

UNHEARD VOICES

MARCHING ON THE PATH OF CASTE FREE SOCIETY

~~KHANDAN KI IJJAT
MITI ME MILA DI~~

intercaste
marriage

~~LOG KYA
KAHENGGE~~

~~CULTURE
VALUES~~

~~VIDESHI CONCEPT HAI~~



Inter-caste marriage : Towards caste free society

While caste discrimination continues to manifest in some or other form in various parts of the country, we ought to welcome some positive incidents, which keep us motivated to move ahead on the path of social equality and harmony. In the last month, 30 couples, who had opted for inter-caste marriage, were felicitated by a social organization in Nellore of Andhra Pradesh. The incident may be small but very significant as it signals the onset of new India. The event is significant for some other reason as well. The function was attended by a few religious personalities, which signifies that Hindus are freeing themselves from traditional shackles of caste sentiments. Such signs were seen in the past as well but support and encouragement to inter-caste marriage is more meaningful.

Central and state governments have launched several schemes to encourage inter-caste marriages. These schemes need to be supported and welcomed. However, one cannot neglect the reality that mere legal protection and encouragement is never adequate to bring about reformation. Society has to come forward for the purpose as marriage essentially needs social acceptance, which mainly derives from family, relatives, friends and other well-wishers. Unfortunately, this social acceptance comes from the traditional caste system. We, as a society, have the responsibility to take initiative to brush aside caste sentiments and support the couple, which has chosen inter-caste marriage. This is essential as law alone cannot bring about expected reformation.

Inter-caste marriage is not a new phenomenon to us. In ancient Indian literature, one would find several instances of inter-varna marriages. These instances were kept under carpet by vested interests. There is a fundamental difference between western idea of marriage and the Indian concept of marriage. For Indians, marriage is not merely a contract, unlike westerners. It goes beyond sexual relationships and mainly concentrates on the concept of family. We need to put forward this concept in accordance with changing times to have healthy social order.

It is a welcome sign that instances of inter-caste marriage are increasing. It is more promising that inter-caste marriage is not restricted to urban pockets. One can see them even in rural areas as well. It is a further big sign of hope that one of the couple hails from the so-called lower caste. In several cases, husbands are seen from the so-called lower caste, which is appreciable in the contemporary social conditions. This, in fact, is a silent revolution and sociologists have to deliberate upon it very seriously as it has the potential to create a new social order, which will be founded on equality.

Some petty reasons like differences in social background, customs and practices, difficulties in adjustment are being shown to oppose inter-caste marriage. Some also point at increasing cases of divorce. However, this does not hold water as all these elements are also seen in the cases of same caste marriage. The need of the hour is to come out of the traditional mindset and teach ourselves human values in tune with the changing times. We must remind ourselves all the time that caste discrimination has no place in society.

The trend of inter-caste marriage is expected to be further accelerated and strengthened because of several reasons, which we believe are qualitative in nature. New generation, even among the orthodox people, is seen as bold enough to neglect caste factors. For example, a state like Madhya Pradesh has recorded 677 inter-caste marriages in the past two years, involving Dalits. 2011 census report says the number of inter-caste marriages was increasing gradually. Report says that India recorded 5.8 per cent marriages in ten years. We must welcome this trend as inter-caste marriage is sure to provide a necessary blend for cohesive society.

This trend is all set to be widened thanks to the pace of change. We need to look at this trend with an absolutely healthy approach as it has very strong potential to lead us to a caste free society. And remember, caste free society is not a romantic or utopian idea. We are already marching on that route.

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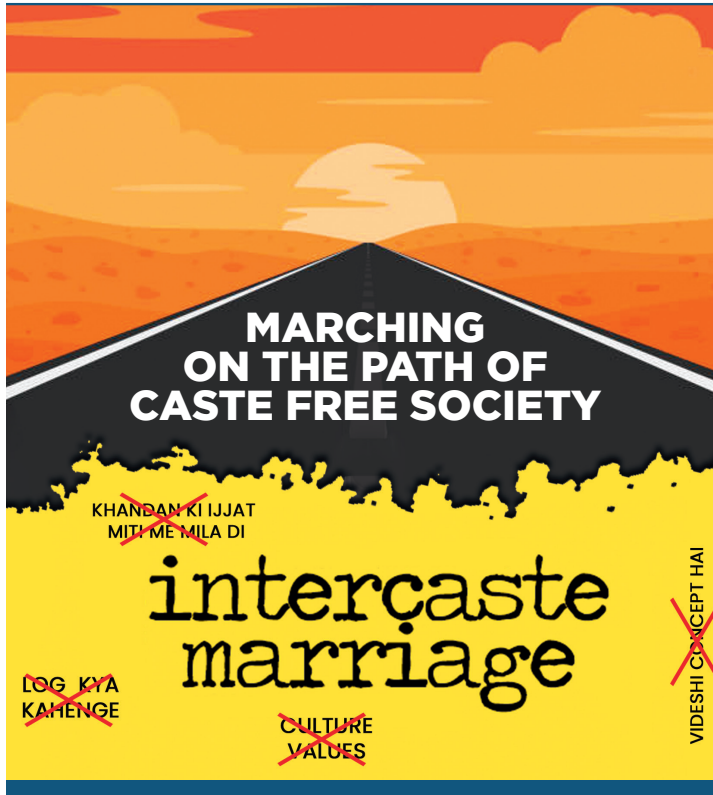
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Appeal for financial assistance



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

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

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Inter-caste marriage: a path to social cohesiveness

Inter-caste marriages can promote social harmony and break down caste barriers. By marrying outside their caste, individuals challenge the traditional caste system and promote equality and inclusivity. Inter-caste marriages also allow individuals to learn and understand each other’s cultures, customs, and traditions. Inter-caste marriages must be accompanied by broader social and policy changes to address the root causes of caste discrimination in India.

Vijendra



Dr. Ambedkar strongly believed that inter-caste marriages had the potential to break the barriers of caste. He was of the view that inter-caste marriage would challenge the discriminatory practices prevalent in Indian society. For him, inter-caste marriages were a way to dismantle the rigid caste hierarchy, which he considered a significant obstacle to social progress.

According to Dr. Ambedkar, inter-caste marriages would lead to the amalgamation of different castes and the creation of a more cohesive society. He

argued that such marriages would break caste-based discrimination and prejudice and promote understanding, empathy and equality among individuals from diverse backgrounds.

In his book *Annihilation of Caste*, Dr. Ambedkar highlighted the importance of inter-caste marriages in challenging the caste system. He argued that by marrying outside their own castes, individuals would send a powerful message that they no longer adhere to the discriminatory principles of the caste system. Dr. Ambedkar recognized the resistance and social ostracism faced by couples entering inter-caste marriages. He emphasized the need for individuals to be brave and defy societal norms to pave the



way for social transformation. He believed that inter-caste marriages would create a new generation of individuals who would be free from the prejudices of the caste system.

Dr. Ambedkar actively promoted inter-caste marriages throughout his life and encouraged his supporters to follow them. He set an example by marrying outside his own caste, which was considered a revolutionary act at the time. His progressive stance on inter-caste marriages continues to inspire individuals fighting against caste discrimination and seeking social justice in India.

Inter-caste marriage can be a way forward for social inclusion. In many societies, caste has been a significant factor in determining one's social status and opportunities in life. Inter-caste marriages can help to break down these barriers and promote social inclusion by promoting the idea that love and compatibility are more important than one's caste or social status. Inter-caste marriages can help to reduce discrimination and prejudices against particular castes. When individuals from different castes come together in marriage, it can lead to greater understanding and acceptance between the communities. This can positively impact social relations and help foster a more inclusive society. Furthermore, inter-caste marriages can also help to destroy the rigid caste system and promote greater social mobility. By breaking down the barriers between castes, individuals from lower castes can have greater access to opportunities and resources previously denied.

