seat will now be known as Anantnag, Rajouri, Poonch, that is, two districts Rajouri and Poonch have been removed from Jammu division seat and included in Anantnag. Each Lok Sabha seat will have 18 Assembly seats. Reasi district has been carved out of Udhampur seat and added to Jammu.

Now the path is completely clear regarding the Assembly elections in J&K. Stepping into the election process, the Election Commission of India has appointed District Election Officers, Electoral Registration Officers, and Deputy Election Officers. ECI has stated that the 20 district deputy commissioners of the state will remain the district election officers in the district under their jurisdiction.

Significance of delimitation

It is a known fact that the people in border states have suffered political unscrupulousness and neglect for decades, leading to unequal distribution of development. Hitherto, each Assembly election in J & K resulted in unequal representation and unfair division of geographical areas. This new delimitation award will hopefully bring democracy in true spirit

for those, who were neglected and deprived of equal political rights over seventy years. Thus, Delimitation is very important for the people of Union Territory of J & K because the success of democracy lies in the fact that every person living in any part of the region, however remote it might be, is equitably represented in the Assembly which is responsible for their welfare.

Way forward

Be it the urban or rural or the hilly regions, be it the Dogras, Kashmiris, Gujjars, Pahadis, or Shinas, all have welcomed the new delimitation award. Delimitation exercise empowers the voiceless sections of society and introduces democracy. We must agree that democracy is meaningless if people are not given a platform to raise their voices. This is more crucial and important for the people from remote and backward areas. Purpose of democracy will be defeated if this does not happen. People of J & K were compelled to suffer the arbitrary and unjust delimitation for decades because of non-application of significant central laws in J & K including the Delimitation Act, 2002. Further, Jammu and Kashmir was kept out of the delimitation exercise when it was carried out in the rest of the country in 2002 - 2008. Non implementation of the said laws in Jammu Kashmir, caused discrepancies and disparities in delimitation. This denied equal participation in the democratic process to a large section of society for decades. It was all against fundamentals of the constitution and principle of democracy. The SC decision has, thus, delivered justice to deprived and neglected people of India.

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Manual scavenging workers : Lot more to be done

In reality, the manual scavengers need to enter inside sewers to make them free and clean. They enter the sewers filled with human waste without any safety gear and remove it from inside. These are the people, who do all this work with bare hands and carry it on their heads from one place to another. Continuation of this practice clearly shows the societal divide even today.

Adv. Girender Nath



It is very miserable that the practice of manual scavenging that started ages ago is still in practice. This problem of manual scavenging is getting worse with the advent of industrialization and urbanization. This work was always associated with a particular caste and was considered a hereditary profession. It used to be inherited from one generation to another. This millennial old practice has become a day-to-day life for this community.

The peculiar characteristic of the Indian caste system is that each of the castes is associated with a certain type of business. Upper caste people had a number of options for the businesses while the work associated with filth, cleanliness and garbage used to be the responsibility of lower caste people. For example, cleaning of roads, cleaning of drainages and sewers, removing of human and animal waste, leather work, pig breeding, etc used to be associated with lower caste people. Because there were no flush toilets in many villages, cleaning workers would

collect human waste with their hands and take it to dumping place on their heads. This also included picking up the dead bodies of stray animals and taking out leather from their bodies. All this was considered a dirty task. Not just these tasks were known as pollutants but it also involved remunerations in terms of leftover food from the kitchens of upper caste houses. Despite technological development, there is not much change in this scenario.

In a caste-based society, human waste carriers/cleaners have been put at the bottom of the pyramid. All those born in this caste had to pursue this profession. This ensured that they remain at the farthest corner of the caste-based system in India. Most heart-wrenching fact is that those born in these families were put in the lowest layer of the social ladder and were considered as pollutants. These are the people, who were most hated, excluded by all the other castes and classes along with being the most harassed and exploited community. No community in history has ever faced such difficulty, insult and exploitation. We need to take arduous efforts to change our mentality on a social as well as on a



national level.

After achieving independence in 1947, the government of India has taken a lot of legislative and strategic efforts to stop this practice of manual scavenging. Even in recent years, many such efforts were made by the government. The efforts are being made to make scavenging an advanced technology-based task. This is to ensure that no human should need to do this manually again and no human effort gets involved in this task.

On one hand technological developments in cleaning works is a very important step towards ensuring that lower caste people do not engage in manual scavenging. However, only the investments in this technology are not enough to end the social and financial exclusion faced by this community. The government's aim should be to reach out to the last person doing this job and helping him/her to get rid of it. Local officials need to be sensitive about this topic for better implementation. This should be done by local authorities as they are the ones who actually find out such cases of manual scavenging.

