



Ambedkar Times

Weekly

Editor-in-Chief: Prem Kumar Chumber

Contact: 001-916-947-8920

Fax: 916-238-1393

E-mail: chumbermedia@yahoo.com, editor@ambedkartimes.com

VOL- 15

ISSUE- 5

April 12, 2023

California (USA)

www.ambedkartimes.com

www.deshdoaba.com

Greetings on Vaisakhi (April 13) & Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's 132nd Birth Anniversary (April 14)

Prem K. Chumber

Editor-in-Chief: Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba

Let me join our all-esteemed readers, contributors and sympathizers in exchanging Vaisakhi greetings and paying floral tribute to Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on the auspicious day of his 132nd birth anniversary. He devoted his whole life in the service of downtrodden: relentlessly struggling for the annihilation of castes and making efforts towards the creation of egalitarian society. His was a very highly educated personality. He received various degrees of higher education from reputed universities of United States of America and United Kingdom. He adopted legal-constitutional ways to acquire the long-denied rights of the hapless and socially excluded sections of the society and made them aware of their rights by establishing three newspapers (Mook Nayak, Janata and Prabudh Bharat), and organized them by founding three political parties (Independent Labour Party, Scheduled Castes Federation, Republican Party of India). Babasaheb Dr Ambedkar was a true democrat, great organizer, erudite scholar, eloquent speaker, conscientious philosopher, brilliant parliamentarian, audacious administrator and a thoroughly fine human being. He served the nation at various top offices but never compromised with the integrity and cause of poor people and egalitarian principles of social order based of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity! His contribution as the Chief-architect of the constitution of Independent India, advocate of women rights, laborers and the savior of the lowest of the low and staunch defender of social democratic values would be remembered fondly for the times to come.

Ambedkar Times and Desh Doaba forum also fondly remember 13 April; on this day in 1699, Tenth Master Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji baptized the five beloved (PunjPyare) at Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib, Anandpur Sahib. Guru Gobind Singh Ji infused a new spirit in them - the spirit of freedom, equality, justice - and put to an end for all times the oppressive social system of caste-based binaries of purity and pollution. ManasKee-JaatSabheAkayPehchanbo - Equality of Mankind. We wish to all Very Very Happy Khalsa Sathapan day and Happy Vaisakhi!

It is matter of great honour and pleasure for us to share with our esteemed readers, contributors and sympathizers that with your continuous support and encouragement, Ambedkar Times (English Weekly) has entered its 15th year of uninterrupted publication on March 15, 2022, and Desh Doaba (Punjabi Weekly) its 12th year of onward journey in the service of society. Ambedkar Times, named after Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and dedicated to Sahib Kanshi Ram, reminds us the golden time spent by Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar at the Columbia University (New York) that exposed him to the basic tenets, philosophy and the practice of true democracy. After reaching Bharat, Babasaheb developed a great movement for the restitution of social democracy at the grassroots. Desh Doaba, named after Doaba Punjab, reminds us of our roots and the great sacrifices made by the sons of the soil for the liberation of our land from the British Raj. The inhabitants of Doaba Punjab played a significant role in the Ghadar Lehar and the subsequent Babbar Akali Lehar. Desh Doaba weekly has been dedicated to Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, who arrived in the United States of America in 1909 and was among the forerunners of the Ghadar movement, and after reaching India in 1925 founded the Ad Dharm movement for the emancipation and empowerment of the Scheduled Castes. His contribution towards the mission of Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar is well known during the London Round Table Conferences.

Once again, the Ambedkar Times and Desh Doaba forum join with our esteemed readers, contributors and sympathizers in fondly remembering Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on his 132nd birth anniversary - April 14, 2023

Ambedkar, Caste and Nation - A Subaltern Perspective

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was an iconoclastic social reformer who, at the very formative years of his career, realized what it meant to be an Untouchable and how a struggle against untouchability could be launched. The social-reform movement of the caste Hindus could not win him to its side because of his existential understanding of the horror of untouchability. The issue of untouchability, for social reformers, was a mere problem. This problem was exterior to them in the sense that it affected only the Untouchables but not them. They themselves had never experienced the sinister blows of untouchability. Though they were sympathetic to the cause of lower castes, they belonged to the camp that imposed this inhuman system of social segregation.

Dr Ambedkar's analysis of the origins of the untouchability and his action plans for its eradication were different from the approach and practice



of the caste Hindu social reformers, who were looking at the reality from above. What distinguished him from the other social reformers was that he looked at the evil of untouchability from below, from a vantage point of the socially excluded and the oppressed. This perspective led him to think differently from the ones who belonged to the dominant stream of social and political thought of his time. His major works - *Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development; Annihilation of Caste; The Untouchables: Who Were They and Why They Became Untouchables? Who Were the Shudras* among others - are testimony to this perspective and his independent, original and rational thinking. He smashed the mythological basis of untouchability and laid bare its social and economic roots.

He built a strong case against the thesis of birth-based untouchability, which forced social exclusion on those kept outside the caste system and made their life hell. He exhorted its victims to oppose it tooth and nail. He said, "It is disgraceful to live at the cost of one's self respect. Self-respect is the most vital factor in life. Without it, man is a mere cipher. To live worthily with self-respect one has to overcome difficulties. It is out of hard and ceaseless struggle alone that one derives strength,

confidence and recognition." He drew a distinction between merely living and living worthily. For living a worthy life, Ambedkar said, society must be based on liberty, equality and fraternity. For Ambedkar, social tyranny was more oppressive than political tyranny and "a reformer, who defies society, is a much more courageous man than a politician, who defies government".

Ambedkar was of the kind who defied society. In the beginning of his social-reform crusade, he tried to get respect and

equality for the lower castes through reforms within the social set-up. He continued his struggle for empowerment of the lower castes by seeking changes within the fold of the society till 1935. When he realized that the liberation of lower castes within the given social setup was impossible, he began his scathing criticism and tirade against the inegalitarian social order. Ultimately, he got convinced that the only safe passage available for lower castes lies in conversion, hence, his conversion to Buddhism. For Ambedkar, lower castes liberation was the foremost issue and he emphasized that lower castes themselves have to come forward for its realization. Thus, Ambedkar provided a subaltern perspective to see through the chameleon of Indian caste-ridden social set-up and the ways to guard the interests of the Lower castes.

Dr B.R. Ambedkar made strenuous efforts to transform the hierarchical structures of Indian society for the restoration of equal rights and justice to the oppressed lot by building a critique from within the structure of Indian society. His was not a theoretical attempt but a practical approach to the problems of untouchability. He tried to resolve this perennial problem of Indian society not by making appeals to the conscience of those who religiously practised untouchability or begging them to transform their outlook but by relentless struggle against the socio-religious and politico-economic structure, where he thought the roots of the untouchability lay.

It is in this context that Dr Ambedkar's views on Indian nationalism needs special attention. His views on Indian nationalism are in stark opposition to the dominant discourse of secular nationalism represented by Jawaharlal Nehru; Hindu nationalism represented by Raja Rammohan Roy, B.G. Tilak, M.S. Golwalkar and Shyama Prasad Mukherjee; and Communist-secular-socialist nationalism represented by M.N. Roy, R. P. Dutt, T. Nagi Reddy and E.M.S. Namboodiripad. His views on Indian nationalism are not only distinct but also original. Hindu nationalism in essence aims at strengthening the brahmanical supremacy in post-colonial India. The communist-secular-social nationalism had the abolition of class as objective, but its ideologues, like that of the Hindu nationalism, also belonged to the upper-castes and were myopic to the question of ending the sufferings of the lower castes. Dr Ambedkar's conception of nationalism articulated and synthesized the national

(Contd. on next page)



Prof (Dr.) Ronki Ram

Shaheed Bhagat Singh Chair
Professor of Political Science
Panjab University, Chandigarh (India)
Former Visiting Professor,
Centre for Sikh and Panjabi Studies
University of Wolverhampton (UK)

Remembering Dr. Ambedkar on his 132nd Birth Anniversary

As the chief architect of the Indian Constitution, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar laid the foundation for modern India. He was a brilliant economist, whose work played a crucial role in the establishment of India's central bank, the Reserve Bank of India, and in the design of the country's first river valley project. However, his greatest and least known contribution was his ability to expand the concept of the nation to include India's vast diversity of people, cultures, and aspirations.

This write-up explores Dr. Ambedkar's unique conception of the nation as a philosophical entity, with welfare, equity, and fraternity as its central themes.

Dr. Ambedkar's conception of the nation is not only a political or geographical entity with a map and a flag. He did not subscribe to the popular definition of a nation as "a large group of people living in one area with their own government, language, traditions, etc." (Cambridge Dictionary).

For him, the idea of a nation had to have a philosophical and spiritual connotation with welfare, equity, and fraternity as its central themes.

While explaining his idea of the nation, he quoted French philosopher Ernest Renan, saying, "A nation is a living soul, a spiritual principle. Two things, which in truth are but one, constitute the soul, this spiritual principle. One is in the past, the other in the present. One is the common possession of a rich heritage of memories; the other is the actual consent, the desire to live together, the will to

preserve worthily the undivided inheritance which has been handed down. The nation, like the individual, is the outcome of a long past of efforts, and sacrifices, and devotion...A heroic past, great men, glory, these form the social capital, upon which a national idea may be founded."

Babasaheb spent his entire life trying to achieve this cherished goal of nationhood. He argued with another towering personality of his time, Mohandas Karam Chand Gandhi, on this issue. That great debate is now part of our national consciousness.

Any assessment of Dr. Ambedkar's contribution should keep in mind this philosophical and spiritual framework that he had in mind for the subcontinent. In his seminal but undelivered speech known as 'The Annihilation of Caste,' he argued that a casteless society was a prerequisite for a strong nation. Keeping this idea in mind, he led many social movements such as the Mahad Satyagraha for equal rights to drink water from a public tank, the temple entry rights movement, and the movement to burn the Manusmriti. He warned that without social



and economic equality, our nation might face an existential crisis.

While concluding the debate in the Constituent Assembly, as the chairperson of the drafting committee, Babasaheb stated that, "On the 26th January, 1950, we are going to

enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of one man one vote and one vote one value. In our social and economic life, we shall, by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man one value. How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which is Assembly has to laboriously built up."

To resolve these contradictions, Dr. Ambedkar labored hard to

push the idea of affirmative action for the deprived sections of the society and women. It sprang from his steadfast belief that there could not be sustainable liberty without equality and fraternity.

