



TRIBUTE TO BHARAT RATTAN BABASAHEB

DR. BHIMRAO RAMJI AMBEDKAR

Prem K. Chumber

Editor-In-Chief: Ambedkartimes.com



Babasaheb Dr B.R. Ambedkar devoted his whole life to eradicate social injustice and annihilate insidious system of caste from the social structure of Indian society. He adopted legal and constitutional way for achieving his societal goals. Acquiring education and dissemination of information and knowledge among his people made him famous not only in India but also in whole world. He is now known as one of few most adorable scholars in the world. His contribution to Social Democracy is seminal. Liberty, Equality and Fraternity constitute the core of Social Democracy. He was of the firm opinion that without establishing Social Democracy at the base the Political Democracy remains superficial. In order to make liberty, equality and fraternity as the cardinal principles of Social Democracy, Babasaheb Dr Ambedkar enshrined them in the Constitution of Independent India, of which he was the Chief-Architect. The constitution is a living document of ever evolving democracy in India. It guarantees special provisions for the distributive justice under the state affirmative action for the social emancipation and economic and political empowerment of downtrodden. In fact, the very inclusion of special provision for the uplift of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and OBCs in the Constitution laid the foundations of social democracy in Independent India. It is for this reason that the grassroots support for the maintenance of the constitution remained as a most vigilant guard against the dilution of its social democracy contents. It is for such a brilliant contributions towards the deepening of social democracy in India that Babasaheb Dr B.R. Ambedkar is known worldwide in the image of Construction in one hand and symbol of raised finger of the other hand for the coming up of the downtrodden in Independent India. Ambedkartimes.Com pays floral tributes to Bodhisattva Bharat Ratan Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar on his 65th Pr Nirvan Divas.

Gen Rawat was strong proponent of India-US defence partnership: US

Washington- General Bipin Rawat, India's first Chief of Defence Staff who died in a helicopter crash in Tamil Nadu, was a strong proponent of India-US defence ties and helped deepen the strategic partnership between the two countries, a senior US official has said.

General Rawat, his wife Madhulika and 11 other people on board an Indian Air Force helicopter died in a crash near Coonoor in Tamil Nadu on Wednesday, the Air Force said.

"We are deeply saddened to hear of the death of Indian Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat, his wife, and 11 others in that tragic helicopter crash in India today. General Rawat was a valued partner," State Department Spokesperson Ned Price said at his daily news conference on Wednesday.

"He was a strong proponent of the US-India defence partnership. He helped to deepen the strategic partnership between our two countries. He was pivotal to that relationship, and that's why our thoughts go out to the general's family, to the families of all those on board this flight, and, of course, to the people of India on the loss that they have suffered today," Price said.

Pentagon Press Secretary John Kirby, at a separate news conference said that on behalf of the entire Department of Defence, Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin extends their deepest condolences to the Rawat family, the Indian military and the people of India after the tragic death of General Rawat in helicopter crash.

"He left an indelible mark on the course of the US-India defence partnership and was at the centre of the Indian Armed Forces' transformation into a more jointly integrated warfighting organisation," Kirby said.

"The secretary had the privilege of meeting with him earlier this year and really came to view him as a valued partner and a friend to the United States. Our thoughts and prayers are with the entire Rawat family, as they lost other family members in this crash, and of course the families of all the other victims of this terrible, terrible incident," he told reporters.

Several top American lawmakers expressed



their condolences at the demise of the Indian general in a tragic incident. "I send my deepest condolences to Narendra Modi & the people of India as they mourn the tragic deaths of General Bipin Rawat, his wife, Madhulika Rawat, & the 11 other crew members & passengers lost," said Senator Rick Scott. "India is strong and during this time of grief the United States stands with you," he tweeted. "My deepest condolences to the people of India after the tragic death of General Bipin Rawat, head of India's armed forces, his wife & 12 others today. My thoughts & prayers are with their families," tweeted Senator Bill Hagerty.