Work of Sewers

In reality, the manual scavengers need to enter inside sewers to make them free and clean. They enter the sewers filled with human waste without any safety gear and remove it from inside. These are the people, who do all this work with bare hands and carry it on their heads from one place to another. Continuation of this practice clearly shows the societal divide even today.

Following are the types of manual scavenging – Manual scavenging in dry toilets, manual scavenging in dry community toilets, manual scavenging in railways, cleaning of septic tanks, etc.

All types of manual scavenging led to health issues, caste discrimination and all the other insulting values in the society. Any person, who is engaged in cleaning of lanes/drainages does the same job in any part of the city. Deployment of cleaning workers began since the inception of cleanliness as a priority of the cities. Later, a water hose came into use for the cleaning of lanes and drainages.

Since the state governments are not willing to put in more effort, the expected objectives are not being achieved despite consistent efforts by the central government. The Union Ministry of Home Affairs started a scheme for emancipation and rehabilitation of manual scavengers back in 1980. The scheme was aimed at converting dry toilets into clean toilets. Under the scheme, the government started building low-cost urban toilets. This was the first big step towards the change. In 1992, when the scheme deepened its roots and with the aim of rehabilitation of manual scavengers, the government converted the scheme "Low-cost urban toilets to get rid of scavengers" into two separate initiatives.

1. Conversion of dry toilets into flush toilets which was supposed to be funded by the then finance ministry

2. The ministry of social welfare started "National Scheme for Liberation and Rehabilitation of Scavengers" (NSLRS)

Later, both the schemes were handed over to Urban Employment and Poverty Eradication ministries. However, the pace of implementation of the scheme was very slow. The scheme only could focus on getting rid of manual scavenging and the further motive of emancipation and rehabilitation somehow never happened.

Legal Efforts

1. In 1993, under the Employment of Manual Scavengers Act, the practice of employing a person for manual scavenging was declared a crime.
2. On September 6, 2013 the Parliament passed the bill to form the "Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (prohibition) Act 2013" which is committed to end the practice of manual scavenging. In many parts of the country, a lot of people are still involved in the practice of manual scavenging. In the colonial times, with increasing urbanization the practice got more encouragement than restraint. There was hardly any change in this practice during colonial times. Though there was an invention of septic tank or sewer, the technology was available for the limited number of people in the society. It was found in a survey in 2013 from the official figures of the government that the number of manual scavengers was 14,505 in the year 2013. Later, National Safai Karamcharis Finance Development Corporation (NSKFC) which is an undertaking of the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) undertook another such survey in between March and December 2018. It pointed out that a total of 42,303 people were still engaged with manual scavenging as of August 2019.

The survey was done only in 18 states and all of them accepted that they still have the practice of manual scavenging. The country has a total of 780 districts; however, a survey was undertaken only in 170 districts. In the end, the ground situation can be assessed only after a nationwide survey.

Before taking any action towards eradication of deaths during sewage tanks cleaning, one must understand what exactly it is. It's a general process of transferring the accumulated waste through underground pipes. Through these pipelines, the accumulated waste in any form is taken to processing machines where it undergoes some chemical process. This accumulated waste includes the mud, human excreta, and industrial waste. Along with this, underground pipelines are the dwelling place of various viruses and bacteria. As bacteria and viruses are there the accumulated waste also produces the gasses like hydrogen sulphide, ammonia, methane, carbon monoxide and sulphur dioxide.

When these sewage holes get completely filled



with waste to their limit, they are supposed to be cleaned by the local municipal corporations. According to the Manual Scavenging act of 2013, these sewage holes should be cleaned with the help of machines or they can also be cleaned manually but with proper care and precaution. But the conditions are such that no one adheres to the rules. Workers are forced to clean the sewage holes without giving them any safety instruments which results in severe illness and deaths. According to the statistics given by government departments, 1032 sewage cleaners lost their lives during 1993 to 2023. Between January 2022 and January 2023 total 91 people lost their lives during sewage cleaning. Before 2014, conditions were really difficult for these cleaners. They hardly got the compensation for the dead ones. But things started changing after 2014. The Supreme Court came as a saviour for these scavengers and ordered the governments to pay the compensation of 10 lakh rupees to the family of the dead one. It also ordered the job and accommodation facilities for the family members. But still there are many loopholes in this system which should be given attention. Let us say if there are three people working in the sewage holes and two of them die and one survives, then there is no surety of his further life. Governments are not entitled to pay any compensation in this matter.