"How can people divided into several thousands of castes be a nation" he said. Forefathers of Indian constitution had agreed to Babasaheb's view on the need to have reservations for oppressed classes. If we go through the constituent assembly debates, we can notice that there were practically no conflicting views on the issue of equal rights and affirmative action. In the case of the Hindu code bill prepared by Babasaheb, Dr. Ambedkar's view to have equal rights for women in the family was later endorsed by the Parliament. Though in the initial phase there was resistance to this bill and sensing this baba sahib had resigned from the position of the law minister. For Babasaheb had famously said, "I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved" As Earnest Renan had rightly said that a nation must forget the bad memories of the past and cherish the dream of a shared future, the constituent assembly of India passed that test of having social equality and fraternity with flying colours. That's the legacy we have, when we remember the great son of India, Baba Saheb Dr. Bhim



Prof. Dilip Mandal
(Former Editor: India Today)

Ambedkar, Caste and Nation – A Subaltern Perspective

(Continue from page 1)

perceptions and aspirations of the down-trodden. It constructed a subaltern discourse of Indian nationalism. It aimed at establishing a casteless and classless society where no one would be discriminated against on the basis of birth and occupation. Within the lower castes-bahujan framework of Indian nationalism, Ambedkar built a critique of the asymmetrical social set-up based of graded caste hierarchy. His understanding of the question of the identity and existence of the nation was based on incisive analysis of the oppressive character of mainstream religion that pervaded a society built around the caste system. Since the dominant discourse of Indian nationalism remained indifferent towards removal of the caste system; and

the economic analysis of the communist secular socialist school also failed to highlight the issue of caste in its mechanical interpretation of class, Ambedkar – himself an Untouchable and victim of untouchability – formulated his own framework from the perspective of lower castes for the understanding of the system of caste and untouchability. The foundations of lower castes-bahujan nationalism lie in this framework developed by Ambedkar. It aimed at restructuring Indian society into a casteless and classless society – an egalitarian Sangha. Annihilation of caste was its central theme. Caste, asserts Ambedkar, was antithetical to nation. He realized that any form of nationalism whose roots were steeped in segmented socio-religious order could not bring relief to lower castes. Any

discourse of nationalism bereft of annihilation of caste was not acceptable to him at all. The agenda of annihilation of caste was so important to him that it became a central point of his struggle against colonial rule. In the first Round Table Conference, he minced no words in criticizing the British government for its failure to undo untouchability.

Swaraj without extinction of caste had no meaning for Ambedkar. In his undelivered speech to the Jat-Pat Todak Mandal of Lahore, he said, "In the fight for swaraj you fight with the whole nation on your side. In this, you have to fight against the whole nation and that too your own. But it is more important than swaraj. There is no use having swaraj, if you cannot defend it. More important than the question

of defending swaraj is the question of defending Hindus under the swaraj. In my opinion, only when the Hindu society becomes a casteless society that it can hope to have strength enough to defend itself. Without such internal strength, swaraj for Hindus may turn out to be only a step towards slavery." Thus, it was Ambedkar's subaltern perspective, which distinguished his conception of swaraj from that of the protagonists of the various shades of the national freedom movement. In his editorial in the *Bahishkrit Bharat*, Ambedkar wrote on 29 July 1927, "If Tilak had been born among the Untouchables, he would not have raised the slogan 'Swaraj is my birthright', but he would have raised the slogan 'Annihilation of untouchability is my birthright'."



Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD

URGENT CARE CLINIC

DR. TAKHAR'S FAMILY MEDICINE & URGENT CARE CLINIC

8191 Timberlake Way, Suite # 400, Sacramento, CA 95823

Phone: 916-688-8888 Fax: 916-688-8837

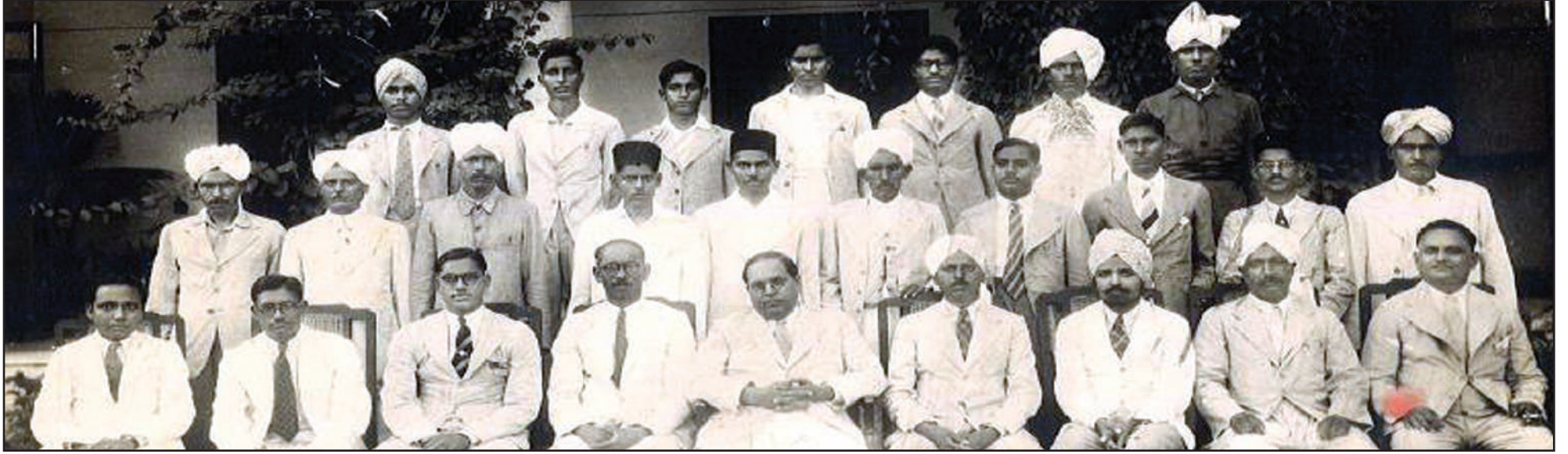
Clinic Hours: Monday to Friday 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM, Saturday 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM & Sunday closed

We speak your language: Panjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Farsi, Arabic and Spanish



Goodie Takhar, PhD

Heartiest congratulations on Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar's 132nd birth anniversary Message from Ambassador V. B. Soni



Dr. B. R. Ambedkar as a mentor to selected community leaders as potential achievers. 1946.

On the eve of Baba Sahib Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar's 132nd birthday on April 14, I have pleasure in sending fraternal greetings to all. All through his life, Baba Sahib laid due emphasis on books, learning and becoming aware of things around. The need for declaring this auspicious day as the **World Knowledge Day** can hardly be over-emphasized. Baba Saheb Ambedkar's dream of bringing his people on par with the rest of the society remains unfulfilled. It's an arduous task and the journey long and daunting. We have to gear up and

march forward to realize his cherished dream soon. He had taken initiative to mentor and train the budding youngsters in assuming leadership role and high positions in the various institutions during his lifetime. This will be evident from the photo below. My uncle Vimal Chandra and father Bankey Lal, seated first and third respectively from the left, contributed to the activities of this group.

This year a welcome initiative has been taken to start the maiden "Babasahib Ambedkar Yatra" train on his birthday. The special train under

the 'Bharat Gaurav' scheme, with around 600 passengers on board, will depart for the eight day long tour from Delhi to places associated with the life of Dr. Ambedkar and the Buddhist heritage. They will be shown around to his place of birth in Mhow, Madhya Pradesh and the 'Deeksha sthal' - the place where Baba Sahib adopted Buddhism in Nagpur. The itinerary includes trips to Buddhist sites at Sanchi, Sarnath, Bodh Gaya, Rajgir and Nalanda in the yatra. Dr. Ambedkar Foundation has been involved in the packaging of

the tour. It is proposed that before boarding the train from Delhi, a visit will be organised for the passengers to the Ambedkar memorial. The tour package includes food and lodging at the places where it involves halt at night. On this auspicious occasion, let us all resolve to introduce our youngsters, students and those interested, to Dr. Ambedkar's books, writings, lectures and commentaries, to open a totally new world for them, and widen their horizon. That will be the best tribute to him.

Jai Bhim.



SKY TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS

STRIVE FOR MORE

ਟਰੱਕਾਂ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਵੀਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਲਈ
ਸਕਾਈ ਟਰਾਂਸਪੋਰਟ ਸਾਲਿਊਸ਼ਨ
ਦੀਆਂ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ



SPECIAL BIT INSPECTION AND DOT AUDIT COMPLIANCE:

WE PROVIDE
ALL TRUCKING
RELATED
PERMITS AND
SERVICES

ICC, DOT, IFTA, IRP Plates,
PERMITS, NYP, KYU, OR,
Canada Permit, CORPORATION
AND LLC FILLING
SERVICES, 2290, PTI,
Trailer plates.

NOTARY PUBLIC SERVICES.
ON THE SPOT VIN VERIFICATION SERVICES.
DOT OUT OF SERVICES??
AUTHORIZED IRS E- FILE PROVIDER.
WE HAVE COMPLETE SOLUTIONS
FOR OUT OF SERVICE DOT.

SPECIAL DOT COMPLIANCE
FOR SAFETY, AUDITS AND
RECORD KEEPING.

PLEASE CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION

PHONE: 209-855-6938, FAX: 209-762-6540

Email: skytransportsolution@gmail.com

Give us a chance to provide you best services

121 E 11th St. Tracy, CA 95376

Ambedkar International Symposium at Vancouver (Canada) - April 21-26, 2023 - A Curtain Raiser

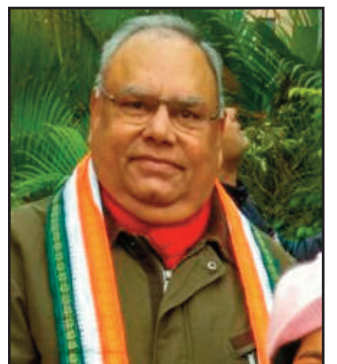
I learnt with satisfaction and pleasure from my friend Jai Birdi of Chetna Association of Canada that Chetna Association in cooperation with Ambedkarite International Coordination Society (AICS) is arranging and hosting 'Ambedkar International Symposium on Emancipation and Equality' in Vancouver from April 21-26, 2023 on the subjects of interest and concern with regard to Babasaheb B.R. Ambedkar and his legacy in which more than 100 delegates not only from Canada but also other countries from the developed world will participate. The main theme of the Symposium will be 'Emancipation and Empowerment on the basis of Equality. In a Press Release in this regard, Jai Birdi and Param Kainth, Co-Chairpersons of the Steering Committee set up to steer the Symposium, said, "We are very excited to welcome the delegates and community members to these gatherings and facilitate interactive dialogue on dalit emancipation through inclusion, meaningful representation and enhanced social, political and economic equality" and added, "We are also very pleased to organize these events in partnership with our academic and community partners." It clearly sets the agenda and direction of Ambedkar International Symposium. I am confident that the deliberations at this timely event in Vancouver would be of far-reaching importance and relevance particularly to Babasaheb Ambedkar's legacy on 'Equitable World Order', the very 'aim and objective' of comity of nations under the aegis of the UN. Such an august gathering would be held in Vancouver by the Dalit Diaspora after almost 20 years, first such event was held in Vancouver in 2003, I understand. If one simply goes by the subjects, themes, involvement of institutions, participation of high caliber delegates and organizers, one can easily say that Ambedkar International Symposium will happen to be a high voltage event of great value to the students, scholars and decision makers on one hand and of great educative content and beneficial to the community and the society at large on the other.