Inter-caste marriages in India refer to the union between individuals from different castes or social groups. In India, the caste system has been prevalent for centuries, and marriages within the same caste are considered traditional and preferred. However, inter-caste marriages have gained acceptance recently due to increased education, urbanization and exposure to other cultures.

Inter-caste marriages face various challenges, including societal pressure, family opposition, and religious differences. The family's honour and reputation may be at stake if a member chooses to marry outside their caste and they may face social stigma and discrimination from their community. In some extreme cases, couples have faced violence or even honour killings.

The Indian Constitution prohibits discrimination based on caste and inter-caste marriages are legally recognized. The Special Marriage Act of 1954 allows people from different castes and religions to marry and register their marriage without conversion or any other requirements. Additionally, various organizations and NGOs work to promote inter-caste marriages and provide support to couples facing opposition from their families.

Inter-caste marriages can promote social harmony and break down caste barriers. By marrying outside their caste, individuals challenge the traditional

caste system and promote equality and inclusivity. Inter-caste marriages also allow individuals to learn and understand each other's cultures, customs, and traditions. Inter-caste marriages must be accompanied by broader social and policy changes to address the root causes of caste discrimination in India. Such changes could include:

- Education and awareness campaigns.
- Affirmative action policies.
- Legal reforms to protect the rights of individuals from marginalized castes.

Despite legal and social support, inter-caste marriages still face challenges in India, and it is essential to create more awareness and promote a more accepting attitude towards them. Inter-caste marriages can be crucial in breaking down caste barriers and promoting social harmony and equality in the country. The Indian central government has taken various initiatives to encourage inter-caste marriages and reduce caste-based discrimination. Some of these initiatives are:

Inter-caste marriages can improve society in India by breaking down caste barriers, promoting social harmony, reducing discrimination, and promoting gender equality. However, it is essential to create a healthier attitude towards such marriages and address the challenges couples may face due to social stigma and family opposition. Inter-caste marriage can be a significant step towards creating a more inclusive and just society.

Dr. Ambedkar Scheme for Social Integration through Inter-Caste Marriages: The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment launched this scheme in 2013 to promote inter-caste marriages by providing financial assistance to eligible couples. The scheme offers a one-time grant of Rs. 2.5 lakh to inter-caste married couples where one of the spouses is a Dalit.

National Campaign for Social Awareness and Education : The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment also launched a national campaign in 2015 to create awareness about the benefits of inter-caste marriages and to discourage caste-based discrimination.

Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Yojana : The central government's flagship program aimed at promoting gender equality and the education of girls also promotes inter-caste marriages. The program provides financial incentives to families who



encourage and support the education and marriage of their daughters outside their caste.

Special Marriage Act : The Special Marriage Act, 1954, provides a legal framework for inter-caste marriages and protects couple's rights from different castes and religions. These initiatives aim to create awareness about the benefits of inter-caste marriages, reduce caste-based discrimination, and promote social harmony and equality in the country. However, more efforts are needed to overcome the deep-rooted prejudices and social norms that still discourage inter-caste marriages in many parts of India.

Inter-caste marriages can bring several benefits for the betterment of society in India. Some of these benefits are:

Breaking down caste barriers : Inter-caste marriages can play a crucial role in breaking down the caste barriers that separate individuals and communities in India. When families from different castes come together, they learn to understand and appreciate each other's cultures, customs, and traditions. Over the period, such marriages can lead to the gradual erosion of caste-based prejudices and discrimination.

Promoting social harmony: Inter-caste marriages promote social harmony and inclusivity by challenging the traditional caste system and encouraging equality. Such marriages help to build bridges between different communities, foster inter-community relationships and create a sense of unity and shared identity.

Reducing caste-based discrimination: Inter-caste marriages can contribute to lowering caste-based discrimination by creating awareness about the harmful effects of caste-based prejudices and stereotypes. Such marriages also provide an opportunity to educate families and communities about the importance of ending caste-based discrimination.

Promoting gender equality: Inter-caste marriages can also promote gender equality by allowing women to choose their partners based on their preferences and not be forced into marriages based on caste or social status. Such marriages also help to challenge patriarchal norms and promote the idea of gender equality.

Overall, inter-caste marriages can improve society in India by breaking down caste barriers, promoting social harmony, reducing discrimination, and promoting gender equality. However, it is essential to create a healthier attitude towards such marriages and address the challenges couples may face due to social stigma and family opposition.

However, it's important to note that inter-caste marriage alone cannot solve all the problems related to caste discrimination and social exclusion. There needs to be a sustained effort from individuals, communities, and governments to address these issues and promote equality and inclusion. Nonetheless, inter-caste marriage can be a significant step towards creating a more inclusive and just society.

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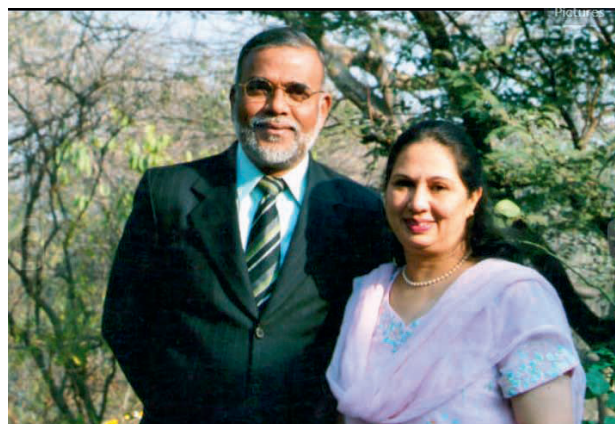


Breaking chains of Caste

It is a very big elating trend that new generation of changing India is coming forward for inter-caste marriage. This, necessarily means that youths are ready to come out of traditional caste sentiments. We must welcome this. We publish stories of couple with inter-caste marriage as our social duty.

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, who is widely regarded as the architect of the Indian Constitution, married Dr. Savita Ambedkar in 1948. Dr. Ambedkar had previously been married to Ramabai Ambedkar, who had passed away in 1935. Dr. Savita Ambedkar, also known as Savita Bai Ambedkar, was a Brahmin woman who had been a follower of Dr. Ambedkar's teachings and had worked with him on social justice and the empowerment of marginalized communities. Their marriage was significant because it challenged the prevailing caste norms of Indian society, which strongly discouraged inter-caste marriages. Dr. Ambedkar, being a Dalit, belonged to one of the lowest castes in the traditional caste hierarchy, while Dr. Savita Ambedkar was a Brahmin, one of the highest castes. By marrying across caste lines, they demonstrated their commitment to the principles of social justice and equality Dr. Ambedkar had advocated throughout his life. The marriage, however, was not without controversy. Some members of Dr. Ambedkar's community, including some of his followers, were critical of the marriage, viewing it as a betrayal of their struggle for Dalit emancipation. Nevertheless, Dr. Ambedkar remained steadfast in his commitment to his principles and Dr. Savita Ambedkar. Sadly, Dr. Ambedkar passed away

just a few years after their marriage, in 1956. Dr. Savita Ambedkar continued to work for social justice and the empowerment of marginalized communities in India and was active in various organizations dedicated to these causes. She passed away in 2002.



Dr. Narendra Jadhav is an Indian economist, educationist, writer, and former member of the Planning Commission of India. He is also a Dalit, belonging to the Mahar community, considered one of the lowest castes in the traditional caste hierarchy in India. In 1983, Dr. Jadhav married Vasundhara Jadhav, she belonged to Brahmin family. Their marriage was significant because it challenged the prevailing caste norms of Indian society, which strongly discouraged inter-caste marriages. The marriage also highlighted the issue of caste discrimination and the need for social and educational reforms in India. Dr. Jadhav and Vasundhara Jadhav have been vocal advocates for social justice and equality and have worked tirelessly to promote education and empower marginalized communities in India. Despite facing opposition from some quarters, including some members of Dr. Jadhav's community, the couple has remained committed to their principles and each other. They





have inspired many people in India who have faced discrimination and social exclusion based on their caste. Dr. Narendra Jadhav has written extensively on social justice and equality issues and has received several awards and honours for his work.