"My most sincere condolences to the people of India and their armed forces for the lives lost in today's tragic aviation incident. I will continue to do all I can to help our partnership grow into an enduring force for overcoming this and future adversities," Congressman Michael McCaul said in a tweet. "Please join me in praying for India today after this staggering loss," Congressman Mark Green said in a tweet.

Courtesy: The Tribune Chandigarh



Feature film "Jayanti" addresses the issue of casteism, screened in Novi, Michigan, USA



Local Michigan Ambedkarite community came together to watch the Marathi-language feature "Jayanti" movie (birth anniversary) which is produced in India. This movie was screened in Novi, Michigan which is suburb of Detroit, Michigan, USA. This movie was screened at the topmost theater in Michigan which is Emagine Movies and about 45-50 members watched and maintain the covid-19 protocol. Jayanti movie addresses the issue of casteism and celebrates the path-breaking solutions to unite the Bahujan youth against idolatry and casteism.

"Dr Ambedkar Jayanti celebrated in almost every nook and corner of the country in India and across world including on social media with great zeal.

Jayanti Movie has English subtitles and with a running time of 124 minutes. It has been written and directed by ex-journalist and artist Shailesh Narwade. The film has been produced by Meliorist Film Studio and presented by Dashami Studioz.

Jayanti Movie revisits the

thoughts and works of anti-caste leaders and explores their relevance in contemporary Indian society. It's the



story of a young directionless chap, who unknowingly becomes part of the caste-based hatred, but later on leads a meaningful life after reading and learning about the works of great social leaders.

The film is a work of fiction that attempts to unite different communities, who have been victims of

the caste-divide in the Indian society since several hundred years.

Jayanti was shot in 28 days

week with increasing response from the audiences.

Some of the Indian media houses, including The Times of India, The Quint, The Free Press Journal, and News9, have published very rave reviews about the film.

Jayanti has been produced by a collective of all first-time producers, including Dr Anand Bankar, Amol Dhakadey, Dr Nilima Suhas Ambade and Dr Sudhir Hajare to name a few.

Well-known music director Mangesh Dhakde has scored background music for the film while Yogesh Koli (cinematographer), Rohan Patil (editor), Ashish Shinde (sound designer), Santosh Gilbile (makeup designer) and Ruhi (music director) are among important crew.

Ruturaj Wankhede is the male actor in leading role while Titeeksha Tawde is the actress. Among prominent cast of the film also includes Milind Shinde, Kishor Kadam, Paddy Kamble, Atul Mahale, Anjali Joglekar and Amar Upadhyay.

Nitin Vaidya, Ninad Vaidya, Aparna Padgaonkar, Vaibhav Chhaya, Sameer Shinde and Suraj Bhanushali are the executive producers.

between December 2019 and February 2020 on around 40 real locations in Nagpur city in Central India. The film got its theatrical release across Maharashtra State and a few other cities in India on 12 November 2021 with 'U' certificate of the CBFC. The film is currently running successfully with 50-plus shows in the fourth

Bhatia Family hosted Sukhmani Saheb Path and Langar Sewa at Sri Guru Ravidass Temple, Pittsburg



On December 5th, 2021 (SUNDAY) Waheguru blessed family of Mr. Kashmiri Bhatia and Mrs. Kamaljeet Kaur Bhatia hosted Sukhmani Saheb Path and Langar Sewa at Sri Guru Ravidass Temple, Pittsburg (CA). The family performed this Sewa expressing their humble gratitude and gratefulness to Akalpurkh for His kind blessings for their elder daughter Veena Bhatia, who completed her Law degree and has been hired as an Associate Attorney by Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy, LLP, a renowned Law Firm in Burlingame, California, working in various fields and branches of law. She also earned the distinction of being the first girl in our community to have the honor of becoming an attorney which is a matter of pride and prestige for Veena as well as her sup-

porting parents and the entire Bhatia family. Besides Veena Bhatia, her younger sister Jyoti Bhatia also completed her college graduation along with her younger brother, Veeru Bhatia acquiring his Real Estate License. All the three gems from Bhatia family were honored together with Siropas, the highest award of honor from Guru Ghar.