It is gratifying to note that apart from the hosts, Chetna Association of Canada and AICS; there are more than six esteemed academic and research institutions and organizations namely; Department of Asian Studies of University of Columbia, Center for India and South Asia Research at University of British Columbia, University of Victoria, Center for India and South Asia Studies of University of Columbia, Simon Fraser University among others, which are fully engaged and involved in the process. The subjects and themes of lectures, discussions, deliberations viz.: Buddhism- as envisioned by Dr. Ambedkar, and outlined in his noble book, 'Buddha and His Dhamma, India's legal framework and how it enables human emancipation, Caste in academic settings in Canada and

other jurisdictions, Caste and Entrepreneurship, Women and Youth Empowerment, inter alia, have been thoughtfully identified and selected, besides the most important one and of great contemporary relevance - April 14, birthday of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar as International Day of Equality under the UN arrangements. The crux of the matter is summed up when the organizers termed the show as "Dr. Ambedkar's Manifesto". With a view to underline the issue of discrimination on the basis of caste in the schools and universities, a session of the Symposium has been devoted and dedicated to Dr. Pamposh of Sri Guru Ram Dass Institute of Medical

surfacing. A need to assess and develop proactive measures is critical for preventing caste-based discrimination and providing safer places are critically needed in Canada." The Press Note has rightly observed, "In the lower mainland of British Columbia, there is already a strong foundation and partnerships created with academic, community, media, and other organizations." It is heartwarming to note that The City of Burnaby was the first to come forward and declared April 14, birthday of Babasaheb Ambedkar, as Dr.B.R. Ambedkar Day of Equality in April, 2020 followed by the Province of British Columbia and cities and provinces. It will

thoughtful of Chetna Association and AICS to express their sense of gratitude to the local authorities in extending due recognition to the lofty ideals of Babasaheb



Ramesh Chander
Ambassador - I.F.S. (Retired)
91-99885-10940

Ambedkar, Equality, Liberty, Justice and Fraternity. I am confident that the legacy of the greatest son of India, Babasaheb Ambedkar, will find and rightly so, greater acceptability and recognition in the friendly and democratic social and political weather like that of Canada in the years to come. It is further satisfying to note that other sister-outfits in Canada like; Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha (Vancouver), Shri Guru Ravidass Society of Calgary, Ambedkarites International Mission Society-Canada (Calgary), Shri 108 Sant Sarwan Dass Charitable Trust (Western Canada) are fully supportive and cooperative of the umbrella organizations like Chetna Association and AICS in their endeavors in this regard.

Ambedkar International Symposium is all set to be a great success not only because of the fact that the organizers and hosts of the big event are sincere and fully dedicated but also of the fact that the mere list of academics and intellectuals participating in the event reads like a 'Who's Who' of intelligentsia in Canada and beyond besides the availability of expert and professional advice of the stalwarts of the community namely; Prof (Dr.) Vivek Kumar, Dr. KP Singh, Dr. Suraj Yengde, Dr. Sujata Gaurkhede and Dr. Yuwraj Naranaware.

I take this opportunity to wish all the very best to the organizers and hosts of Ambedkar International Symposium and hope that the symposium would further enlighten and empower the depressed and oppressed communities of the world to contribute positively in the establishing an 'Equitable World Order', the cherished wish of Babasaheb Ambedkar.

It was intended to be a mere 'curtain raiser' before the event. More details, if required, the Media Coordinator, Rattan Paul and the Team-ASE, 2023 may be contacted: Ratan Paul, media coordinator. Email: paul2cc@hotmail.com or ase2023@yahoo.com and Phone: 778-772-2101 www.ase2023.ca and: Team ASE2023 www.ase2023.ca ase2023@yahoo.com

(A Blog of Ambassador Ramesh Chander, a retired Career Diplomat of the Indian Foreign Service (IFS)



Research and Rohit Vemula of Hyderabad University and rightly so.

Why a symposium in Vancouver, Canada? The hosts have raised the question and have answered it themselves. - "Metropolitan cities of Canada are now evolving and have a stronger visibility of the South Asian populations. Similar to what is being reported in other jurisdictions, incidents of caste-based oppression are

not be out of place to mention and appreciate the pioneer work done by Chetna Association of Canada in this regard. They responded positively and candidly to the proposal of April 14 as International Day of Equality in 2015, of which I happen to be a humble initiator, and wrote to PM Narendra Modi and others including their local interlocutors and pursued the matter with enthusiasm and zeal. It is

A week-long International symposium and Dr. Ambedkar Equality Day, planned for April 21 to 26, 2023

Chetna Association of Canada and Ambedkarite International Coordination Society

Vancouver- Approximately hundred delegates are expected to attend a week-long symposium in Vancouver from April 21 to 26, 2023 from India, the United Kingdom, France, Middle East, the United States, and of course, from across Canada.

"We are very excited to welcome delegates and community members to these gatherings and facilitate interactive dialogues on Dalit emancipation through inclusion, meaningful representation, and enhanced social, political, and economic equality", said Jai Birdi and Param Kainth, co-chairs of the steering committee mandated to host these events and appointed by Chetna Association of Canada, and Ambedkarite International Coordination Society (AICS).

"We are also very pleased to organise these events in partnership with our academic and community partners", continued Birdi.

The symposium will feature:

- April 21 - 2 PM to 3:15 pm. Asian Center at University of British Columbia. A session on "Buddhism-as envisioned by Dr. Ambedkar and outlined in his noble book, 'Buddha and His Dhamma'".

Dr. Ambedkar's great grand-nephew, Rajaratna Ambedkar, will be one of the key panel members to discuss this topic. The session will be moderated by Dr. Jessica L. Main, Associate Professor with The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Chair in Buddhism and Contemporary Society, Department of Asian Studies, University of British Columbia

- April 21 - 6 PM to 8 PM. CK Choi Building, University of British Columbia

Session- "India's legal framework and how it enables human emancipation."

LA County Judge Neetu Badhan-Smith will be a key member on this panel. The session will be moderated by local lawyer, Lovleen Gill.

- April 22 all Day. Sauder Business School at University of British Columbia, Room Number 492

Sessions will include:

1. 8 am - continental breakfast
2. 9 am - Opening and introductory remarks
3. 10:15 am - Dr. Ambedkar Manifesto.
4. 11:15am - "Caste in academic settings in Canada and other jurisdictions" will provide opportunities for students and faculty to share their experiences and suggestions on addressing Caste based discrimination in academic settings. The session will be moderated by Dr. Priti Narayan, Director with Center for India and South Asia Research at University of British Columbia. Note:.

This session will be tributed to Dr. Pamposh, RohithVemula, and others who experienced extreme caste-oppression in academic settings and lost their lives.

5. 1:30 pm - "Caste and entrepreneurship" - entrepreneurs will discuss how they are leveraging opportunities to enhance inclusion through entrepreneurship both in Canada and India.

6. 3:00 PM - "Women and Youth Empowerment"- a panel discussion highlighting women and youth spearheading discussions on caste oppression and strategies moving forward. Moderated by UBC Law Professor, Dr. Brenna Bhandar. Meera Estrada, Toronto-based journalist will be one of the key panel members.

7. 4:20 PM - A summary of issues and strategies heard will be reported by Dr. Rita Dhamoon of University of Victoria at the end of the season April 22.

8. 6 pm - dinner
- April 23: A pilgrimage to the Guru Ravidass Community Center in Burnaby will be arranged for the morning of April 23. In the evening, a gala reception to celebrate Dr. Ambedkar Birth Anniversary as 'Equality Day will be hosted at Fraserview Banquet Hall in Vancouver.

- April 24, Equality Day Celebrations will be hosted at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby.

Along with theatrical performance by Simran Kranti, City of Burnaby will be honoured for being the first city in North America to proclaim April 14- Dr. B.R. Day of Equality in Burnaby.

- April 25- Equality Day at the University of Victoria. A short visit to the BC Legislature and a meeting with the House Speaker, Mr. Raj Chouhan, the first person of South Asian background to achieve this position, will also be arranged.

- April 26- Equality Day Celebrations at the University of Fraser Valley in Abbotsford. A discussion will be on partnership opportunities for enhancing inclusion and preventing discrimination at the campus.

As some of the information is subject to change, people are encouraged to visit www.ase2023.ca regularly.

Why a symposium in Vancouver, Canada?

Some may wonder why the Dr. Ambedkar International Symposium is taking place in Canada?

"Metropolitan cities of Canada are now evolving and have a stronger visibility of the South Asian populations. Similar to what is being reported in other jurisdictions, incidents of caste-based oppression are

surfacing. A need to assess and develop proactive measures is critical for preventing caste-based discrimination and providing safer places are critically needed in Canada", says Birdi.

In the lower mainland of British Columbia, there is already a strong foundation and partnerships created with academic, community, media, and other organizations.

City of Burnaby was the first city in Canada to proclaim April 14- Dr. Ambedkar Day of Equality. Similarly, the Province of British Columbia was the first provincial or state level government to proclaim Dr. Ambedkar Day of Equality and April - Dalit History Month. Presentations to local cities and BC Human Rights Commission on the need to assess caste situation and take appropriate actions have also already been made. Legal cases were presented before the BC Human Rights Tribunal, and recently, the tribunal found the incident of caste oppression was valid and penalized the offenders close to ten thousand dollars to cover a portion of legal costs.

Gratitude and acknowledgement:

The steering committee is very grateful to all for the support and advices received and look forward to having a meaningful and respectful dialogue, and developing strategies to move forward together and enhance respectful and inclusive communities. The steering committee acknowledges financial and in-kind support of Academic partners and sponsors:

- Centre for India and South Asia (CISAR) at University of British Columbia.

- Institute for the Humanities at Simon Fraser University

- Hari Sharma Foundation

- South Asian Studies Institute (SASI) at The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Program in Buddhism and Contemporary Society at University of British Columbia

- South Asian Studies Institute, University of the Fraser Valley

- President's Office, University of Victoria

- Department of History at University of British Columbia

- David Lam Center at Simon Fraser University

- Public Humanities Hub at University of British Columbia

- Kwantlen Polytechnic University.

Academic Advisors:

- Prof (Dr.) Vivek Kumar
- Dr. KP Singh
- Dr. SurajYengde
- Dr. Sujata Gaurkhede
- Dr. YuwrajNaranaware

Symposium Rapporteur:

- Dr. Rita Dhamoon, Lead Rapporteur

- Dr. SharnSandhra
- Dr. Ajay Haradwaj

- Seema Mahi

- Manjit Bains

Media Team:

- Ratan Paul, Coordinator

- Ashok Dass,DalitDastak

- Dr. Jas Simran Kehal, Grad Student (Mass Media)

- Prem Chumber, Chumber Media (Desh Doaba and Dr. Ambedkar Times)

- MeenaKotwal, Mook Nayak
- SurbhiGogoi, Freelance Journalist

- Sonia West, Chetna Association of Canada

- ShilipashreeJagannathan, Freelance Journalist

- Dr. Drona Rasali, Founder and International Moderator, NepalDalit-info International Network.

Community Partners:

- South Asian Network for Secular and Democracy (SANSAD)

- Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha (Vancouver)

- Shri Guru Ravidass Society of Calgary

- Ambedkarites International Mission Society-Canada (Calgary)

- Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Ontario

- Shri 108 Sant Sarwan Dass Charitable Trust (Western Canada)

- Our Global Village (OGV)

- South Asian Dalit & Adivasi Network (SADAN)

Steering Committee Members:

- Jai Birdi, co-chair

- Param Kainth, co-chair

- Surjit Bains, chair, finance

- Harmesh Chander, social media

- Anand Balley, Coordinator, Delegate Services

- Harjinder Mall, Welcome Committee

Representatives:

- Victoria, BC: Mohinder and Krishna Ralh

- United Kingdom: HL Virdi

- Calgary, Alberta: Major Mal

For information, contact Ratan Paul, media coordinator.

Email: paul2cc@hotmail.com or ase2023@yahoo.com

Phone: 778-772-2101

www.ase2023.ca

Sincerely,
Team ASE2023
www.ase2023.ca
ase2023@yahoo.com

Corollary of Dhamma of Tathagat Buddha

After attaining enlightenment, Tathagat Buddha gave his first sermon to the five seekers he knew before. After a few days, common people started to visit him to listen to his teachings, some of whom left worldly life and began to live with Tathagat. They used to live on the alms offered by the common people. They were called Bhikkhus and those who started to believe Tathagata and follow his Dhamma while living a worldly life were called Upasakas.