Adv. Prakash Ambedkar is a prominent Indian politician and lawyer and the grandson of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who is widely regarded as the father of the Indian Constitution and a champion of social justice and equality. In 1983, Adv. Prakash Ambedkar married Anjali Ambedkar, who is also from an upper-caste Brahmin family. Their marriage was significant because it united two prominent families associated with the Dalit community and highlighted India's continuing struggle for social justice and equality. Both Adv. Prakash Ambedkar and Anjali Ambedkar have been active in politics and social activism, empowering marginalized communities and promoting the principles of equality and social justice that Dr. B.R. Ambedkar stood for.

Adv. Prakash Ambedkar is the founder and leader of the Vanchint Bahujan Aghadi (VBA), a political party in Maharashtra that represents the interests of Dalits and other marginalized communities. He has also been a vocal critic of the caste system and has advocated for the rights of Dalits and other oppressed groups. Anjali Ambedkar has also been active in social and political activism and has worked on issues related to women's empowerment and



gender equality. She has been involved in various organizations and initiatives aimed at promoting the education and welfare of marginalized communities in India. Overall, the marriage of Adv. Prakash Ambedkar and Anjali Ambedkar reflect their commitment to the principles of social justice and equality and their determination to carry forward the legacy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

In Bihar, inter-caste marriages are still uncommon and often met with resistance from traditional and conservative elements of society. While there is no legal barrier to inter-caste marriage in Bihar, the social stigma associated with it can make it difficult for couples to get married. It can also result in social ostracization and violence. In recent years, progress has been made toward greater acceptance of inter-

caste marriages in Bihar. The state government has launched several initiatives to promote inter-caste marriages and support couples who wish to marry outside their caste. These initiatives include financial incentives for inter-caste weddings and legal and social assistance to couples facing opposition from their families or communities. Nevertheless, there are also many examples of successful inter-caste marriages in Bihar. With continued efforts to



promote social acceptance and support for such marriages, it is hoped that these incidence will continue to increase in the state.

One such marriage of Shambhavi Chaudhari, the daughter of Bihar state cabinet minister Ashok Chaudhari belonged to Pasi (Dalit) community. In contrast, Sayan Kunal, Son of IPS Kunal Kishor, belonged to Bihar's Bhumihar (Brahmin) community. They got married last year. This marriage is unique as this marriage breaks the shackles of casteism. Sambhavi is pursuing her Ph.D. in Economics, and Sayan is a Law graduate. Although marriage is considered a union of two hearts and two families, the biggest thing is that two different castes also meet in it. However, Ashok Chowdhary is also considered very progressive in this matter. The minister of the Bihar government had done inter-caste marriages in those days when there was no delay in bloodshed due to inter-caste marriages. The way the social environment of Bihar has changed, the government has also tried its best to encourage inter-caste marriages.

In Gujarat, inter-caste marriages are still uncommon and often met with resistance from traditional and conservative elements of society. While there is no legal barrier to inter-caste marriage in Gujarat, the social stigma which creates difficulties for couples to get married. Sometime It can result in social exclusion and violence.

In recent years, some progress has been made in acceptance of these kind of marriages in Gujarat. The state government has launched several initiatives to promote inter-caste marriages and support couples who wish to marry outside their caste. These initiatives include financial incentives for inter-caste weddings and legal and social assistance to couples



facing opposition from their families or communities.

Despite these efforts, inter-caste marriages still face many challenges in Gujarat, including social ostracism, violence, and discrimination. Many families and communities are still cling to traditional caste-based values and oppose inter-caste marriages, particularly when they involve lower-caste individuals marrying into higher-caste families. Nevertheless, there are also many examples



of successful inter-caste marriages in Gujarat. With continued efforts to promote social acceptance and support for such marriages.

An exceptional case of Inter caste marriage story from Gujarat is Ravindra Parmar, a Dalit, and Shilpaba Upendrasinh Vala, a Rajput, a Hindu warrior community. They both met through social media platforms. However, they had to flee from their village to get married. They have studied Law also with a vision to look up these kinds of issues with a human rights approach and are willing to feel their parents proud of them.

Tekchand Sonawane and Pooja Bawale's inter-caste marriage in 2012 was nothing short of a miracle. It defied societal norms and challenged traditional beliefs. Tekchand, a Delhi-based Dalit journalist, with whom Pooja fell in love, is an international tour leader of the 96 Kuli Maratha caste. Their inter-caste and inter-class marriage faced many challenges, but the couple persevered and fought for their love.

Tekchand's father was a road sweeper, and Pooja's father was the retired principal and then director of adult education. Despite these differences, Pooja's parents, Prof. Dr. Kailas and Mrs. Alka wholeheartedly accepted Tekchand and Pooja's love. Accepting a Dalit son-in-law (born and brought up in the Bhusawal) was no small feat for the Maratha family in western Maharashtra, especially since Pooja was their only child. However, the Bawale family was progressive and supported their daughter's decision.

Tekchand's elder brother, Dr. Devendra, a public health professional based in Africa, and the entire family also upheld their decision.

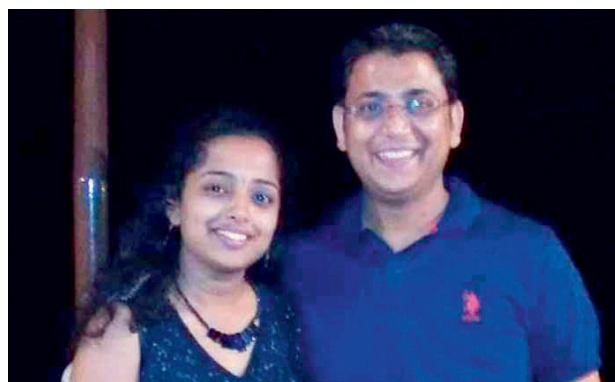
Both Tekchand and Pooja were academically accomplished and well-known in their respective

fields. They believed that caste had no relevance if one's feelings were true and emotions pure. They did not follow any rituals for marriage, either Vaidik or Buddhist, and both families supported their decision. They tied the knot in a registration office and arranged a gathering for friends and family. Eminent people from social-cultural organizations, Dalit activists, media personas, and educationists like former vice-chancellors attended their reception.

Their marriage journey was socially committed, and they believed inter-caste marriages were crucial to eradicating caste. They followed in the footsteps of their idols, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, Mahatma Phule, and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. The couple named their daughter after the river Ravee, mainly known in Pakistan.

Before marriage, Tekchand and Pooja wrote many letters to each other. These letters were not merely love letters but also reflections of their spontaneous feelings and contemporary social reflections. They believed that caste had no significance if their inspirations and aspirations matched. Tekchand believed that it was high time for educated people to support inter-caste marriages and that it was essential to educate the educated.

During their marriage reception, both families did not accept gift articles but felicitated guests



with a plant and two books written by Dr. Bawale, one based on Swami Vivekananda and the other on female foeticide. Notably, the books were published on the day of marriage at the hands of Tekchand and Pooja.

Tekchand and Pooja's inter-caste marriage was a love story and a testament to their belief in equality and justice. They stood for a cause that challenged the status quo and paved the way for a more inclusive society. Their marriage demonstrated that love can transcend social boundaries and that true love is beyond caste and class. Their story reminds us that we should break free from societal norms and embrace love and compassion in all forms.

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“Time to initiate dialogue and educate dominant class people”

Satish Kumar, an activist from Rajasthan, works for Centre for Dalit Rights. He is mainly engaged with advocacy for Dalit rights, mainly focus on implementation of acts, related with Dalits and also sensitizing the administration and society as large. Satish Kumar, while fighting for rights of Dalits, also emphasizes on continuous dialogue among various sections of society. Vijendra Sonawane talks to Satish Kumar.