On 2 February 2020 two persons were working in the sewage hole of CBD ground in East Delhi. One person among them lost his life after coming in contact with the poisonous gas. His family was given a compensation of Rs.10 lakh. The other one who managed to survive, was not less than dead. He could not get any kind of compensation as he was alive. His life completely changed after that incident. When I happened to meet that man's old mother, she told us that her son also should have died as he has turned into a moving dead body. With the combined efforts of government bodies, social organizations and social workers, cases were filed against the concerned contractors under article 304 of IPC. Manual Scavenging act of 2013 and Prevention of Atrocities on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes act of 1989 are also there to help these classes, but still there is a lot of scope for improvement.

Our bureaucrats and governments are focusing on building the networks of cities according to the western model. But on the other hand, issues and complaints of manual scavengers still remain unaddressed. When Indians were fighting their first war of independence in 1857, the French were building the networks of sewage systems. During the British era growth was restricted to only cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Calcutta and Madras. That is why the networks of sewage systems can be seen in these cities even today. Frenchs were way ahead of their time in terms of safety of manual scavengers. They were given all the safety instruments. There is one museum in Paris which is dedicated to the instruments used in manual scavenging which is built on a drainage canal. This

museum has now become a tourist spot. Since the year 1867, they have been running a program where they make people aware about the contribution of sewage cleaners and manual scavengers in keeping the city clean.

In India manual scavengers used to use brooms made up of bamboo sticks which gave them spinal ailments. In order to carry the accumulated trash and waste in the sewage tank, they used to use the vessels made of bamboo, which we all know are not that strong. During the process of carrying it, their body also used to get littered with that trash. How inhuman it was!

In 1962, a committee was formed by the labour ministry of India to suggest reforms for the betterment of manual scavengers. Late Kanhaiyalal Valmiki, who was also a member of Parliament, was the member of that committee. That committee suggested the use of a wheelbarrow to collect the trash and also suggested the use of brooms with the extended stick attached to it. These reforms were supposed to be followed by the local municipal corporations. but the manual scavengers kept working with their traditional equipment.

My grandma, who was also involved in this work of manual scavenging, used to work with the traditional equipment. She was a worker in the local municipal corporation. I can still recall those days when newly introduced brooms came on the horizon. This was not a very big move but still it felt like a big change. Still there are some pockets in our country where these manual scavengers are given inhuman treatment.

In 1995 -1996 National Human Rights Commission along with National Labour Commission came up with the suggestion of using advanced equipment which were supposed to be put into practice by municipal corporations. On October 2, 2014, our Prime Minister launched the Swachh Bharat Mission whose main purpose was to make people aware about building toilets, eradication of defecation in open areas and the use of machines instead of manual scavenging. In 2022, the government came up with the NAMASTE scheme whose aim was the eradication of unsafe sewer and septic tank cleaning practices. Total 100 crore rupees were allotted for this scheme. Most of the parties and social organisations welcomed and praised this move by the government. If the implementation of this scheme goes well, then we can see the drop in the deaths happening during manual scavenging. The laws made by the then governments in the years 1980, 1992, 1993, 2013, which we have already mentioned and the plan announced by the Prime Minister, will be fully implemented when the monitoring committees get power and the people related to the subject are appointed in the respective commissions. These institutions should become vibrant and strong so that the manual scavenging finally ends!

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Harichand's doctrine is based on three basic principles-truth, love, and sanctity. The doctrine treats all people as equal; people are not seen according to castes or sects. This is why most of his followers believe Harichand to be an 'avatar' (incarnation) of Vishnu. Majority of them are from the lower strata of society.

Sri Sri Harichand Thakur and regeneration of Namshudras

Raktim Das



The Matua religion was founded by Lord Sri Sri Harichand Thakur of Orakandi, in Gopalganj district of present-day Bangladesh. Lord Sri Sri Harichand Thakur was born in 1812. He became active during the period when the untouchables of Bengal were accepting Islam and Christianity due to ill treatment by upper caste Hindus. Lord Harichand saved the untouchables from conversion by floating Matua religion that maintained vocabulary and motifs of the Hinduism

Harichand Thakur received little formal education. After completing his initial schooling in a pathshala, he attended school for only a few months. He then started spending his time with shepherds and cowboys and roamed with them from one place to another. Signs of some transformation within him were seen during this period. He was loved by all of his friends for his physical beauty, naivete, love for music and philanthropic attitude. He could also sing kirtan.

Harichand's doctrine is based on three basic principles-truth, love, and sanctity. The doctrine treats all people as equal; people are not seen according to castes or sects. This is why most of his followers believe Harichand to be an 'avatar' (incarnation) of Vishnu. Majority of them are from the lower strata of society. They used to affirm: *Rama hari krisna hari*

hari gorachand. Sarba hari mile ei purna harichand (Rama is lord, Krishna is lord, lord is Chaitanyadev. But all of them make our Harichand, who is our lord.) Harichand did not believe in asceticism. He was more of a family man and it is from within the family that he preached the word of God. He believed that *Grhete thakiya yar hay bhaboday. Sei ye param sadhu janio nishchay*; (the best ascetic is he who can express his devotion to God remaining a family man).