After their training in Dhamma was finished, the Bhikkhus who go for the propagation of Dhamma were/are called Bhante. Tathagat's message to them was:-

"The aim of the Bhikkhus



who propagate Dhamma is not to become dependent, but to inspire the

whole society with true Dhamma through their thinking prowess, character and behavior. People often confuse the meaning of spirituality with unproductive miracles, due to which it becomes difficult to motivate common people for introspection. People will disrespect you, will be scornful of you, even then you have to maintain calm. Be patient. And propagate Dhamma while following restraint.

If a householder invites you for a meal, then after the meal you have to preach the Dhamma to the householder and the Upasakas present there. Just as a confectioner with his intelligence and hard work and using only three things - First, milk from which condensed milk,

scraped cream, ghee, butter and cream, Second, sugarcane juice from which sugar, jiggery, sugar syrup and sugar candy and Third, wheat from which flour, refined flour, etc. - prepares different types of sweets, in the same way you should have a well-balanced speech in your mind, a balanced and articulate discourse should be given on any one subject..."



Dr Amritpal Kaur

(Dental Surgeon)

Writer on Ambedkarism, Buddhism and Feminism
Founding Member National Council of Women Leaders

Heartiest congratulations on birth anniversaries of Mahatma Jyotirao Govindrao Phule and Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar

Prem Kumar Chumber
Editor-in-Chief
Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba

NAMO BUDDHAY



Tathaghat Buddha

Welcome
All Delegates and Supporters



JAI BHEEM



Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

DR. AMBEDKAR INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM FOR EMANCIPATION AND EQUALITY DAY

on 21st to 26th April, 2023 at Vancouver (BC) Canada.

Organized by :

AMBEDKRITES INTERNATIONAL CO-ORDINATION SOCIETY OF CANADA & CHETNA ASSOCIATION OF CANADA.

Contact : Param Kainth : 778-708-4236, Anand Balley : 416-578-0000, Harjinder Mall : 250-344-8179, Surjit Bains : 778-388-9046, Harmesh Chander : 778-995-4110, Jai Birdi : 778-878-7473

E-mail : ase2023@yahoo.com, website : www.ase2023.ca



SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES INSTITUTE
University of the Fraser Valley



UNIVERSITY OF THE FRASER VALLEY



CENTRE FOR INDIA AND SOUTH ASIA RESEARCH

SFU

DAVID LAM CENTRE



KWANTLEN POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY



Hari Sharma FOUNDATION

SFU

INSTITUTE FOR THE HUMANITIES



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Public Humanities



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Department of History
Faculty of Arts



University of Victoria



THE ROBERT H.N. HO FAMILY FOUNDATION PROGRAM IN
Buddhism and Contemporary Society

Dr. Ambedkar – Champion of Women's Liberation

Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb B.R. Ambedkar, revered as 'Father of the Constitution' was a versatile personality, whose life has been a saga of struggle and sacrifice not only for the liberation of the marginalized and deprived sections termed as the Shudras in India but also the women from the perpetual thralldom of the irrational, iniquitous and discriminatory prevailing Social Order. His mission was to establish an egalitarian social and political Order based on the democratic principles of liberty, equality, fraternity and justice, and to realize the ideal of India being 'One Nation One People'. Some people may be aware of his struggle for the uplift of the children of lesser God – the Shudras and Ati-Shudras (Untouchables), but most of them may not be knowing about his mammoth contribution in elevating the status of women who were equated with the Shudras and were deprived of the basic human rights, and degraded as the progeny of sin. According to Dr. Ambedkar,

progress of the Community is measured by progress of women. He believed that the society and the nation could not progress without the progress of women. Therefore, he took up the cause of women along with that of the Depressed Classes as a question of life and death. Apart from the steps taken to empower women by him as Labour Member (Minister) of the Governor General's Executive Council, Dr. Ambedkar as the first Law Minister of Independent India prepared and moved in the Parliament the revolutionary 'Hindu Code Bill' for women empowerment. Unfortunately, the Bill fell prey to the fossilized mindset of the Hindu orthodoxy and was ultimately dropped on flimsy grounds after its four years incubation. As the Bill was considered to be the most important measure for elevation of half of the population of the country, Dr. Ambedkar resigned from the Nehru Cabinet in protest. Though condition of women particularly from the upper strata of the society is somewhat better to a degree today, but that of the common women continues to be abysmally distressing. Female foeticide, dowry, illiteracy, disease, discrimination, domestic and social violence and ever increasing crimes against women speak loudly of the past legacy and present scenario. Dr. Ambedkar carried out extensive research on the subject with revealing results warranting radical social reforms.

According to Babasaheb, the status of women in the Early Vedic period was said to be dignified and equal to men in many ways. Their condition started deteriorating in the later Vedic period and subsequently

touched its nadir. They were deprived of the right to education and property, and were equated with the *Shudras*, and treated even worse than them in many cases. Their condition was reduced to the sub human level and they were treated worse than a slave and animal as ordained in the Scriptures. *Nrisinhpoorvtapi Upanishada* (1.7) lays down: "The learned people



do not want to deliver sermons to the women and Shudras on Pranava Gayatri and Mahalaxmi incantation (*Mahalaxmi Mantra*) like Yajurveda. They (Learned Ones) should know the thirty two lettered *Saama (Veda Mantra)*. Those who know *Saama*, they achieve immortality. If women and Shudras happen to know the *Pranava Gayatri* and *Mahalaxmi* incantation like Yajurveda even then they attain debasement (अधोगति) after death. Such teachers should, therefore, exercise caution while teaching the Mantras, for they also reach debasement along with such women and *Shudras*." Lord Krishna says in the *Geeta* (9.32): "Women,

Vaishyas, Shudras as well as even those who are born of the womb of sin – pariahs (पापसोत्रि) attain supreme status when they take refuge in me." Explaining the duties of a faithful wife to Parvati at the time of her wedding with Lord Shiva, the Brahmin Lady says: "A faithful wife should worship her husband as God. He is greater than *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Shiva*. She should rise earlier to her husband and go to bed after he goes to sleep. She should take the left-over food of her husband after he has finished his meals. She should not appear before her husband without being properly dressed up with proper make-up. She should never apply makeup when he is not home. When called by the husband she should present herself instantly with folded hands and seek and comply with his orders like an obedient servant. If she wants to derive the benefit of pilgrimage, she

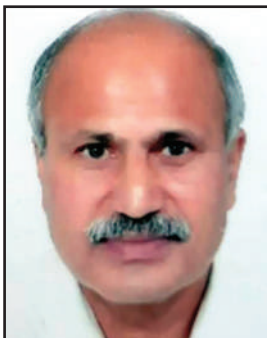
should drink the water got from cleaning the feet of her husband (चरणोदक). A woman responding harshly in anger to the words of her husband is like a village bitch and she-jackal in the jungle. She should love all that what her husband loves and satisfy him with her speech, action and thought. She should never sit at a place higher than that of her

horses, One crore (ten millions) elephants and same quantity of jewel studded chariots etc. were given in dowry to Lord Shiva at his marriage with Parvati (*Sankshipta Shiv Purana*, *Rudra Samhita*, *Parvati Khand*, Ch.48, p.229, Gita Press Gorakhpur, 1988). King Janaka gave huge wealth, lakhs of cows, many expensive carpets, crores of silk and cotton dresses,

many divine elephants, horses, chariots and foot soldiers decorated with variety of jewellery as dowry at the marriage of Sita and Urmila as well as Janaka's brother Kushadhwaja's two daughters Shrutkirti and Mandvai with Rama, Lakshmana, Shatrughana and Bharata respectively on the same day (*Valmikya Ramayana*, Pt. 1, Gita Press Gorakhpur, 1996, Balkanda, Sarga, 74.4, 73.25-36).

Such a pitiable condition of women was considered by Dr. Ambedkar not only inhuman but also against the interest of the society and the country as almost half of the population was deprived of development of their

human potential and their positive contribution in improving the condition of society and the nation. In an article titled "THE RISE AND FALL OF THE HINDU WOMEN: WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR IT?" published in the journal 'Maha Bodhi' May-June 1951 (BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt. 2, pp. 109-129), Dr. Ambedkar brought out that at one time in the ancient history women occupied a very high position in the intellectual and social life of the country. They were taught to read the Vedas and they could repeat the *Veda Mantras*. Panini's *Ashtadhyayi* bears testimony to the fact that women attended Gurukul (College) and studied the various *Shakhas* (Sections) of the Veda and became expert in *Mimansa* (Epistemology-interpretative exposition). Patanjali's *Maha Bhashya* shows that women were teachers and taught Vedas to girl students. The story of public disputation between Janaka and Sulabha, between Yajnavalkya and Gargi, between Yajnavalkya and Maitrai and between *Sankaracharya* and Vidyadhari shows that Indian women in pre-Manu's time could rise to the highest pinnacle of learning and education. A woman was entitled to *Upanayana* is clear from the *Atharva Veda*. That at one time women were highly respected cannot be disputed. Among the *Ratnis* who played so prominent a part in the coronation of the King in the Ancient India was queen and the king made her an offering as he did to the others. Not only the king elect did homage to the Queen he worshipped his other wives of lower castes as well. In the same way the king offered



Col. Prithvi Raj Kumar

91-94648-94941
Chief Postmaster General (Retd.)
(Additional Secretary,
Govt. of India)

husband. The husband is the god, guru, religion, pilgrimage and fast to a woman; she should worship none else than her husband only. There is a long list of do's and don'ts for her (*Sankshipta Shiv Purana*, *Rudra Samhita*, *Parvati Khand*, Ch.54, pp.233-237, Gita Press Gorakhpur, 1988). Similar and some more duties and commandments have been prescribed for a woman in the Gita Press Gorakhpur, 1995 edition, of *Sankshipta Skandh Purana*, *Braham Khand*, *Dharamaranya Mahatmya*, pp.467-470. *Ramcharitamanas* (Sunderkaand, 58.3) ordains: "Drums (ढोल), rustics, Shudras, beast and women are

subject of being beaten up/thrashed." *Manu Smriti* lays down detailed laws and commandments to be strictly observed by women. It reduces women to the level of a slave. A woman under the law of *Manu* is subject to corporal punishment and *Manu* allows the husband the right to beat his wife. He lays down: "A wife, a son, a slave, a pupil, and a younger brother of the full blood, who have committed faults, may be beaten with a rope or a split bamboo (MS, VIII. 299)". According to *Manu*, the ideal of life for a woman is to worship her husband though he may be devoid of virtue or good qualities or may be of loose character. She should live and die with her husband (MS, V.151, 154). The despicable dowry system was in practice since ancient times. A large quantity of jewels, variety of drinks, vessels, one lakh (one hundred thousands) cows, one lakh decorated

(Contd. on next page)

Dr. Ambedkar – Champion of Women's Liberation

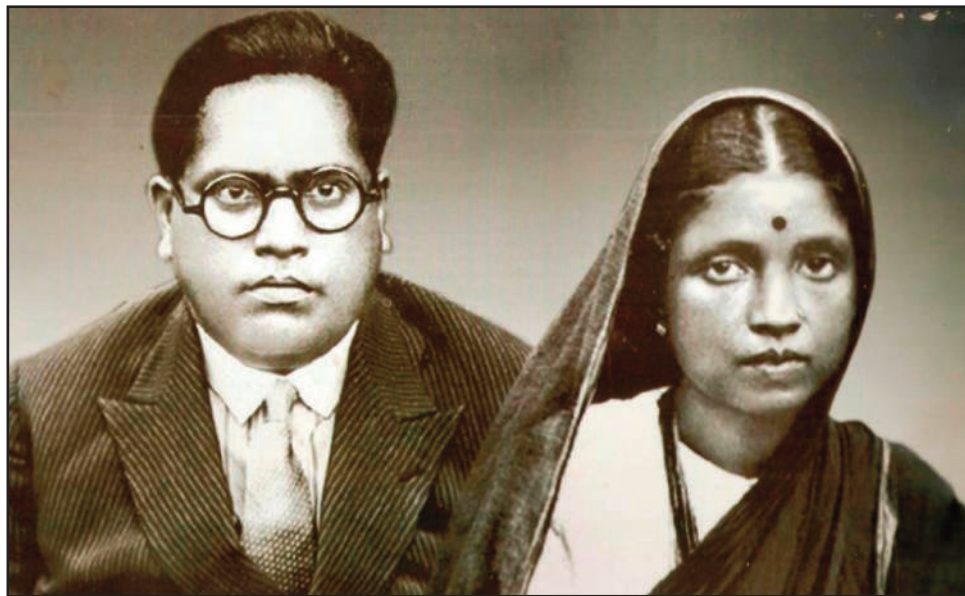
(Continue from page 7)

salutation to the ladies of the chiefs of the 'Srenies' (guilds) after the coronation ceremony. This is a high position for women in any part of the world.