Q: What is your family and social background?

A: I am a resident of Bharatpur district in Rajasthan. I graduated in law from Jaipur and also have a degree in Education. My father was working as a labourer. Eventually he migrated from Bharatpur to Faridabad. Faridabad is close to Delhi. He started working as a small contractor in the construction sector.:

Q: What was the motivation behind starting Centre for Dalit Rights?

A: After the Durban Conference in 2003, we realized that we cannot address Dalit issues without work. Law study is a must if victims want justice. For that we need to do the more advocacy, more

homework, more fact-finding work, more legal work at grass root level as well as domestic level. We are having powerful tools like, SC/ST Act, POA act, Protection of Civil Rights Act. But implementation of these acts is very poor. Effective tools like PCR Act, POA Act are available to us. It is our responsibility to use it properly. Registration of FIR is the biggest challenge for the victim. There was no awareness of this twenty years ago. Even the law enforcement agencies were not aware of it. There are 22 sub sections of initial act. But police would always apply act which is feasible to them. If you look at the cause of atrocity; there are three causes at Grass root level. First cause is the dignity of Dalit is



suppressed. Second major cause for atrocity is related to land matters. During the regime of Indira Gandhi in 1974 and thereafter state government allocated small pieces of land to Dalits under land reform act but the physical possession was with dominant class people. And the third cause is related to wages. Whenever Dalits ask for wages, they were brutally beaten up. The fourth call is caste discrimination and untouchability. These are the four main root causes of Dalit atrocity. Therefore, we decided to sensitize law enforcement agency, to ensure better implementation of law, to train our cadre, to train our women activists, to train our different stakeholders.

Q: How the centre actually started?

A: I joined later. The founder of centre for the Dalits rights was Prabhati Lal Mimroth. He was close to justice Krishna Iyer. Krishna Iyer believed in empowering Dalits and effective implementation of justice for the Dalits. There were more members with Mimroth, who believed in this. So, they established this organisation.

Q: What are your findings about implementation of laws, related to Dalits? Particularly, Prevention of Atrocities (POA)?

A: When this law was enacted initially there was fear. POA act is world best legislation, because it talks about punitive and preventive measures also. Act talks about prevention of atrocity. The most of the criminal act's law start after the offence has been committed. Whereas this law talks about prevention, rehabilitation, security, monetary compensation and overall rehabilitation. Law enforcement agency can snatch the licence of arms from any particular sensitive areas where the atrocity has been committed again and again. The law enforcement agency or the state government can issue arm licence to victims to make them feel secure. However, there is very poor implementation of the act. We want to strengthen the voice of victims and create a mechanism to support them. I have to fight with administration. Because the law is in favour of them. It is our duty to get effective implementation of law so that we can get the justice for the survivors.

Q: Do you see any change?

A: Little change is there. Apart from us, other organizations are there. Political awareness is there. Education is there. Prosperity is there. But there is no check and balance over the atrocity. Because if you look at data in Rajasthan per year more than 6000 cases have been registered. There are many such cases which are not registered. FIRs are not made. But now methods have changed. If you go back 20 years, Dalits were not allowed to sit on horses during marriage procession. But they are accessing their rights. They are demanding their dignity. But Dalit paying money to the horse owner and passing

through the areas of dominant class people is not acceptable. People did not want to change their mind set. This takes place in urban area also. Few years back, a Dalit purchased a piece of land in the non-Dalit colony. Once it was identified that he is Dalit, the owner of the private property forced to withdrawal the purchase or threatened to cancel the registration of land. This happened in Jaipur. Situation is changing slowly but the main root cause is mind set which is the biggest challenge. Right now, the issue of hut burning is there. They are not able to digest how Dalits can access their economic rights? How they can access their democratic rights? How Dalits can contest Sarpanch elections? How Dalits can access their different rights.

Q: What about NCRB data?

A: If you properly look at NCRB data you would notice that more than fifty percent of under trial prisoners are from SC/ST class and minorities. Because the role of investigating agency is very biased. Police are not doing just and fair investigations. Accused is not having access to lawyers. Investigation is poor. I have seen that police are playing a biased role against the Dalits. So, they have to change their mind set.



Q: People say that many atrocity cases are false. What is your opinion?

A: No not at all. 99% cases are genuine. Let me tell, if police are saying 60 to 70% cases are false then how many cases they have genuinely examined? All the cases are genuine. But due to intimidation or due to fear, because victims must reside in the same place, they have to borrow the loan from upper caste community. Dalits are accessing facility from upper class, accessing water from their taps and their tube wells, they are more and more dependent on upper caste. So, they become hostile and support system is also very poor. Because law does not support victim



or survivors. As per the act, they are providing the monetary compensation. As per the FIR within 7 days compensation has to be released but I think less than 1% money is released within 7 days. There are no special courts We have filed a PIL before High Court and because of that 7 special Courts are established by state government. Amendment asks disposal of case within 60 days but it is not happening and pressure builds up, witnesses turn hostile. Eventually cases are withdrawn.

Q: What you suggest for effective implementation?

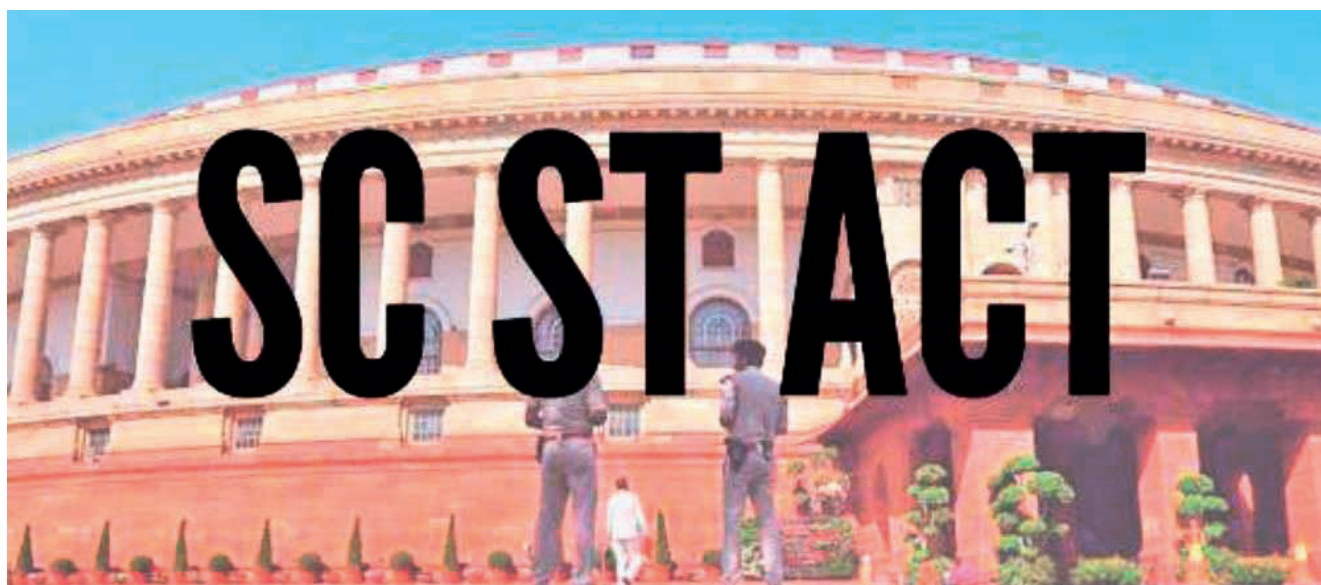
A: SC/ST act has a mention that it is a social legislation and government has to take the responsibility of complete rehabilitation of the victim. If you look at rule 5 read with rule 12/4. there is a provision that additional relief is also there. If you look at murder cases, gang rape cases and rape cases, dacoit cases; the government has to provide a government job to the victim or survivor but only four states are implementing this. They are Karnataka, Bihar, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. If any public servant is murdered during the service period, then their kin or dependent is given the job. We are also asking Rajasthan government to enact the rules in the line of Karnataka Government. Because the rules were framed in 1995 but very less is being implemented. In case of Murder, widows are not even getting monthly pension of rupees 5000. As per the rules not only Rs 5000 but widow should get dearness allowance. But not a single state government is paying dearness allowance. Similarly, education for their kin in the boarding school is also not there. So, State Government and Central Government also play a key role and they have to be accountable. They have to frame a contingency plan. Government has to sensitize as well as organise training programs for police personnel, investigating officers, public prosecutors, presiding officers. We also have to

approach legal service authorities as well as judicial academies. Because judicial academies also not providing training to the special public prosecutors, presiding officers for the effective implementation of the act. Civil societies also have to play a very key role in implementation of the act. We have to work in various stages so that victim gets the justice. Under the SC/ST act, if special public prosecutor is not performing efficiently then victim has to approach district magistrate under rule 4 subs 5 and 6 and if you see rate of conviction is very low. Approximately 10%. If you look at IPC rate of conviction is 45%. I can say or I must say implementation is very poor. We can say there is no use of this POA at all.