He mobilised all the neglected sects and castes and inspired them to remain true to the openness of Hinduism. Harichand left 12 instructions for the matuas, known as Dvadash Ajnya (Twelve Commands): 1. Always speak the truth, 2. Respect your parents like Gods, 3. Treat women as your mother, 4. Love the world, 5. Remain liberal to all the religions, 6. Never discriminate on racial counts, 7. Try to establish Harimandir (temple of the Lord), 8. Sit in prayer every day, 9. Sacrifice yourself for God, 10. Do not practice asceticism in a garb, 11. Hold the six cardinal passions in check, and 12. Chant the name of your Lord while working with your hand.

Harichand died on 23 Falgun, the year 1284 of the Bangla calendar. Matua Sangit spiritual songs of the Matua sect, containing praises of the god Hari and their gurus, Harichand Thakur and Guruchand. Composers of Matua songs include Aswani Gosai, Tarak Chandra Sarker, Manohar Sarker, Mahananda Sarker, Rasik Sarker, Prafulla Gonsai, Surendranath Sarker, and Swarup Sarker. Matua religious literature



in Bengali has been growing since the end of the 19th Century. The first, scriptural works of Matua literature are the Mahasankirtan, a book of Matua songs and Sri Sri Hariliamrita, a multi volume poetical epic style life history of Lord Harichand Thakur. These two books were both penned by Tarak Chandra Sarkar, a famous folk poet and untouchable sant. Composed in the manner of baul songs, these songs are predominantly about love (prem) and devotion (bhakti). The closing lines of the songs mention the name of the composer. Musical instruments such as the drum, shinga, and kansa are used as accompaniments. The devotees dance while they sing. Matua songs describe the longing of the soul for the divine.

As in other religious poetry, the desire of the human soul is imaged in terms of human love as in the following songs: *Hari tomar namer madhu pan korla na man-bhramara* (The honey-bee mind has not drunk the honey from your name, oh Hari), *Kabe tanre pab re, paran kande Harichand bali* (When shall I meet Him, my soul cries for Harichand), *Amar ei akinchan, he Guruchand tomay ami bhalabasi* (Listen to me, O Guruchand, I love you).

Shri Harichand Thakur and his son were great social reformers. Sri Sri Guruchand Thakur brought reformations in the chandal (charal) section of the society. In 1873, Chandals held a general strike and decided not to serve any higher caste people unless they got a dignified position in Hindu society. This is the first general strike (Dalit uprisings) officially recorded and recognized in the Indian subcontinent. He started an English high school at Orakandhi (Bangladesh) for the people of lower communities, most of them called Namshudra (untouchable community). He united people of lower communities and protected them from conversion. He also took help from an Australian missionary Dr. C. S. Mead for the social and educational development of these downtrodden societies. With the help of Dr. C.S. Mead, he also tried to increase the awareness regarding basic needs like health check-ups, environmental awareness, etc. In 1907, he established a higher English medium school, named Dr. C. S. Mead School, in his native village. He also understood the importance of women's education. In the Vedic period of India, men and women had equal opportunities for education. However, this flow was stopped during the medieval period by the name of Purdah System. Purdah System basically means women cannot go in front of other men except their husbands without covering their faces. This system was most prevalent in upper-class society. Most of the women of the lower-class society had to go outside for daily earning; thus, Purdah System did not exist in that society. However, education was like a dream for most of the girls during that time. Women also had to suffer much in their family life due to lack of any education. He understood these problems of women and tried to find a solution through women's education.

He realized that only educated women can balance their married life in a rational way and provide a healthy educational atmosphere to their children at home. He understood that only educated women can engage themselves in various avenues of social and economic development. He established many girls' schools for the spreading of women's education. Under his guidance, the Widow Remarriage system was also introduced in the Namshudra community in 1909. He also instructed his followers to stand against the dowry system. In 1907, he submitted a memorandum to the Bengal government demanding upper caste status for the lower class of Hindu Chandal society. Starting from 1901, many Hindu caste sections sent representations to the Bengal government demanding a name change and a higher status. In 1911, the government turned down all these demands except two. One of these were of Chandals, who were renamed as Namshudra. People from the Chandal community started calling themselves Namshudra and professed to be Vaishnav. He realized that political, economic, and moral standards had to be raised for the upliftment of the poor Namshudra community. He understood the necessity of government help for the upliftment of the Namshudra community. He requested the Bengal government for reservation for the Namshudras in the field of government jobs. By his serious effort, Reservation was introduced for Namshudras in the field of education, government employment and representation in politics. In 1909, A list of 31 disadvantaged classes was prepared in the Bengal province and Reservation was extended to them for their economic and social upliftment.