Miss Veena Bhatia also expressed her thanks for this honor and her supporting parents with a short biographical sketch of her educational career.

The program was embellished with melodious Shabad Kirtan by Bhai Gurnam Singh and Bhai Om Pal Singh followed by a renowned Kirtankar Jatha led by Bhai Suveg Singh of San Jose.

Bibi Kamaljeet Kaur Bhatia joined by her respected father Mr. Joginder Singh Delhi Wale who is always very encouraging and helpful to the family, also recited Shabad Kirtan on this joyous occasion. Bibi Navneet Kaur also recited a Gurbani Shabad in her melodious voice.

Mr. O. P. Balley, founder Member of Pittsburg Guru Ghar also addressed the Sangat, congratulating the Bhatia family and their three distinguished children for their literary achievements, emphasizing the importance of education in the life of a person. He shared his feelings with the audience that it has happened not through any magic or miracle but with their hard work, determination, perseverance and commitment, providing inspiration to the future

generation.

Mr. Balley also addressed the Sangat paying his glowing tributes to Babasaheb, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on his 65th Mahaparinirvan Divas falling on December 6th, 2021.

Mr. Abhishek Pal Narabut, General Secretary of Guru Ghar conducted the proceedings of the event from the podium in a very methodical manner.

The program ended with Ardash and distribution of Parshad and Langar Sewa for the gracious Sangat. "NANAK NAM CHARDI KALA TERE BHANE SARBAT DA BHALA" SEWADAR,

O.P. Balley
Founder Member
Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha, Pittsburg

WE ARE SO PROUD OF VEENA BHATIA

We are so proud of Veena Bhatia, daughter of Bhai Kashmiri Bhatia and Bibi Kamaljeet Kaur Bhatia, for fulfilling her dream of becoming a lawyer. She is a very smart young lady with a great future. Bhatia family has been very dedicated to Gurbani and Sri Guru Ravidass Temple. They are one

of the major contributors to this Gurdwara Sahib and the community.

Bhai Kashmiri Bhatia and Bibi Kamaljeet Kaur Bhatia hosted Sukhmani Sahib Path and Langar Sewa to celebrate their daughter, Veena Bhatia's successful completion of her education and becoming a

lawyer. Bhai Subeg's Singh's jatha and Giani Gurnam Singh & Giani Ompal Singh delighted Sangat with their melodious Shabad Kirtan. General Secretary,

Abhishek Pal Narabut and founding member, Mr. O.P. Balley congratulated Veena and her family from

the stage.

May Waheguru bless Veena Bhatia with all the success in her future endeavors.

- Ramesh Suman
Former President/Chairman
Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha
Pittsburg (CA)



"Ad-Dharm Movement was the Revolt against the Hinduism"

Saheb Kanshi Ram's Speech at Sikri, Punjab, 12th February 2001

[Speech delivered at village Sikri, Punjab, 12th February 2001. Original speech is in Punjabi and in case you understand Punjabi, you can listen to it from the video at the end of this post. I transcribed it keeping it as close as possible to the original speech. Many times voice is inaudible and Saheb Kanshi Ram switches from one topic to another quite frequently. I have kept that as it is to preserve the originality with very little adjustments in the text. Adjustments in the text are to keep the relevant parts in the same paragraph. If you don't have time to read the whole speech, go at the end of the post where I highlight a few main points from the Saheb Kanshi Ram's speech.]