Q: But people still complain about the act. How the situation can be handled?

A: I think the first thing is educational awareness among Dalits as well as non-Dalits. Because right now time has come to recognise the rights of the Dalit and tribal. Rights of Dalit women and children have to be recognised. This is duty of all the citizens. We are governing under the frame of constitution. Time has come to initiate dialogue with the dominant class people. We have sensitized them that the time has come to stop these atrocities. We are now in digital era. And lastly effective implementation of the act. For this we need to utilise the electronic evidence to prove our cases. Rate of conviction also has to be enhanced. Everyone is having mobile and my observation is that 60 to 70 % cases do have electronic evidence. We have to utilise it. So, objective of the state should be fulfilled through effective advocacy, effective field investigation, effective implementation. This will also enhance the rate of conviction. It is the collective duty to move forward to remove this caste discrimination, untouchability practice.

*As told to Vijendra
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Savarkar fought against seven shackles

Savarkar strongly supported Dr. Ambedkar’s Mahad Satyagraha. He said in an article on September 11, 1927 in the magazine ‘Shraddhanand’ that Hindus should accept and cooperate with the untouchables to take water from the Mahad Chavdar tank. He further says that if the upper caste Hindus oppose your just demand do not threaten to leave Hinduism. Hinduism is not just the inheritance of the upper class; it is as much your religion as it is their religion.

Jai Kumar



Vinayak Damodar Savarkar is one such personality, who is presented with biased opinions in Indian political history. Veer Savarkar was born in Bhagur village of Nasik district of Maharashtra. Veer Savarkar poured his heart and soul into the Indian freedom struggle. He was also a great revolutionary thinker, writer, poet, social reformer, and visionary leader. Veer Savarkar’s revolutionary work is unparalleled and unforgettable. Politically biased historians have only painted the image of Savarkar as a Hindutva leader. But Savarkar spent most of the period of his

life in social reforms.

Savarkar was always vocal against evils like caste-system since his childhood. He has written extensively on social reform and did many works at ground level. In the series of Indian social reformers, we study the thinkers like Raja Rammohan Rai, Jyotiba Phule, Ranade, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Mahatma Gandhi, and Dr B.R.Ambedkar. Veer Savarkar deserves to be from this series.

Savarkar on caste system & social reform

Research done on Savarkar in the last few years has helped in shedding a light on his multidimensional personality. Along with being a freedom fighter and an avid writer, he was also a social reformer, who



was blatantly against social evils. He was released from jail in 1923. After being released from jail, he chose Ratnagiri for his further works. Savarkar was always committed to eradication of flaws in the social structure of India. He was more concerned about division of Indian society into castes, which has made this strong nation

completely hollow. Attacking the social evils like caste system, Savarkar says that today in Hindus, what we call innate casteism, which is actually codex caste. Savarkar believed that the caste system was not only a problem of Brahmins and Shudras. This is the problem of the entire Hindu society." Caste system is a stigma on Hindu society, it is a blot on humanity"; According to Savarkar, the caste system is not a single maze created by the Brahmins, nor by the Kshatriyas, but it is a social network created by all the castes of the society.

'Caste is different from class. It is not based on merit. In Savarkar's 'Samagra Vangmaya', details of an article are found in which he says that India's land force has become completely weak. The ships were India's strength in water and navigational means till the tenth century, we used to hoist the Hindu flag on the chest of the ocean. But all of them have not drowned in the ocean; they have drowned in the ego of the caste system. The caste system has made India very weak. Due to which India has fallen prey to the western invasions.

Savarkar while writing in 'Kesari' says that even if we get the freedom we want for the Hindu nation, we will lose it back to the caste-ridden nation. Savarkar wrote in Kesari on November 29, 1930 that even if we achieve the freedom we have to achieve for the Hindu nation, the nation, ruined by casteism will be destroyed. We will lose it again. In order to avoid this, we will have to eradicate the caste system from its very roots.

Savarkar gave a call to the entire Hindu community, to break the shackles prevailing in the Hindu society. He wrote an article titled "Seven bonds of Hindu society". In which he advocated breaking the seven bonds. Savarkar called for breaking some shackles prevailing in the Hindu society. Savarkar wrote an article titled "Seven bonds of Hindu Society", in which he advocated breaking the seven bonds.

Vedoktabandi (Prohibition of rites sanctioned by the Vedas): The entire Hindu society should have equal rights on all religious scriptures like Vedas. Recitation of Vedas and Vedokta Sanskar should be done by all Hindu societies without caste discrimination. If people from other religions can study our Vedas, then why can't our untouchable brothers.

Vyavasaybandi (Prohibition of pursuing certain occupations): In Hindu society, a person should have the right to choose his occupation according to his wish. We should not force a person to choose his profession on the basis of caste. Categorical business should be prohibited on the basis of caste. In order

to increase the nation's power a person should be given the chance to choose his occupation.

Sparsbandi (Prohibition of Touch): Untouchability is a stigma on humanity, we should eliminate it. If untouchability ends in the society, then the Hindu brothers will merge with their nation as one soul. Untouchability has divided the Hindu society into pieces, due to which both the attack & conversion on the entire Hindu society by non-Hindu religion community has increased.

Samudrabandi (Prohibition of seafaring): Our Hindu society has been cut off from the world by the bondage of the sea. The huge Hindu nation which was spread from Mexico to Egypt, today nearly got cut off from the world due to this Samudrabandi. That is why our Hindu religious preachers, Hindu



organizations, Hindu businessmen and brave students should settle abroad in large numbers.

Shuddhibandi (Prohibition of reconversion): By breaking this fifth bond, we should bring back the people of Hindu society who have gone to foreign religion to Hinduism. We should assimilate Hindu people who have gone to other religions with affection and equality and good behaviour. This will give strength to our Hindu nation. Due to obstacles like temple ban, roti ban, and beti ban, such a big Hindu society is not coming back to our Hindu religion.

Rotiband (Prohibition of Inter digning): The feeling of brotherhood has ended in our Hindu society due to rotiband . It would be a kind of foolishness that by eating with another-caste, our caste and religion would be completely destroyed. Because of this ban on bread, untouchable Hindus shared food with Christians during times of famine. People of Christian religion lured our people and got them converted. The whole world has eaten the food from Hindus, those religions had never been corrupted. So how will we get corrupted by eating the food of the people of our Hindu society. That's



why we should organize this joint meal (Sahbhojan) in Hindu society.

Betibandi (Prohibition of inter-caste marriages):

This is the seventh biggest bond that breaks the Hindu nation into pieces. We have to accept and promote inter-caste marriages in Hindu society. There are also inter-caste marriages among Muslims and Christians. Those people never oppose it. They identify themselves as a Muslim and a Christian. Similarly, there should be inter-caste marriages in Hindu society and they should not be identified only on the basis of caste but it should be known as only Hindu.