Dr. Ambedkar attributes the utter downfall and degradation of women in India to Manu, the Law Giver of the Hindus as evident from his Manu Smriti. Quoting some of the laws of the Manu Smriti, he says that Manu starts with a low opinion of women. He proclaims that it is the nature of women to seduce man in this world. For that reason the wise are never unguarded in the company of females (MS, II.213). Women are able to lead astray in this world not only a fool, but even a learned man, and make him a slave of desire and anger (MS, II.214). One should not sit in a lonely place with one's mother, sister, or daughter, for the senses are powerful and master even a learned man (MS, II.215). Women do not care for beauty, nor is their attention fixed on age; it is enough that he is a man. They give themselves to the handsome and ugly (IX.14). Through their passion for men, through their mutable temper, through natural heartlessness, women become disloyal towards their husbands; however, carefully they may be guarded in this world (IX.15). Knowing their disposition, which the Lord of creatures laid in them at the time of creation to be such, every man should most strenuously exert himself to guard them (IX.16). Manu allotted to women a love of their seat, ornament, impure desires, wrath, dishonesty, malice and bad conduct (IX.17). Women are not to be allowed freedom under any circumstances. Day and night women must be kept in dependence by the males of their families and if they attach themselves to sensual enjoyments, they must be kept under one's control (IX. 2). By a girl, by a young woman, or even by an aged one, nothing must be done independently, even in her own house (V.147). In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons; a woman should never be independent (V.148). She must not seek to separate herself from her father, husband, or sons; by leaving them she would make both families contemptible (V.149). The husband is declared to be one with wife, which means that there could be no separation once a woman is married (IX. 45). Woman is not to have right to divorce. Manu's law against divorce had a very different motive. It was not to tie up a man to a woman but it was to tie up the woman to a man and to leave the man free. Manu says neither by sale nor by repudiation is a wife released from her husband (IX. 46). A wife was reduced by Manu to the level of a slave in the matter of property. He ordains that a wife, a son and a slave, these three are declared to have no property; the wealth which they earn is for him to whom they belong (IX. 416). A woman under the law of

Manu is subject to corporal punishment and Manu allows the husband the right to beat his wife. He lays down that a wife, a son, a slave, a pupil, and a younger brother of the full blood, who has committed faults, may be beaten

with a rope or a split bamboo (VIII. 299). A woman had no right to knowledge under Manu. The study of Veda was forbidden to her by him. He took away their right to study the Vedas. The uttering of the *Veda Mantras* is useful for removing sin, but as women cannot utter the *Veda Mantras* they are as unclean as untruth is (IX, 18). Even for a woman



the performance of the Sanskaras is necessary and they should be performed without uttering the *Veda Mantras* (II. 66). A woman shall not perform the daily sacrifices prescribed by the Vedas. If she does it, she will go to hell (XI, 36-37). A Brahmin must never eat food given at a sacrifice performed by women. Sacrifices performed by women are inauspicious and not acceptable to God (IV. 205, 206). The ideal of life for a woman is to worship her husband though he may be devoid of virtue or good qualities or may be of loose character. She should live and die with her husband. Manu says whomsoever her father or brothers give her, she shall obey him as long as he lives and when he is dead, she must not insult his memory (V. 151). Though destitute of virtue, or seeking pleasure elsewhere, or devoid of good qualities, yet a husband must be constantly worshipped as a God by a faithful wife (V. 154). No sacrifice, no vow, no fast must be performed by women, apart from their husbands; if a wife obeys her husband, she will for that reason alone be exalted in heaven (V.155). A husband is always a source of happiness to his wife, both in season and out of season in this and next world (V.153). As though to put a coping stone on his edifice of disabilities of women Manu declares that killing a woman is only a minor offence. He says slaying women, Shudras, Vaishyas or Kshatriyas and atheists are minor offences (उपपातक) (XI. 67). Brahmin being superior to all only his killing was major offence (महापातक).

Dr. Ambedkar says that Manu

was not worried by consideration of justice or injustice of his law. He wanted to deprive woman of the freedom she had under the Buddhist regime. He knew that by her misuse of her liberty, by her willingness to marry the Shudra the system of the gradation of the Varna would be destroyed. Manu was outraged by her license and in putting a stop to it he deprived her of her liberty. Woman was not to have any intellectual pursuits or free will, or freedom of thought. She was not to join any heretical sect such as Buddhism. If she did that she was not to be given the libation of

water as was done in the case of all dead. In the face of the above evidence, Dr. Ambedkar concludes: "It goes without saying that Manu was responsible for the degradation of women in India. He imposed these and many more disabilities upon women and crippled them permanently. If this is not monstrous, nothing can be" (BAWS, Vol.3, pp.430-432)!

There was prevalent among the Aryans the practice of renting out their women to others for a time. As per story in Mahabharata in Udyoga Parva, Adh, 106-123, king Yayati gave his daughter Madhavi as an offering to his Guru Galav who further rented out the girl to three kings each for a period. After that she was given in marriage to Vishwamitra with whom she remained until a son was born to her. She was returned to her father thereafter. Besides the practice of letting out women to others, there was prevalent another practice of allowing the women to have sexual intercourse with any of the Devas (Brahmins or priests!) in the interest of good breeding. *Devas* were superior in status and prowess. This practice prevailed so extensively that the *Devas* came to regard prelibation in respect of the Aryan women as their prescriptive right. The *Sapatapadi* performed in all Hindu marriages has an integral connection with the prelibation right of the *Devas*. If the *Devas* were dissatisfied with the compensation, they could claim the woman before the seventh step was complete. After the seventh step was taken, the right of the *Devas* was extinguished and the couple could live as husband

and wife without being obstructed or molested by the *Devas* (BAWS, Vol. 3, p 172).

Manu designated the Brahmins as *Bhu-devas*, lords of the earth. The Brahmins extended the scope of this statement and began to claim the right to sexual intercourse with women of other classes. Even queens were not exempt from this claim. Ludovico Di Varthema who came to India as a traveler in about 1502 A.D. records about the Brahmins of Calicut that when the king takes a wife, he selects the most worthy and the most honored of these Brahmins and makes him sleep the first night with his wife in order that he may deflower her. The king is even obliged to pay him for this favor. Similarly, Hamilton, another writer says: "When the Samorin (King) marries, he must not cohabit with his bride till the Nambudri Brahmin or chief priest has enjoyed her, and if he pleases, he may have three nights of her company, because the first fruits of her nuptials must be an holy oblation to the god she worships." In the Bombay Presidency, the priests of the Vaishnava sect claimed the right to deflower the women of their sect. This gave rise to the famous Maharaja Libel case brought by the chief priest against one Karosondas Mulji in the High Court of Bombay in 1869. This shows that the right to claim the benefit of the first night was certainly effective till then (BAWS, Vol. 3, p.324).

According to Dr. Ambedkar, Manu's view of the women was both an insult and an injury to them. It was an injury because without any justification she was denied the right to acquire knowledge which is the birthright of every human being. It was an insult because after denying her opportunity to acquire knowledge she was declared to be as unclean as untruth for want of knowledge and therefore not to be allowed to take Sannyas which was regarded as a path to reach *Brahma* (The Creator). Not only was she denied the right to realize her spiritual potentiality she was declared to be barren of any spiritual potentiality by the Brahmins. This is a cruel deal with women. It has no parallel. As Prof. Max Muller has said, "However far the human may be from the Divine, nothing on the earth is nearer to God than man, and nothing on earth is more Godlike than man". If this is true of man why is this not true of woman? (BAWS, Vol. 17 Pt.2, p. 119).

The principle of graded inequality and degradation of women and the Shudras runs throughout the Manu Smriti. There is no department of life in which Manu has not introduced this principle. Women and the Shudras together make up about 75% of the total population. It is this huge mass of people that has been doomed by Brahmanism to eternal servility and degradation. It is because of the colossal scale of degradation where by 75% of her people

(Contd. on next page)

Dr. Ambedkar – Champion of Women’s Liberation

(Continue from page 8)

were deprived of their right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness that India became a decaying if not dead nation (BAWS, Vo., 3, p317).

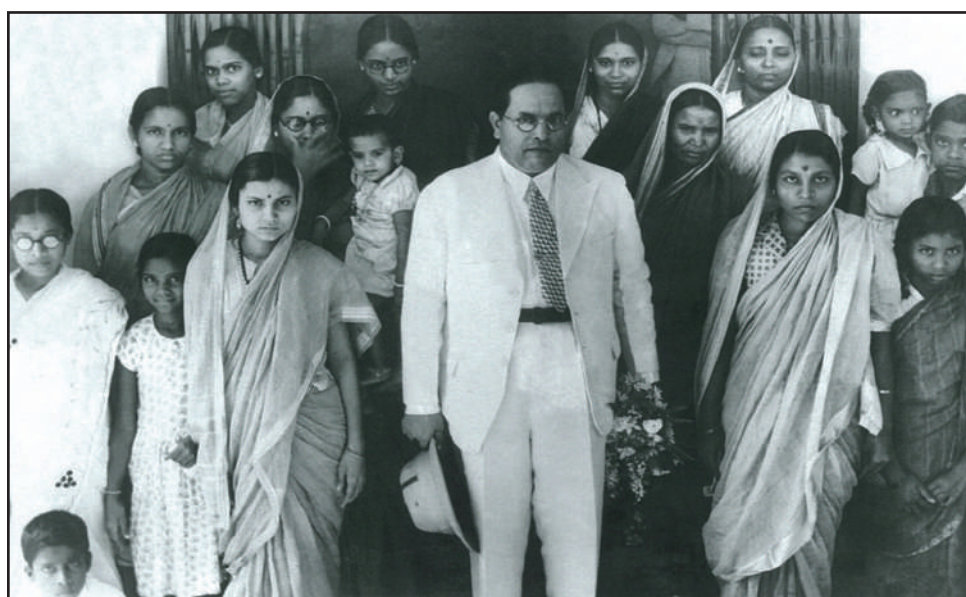
There is strong evidence on the other hand in Buddhist sacred literature to show that Buddha did not regard woman as inferior to man either in point of intellect or character. They were admitted to be पुरोहित (nuns-monks) in the Buddhist संघ (Organization) for women. While therefore admitting women, he thought, it was necessary, to use his own words, ‘a dyke between men and women’ by creating two separate organizations. Far from doing anything which would have the effect of degrading the woman, the Buddha all along tried to ennoble woman and to elevate her. It was a great revolutionary act on his part to have allowed women to take संन्यास (Monkhood). By admitting women to the life of पुरोहित, the Buddha, by one stroke, removed both these wrongs - denial to acquire knowledge and realize the spiritual potential. It was both a revolution and liberation of women in India (BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt. 2, pp. 115, 117, 120).