Sathiyo (friends), on the occasion of Guru Ravidass Jayanti, I requested my colleagues that in every constituency of Doaba region (region of Punjab that lies between the Beas River and the Sutlej River) organize my speeches. I know that in Doaba region people know about Guru Ravidass more than what I know about Guru Ravidass. So, I don't think there is any necessity to tell people about the Guru Ravidass. It is because almost 70 years ago, Guru Ravidass was recognized as an ideal person in Doaba (in Punjab, Ad-Dharmi movement was started around 1920's by Dalits for getting a distinct religious identity and Doaba was at the forefront of that movement. The founder of the Ad-dharma movement was Mangu Ram Mugowalia and followers of Ad-Dharmi movement believed in the teachings of Guru Ravidass and considered him an ideal). By putting their trust and considering Guru Ravidass as an ideal, Chamars of Doaba, who were facing brutal caste atrocities, started a movement. Guru Ravidass was Chamar who was born in Banaras and Chamars of Punjab considered him as ideal. The movement which Guru Ravidass didn't start, Chamars of Punjab started. Guru Ravidass never said that he is Ad-Dharmi.

Almost 70 years ago, Chamars of Doaba, who couldn't produce any ideal from within their own region, selected another Chamar from Uttar Pradesh as an ideal and start the Ad-Dharmi movement. Now, it is almost 75 years since the start of that movement but people can't still explain properly that what is Ad-Dharm?

What is Ad-Dharm? To tell people about this, I have called this meeting at this place. The Ad-Dharm movement was the movement of rebellion against the Hindu religion. It was the movement against the Manuwad. A religion that mistreated and exploited Chamars for years and years, Ad-Dharm movement was the movement against that oppression. It was the rebellion against all those atrocities. Ad-Dharm movement was the revolt against the Hinduism.

After 75 years, I can't see that rebellion against the oppression. One can't even find traces of Ad-Dharm.

People come to me and tell census of India is going on. In 1931 census, around 24% of people from Doaba region had registered their religion as Ad-Dharm. Today there is not even a mention of Ad-Dharm religion in the list of religions in the documents of the census of India. People come to me and ask what happened and why there is no column of Ad-

Dharm in the documents. I tell them, go and ask those who were running the Ad-Dharm and till today they claim to be the leaders of the movement. Ask those, who claim to be the leaders of this movement, what happened and why there is no column of Ad-Dharm in the documents?

Why has it disappeared from the documents of the census of India? Let me tell you why it has disappeared. In last 75 years you have not been able to define what Ad-Dharm is, what are the principles of Ad-Dharm, and following those principles what we have achieved for the community?

In 75 years, you have not been able to answer these questions, so Manuwadi; the Brahminical government decided it is a right time now to delete the column of Ad-Dharm from the census of India documents. After deleting the Ad-Dharm column, the government knows if these people want the benefits of reservation in education or jobs, people will have to register themselves under Hinduism, religion against which these people (Dalits) once revolted. Now, those who believed themselves as Ad-Dharmi are forced to be Hindus.

So, that's why I am here to tell you a bit about the 75 years of history of Ad-Dharm movement which considered Guru Ravidass as ideal. In the memory of Ad-Dharm's 75 years, we have decided to conduct a massive rally in Hoshiarpur (a district in Punjab) at Roshan ground. This is one of the reasons that I am here to appeal Ad-Dharmi people to come and join that rally. I am travelling around the Punjab to appeal and tell people about the Ad-Dharm. Its 75 years so at least 75,000 people should gather at that ground and talk about the results of our 75 years of rebellion. What have we gained in last 75 years through this revolt? Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar gave us the right to vote and won the right of separate electorates of us but Gandhi started the fast. Hence, Dalits lost that right of separate electorates. The British government wanted to give Dalits that right. Gandhi said if the right of separate electorates is given to Dalits, I wouldn't want to live in such a country. So, his fast till death started to oppose rights of Dalits. In September 1932, Gandhi started his fast till death in Pune. At Shimla, Ad-Dharm's founder Mangu Ram Mugowalia started his fast till death to oppose Gandhi and fight for Dalits' rights. People from Ad-Dharm at least tried to do something against the Gandhi's injustice.