Social Reform Workshop by Savarkar in Ratnagiri

Savarkar did not advocate social reform only through his writings and speeches. He, in fact, stayed in Ratnagiri and led social reform. Savarkar believed that social reforms would not happen through writings and speeches alone. For this we have to work on the ground. Both touchable and untouchable sections of the society have to face the challenges. Savarkar was absolutely prepared to face the challenge arising out of social reforms.

He made his first debut on April 17, 1924 at Vitthal Mandir in Parshuram village. This temple is considered to be the most sacred place for Chitpavan Brahmins. Savarkar's first speech after his release was held at this place. Savarkar openly expressed his views on purification and untouchability here. Due to which Savarkar had to become a victim of bitter criticism from orthodox Hindus. But Savarkar faced it firmly.

Ganapati For Untouchables

The Ganapati for untouchables was installed by Savarkar in 1925 during the Ganesh Utsav in Ratnagiri. It was well received by the Brahmin community. A person named Shivu of an untouchable community worshipped the Ganesh idol. More than 5000 people were present in this Ganapati festival. This was a truly revolutionary initiative for the people stuck in social evils.

School admission for untouchable children

In 1925, Savarkar undertook the challenging task of enrolling untouchable children in schools. So that all the children in the school sit together without caste discrimination. Until then, untouchable children were not allowed to sit with other children. They used to stay outside the class. There was no such school in Ratnagiri and Malegaon where children were studying together. Actually in 1925 Savarkar decided to tackle this problem directly. During his speeches at Dapoli, Khed, Chiplun, Devrukh, Sangameshwar and Kharepatan, Savarkar appealed to the Hindu community to let children study together.

Savarkar said in the public meeting "Can you prevent Christian children from entering the school? No! You don't have enough courage. Because you know the consequences of it. The English government will reply to it with bullets. You despise the helpless and ignorant untouchable. You accept

the unlawful demands of Muslims because they are fierce. When an untouchable Muslim becomes a Christian, you treat him as equal. But you do not treat him equally as an untouchable."

Establishment of Patit Paavan Temple

It was a very difficult task to allow the entry into the old temple to all Hindus together without caste discrimination. The Hindu Mahasabha decided to establish a new Akhil Hindu Devalaya (All Hindu Temple). In this context, Savarkar planned to establish an ethnic Hindu temple. For this he invited the famous businessman Bhagoji Baloji Kir, who alone built Hindu temple. He was a big admirer of Savarkar. He donated a huge amount for the establishment of Patit Paavan Temple. On March 10, 1929, Shankaracharya Dr. Kurtakoti performed Bhoomi Pujan to lay the foundation of the proposed temple. On February 22, 1931, the Patit Paavan temple was established in Ratnagiri.

Savarkar's support to the Mahad satyagraha

On March 20, 1927, Dr. Ambedkar and his companions took out a procession to Chavdar tank. It is famous in history books as Mahad Satyagraha. It proved to be a decisive step in the fight against untouchability. Dr. Ambedkar drank canal water to prove equal rights of untouchable castes in public places. Savarkar strongly supported Dr. Ambedkar's Mahad Satyagraha. He said in an article on September 11, 1927 in the magazine 'Shraddhanand' that Hindus should accept and cooperate with the untouchables to take water from the Mahad Chavdar tank. He further says that if the upper caste Hindus oppose your just demand do not threaten to leave Hinduism. Hinduism is not just the inheritance of the upper class; it is as much your religion as it is their religion.

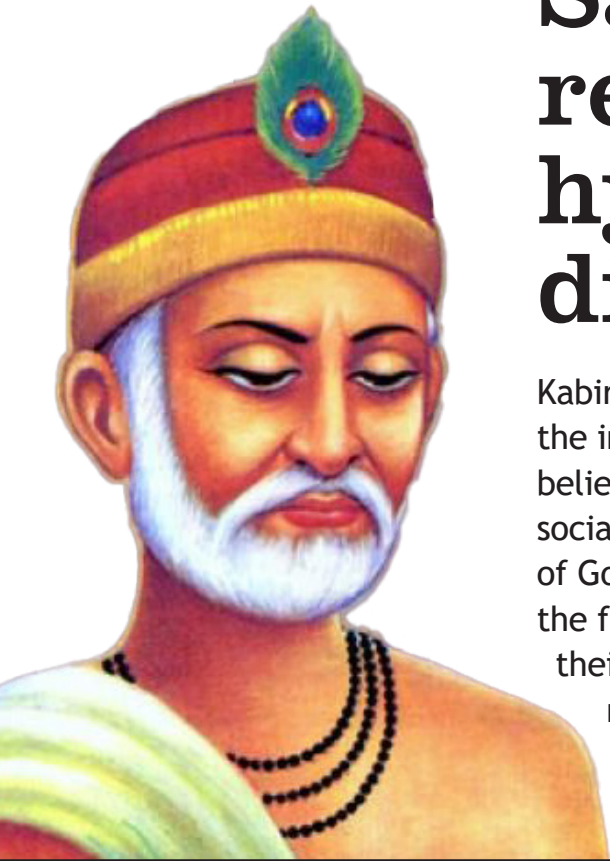
Savarkar conveyed the details of the social reform work done in Ratnagiri to Dr. Ambedkar through a letter. Biographer of Savarkar and Dr. Ambedkar, Dhananjay Keer gives the details of correspondence between Savarkar and Dr. Ambedkar in Savarkar's Biography. Praising the social reforms carried out by Savarkar, Ambedkar writes "I congratulate you for the work you have done in the field of social reform. If you want to make untouchables an integral part of Hindu society, you need not just abolish untouchability but you also have to destroy the caste system. I am glad that you are among the few who understand this."

During his stay in Ratnagiri, Savarkar invited Ambedkar to show him a view of his social reforms. But Ambedkar could not meet Savarkar in Ratnagiri due to his busy schedule. However, Ambedkar was always an admirer of Savarkar's projects of social reform.

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Sant Kabir rejected religious hypocrisy and discrimination



Kabir rejected the hierarchical caste system and emphasized the importance of equality and universal brotherhood. He believed that all human beings, regardless of their caste, social status, or religious affiliation, were equal in the eyes of God. Kabir often used his poetry and verses to highlight the futility of discriminating against individuals based on their caste. He emphasized that true spirituality and righteousness were not dependent on external factors such as caste or social position but on one's inner qualities and devotion to the divine.

Ankita



Sant Kabir, also known as Kabir Das, was a prominent mystic poet in India during the 15th century. People revere him for his spiritual teachings that emphasized the unity of God and the importance of love, compassion, and devotion.

Kabir's precise birth and death dates are unknown, but he was believed to have been born in 1398 in Varanasi on Uttar Pradesh. Kabir's teachings transcended religious boundaries and attracted followers from various faiths. Kabir's philosophy was rooted in the belief that the ultimate truth can be realized through personal experience rather than dogma or rituals. He criticized religious hypocrisy, caste discrimination, and the social divisions of his time.

Kabir emphasized the oneness of God and rejected the notion of different Gods worshipped by different religions. He believed in the unity of all beings and taught that true spirituality lies in recognizing this

unity and treating all with love and respect.

Kabir expressed his teachings through his Doha's, which are couplets in a simple and accessible language that people from all walks of life could understand. His Doha's are widely read and recited even today, and they contain profound insights into spirituality, morality, and the nature of existence. Kabir vehemently criticized caste discrimination and challenged the social divisions. His teachings reflected a strong belief in the equality of all individuals, irrespective of their caste or social status.

Kabir rejected the idea that a person's caste or birth could determine their worth or spiritual standing. He emphasized that true spirituality lies in recognizing the divine essence within oneself and treating all beings with respect and equality. Kabir's teachings on caste discrimination were revolutionary for his time and remain relevant today. His emphasis on equality and social justice has inspired generations



to challenge discriminatory practices and strive for a more inclusive and harmonious society.