These disadvantaged classes are renamed together as a Scheduled Caste. However, only Bengal province had this Reservation system. No other state in India had such a system. Later in 1919, Reservation was introduced in all other provinces of India under the Montague-Chemsford Act of 1919. Guruchand thakur preached this religion amongst the Dalits and promoted their upward mobility by launching his famous education movement in 1881, ten years before the birth of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Due to Guruchand Thakurs education movement, Dalits of East Bengal literate and politically conscious and therefore elected Dr. Ambedkar from

Bengal constituency in the Constituent Assembly election in 1946. It was the time when Congress leaders had marginalized him in Maharashtra and the Hindi belt. Considered another avatar in his own right, Guruchand Thakur integrated Bengal's great Namshudra community into one unit from its divisions and skillfully organized their ongoing mass conversion to Matuamism in protest against Brahmanism.

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Padma Awards: Appreciating contribution of unprivileged

The Padma awards are a set of civilian awards presented by the Government of India to recognise the exceptional achievements and service in various fields such as arts, literature, science, social services, public affairs, and sports etc. The awards are usually announced on Republic Day every year. There are three categories of Padma Awards: Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Shri.

The Padma Vibhushan is the highest civilian award in India and is given for exceptional and distinguished service, while the Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri are given for distinguished service in various fields. The selection process for the Padma Awards is rigorous and involves several stages of review and scrutiny. Nominations are invited from the public, government officials, and other organizations, and are evaluated by an independent committee of experts in each field. The final list of awardees is then approved by the President of India. The Padma Awards are one of the highest civilian honours in India and are highly coveted by individuals across various fields.

We publish names and contributions of those eminent citizens of India, who were honoured with Padma award this year. All of them belong to either Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes.

1) Dhaniram Toto (ST) from West Bengal received the Padma Shri award in the Literature and Education category. He received the award for preserving & promoting the Toto (Dengka) Language for decades. This language is a developed script for the critically endangered language. Dhaniram Toto is considered the Toto (Dengka) language preserver from Totopara village of Jalpaiguri district West Bengal. Despite lacking the formal education or training as a Linguist, he is considered the architect of the Toto language script, preserving the indigenous language. This language has now 37 alphabets. He is the first author to write a novel in Toto language 'Dhanua Toto's Kothamala (Dhanua Toto's Tales).'



2) Neihunuo Sorchie (ST) from Nagaland has been conferred Padma Shri award for her contribution in the field of Arts. She is one of the renowned personalities in the field of indigenous handcrafts for original art motifs and patterns in traditional

weaving. Neihunuo Sorchie is from the Angami community living in the Kohima district. She learned the art of weaving from her mother at the age of four and by the age of six she used to weave the clothes on her own. She has trained over 300 young Naga women in this form of art.

3) Moa Subong (ST) from Nagaland has been conferred Padma Shri award for his contribution in

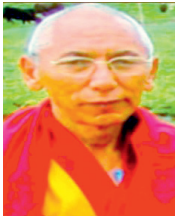


the field of Arts (Folk Music). He is a Naga musician and innovator from Nagaland. He has developed a new and easy to play tool 'Bamhum', a wind musical tool made from bamboo. He also founded Abiogenesis, a musical band that fuses traditional Naga music with modern rock music, along with his wife Arenla M. Subong. They also developed a new world music genre called Howey, which is a fusion of modern rhythm with Naga folk tunes.

4) Kushok Thiksey Nawang Chamba Stanzin (Buddhist) from Ladakh received the Padma Shri in the field of spiritualism. He is a Buddhist spiritual leader from Leh. He is the incumbent head of Thiksay



Monastery. He is considered the ninth reincarnation of Jangsem Sherab Zangpo, a contemporary disciple of Lord Tsongkhapa, the founder of the Yellow



Hat sect of Tibetan Buddhism. He has given countless teachings and initiations to the public in Ladakh and particularly to the monks of Thiksay Monastery. Apart from his religious services rendered both to the monks and lay people of Ladakh, he has also served by taking various political positions to address the grass root problems faced by the people of the remote region of Ladakh. During his tenure as the President of All Ladakh Gonpa Association, the residence for His Holiness the Dalai Lama at Choglamsar, which had been kept under suspension for many years, was officially "offered" to him.