It was the one appreciable attempt from the people who were running

the Ad-Dharm movement. Second maybe were the efforts for the inclusion of Ad-Dharmi religion in the 1931 census of India, in which 24% from Doaba reported Ad Dharmi as their religion, 23% were Hindu, 26% Muslim and 25% Sikh. Almost one-fourth population of Doaba was Ad-Dharmi as per the 1931 census of India and in today's census; there is no Ad-Dharmi.

At 50 years of Ad-Dharm there should have been golden jubilee celebrations but no one did anything despite Mangu Ram Mugowalia was alive at that time, no one cared to remember golden jubilee. Mangu Ram Mugowalia was old (around 90 years) at that time but those who were capable they also didn't celebrate golden jubilee. Ad-Dharm religion survived almost 75 years and after 75 years when diamond jubilee should have been celebrated not even a single Ad-Dharmi is thinking about it.

Kanshi Ram who doesn't have much

knowledge about Ad-Dharm or Guru Ravidass, he is forced to think that it is 75 years to Ad-Dharm and there should be some celebrations. We as a community must understand what Ad-Dharm movement was and 75 years ago what movement was started by our forefathers, how Ad-Dharm movement ran for 75 years, what next needs to be done and what future holds for us, for the movement. Today, Brahminism is ruling in the country. Brahmins heaped injustices on us and forced us to live in inhuman conditions so to mark respect to 75 years of Ad-Dharm revolt, we must gather at least 75,000 people in the Hoshiarpur ground. It is necessary to gather to have a discussion on what happened in past and what we have to do in future. This event has been organised in Roshan ground in Hoshiarpur on 28th February 2001. To organize this event, I have assigned duties to Ad-Dharmi party workers so you all have to support them in organizing the event.

As I said in the beginning, if I am in Doaba region, I can't teach you about Guru Ravidass. There is hardly any village there is not Guru Ravidass Gurudwara (religious place). So, you already know more than what I know about Guru Ravidass's teachings and in Doaba region I come to learn from you. Almost 70 years ago, you accepted Guru Ravidass as the ideal and progressed in life. One thing I know is that if Guru Ravidass Ji's teachings were not included in Sri Guru Granth Sahib (Sikhs' religious book), no one would have ever known about Guru Ravidass. No one would have even known Guru Kabir or any other Guru from the downtrodden community. It is because of

Sri Guru Granth Sahib we know about all of them.

BSP is a party of weakest (sections of the society) but its fight is with those who are powerful. How to fight these powerful parties? By developing the right thinking/mentality. When we formed the government in Uttar Pradesh, we had the budget of almost 30,000 crores and I told Mayawati that 100-200 crores you should spend on spreading teachings of Guru Ravidass. When the new bridge was built on Ganga in Banaras, we named is Ravidass Setu (loud clapping). Pandas have built many Ghats along the Ganga River in Banaras and we found empty space near the Ganga in Banaras and I instructed them that at this location, which was near to where Guru Ravidass was born, Guru Ravidass Ghat should be built. (Guru Ravidass Ghat in Banaras is the largest Ghat with a 25 acres park known as Sant Ravidass-Smarak Park) Panda-Brahmins opposed the construction of Guru Ravidass Ghat and I told them you have accept it now, we are the rulers. Brahmins' Ghats are down and Guru Ravidass's Ghat is up. So, within 6 months government, we spent more than 100 crores on the promoting the ideology of Guru Ravidass.

Friends, (while in power) within our knowledge and capacity we tried to do the best for propagating the ideology of equality. I am a firm believer that soon there will be elections again and BSP will form its government again and a Chamar will become Chief Minister for the third time. After that, we will try to do more for the development and propagate the ideology of our ideals.

Reminding you once again that try to reach Roshan ground, Hoshiarpur on 28th February 2001, I take leave from you.

Jai Bhim! Jai Bharat!