Mission Women’s Liberation

As Dr. Ambedkar believed that the society and the nation could not progress without the progress of women, therefore, he took it as a mission to liberate women from their age old thralldom and make them equal partner of men in every walk of life. Ever since he began to work among the Depressed Classes he made it a point to carry women along with men. His inspiring leadership highly motivated women to join men in all the organizations, agitations and Satyagrahas launched under his guidance and leadership. Be it Mahad Satyagraha, Kalaram Temple entry movement or any other mass movement for establishing human rights and equitable Social Order, women were always in the forefront. Prepared to boldly and fearlessly face any police or legal action including imprisonment, they rubbed shoulders with their male counterparts in all such movements. As a result of great awakening they formed women’s organizations and held local and national level conferences to put across their view points and grievances, and seek redressal.

In an All-India Depressed Classes Women’s Conference held on 20th July 1942 at Nagpur attended by about 25000 women with Dr. Ambedkar as the Special Guest, it was resolved to take up with the Government to recognize women’s right to divorce, and request them and leaders of the Society to undertake necessary changes in law. The idea of polygamy existing in the society was abhorred being unjust to the women, and necessary amendment or changes in law urged. In order to improve the economic and other working conditions of the female workers in Mills, Factories, Municipalities and Railways, they claimed right to enti-

tlement of 21 days casual and at least one month’s annual leave at par with other employees; adequate compensation for them or their children in cases of death, accident, injury while on duty or work and pension of at least of Rs. 15 on completion of 20 years of service. To improve the education level it was resolved to request the Provincial Governments to take steps to enforce compulsory primary education for them; grant freeships and scholarships to the students of Depressed Classes for secondary and college educations and provide free hostels for at least for 50 girl students of these classes in each Province. In another Resolution provision for reservation of seats for the



women of Depressed Classes in the Legislative and other representative bodies was demanded. Addressing the Conference, Dr. Ambedkar said, “I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved, and when I see this assembly, I feel both convinced and happy that we have progressed.” He concluded his address with this advice: “Learn to be clean; keep free from all vices. Give education to your children. Instill ambition in them. Inculcate on their minds that they are destined to be great. Don’t be in a hurry to marry: marriage is a liability. You should not impose it on your children unless financially they are able to meet the liabilities arising from marriage. Those who marry will bear in mind that to have too many children is a crime. That parental duty lies in giving each child a better start than its parents had. Above all, let each girl who marries stand up to her husband, claim to be her husband’s friend and equal, and refuse to be his slave” (BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt. 3, pp. 279-283).

Practical Steps as Member of Governor General’s Executive Council

Dr. Ambedkar took up the cause of liberation of Indian women not only through his writings and speeches at all the fora that mattered, he did not miss any opportunity to do practically whatever possible to liberate them from the bondage of irrational and draconian laws of Manu, and improve their condition and status to bring at par with

men. As a Member of the Executive Council of the Governor General with the portfolio of Labor and CPWD, he took various measures, moved Bills and caused enactment of laws for their welfare, equal status and equal rights. Some of the historical and revolutionary measures taken and laws got enacted were relating to equal pay for equal work; holidays with leave; maternity leave with pay and other maternity benefits; opening of crèches with female attendants and schools for the children of the working women; opening of hostel for the working women; reduction in work hours from 14 to 8 hours; opening of child clinics with arrangements for milk for them; opening of primary

schools for the children of working women; Medical facilities for the labor including women and children; right to form unions and strike at par with men; housing and watersupply, educational, recreational and transport facilities; scholarships for higher study for the women from the weaker sections; abolition of forced women labor; social security for the labors including women and rickshaw-pullers; General and health insurance scheme; setting up of Employment Exchanges; amendment to payment of wages Act, Industrial Dispute Act, Workmen’s Compensation Act and Coal Mines welfare Ordinance; constituting labor welfare fund; opening Canteens and cafeterias for the workers; rationalization of principles for grant of Dearness Allowance; appointment of Labor Officer in Industrial Undertakings; compensatory leave against compulsory holiday; Provision for adequate compensation against injury; Pit-head shower baths and lockers for the coal mine workers including women; and appointment of Labor officers in the industrial undertakings and so on (BAWS, Vol. 10, pp. 69-325, 393, 394, 680, 857).

Constitutional Provisions

The biggest opportunity to liberate not only the women but all the Depressed Classes in real terms came when Dr. Ambedkar was appointed Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee. He made the best of the opportunity and worked day and night to draft a Constitution that included his philosophy as a last-

ing contribution in liberating the women and establishing equitable Social Order based on the principles of liberty, equality, fraternity and justice. The Constitution contains various provisions with his special mark in providing for equal rights and opportunities both for men and women. Article 14 guarantees equality before law and equal protection of the laws. Article 15 prohibits discrimination against any citizen on ground of sex, religion, race, caste etc. It empowers the State to make special provisions for women and children. Article 16 provides for equality of opportunity in the matters of public employment. Article 23 prohibits trafficking in human beings and forced labor. Article 39 (a) and (d) enjoins the State to provide equal means of livelihood and equal pay for equal work. Article 42 makes incumbent on the State to make provisions for securing just and humane conditions of work, and for maternity relief. Article 51 A (e) imposes a Fundamental Duty on every citizen to renounce the practices derogatory to the dignity of women. Article 243 D (3) provides that not less than 1/3rd of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat to be reserved for women. Article 243 T (3) enjoins that not less than 1/3rd of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Municipality shall be reserved for women. Article 243 T (4) provides reservation of offices of Chairperson in Municipalities for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women. In pursuance of these and some other Constitutional provisions, various legislative enactments have been framed to protect, safeguard and promote the interests of women.

Hindu Code Bill – Charter of Women’s Liberation

Dr. Ambedkar laboriously drafted and presented in the Parliament the landmark Hindu Code Bill to achieve the ideals of a progressive society, liberation and empowerment of women and an equitable Social Order essential for the cohesiveness, growth and prosperity of the society and the country. Underlining the importance of the Bill, he said: “No law passed by the Indian Legislature in the past or likely to be passed in the future can be compared to the proposed Hindu Code in point of its significance. To leave inequality between class and class, between sex and sex which is the soul of Hindu society, untouched and to go on passing legislation relating to economic problems is to make a farce of our Constitution and to build a palace on a dung heap.” He put in his heart and soul in drafting and defending the Bill against tough opposition of orthodox Hindus in and outside the Parliament (BAWS, Vol. 14, Pt.2, pp.1325, 1326). Explaining the need, aim and salient features of the Bill, he said in his opening speech in the Parliament : “The Bill, the aim of which is to cod

(Contd. on next page)

Dr. Ambedkar – Champion of Women’s Liberation

(Continue from page 9)

ify the rules of Hindu Law which are scattered in innumerable decisions of the High Courts and of the Privy Council, which form a bewildering motley to the common man and gives rise to constant litigation, seeks to codify the law relating to seven different matters of right to property, order of succession to property, maintenance, marriage, divorce, adoption, minority and guardianship.” As regards the inheritance of property, he says that the Hindus are governed by two fundamentally different systems of law called *Mitakshara* and *Dayabhag*. According to *Mitakshara*, the property of a Hindu is not his individual property. It belongs to what is called a coparcenary, which consists of father, son, grandson and great grandson. All these people have a birth-right in that property and on the death of anyone member of the coparcenary the property passes by survivorship to the surviving members. The Hindu Code Bill adopts the *Dayabhag* rule, under which the property is held by the heir as his personal with an absolute right to dispose it off either by gift or by will or any other manner that he chooses. Apart from this the Bill seeks to bring four major changes which are favorable to the women. It universalizes the law of inheritance by extending the *Dayabhag* rule to the territory in which the rule of the Mitakshara now operates. In addition to this general change in the order of succession to a deceased Hindu, the Bill also seeks to make four changes favorable to women.

As regards the intestate succession to females, under the existing law the property held by a Hindu female falls into two categories; one is called her *stridhan*, and the other is called “woman’s property”. So far as *stridhan* is concerned the present Bill consolidates the different categories of *stridhan* into one single category of property and lays down a uniform rule of succession. The second change which the Bill seeks to make is that the son also is now given a right to inherit the *stridhan* and he is given half the share which the daughter takes so as to maintain an equality of position between the son and the daughter. As regards “woman’s estate”, under the Hindu Law where a woman inherits property she gets only what is called a ‘life estate’. She can enjoy the income of the property and it must pass after her death to the reversioners of her husband. The Bill converts this limited estate into an absolute estate just as the male and secondly, it abolishes the right of the reversioners to claim the property after the widow. The Bill also provides one of the most salutary provisions, namely, that this property which is given as dowry to a girl on the occasion of her marriage shall be treated as a trust property, the use of which will inure to the woman and she is entitled to claim that property when she comes to the age of 18, so that neither her husband nor the relations of her husband will have any in-

terest in that property; nor will they have any opportunity to waste that property and make her helpless for the rest of her life.

In the case of maintenance, the Bill prescribes that the dependents of a deceased shall be entitled to claim maintenance from those who inherit his property either under the rules of intestate succession or under his will. The Bill also recognizes the rights of a wife to claim separate maintenance when she lives separate from her husband on justified grounds.

About the marriage, the Code recognizes “sacramental” as well as the “civil” marriage. The existing

Hindu law recognizes only what is called sacramental marriage. Comparing the rules of marriage contained in the Bill and the existing law, there are three differences which the Bill makes. One is that while the existing law requires identity of caste and sub-caste for a valid sacramental

marriage, the Bill dispenses with this condition. The second provision in this Bill is that identity of gotrapravara is not a bar to a marriage while it is under the existing law. The third distinctive feature is that under the old law, polygamy was permissible, but under the new law it is monogamy which is prescribed. The sacramental marriage was a marriage which was indissoluble. There could be no divorce. The present Bill makes a new departure by introducing into the law provisions for the dissolution of marriage. The Bill also provides that even though the marriage may be invalidated and may be declared invalid by a court of Law, the invalidation of marriage will not affect the legitimacy of the children born and they would continue to be legitimate just the same. As regards divorce, it can be obtained on seven grounds of desertion; conversion to another religion; keeping a concubine or becoming a concubine; incurably unsound mind; virulent and incurable form of leprosy; venereal diseases in communicable form and cruelty. In the question of adoption under the Code, it will be necessary for the husband if he wants to make an adoption to obtain the consent of his wife and if there are more than one, at least the consent of one of them. If the widow wants to adopt, she can only adopt if there are positive instructions left by the husband either by registered deed or by a provision in the will authorizing her to adopt. The code makes a salutary provision that there may be registration of adoption by a Hindu (BAWS, Vol. 14, Pt. 1, pp. 5-12)

The Constituent Assembly unanimously approved the principles of the Bill.. It was a tribute to the forensic skills of Dr. Ambedkar. The principles of the Bill were in harmony with the constitutional philosophy of equality of men and women. The Bill was only aimed at removing the obstruction of Law in the social advancement of women. On wealth depends independence and a woman must be very particular to retain her wealth and rights to help retain her freedom.