5) Karma Wangchu (Buddhist) from Arunachal Pradesh has received the Padma Shri in the field of social work (Posthumous). He was Born in Seru village in Tawang district in 1936. He had been elected as the first MLA from Tawang in 1978, and, during his time as a public representative from 1978-1994, Wangchu worked tirelessly for the preservation



and promotion of the rich cultural heritage in the border areas of the state. He had served as a minister in the government headed by then chief minister Tomo Riba. Wangchu had not lost any election in his long political career, prior to retiring from politics in 1994. He had, till the time of

his passing, provided free education and residential facilities to more than 1,256 children, mostly orphans, destitute and children belonging to very poor parents of border villages like Mago, Thingbu and Zemithang. In addition, 18 students belonging to poor families in the extreme border areas are being imparted modern education, funded from his pension savings. He was the Buddhist leader and social worker from Tawang - known for his work in the preservation of Monpa culture and traditions.

6) Dr. Janum Singh Soy (ST), received the Padma Shri award in the Literature and education category. He got this appreciation for his work towards preserving and promoting Ho language. This



language is largely spoken by the Ho tribes, who are majorly located in the Singhbhum area of Jharkhand. Dr. Janum Singh Soy, born in Kokcho panchayat area of West Singhbhum district. He has been preserving and promoting the Ho language for the last four decades. He has an Honours

degree in Hindi from Tata college, Chaibasa along with post-graduation from Ranchi University. He had headed the Hindi department in Ghatshila college.

He has authored six books on culture and lifestyle of the small Ho tribe. He has pioneered Ho as a formal course in language with his work a part of curriculum.

7) Anand Kumar (SC), famous in India for his initiative of super 30 got felicitated by Padma Shree award this year by the Indian government. Anand Kumar comes from Bihar's Patna city. This



program, run by Anand Kumar and his family, guides and takes care of the expenditure of the 30 most brilliant students selected from India for the JEE preparation. Qualifying the JEE examination is mandatory for those, who want to complete their engineering from prestigious

institutions like IIT's. Most of the students belong to the poor class. This program was started in 2003. During early days of his struggle, he was helped by his mother and his brother. This initiative is so successful that every year more than half the students from this super 30 batch manage to qualify the JEE exam. Out of 270 understudies he guided from 2002-2011, 236 understudies have secured admission to the IITs. Each one of these 236 pupils belonged to a poor background where their parents or guardians were hawkers, auto-drivers, workers and so on. During 2003-2009, 182 understudies out of 210 have made it to the IITs. In 2010, one of the understudies of Super 30 cleared the IIT JEE passageway making it a three of the line for the foundation. Anand's work is also acknowledged by westerners. Barack Obama, former President of the United States, took notice of Kumar and sent an agent to understand the work done by him. Considering his exceptional work in this field, he was awarded with the Rastriya Bal Kalyan Award in 2017. In 2018 he was awarded with the golden education award and in 2019 he received training excellence award by the foundation based in California. In 2019, Hritik Roshan came up with a movie on Anand Kumar which spread his fame far and wide.

8) Hirabai Lobi (ST) is one such name. Hirbai hails from the African- origin Siddi tribe that resides in Jambur village near Gir forest in Gujarat, which is also the home of the pride of India - the Asian lion. She is conferred by Padma Shree award this year for



her phenomenal work done for the upliftment of Siddi womens . She never received any formal education. She got her knowledge from the radio. Hirabai lost her parents in childhood and was brought up by her grandmother. She has established several kindergartens with the spirit

of providing basic education to the children of the Siddi community. She taught local women the process of making fertilizer, which helped them to become self-sufficient and self-reliant. In 2004 she established Mahila Vikas Foundation for the upliftment of tribal



Siddi women . Till now she has changed the lives of more than 700 women and innumerable children. Till now she has been honoured with various accolades, but when she got the first prize of \$500, she put all the money into the development of the village. So far, she has received many awards like, Award from Reliance, Janaki Devi Prasad Bajaj Award and the Green Award.

9) Cheruvayal Raman (ST) is an Indian tribal farmer



from Wayanad district in Kerala. He is known as the guardian of rare seeds. He had no formal knowledge about the conventional sciences like botany or agricultural sciences but he is successfully conserving over 55 rice varieties on his three acres farm at Kammana in Wayanad district. In

January 2023, the Indian government honoured him with Padma Shri.

10) Paresh Bhai Rathwa (ST) is an Indian tribal artist,



from Gujarat's Chhota Udeypur district. He belongs to the Rathwa tribe mainly located in Gujarat. Paresh bhai and his family are involved in the artwork of age-old Pithora painting. Pithora paintings are found in ancient caves and are believed to be more than 1200years old. These paintings are done for the tribe's deity Pithora

Baba, a way of thanking the deities for their blessings. Due to his efforts, in maintaining the cultural legacy of Pithora and for preserving this tribal folk art, Paresh bhai has been awarded with the Padma Shri.