Main Points from Saheb Kanshi Ram's Speech –

- The Ad-Dharm movement was the movement of rebellion against the Hindu religion. It was the movement against the Manuwad.
- Ad-Dharm movement was the revolt against the Hinduism.
- We as a community must understand what Ad-Dharm movement was and 75 years ago what movement was started by our forefathers, how Ad-Dharm movement ran for 75 years, what next needs to be done and what future holds for us, for the movement.
- One thing I know is that if Guru Ravidass's teachings were not included in Sri Guru Granth Sahib (Sikhs' religious book), no one would have ever known about Guru Ravidass.
- BSP is a party of weakest (section of the society) but its fight is with those who are powerful. How to fight these powerful parties? By developing the right thinking/mentality.

Transcribed by – Pardeep Attr

Read also –

* Leave behind Your Laziness and Start Working Hard for the Movement' – Saheb Kanshi Ram's Speech That You Haven't Read

* Saheb Kanshi Ram's Speech at First International Dalit Conference (Kuala Lumpur)

The Ballot or the Bullet – By Saheb Kanshi Ram Ji

Declining fertility rate and population in India

The second phase of data collected by National Family Health Survey-5 (2019–21) was released on November 24, 2021. The survey was conducted in two phases due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The National Family Health Survey – 5 was being conducted in March 2020, but had to be abruptly stopped due to COVID -19 Lockdown. Therefore, in its first phase, the data of 22 states and union territories collected before the COVID-19 pandemic was released in December 2020. According to the National Family Health Survey –5, for the first time in India, the birth rate has fallen below the replacement ratio of 2.1. According to the survey, the country's fertility rate has come down to just 2.0 from 2.2 in the National Family Health Survey-4 (2015-2016) and 2.7 in the National Family Health Survey-3 (2005-2006). The fertility rate is 1.6 in urban areas while it is still 2.1 in rural areas which is equivalent to the replacement rate. According to the National Family Health Survey—5, only five states of the country, Bihar (3.0), Meghalaya (2.9), Uttar Pradesh (2.7), Jharkhand (2.4), and Manipur (2.2) have recorded relatively high fertility rates and this is also above the replacement rate.

Although the fertility rate in these five states has been recorded above the replacement rate, the positive side is that it is lower than the National Family Health Survey-4. According to the National Family Health Survey—5, Sikkim recorded a fertility rate of only 1.1 which is lower than all the states and union territories of the country. The fertility rates seem to point to a glimpse of the impact of population control measures.

The World Health Organisation(WHO) describes Total Fertility Rate as the average number of children born to a woman "at the end of her reproductive period". Replacement level fertility is the level of fertility at which a population exactly replaces itself from generation to the next. One couple replaces two children, if a couple has more than two children then it will lead to rapid population growth. With less than two children, the population will certainly increase, but at a declining rate. In Sikkim, Ladakh, Goa, Andaman & Nicobar, Lakshadweep, Jammu & Kashmir, and Chandigarh, the fertility rate is less than 1.5. Maharashtra and Rajasthan have a fertility rate of 2 which is equivalent to the national average, while in the remaining 22 states and union territories, the fertility rates range between 1.6 and 1.9.

Since the country's independence in 1947 the problem of popula-

tion growth in India has always been a matter of concern for governments. The first family planning scheme was planned in 1952. The governments of the time did not take up to implement it out of fear of their vote bank. The then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi launched a controversial public sterilization campaign in 1972. It did not result in controlling population growth, but it did a great deal of political damage to the Congress Party.

In 1950, the fertility rate in the country was 5.90 which meant that there were an average of 6 children in a household. Since then, the average fertility rate has been declining every decade but at a much slower pace. From 1950 to 2021, the fertility rate has come down from 5.90 to 2.0, which is a relief for the country, but it does not mean that the country's population will start declining rapidly. In the long run, we will

vey, the reason for the decline in fertility is the use of various contraceptives. There has been a 13 per cent increase in the number of people using contraceptives as compared to the National Family Health Survey-4. At present, an average of 67 per cent people in the country are using contraceptives and institutional births have increased from 79 per cent to 89 per cent. At the same time, 76 per cent of children are being vaccinated over time, which has led to a sharp decline in infant mortality.