Kabir rejected the hierarchical caste system and emphasized the importance of equality and universal brotherhood. He believed that all human beings, regardless of their caste, social status, or religious affiliation, were equal in the eyes of God. Kabir often used his poetry and verses to highlight the futility of discriminating against individuals based on their caste. He emphasized that true spirituality and righteousness were not dependent on external factors such as caste or social position but on one's inner qualities and devotion to the divine.

In many of his Doha's, Kabir disapproved of the rigid caste system and the associated discrimination. He denounced the notion that certain castes were inherently superior or inferior to others. Kabir advocated for a society where individuals are judged based on their actions and character rather than their caste. One of Kabir's well-known Doha captures his stance on caste discrimination:

"Jati na poochho sadhu ki, poochh lijiye gyan,
Mol karo talwar ka, pada rahne do myan"

("Do not ask the caste of a holy person; ask about their knowledge instead. Evaluate the worth of a sword by its sharpness, not by the scabbard it is kept in").

Through this Doha, Kabir urges people to focus on individuals' spiritual wisdom and inner qualities rather than their external identities or social positions. Kabir's teachings promoted inclusivity and unity among people from different castes and religions. He advocated for the unity of humanity and rejected the divisions created by the caste system. Kabir's philosophy challenged the notion of superiority or inferiority based on caste, encouraging individuals to rise above such distinctions and embrace the fundamental equality of all human beings. His verses often contained social commentary and criticism of the prevailing societal norms. By challenging the caste system, Kabir aimed to bring about social reform and foster a society based on compassion, love, and mutual respect.

Kabir's thoughts on the caste system continue to inspire people today. His teachings have had a lasting impact on Indian society and have contributed to ongoing discussions and efforts toward social equality and justice. His emphasis on universal brotherhood and his rejection of caste-based discrimination resonates with those, who strive for a more inclusive and egalitarian society. Kabir's work did not end caste discrimination immediately. His teachings and actions challenged the entrenched beliefs and practices associated with the caste system. His philosophy of equality and social justice laid the groundwork for future reformers and movements that aimed to dismantle caste-based discrimination in Indian society. Kabir's Doha provides a powerful commentary on the societal inequalities that the caste system perpetuates. His

words continue to inspire and challenge people to question the status quo and work towards a more just and equitable society.

Kabir's life demonstrated his commitment to breaking down caste barriers. He actively engaged with people from different castes, including those considered untouchable or marginalized by society. By disregarding social norms and treating everyone as equals, Kabir set an example and inspired others to question and transcend caste boundaries. Kabir's spiritual teachings were inclusive and accessible to all. He emphasized that the path to realizing the divine did not require adherence to any specific caste or religious rituals. Kabir stresses the importance of inner devotion and personal experience over external identity markers, including caste. Kabir stressed the concept of universal brotherhood. He advocated for love, compassion, and harmony among all

Kabir rejected the idea that a person's caste or birth could determine their worth or spiritual standing. He emphasized that true spirituality lies in recognizing the divine essence within oneself and treating all beings with respect and equality. Kabir's teachings on caste discrimination were revolutionary for his time and remain relevant today. His emphasis on equality and social justice has inspired generations to challenge discriminatory practices and strive for a more inclusive and harmonious society.

individuals, regardless of caste or social status. Kabir's message of unity resonated with people from various backgrounds and helped foster a sense of solidarity against caste-based divisions.

Specific details of Kabir's efforts to end caste discrimination may not be extensively documented. Still, his teachings and spiritual legacy inspire generations in their fight against caste-based oppression and discrimination. His emphasis on love, equality, and human dignity has impacted social reform movements in India. It continues to be a guiding force in pursuing a more inclusive society.

Kabir's teachings continue to have a lasting impact on Indian society and culture. His message of unity and love has been passed down through generations and has influenced countless individuals. Today, Kabir's followers, known as Kabirpanthi's, continue to practice his teachings and celebrate his life and poetry. His legacy is cherished as a guiding light for seekers of truth and spirituality.

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Ahilyadevi Holkar : The Fighter

We begin a series on the life of Ahilyadevi Holkar, who was active in 18th century in politics, religion and spiritual. She lost her husband at early age but successfully fought against foreign invasion and protected people. She is highly respected for protecting religious shrines.

Rambhau Lande



After the death of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Aurangzeb settled in the Deccan. To end the power of the Marathas, he tortured and killed Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj and imprisoned his son Chhatrapati Shahu and his family. Maharani Tararani fought against Aurangzeb for twenty-seven years while protecting the sovereignty of the Chhatrapati's. Finally, Aurangzeb breathed his last in 1707 at Bhingar village of Ahmednagar.

After the death of Aurangzeb, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was released from imprisonment. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj made a fresh start to establish the Swarajya during which two kingdoms namely Satara and Kolhapur were created. Chhatrapati Shahu appoints Ashtapradhan Mandal (Council of Eight) to administer the Swarajya from Satara and starts the Maratha race. After Moropant Pingle, he appointed Balaji Vishwanath as Peshwa of Swarajya. He sent the Marathas to cross the Narmada River in order to enforce the Marathas empire in the north. Beyond the Narmada, Giridhar Bahadur and Daya Bahadur acted on behalf of the Mughals in Malwa. The Bahadur brothers were merciless, expropriating the farms, harassing the peasants.

Chhatrapati sent the Maratha forces to Malwa under the leadership of Chimaji Appa to suppress the Mughals. Giridhar Bahadur and Dayabahadur were beheaded in the battle of Amzera and Tirlya. After the victory in this battle, the power centres of three Marathas, Holkar, Shinde, Pawar were established to strengthen the foundation of Maratha power and plan for expansion. After Chhatrapati Shahu, First Bajirao Peshwa, Shrimant Malharrao Holkar, Ranoji Shinde emerged. During this period, Ahilyadevi was born to Sushila Devi and Mankoji Shinde Patil in Chaundi

village on the border of Beed and Ahmednagar in Marathwada.

Chaundi village was located on the boundary of Ahmednagar and Beed districts. It was a part of Kharda Jahagir. (Jahagir means the ruling area of Sardar) Ahilya was educated in her childhood in the Chaundi village located on the banks of Seena River. She was popular in her town as a smart girl since her childhood days. She was applauded for being fearless in asking questions to everyone. Her parents were astonished seeing this habit of hers.

An astrologer who visited the village when Ahilya was a kid, predicted good things about her. By observing her brilliant intelligence quotient, he had already declared that she would be a queen. That she will have a huge palace and she will work for the betterment of the world. Her devotion will give hope in the darkest of times, she will also build Shivalayas (Temples of Shiva) in her life. The soil she touches will become holy and she will bring prosperity wherever she goes.

When Mankoji, father of Ahilya, told these predictions of astrologers to his wife, she couldn't hide her happiness and tears rolled down her cheeks. She further told Mankoji that the astrologer is pointing towards the marriage of our beloved daughter, it seems. Sushila Devi took her daughter to Shivalaya and prayed that all their good deeds be translated into her happiness. She also prayed for continuous positivity from Shiva for her daughter. Sushila Devi belonged to a Maindaad Patil family while the current family was Shinde Patil. Both the families were known for their devotion towards the deity of Jejuri, Khandoba or Malhari Mhalsakant. Both the families also had a strong social standing being Patil in respective areas. These families had a legacy of brave men who had always been ready to show their bravery with sword and the spear wherever, whenever was needed.



Ancestors of Mankoji were martyred in the wars. Hence, they had a great history of valour and sacrifice. Veergal (Memorial Stones) erected in the native villages of Shinde Patil and Maindaad Patil families were proof of their longstanding sacrifice and valour.

Ahilya spent her childhood in Chaundi, Chorakhali and Dhangar Jawla villages. Both her parents would be flattered listening to the praise being showered on her for her eloquence. Meanwhile, Bajirao Peshwa and Malharrao Holkar set up their military camps outside the village of Chaundi while on their expedition. The two friends, Bajirao and Malharrao, were riding horses alongside the Seena River while chasing each other amid the hunt.