The Hindu Code Bill was introduced in the House on the 11th April 1947. After a life of more than four years, it was dropped all of a

sudden by the Prime Minister. It came as a stunning shock- a bolt from the blue to Dr. Ambedkar as the grounds on which the Bill was dropped were not convincing. Moreover, the Prime Minister had repeatedly promised and assured in the House that the Bill would be



passed in the current session of the Parliament. As the Bill was the greatest social reform measure ever undertaken by the Legislature in this country and Dr. Ambedkar had put his heart and soul in it, he decided to separate himself from the Congress Government and fight for the social reforms in his own way. He, therefore, resigned from the Nehru Cabinet. Such unimpeachable was the commitment of Dr. Ambedkar to the cause of women’s liberation and empowerment. The provisions of the Bill were, however, subsequently adopted in piecemeal by the Congress Government sans Dr. Ambedkar. It clearly shows that the Bill was dropped to snatch the credit of the great social reform from its father – Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar. Despite the Constitution being in vogue for over seven decades and multiple social organizations involved in social reforms, the condition of women continues to boggle the mind. Dowry deaths, bride burning, infanticide, female feticide, molestation, rape, kidnapping, sexual harassment, discrimination and atrocities against women are everyday news. The condition in the rural and hilly areas is much worse. As per study in the hilly areas, a pair of bullock works 1064 hours a year on one hectare of farm; a man 1212 hours but a woman 3485 hours. Social norms and mindset continue to be the cause of marginalization and exploitation of women. Girls are still considered a liability and alien money (पराया धन). They are engaged in house work to spare boys for studies. The working hours of women’s are almost

twice that of the men. They are supposed to get up before everyone else and sleep last of all. There is discrimination in food also. They are given less and in the last. But they are accorded inferior status and they suffer inferiority inside and outside the home.

The scholars attribute the continued miserable condition of women mainly to the patriarchal social system and the notion inculcated as a result of indoctrination of the Shastras (scriptures). The solution, therefore, calls for multi-pronged strategy and action. Apart from strict implementation of constitutional provisions in letter and spirit, the sacredness of the social order based on the scriptures needs to be critically examined and reasoned out with open mind at all levels. It is after deep study of the Hindu Shastras for fifteen years and that of the world religions for twenty years that Dr. Ambedkar arrived at his conclusions. In his judgment people were not wrong in religiously observing the iniquitous, irrational and discriminatory Social Order; the wrong lay with the Scriptures which taught them what they practiced as religion. He says that if the social reformers and intellectuals wish to bring about a breach in the system then they have got to apply dynamite to the Vedas and the Shastras which deny any part to reason and morality. They must destroy the religion of the Shrutis and the Smritis. They must take the stand that Buddha and Guru Nanak took (BAWS, Vol. 1, and p.75). Discarding the Scriptures, they treated all men equal and women at par with men. Guru Nanak said why the woman should be looked down upon who is the cause of human world and gives birth to men and the kings (Guru Granth Saheb, p. 473).

Finding Manu’s Laws draconian and inhuman, Dr. Ambedkar set the Manu Smriti – symbol of injustice ablaze on 25 December 1927 as a symbolic gesture of discarding the Law Book containing anti-human and anti-society laws. He said the religion must be given a new doctrinal basis- a basis that will be in consonance with liberty, equality and fraternity, in short, with democracy. It means a complete change in the fundamental notions of life. It means a complete change in outlook and attitude towards men and things. It means a new life. New life can enter only in a new body. To put it simply, the old must cease to be operative before the new can begin to enliven and pulsate. This is what he meant when he said that the authority and religion of the Shashtra must be discarded and destroyed (BAWS, Vol. 1, pp. 75-78). Dr. Ambedkar did what was humanly possible for him to liberate the women and the downtrodden from the age old thralldom. It is now up to the present and future generations to pick up the thread and carry his mission forward to its logical conclusion to see the country progress and prosper as ‘One Nation One People’.

O Jatta Aayi Baisakhi, Mukk Gayi Fasalan Di Rakhi

Punjab is blessed to be the land of fairs and festivals associated with cultural, historical and religious heritage. Fairs and festivals express the feelings, joys, desires, passions, and longings of people of all sections of the society. Festivals like Diwali, Lohri, Holi are celebrated here with great devotion and fanfare, but the glory of Baisakhi, the proud festival of Punjabis, is exceptional. Baisakhi, a festival of happiness, has been a symbol of cultural and historical significance for Punjabis since time immemorial.

Many important mythological events are associated with this festival, due to which its uniqueness is prominently highlighted. According to Hinduism, Ganga appeared on this earth thousands of years ago on the first day of Baisakh month. It is said that Lord Buddha attained enlightenment at Bodh Gaya on this day. The initiation of Khalsa Panth and the bloody apocalypse of Jallianwala Bagh are historical events associated with Baisakhi which have a deep imprint on Indian history. Maharaja Ranjit Singh also held his Coronation gathering on the first date of Baisakh in 1799.

In many parts of India, Baisakhi is also considered the beginning of the New Year. Baisakhi is also associated with Bohag (Rongali) Bihu in Assam and PohelaBosakh in Bengal. Vishu festival is celebrated on the day of Baisakhi in the state of Kerala. Baisakhi is also celebrated as Nepali New Year as this day marks the Hindu Solar New Year according to Vikram Samvat.

The tradition of celebrating Baisakhi has been going on for centuries. The first Baisakhi fair was started by Bhai Paro Paramhans, a resident of village Dalla, with the blessings of Guru SriAmar Das Ji. On this day, people from all over the country used to gather for Gurudashan. On the day of Baisakhi in the year 1567, Guru SriAmar Das ji gave the message of equality and brotherhood by starting 'Guru Da Langar'.

On Baisakh Samvad 1756 i.e. March 30, 1699 (Baisakhi day), a religious congression (Diwan) was held at Anandpur (Kesgarh) Sahib. Guru Ji made a powerful oration about his divine mission. At the end of his speech, He flashed his unsheathed sword and demanded one head for oblation. To the Guru's call, Daya Ram, a Khatri of Lahore offered himself. Guru ji took him inside a tent. A little later he reappeared with his sword dripping with blood, and asked for another head. One by one four more earnest devotees: Daram Das, a Jat of Delhi; Mohkam Chand, a washerman of Dwarka; Himmat, a cook of Jagannath (Orissa) and Sahib Chand, a barber of Bidar (Karnataka) offered their heads. Shortly after, Guru Gobind Singh ji emerged with all the five men dressed piously in white. He baptized the five in a new and unique ceremony called 'Khande di Pahul'. After this, Guru ji asked the five baptized Sikhs to baptize him as well. They were then knighted as Singhs,

as the Five beloved ones, the first members of the new community of equals, to be called the Khalsa. Guru Ji proclaimed that the Panj Pyare would be the embodiment of the Guru himself. Thus Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji established Panth Khalsa, the Order of the Pure Ones. Guru ji also gave his new Khalsa a unique, indisputable, and distinct identity. The creation of the Khalsa Panth on the day of Baisakhi in 1699 has made Baisakhi eternal.

The multi-cultured religious festival of Baisakhi was being celebrated with great enthusiasm and fervor at Ram Thamman (Kasur district) Gurdwara before the partition of the country. Baba Ram Thamman was a cousin of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, and he belonged to the nearby village of Kalu Khara. After his death, his mausoleum was built at Ram Thamman, which is spread over an area of 22 acres. Special trains were used operate from Lahore, Amritsar, Ferozpur, and other cities to Kalu Khara during the Baisakhi fair. According to a police intelligence report in the archives of the Lahore Secretariat, in the year 1946 more than 35,000 people were present at the festivities.

On the day of Baisakhi, a big fair used to be held at Imanabad near Gujranwala, in which wrestling and kabaddi wrestlers from all over Punjab used to participate. Gatka, Bhangra, Neza Bazi competitions were also held in this fair. In undivided Punjab, the Hindu pilgrimage site of Katsarjwas known for its Baisakhi fair. Baisakhi is celebrated as the birthday of the Khalsa in the major gurdwaras of Punjab, especially at Gurudwara Sri Damdama Sahib. The grandest gathering of the Baisakhi Mela takes place at the Thakurduare of Lord Narayan at Pandori Mehtan village in Gurdaspur district, where the fair lasts for three days from 1st to 3rd Vaisakh.

Baisakhi festival is a symbol of prosperity. Seeing golden harvest of wheat in the fields, the farmer feels as if all his dreams are turning into reality. On the day of Baisakhi, he starts harvesting the wheat and his beloved asks him to get her also a sickle with golden anklets. The famous Punjabi poets Baba Bulleh Shah and Dhani Ram Chatrik have expressed their feelings about 'Basakhi' in their writings. After the sale of his bumper crop and paying his debts and Government revenue, the farmers rejoice and go to the Baisakhi fair for community celebrations.

Most of the Bollywood filmmakers eagerly wait for Diwali, Eid or other national festivals to release

their movies. In the beginning, it was also customary to release Punjabi films on the occasion of festivals, especially on Baisakhi. The first Punjabi film "Ishq-e-Punjab" aka "Mirza-Sahiban" was released on March 29, 1935 at Niranjan Talkies, Lahore. Another Punjabi film "Sheela" aka "Pind Di Kudi" also hit the big screen on March 26, 1937 at the Palace Cinema, Lahore. This trend continued and films like Matwali Meera, Gawandhi, Lachhi, Madari, Nikki, Billo, WalayatPaas, Geet Baharan De, Nanak Naam Jahaj Hai, Maa Da Ladla, Darani Jethani, Reshma, Josh Jawani Da, Purza Purza Kat Mare, Sarbans Dani Guru Gobind Singh, Tera Mera Ki Rishtha and Rabb Maaf Kareen etc. were released during the

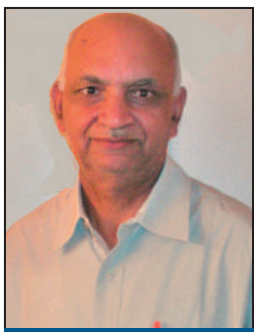


festival of Baisakhi. We find mention of celebrating the festival of Baisakhi and performing Bhangra since the beginning of Punjabi Cinema. The first Baisakhi song 'Khasman Nu Kha Gaya Ghar Ni, Chal Mele Chaliye' featured in the Punjabi film "Sheela" aka "Pind Di Kudi" (1936) made by Krishan Dev Mehra. Then a Baisakhi song 'Dhol Jani Sadi GaliAawin Teri Meharbani' was picturised in "Jagga Daku" (1940). In the same year, the bhangra song 'Kanakan Diyan Faslaan Pakkiyan Ne, Badalaan Chon Khushian Vassiyen Ne' from Pran's debut movie "Yamla-Jatt" (1940), sung by Shamshad Begum, created sensation all over Punjab. After this Bhangra songs became the key to the success of a Punjabi film. Gradually, the word 'Vasakhi' was also used in film songs and the first song was 'Aayi Baisakhi O Jatta Aayi Baisakhi, Balle Balle Ki Aje Tere Band Na Bane' (Bhaiya Ji-1950).