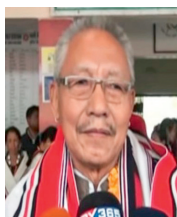
11) Vadivel Gopal and Masi Sadaiyan (ST),



from Irula tribe in Tamilnadu are honoured with the most prestigious award , Padma Shri .They both are expert snake catchers. They

not only catch snakes in India but also in different parts of the world. They have expertise in catching dangerous and poisonous snakes. The most amazing thing is that, they have not done any study of this thing but are masters in doing their job as they follow old techniques given by their forefathers.

12) Ramkuiwangbe Jene (ST), a



Naga social worker who has been preserving and promoting the indigenous Heraka religion and culture for five decades. He received the Padma Shri in the category of social work. He is considered the personal assistant of freedom fighter

Rani Gaidinliu in earlier days. He has dedicated his life for conversation, preservation, and promotion of Heraka religion by organizing awareness. He has also started ten schools for promoting women's education.

13) Risingbor Kurkalang (ST), Musician and expert craftsman of traditional Khasi and Jaintia musical instruments, Dutara. Risingbor kurkalang has been



awarded with Padma Shree this year. He received this award for his contribution to the preservation of Duitara Instrument. Along with Duitara, he also plays Sitar efficiently. Risingbor belongs to the east Khasi hills of Meghalaya. It is a proud moment for the state of Meghalaya

and for India as it recognises the significance of preserving our cultural heritage through traditional folk music. Risingbor said that he is very happy to receive this award as it will inspire other folk artists to continue with their work despite low market demand.

14) Ramesh and Shanti Parmar (ST), craftsman duo belonging to Bhil community from Jhabua region, making Adivasi Dolls from recycled clothes, they have also trained other women in the same. Among many unsung heroes, who have been awarded the Padma award this year by the Indian government,



Ramesh Parmar and Shanti Parmar are one such couple. Ramesh and Shanti have been awarded Padma award for their contribution in the field of preservation

of tribal arts. This couple has been involved in making dolls special to tribal culture for the last 30 years. Shanti Parmar revealed that she learnt this art from her father-in-law and other relatives. They turned the mere art of making dolls into an instrument of earning bread and butter.

15) Magala Kanti Roy (SC), 102-year-old Sarinda



Player from Jalpaiguri, West Bengal, one of Bengal's senior most folk musicians and performing for over 8 decades. He is popular for producing unique bird calls through sarinda. He also called as 'Sarinda ke Sartaj'

16) Jodhiya Bai Baiga (ST): At

the age of 84, Jodhaiya Bai Baiga got the Padma Shri award in Arts this year for her contribution in keeping the art style of Baiga community alive. Jodhiya Bai started painting at the age of 70 years. Jodhiya Bai learnt painting from Ashish Swami, a well-known art teacher, who ran a studio in Umaria district. Jodhiya Bai's paintings are presented in state, nation and international level

PADMA AWARDEES 2023



exhibitions. The paintings made by Jodhiya Bai in the last ten years were focused around Heaven in Indian mythology, God Shiva, and the daily life of the Baiga community. Jodhiya Bai's paintings were even presented during an Art exhibition in Milan, Paris. Jodhiya Bai has become a role model for the young people of India.

17) Bhanubhai Chitara (SEBC) : Among the eight awardees from Gujarat this year, four were from the field of art. Among them



was the Mata Ni Pachedi, an artist Bhanubhai Chitara. He is the seventh Kalamkari artist from the Chunara community, carrying forward the legacy of the 400-year-old traditional craft of 'Mata ni Pachedi'. He has been awarded the Padma Shri. A torch bearer of the 400-year-old craft of

Mata ni Pachedi, promoting the art form through workshops and exhibitions across the world. The Chitara community used to be a nomadic tribe, as people would travel from village to village making this art. The Chitara family is one of the handful of families working on the 'Mata ni Pachedi' art form.

18) Shri Vikram Bahadur Jamatia (ST): Eighty-six-year-old Vikram Bahadur Jamatia, is a man of extraordinary courage and conviction. At a time



when insurgency was at its peak in Tripura, Jamatia campaigned extensively against the powerful and brutal militants. He was instrumental in turning the tide against the proscribed outfits. As Acra (head) of Jamatia Hoda, an apex Socio-cultural-religious body of the Jamatias, he used to visit militancy-infested tribal areas and motivate villagers to stand up against the insurgency pointing out that the fighting had brought a virtual end to development work in tribal areas. Jamatia has also been considered instrumental in the adoption of customary law for indigenous tribes in the north-eastern state.