The girls playing at the banks of the river start running away as soon as they listen to the sound of horses. However, one girl stood holding her ground to save Shiva Linga made by her using the sand. Both of them stopped and started talking to her. Her other friends ran to her house to tell the story to Mankoji. Meanwhile, Malharrao took her along with him and starts riding towards her house. While they were on their way to her house, they appreciated how kids in our Maratha Empire were brave. They told each other that they would soon rule India because of such people and that the day is not too far long. Malharrao says, Rau (Bajirao), this soil is gold. The pride and valour are its innate property. The people start showing their bravery only when they are kids. Just like Shivaji Maharaj vowed to create Swarajya with such friends of his childhood.

Mankoji and Sushila Devi start preparing to welcome two of the bravest warriors. An officer from Shinde Patil family was standing outside the house to welcome them while Mankoji left home to welcome them. The entire village gathered outside their homes to see the two of them. Everybody had heard their stories of valour so all the women, kids and men from the area prepared for their welcome. They decorated their houses and roads.

They were welcomed with the local Maharashtra musical instruments like Tutari and Halgi. Gram Joshi was also present to welcome them. The whole area outside the house of Shinde Patil was full of people observing both of them who were engaged in talking to the small Ahilya. Seeing her on one of their horses made the whole village proud. Her mother welcomed both the warriors with Aarti while they presented her with pearl necklaces as a gift.

Malharrao, Bajirao and Mankoji sat together in the house. Once the formal discussion was over, Bajirao asked Ahilya to marry Khanderao, son of Malharrao. Since Bajirao suggested this, both Malharrao and Mankoji agreed at that very moment itself. Later, in presence of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj himself, Ahilya and Khanderao got married in Shaniwarwada on May 20, 1733. The daughter of Chaundi became the daughter-in-law of Subhedar of Malwa.

This made every Chaundi resident proud. After marriage, daughter of Mankoji Shinde Patil, Ahilya was

now known as daughter-in-law of the Holkar family. Her mother-in-law Gautamabai promised Sushiladevi that she will treat Ahilya like her own daughter. Also, she would be taught the practices of the dynasty, so Sushilabai should live with peace.

Gautambai and Malharrao taught Ahilya the rituals and traditions of the dynasty. Gautamabai gave her all the love. Later, the two children of Ahilya were named Malerao and Muktabai. Her husband Khanderao would constantly go on expeditions with his father Malharrao. This was a peak point for the Holkar family. Everywhere their name was taken with pride. Malharrao, who could not enjoy his childhood, was happy watching his own kids and grandchildren around him. This was the time when Ahilya began learning the skills to take over the mantle of responsibilities. She took all the efforts to continue the legacy of the Holkar family as Subhedars created by the grace of God.

The only son of Malharrao, Khanderao was martyred in 1754 in the battle of Kumbheri. Since Ahilya was very young, Malharrao stopped her from going for Sati (Self-immolation of widows at their husband's funeral pyre) followed by the death of her husband. Angered by the death of son, Malharrao pledged to take revenge on Kumbheri. Shinde and Peshwa families became restless knowing this. Malharrao conducted a siege to Kumbheri to extort over one crore rupees from Surajmal Jaat. After the death of Khanderao, Peshwa and Shinde family settle up the battle with Surajmal Jaat. This created a rift between the Shinde and Holkar family.

After the demise of Subhedar Malharrao Holkar, Ahilyadevi took over the mantle of running the state. In her tenure, she had appointed her royal ambassadors in Pune, Hyderabad, Shirangpattan, Nagpur, Kolkata, etc. This helped her to coordinate better with other powers. She created royal courts and appointed judges to give justice to the people of her state. She also created a systematic postal system for better communication in her state. Several ghats were built by her in many pilgrimage places across India. Some of those ghats are Mandaleshwar Ghat, Gaay Teertha, Kurukshetra and Nemiparanya Ghat in Madhya Pradesh as well as Ahilya Ghat in Puntambe village. Her vision can be understood with this.

To ensure comfort and safety of the pilgrims, she appointed full time servants at various Dharamshala places at pilgrimages. She built several Dharamshala in Kedareshwar, Uttar Kashi, Haridwar, Ayodhya and Ujjain. Acharya Vinoba Bhave says that Ahilyadevi was a truly religious person. Giving the powers of the state in the hands of such a religious woman itself was a huge experiment. In those times, nobody had even thought that a widow could run an empire. But Marathas did this experiment and handed over the administration to a woman. And, she successfully ran the administration.

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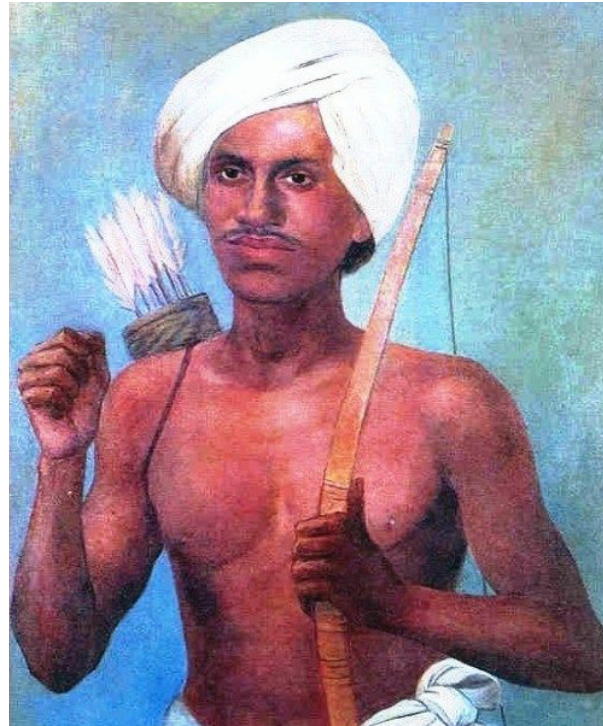
DIN VISHESH

Birsa Munda was a prominent tribal leader and folk hero in the late 19th century in the region that is now the state of Jharkhand, India. He was born on November 15, 1875, in the village of Ulihatu, in what was then the Chota Nagpur division of British India. Birsa Munda belonged to the Munda tribe, one of the largest tribal communities in the region. He played a crucial role in leading the tribal people in their fight against the oppressive British colonial rule and the exploitation of their land and resources by outside forces.

Birsa Munda emerged as a charismatic and influential figure among the tribal communities in the area. He organized and mobilized the tribes to protest unfair taxes, forced labour, and the encroachment of their lands by outsiders. He emphasized the need for unity among the tribal people and urged them to preserve their culture, traditions, and way of life.

Birsa Munda's leadership and resistance movement posed a significant challenge to the British authorities. He led several uprisings and rebellions against the British, and his popularity grew among the tribal communities. However, in 1900, he was arrested by the British and died in prison on June 9, 1900, at the young age of 25. Birsa Munda's legacy remains strong in Jharkhand and among the tribal communities of India. He is celebrated as a freedom fighter and a symbol of resistance against injustice. His efforts and sacrifices played a crucial role in raising awareness about the rights and struggles of tribal communities in India.

Remembering Birsa Munda



9th June

Birsa Munda Death Anniversary



22nd May

Raja Ram Mohan Roy
Birth Anniversary



27th May

Rambai Ambedkar
Death Anniversary



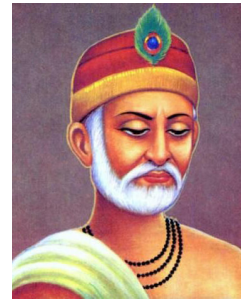
28th May

Veer Savarkar
Birth Anniversary



31st May

Ahilyabai Holkar
Birth Anniversary



6th June

Sant Kabir
Birth Anniversary

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