In 1951, Chitrabhumi Limited, Bombay produced a film titled "Vasakhi", starring Pushpa Hans, Vasti, Manorama, Sunder, Majnu, Paran, and Kuldeep Kaur. The film opens with a bhangra song 'NiKudiye Tu HaakMardi, Aayi Vasakhi Aayi-Belia'. In the 1950s, Punjabi film producers considered the festival of Baisakhi as an important part of their films and started including more bhangra songs. The Bhangra song 'Vasakhi Aayi Vasakhi, Faslaan Di Mukk Gayi Rakhi' from the movie "Kaude Shah" (1953) on actress Shyama and dance master Sohanlal has attained the status of 'Anthem Baisakhi' song.

Thereafter, the film Nikki (1958) had a Bhangra song 'Sun Ve-Gabru Kanthe Walya, Panj Patase-Vaaran Nach Le Morniye'. Encashing the popularity of Baisakhi and Bhangra songs in Punjabi films, Mulk Raj

Bhakri of Golden Movies, Bombay produced a Punjabi film titled "Bhangra" (1959). The music of the film topped the musical charts especially its Bhangra song 'Jatt Kudiyan Ton Darda Mara Modhe Ute Daang Rakhda' filmed on Nishi and Master Sohanlal. The film became a super hit at the box-office and Bhangra songs took the center stage in the upcoming Punjabi films.



Bhim Raj Garg
91+98765-45157

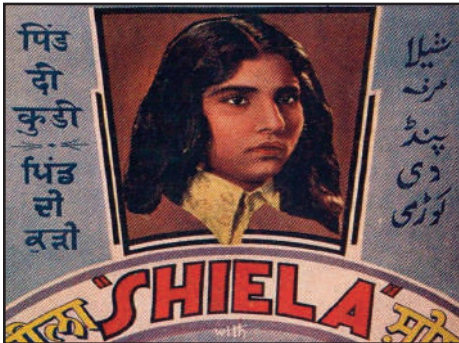
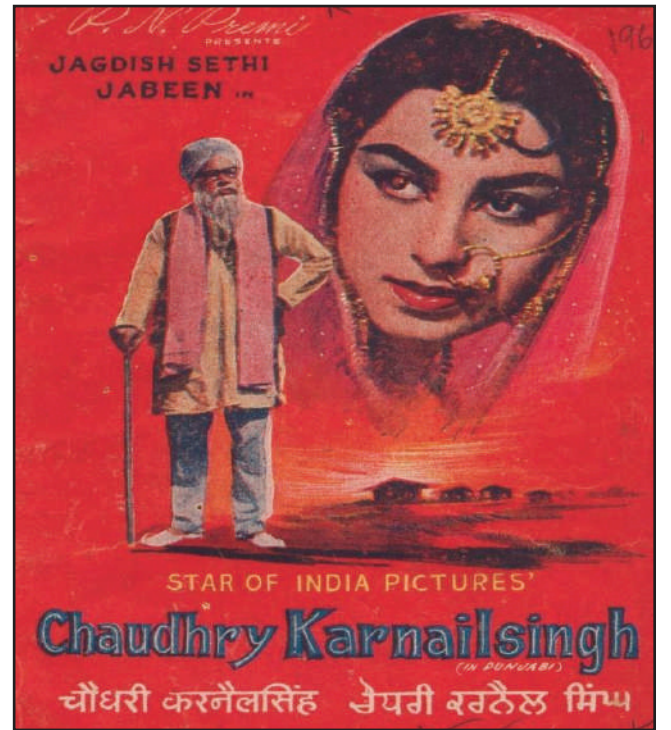
Next year release "Do Lachhyan" (1960) had two popular Bhangra songs 'Gora Rang Na Ho Jaave Kala' and 'Teri Kanak Di Rakhi Mundy Hun Main Nahiyon Behandi'. The films like Pagdi Sambhal-Jatta (1960), Yamla Jatt (1960), Billo(1961), Guddi (1961), Jatti (1961) and Pradesi Dhola(1962) also featured Bhangra songs. The Bhangra song 'Adi Marke Nachi Jadon Banto' from the first National Film Award winner Punjabi movie Chaudhry Karnail Singh (1962) created ripples in the music world. In another award-winning Punjabi film "Jagga" (1964), Dara Singh performed the Pepsu group style Bhangra on the screen. Manohar Deepak introduced a change in the Bhangra routine formation from Shamals Pagri to a Turla style turban in song 'Roop Tere Vich Charde Suraj' (Khedan De Din Char-1964).

The Baisakhi fair would also provide an opportunity for the two lovers to meet. The film makers even used 'vasakhi' in the story line as well as in dialogues. Baisakhi became instrumental in giving a dramatic twist to the story. In the movie "Do Lachhyan" (1960), the villain takes the help of a well-built wrestler to take revenge from the hero on Baisakhi day. But the hero turns table on him. The couple then relish the feast of Jalebies in the Baisakhi fair. In "Lajo" (1963), the heroine Nishi intends to enjoy Baisakhi tomorrow in the company of her beloved. The Bhangra song 'Jaildara Putt Nu Samja Lai' (Pind Di Kudi-1963) was picturised during the Baisakhi.

In the film "Jijaji" (1961), Bholu is sad because he lost his family on this day. Her beloved asks him why he is so depressed on the happy occasion of Baisakhi? She takes him to the festivities, the orphaned and innocent hero starts dancing and singing on the song 'Harippa Harippa Ni Chittiye Kabutriya' rendered by his lost brother. There is family reunion on Baisakhi unlike Manmohan Desai's movies, wherein siblings get separated. The auspicious festival of Baisakhi has been prominently portrayed through Bhangra songs in many other Punjabi films like Mamaji, Pardesi Dhola, Chambe Di Kali, Dharti Veeran Di, Kankan De Ohle, Dupatta, Sherni, Rano, Ambri, Jatt Punjabi,

(Contd. on next page)

O Jatta Aayi Baisakhi, Mukk Gayi Fasalan Di Rakhi



(Continue from page 11)
Jatt Soorme, Mitti Watanaan Di and many more.

Manohar Deepak, the leader of the Bhangra Group of Princely Pepsu state, contributed greatly to establish the Bhangra songs tradition in Hindi and Punjabi films. Raj Kapoor's film "Jagate Raho" featured Manohar Deepak and his troupe in the song 'Main Koi Jhooth Boliya'. Then B.R. Chopra invited them for the famous song 'Yeh Desh Hai Veer

Jawanon Ka' (Naya Daur-1957). The Pepsu troupe also got an opportunity to perform bhangra in the fair-set of another Hindi film "Mirza-Sahibaan" (1957). Inspired by their Indian counter-parts, some Pakistani filmmakers also presented Bhangra songs in their films like Nazi, Patey Khan etc. For almost three decades, the festival of Baisakhi remained the bane and glory of Punjabi films. After this, Punjabi film makers completely forgot the fairs and festivals associated with

Punjab's cultural heritage. Festivals like Diwali, Lohri, Holi and Baisakhi disappeared from our films. But now the drum-beat of Baisakhi is rarely heard. In 1992, director Harjit Singh made Punjabi film called "Visakhi", with a Baisakhi song 'Aa Gaya Vaisakh Chet Gaya Lang TunakTunak'. But this film did not click with the masses. In 2016, Gakhal Brothers Entertainment Pvt Ltd produced a film named "Vaisakhi List". Daljit Dosanjh's movie "Sajjan Singh Rangroot" (2018) fea-

tured a Baisakhi song 'Aayi Baisakhi Sohneya, Pat De Padthu, Dhol Nahitaaan Beliya Ajj Peepa Khadku'. This song has captured the attention of the audience. I feel proud in tracing the rich cultural heritage of Punjab associated with the vibrant festival of Baisakhi and its depiction in Punjabi Cinema. The present-day film makers should play their vital role in connecting and making the new generations aware of the socio-cultural and religious heritage of Punjab.



Learn to live in this world with self-respect. You should always cherish some ambition of doing something in this world. But remember that the age of selflessness has ended. A new epoch is set in. All things are now possible because of your being able to participate in the politics and legislature of your country.

- Dr. Ambedkar

Heartiest congratulations on birth anniversaries of Mahatma Jyotirao Govindrao Phule and Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar



ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਰਾਮ ਭੁੱਟਾ, ਸ੍ਰੀ ਨੰਦ ਲਾਲ ਬੋਲੀਨਾ ਅਤੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਆਤਮਾ ਸਿੰਘ (ਸਾਬਕਾ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ)
ਸਵਰਗੀ ਸਰਵ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਰਾਮ ਭੁੱਟਾ, ਨੰਦ ਲਾਲ ਬੋਲੀਨਾ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਾ ਸਿੰਘ (ਤਿੰਨੇ ਹੀ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਸਭਾ ਸੈਕਰਮੈਂਟੋ ਦੇ ਫਾਉਂਡਰ ਮੈਂਬਰ)

ਕੇਵਲ ਬੋਲੀਨਾ ਸਾਬਕਾ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ
ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਸਭਾ ਸੈਕਰਮੈਂਟੋ



The minorities in India have loyally accepted the rule of the majority which is basically a communal majority and not a political majority. It is for the majority to realize its duty not to discriminate against minorities. Whether the minorities will continue or will vanish must depend upon this habit of majority. The moment the majority loses the habit of discriminating against the minority, the minorities can have no ground to exist. They will vanish. - Dr. Ambedkar



Heartiest congratulations on birth anniversaries of
Mahatma Jyotirao Govindrao Phule
and Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar

Hans Raj Kajla



Learn to live in this world with self-respect. You should always cherish some ambition of doing something in this world. But remember that the age of selflessness has ended. A new epoch is set in. All things are now possible because of your being able to participate in the politics and legislature of your country.

- Dr. Ambedkar



Heartiest congratulations on
birth anniversaries of Mahatma Jyotirao
Govindrao Phule and Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar

Raj Sood
and his family



Heartiest congratulations on birth anniversaries of Mahatma Jyotirao Govindrao Phule and Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar



The minorities in India have loyally accepted the rule of the majority which is basically a communal majority and not a political majority. It is for the majority to realize its duty not to discriminate against minorities. Whether the minorities will continue or will vanish must depend upon this habit of majority. The moment the majority loses the habit of discriminating against the minority, the minorities can have no ground to exist. They will vanish. - Dr. Ambedkar



SUBWAY®

Deepak Saroya



835 Twelve Bridges Dr , Suite 90
Lincoln, CA 95648

Learn to live in this world with self-respect. You should always cherish some ambition of doing something in this world. But remember that the age of selflessness has ended. A new epoch is set in. All things are now possible because of your being able to participate in the politics and legislature of your country.

- Dr. Ambedkar



Heartiest congratulations on Dr. Ambedkar's 132nd Birth Anniversary



L to R: Surjit Momi, Lali, Prem Sodhi, Harminder, Rajinder Momi

Momi Brothers



The minorities in India have loyally accepted the rule of the majority which is basically a communal majority and not a political majority. It is for the majority to realize its duty not to discriminate against minorities. Whether the minorities will continue or will vanish must depend upon this habit of majority. The moment the majority loses the habit of discriminating against the minority, the minorities can have no ground to exist. They will vanish.

Dr. Ambedkar



**Heartiest congratulations on
Dr. Ambedkar's 132nd birth anniversary**



Shri Amardeep Chahal with his Wife, Mother & Father (File Photo)

ਸਮੂਹ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਬਿਹਾਰੀ ਲਾਲ ਚਾਹਲ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