19) Hemant Chauhan (SC), He received the Padma Shri award in the field of Art. He is considered one of Gujarat's best and most widely celebrated singers



of bhajans and folk music. He is frequently referred to as the bhajan king of Gujarati music, and is also considered to be one of the best singers of Sugam Sangeet. He has a huge fan base in Gujarat and abroad for his divine music and singing. It is believed that his performances of bhajans and devotional music could carry the listener into a tranquil, relaxed and serene world.

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North East Assembly Elections 2023

Domination of regional parties

Constituency Assembly seats won 2018

	Naga Peoples Front	Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party	BJP	Ind.	National People's Party	Janata Dal (United)
General	0	0	0	0	0	0
ST	26	17	12	1	2	1
SC	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Won	26	17	12	1	2	1

In Nagaland Assembly election 2018, there are 59 seats are reserved for Scheduled Tribes and 0 reserved seats for Scheduled Castes. Out of 59 ST reserved seats NPF won 26, NDPP won 17, BJP won 12, Independent, NPEP and JD(U) won 1, 2, 1 seats respectively. NPF won 44%, NDPP won 29%, BJP won 20%, Independent and JD(U) won 2% and NPEP won 3% seats from ST constituency.

Constituency Assembly seats won 2023

	BJP	Ind.	Janata Dal (United)	Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas)	Naga Peoples Front	National People's Party	Nationalist Congress Party	Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party	RPI (Athawale)
General	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ST	12	4	1	2	2	5	7	25	2
SC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Won	12	4	1	2	2	5	7	25	2

In Nagaland Assembly election 2023, there are 60 seats are reserved for Scheduled Tribes and 0 reserved seats for Scheduled Castes. Out of 60 ST reserved seats BJP won 12, Independent candidates won 4, JD(U) won 1, Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), RPI (A) and NPF won 2 seats each, NPP won 5, NCP won 7, NDPP won 25. BJP won 20%, Independent won 7%, JDU won 2%, Lok Janshakti Party, NPF, RPI(A) won 3% each, NPP won 8%, NCP won 12% and NDPP won 42% seats from ST reserved constituency.

Constituency Assembly seats won 2018

	Indigenous People's Front of Tripura	CPI	BJP	CPI(M)
General	0	0	18	11
ST	8	0	10	2
SC	0	0	8	2
Total Won	8	0	36	15

In Tripura Assembly election 2018, there are 20 seats are reserved for Scheduled Tribes and 10 seats are reserved for Scheduled Castes. Out of 20 ST reserved seats BJP won 10, IPFT won 8 and CPM won 2 seats. BJP won 50%, IPFT won 40% and CPM won 10% seats from ST constituency. Out of 10 SC reserved seats BJP won 8 and CPM won 2. BJP won 80% and CPM won 20% seats from SC reserved constituency.

Constituency Assembly seats won 2023

In Tripura Assembly election 2023, there are 20 seats are reserved for Scheduled Tribes and 10 seats are reserved for Scheduled Castes. Out of 20 ST reserved seats IPFT won 1, TMP won 13 and BJP won 6 seats. IPFT won 5%, TMP won 65% and BJP won 30% seats from ST constituency. Out of 10 SC reserved seats BJP won 7 and CPM won 3. BJP won 70% and CPM won 30% seats from SC reserved constituency.

	Indigenous People's Front of Tripura	Tipra Motha Party	BJP	INC	CPI(M)
General	0	0	19	3	8
ST	1	13	6	0	0
SC	0	0	7	0	3
Total Won	1	13	32	3	11



DIN VISHESH

Remembering Ram Manohar Lohia



Ram Manohar Lohia was a prominent Indian Freedom fighter and social reformer who advocated for social inclusion and equality. He was a vocal critic of the caste system and worked tirelessly to promote the rights of marginalized communities, including Dalits and women.

Lohia believed that social inclusion was essential for India's progress and development. He argued that a society could not prosper if a significant population were excluded and denied equal opportunities. He saw the caste system as a major obstacle to social inclusion and believed it perpetuated social inequality and discrimination.

Lohia strongly advocated affirmative action measures to promote social inclusion and empower marginalized communities. He called for abolishing the caste system and creating a more just and egalitarian society. He also believed that education was a powerful tool for social change and urged the government to invest in education and provide equal access to quality education to all.

Lohia's ideas and advocacy for social inclusion continue to inspire social activists and reformers in India today. His legacy remains an integral part of India's struggle for social justice and equality.



4th April
Bhagwan Mahaveer
Birth Anniversary



5th April
Babu Jagjivan Ram
Birth Anniversary



11th April
Mahatma Phule
Birth Anniversary