The share of women in sterilization is higher than that of men. It has increased from 36 per cent in 2015-2016 to 38 per cent 2019-21. The increase in female sterilization shows that the onus remains with women. It is also important to point out that declining fertility is an important factor in controlling the population, but at the same time infant mortality at birth or at an early age

Health Survey-1 (1992-93) had 957 females per 1000 males, compared to 927 females in the 1991 census. Similarly, according to the National Family Health Survey -2 (1998-99), the number of women was 960

per 1000 males whereas according to the 2001 census it was 933 and National Family Health Survey -4 (2015-2016) the number of women was 991 as against 943 in 2011 according to the census. From all these figures, it is clear that the number of women is slowly increasing, but it may take some more time for them to reach the same level as men.

With the declining fertility rate, the percentage of children under the age of 15 in the total population is declining rapidly. According to the National Family Health Survey-1 (1992-93), the population of children under this age group was 38 per cent which has now come down to 26.5 per cent. This shows that India's population will continue to grow at a declining rate in the near future, which will have a profound effect on the economic and social fabric of the country.

Apart from the government's family planning programme, one of the reasons for the declining fertility rate is people's perception of small families. Although in India, 'the one child policy' like China, was not imposed on the people, still has a birth rate of 1.1 to 1.9 in 29 states and union territories. This will make it easier for the government to control population growth as people move to a limited family of one child on their own. In states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Jharkhand, there is an urgent need to implement programmes like 'Mission Parivar Vikas' on a large scale and seriously increase the literacy rate of women in these states and make them financially independent. In this direction the government should make serious efforts.

Between 40 and 45 per cent of women in these three states are still illiterate. To curb population growth, the government needs to make adequate arrangements for replenishing the nutrients in the diet of women and children.

While the declining fertility rate is a good sign, more efforts are needed to bring it down as compared to the replacement rate across all the states.



have a potential growth rate of zero, it is not immediate. So far the country has achieved the goal of stability. According to a study published in the journal Lancet, even if India's fertility rate continues to decline at the current rate, after 80 years from now (by the end of the century) the country's population might shrink to 1 billion (100 crore), equal to the population of many countries. The study also found that by then, the fertility rate would have dropped from 2.0 to 1.27.

According to the United Nations' World Population Data Sheet, 2021, India's population will surpass that of China during 2024-28 and India will become the world's most populous country. Although the declining fertility rate in India is a very important indicator of population growth, it may delay the time for the country to become the world's most populous country for a few more years. Much more needs to be done to get rid of it.

According to the current sur-

also affects population growth because child mortality rate then will affect both birth and fertility rates. Due to lack of nutrients in the diet of children, they are not fully developed as a result of which 36 per cent of children in India are not growing according to their age. At present, 67.1 per cent children in the country are anemic. It is 57 per cent in females and 25 per cent in males. Sadly, this percentage has increased by 8.5 per cent in children, 4 per cent in women and 2 per cent in men as compared to 2015-2016. According to the National Family Health Survey-5, the depressing message from the anemia-affected population is that 67 per cent of children and 57 per cent of women are suffering from anemia due to lack of nutritious food. How can such mothers and children create a golden future for the country!

Although the National Family Health Survey –5 has recorded more women than men in the country, it generally represents more than the census data. The National Family



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Sue Frost

Sacramento County Supervisor. District 4



Sue Frost

Flavored Tobacco Ban

In October two of my colleagues on the Board of Supervisors announced that they are bringing forward an item to our agenda to ban all flavored tobacco products, including menthol cigarettes, flavored e-cigarettes and hookah. I have written in the past about this subject, but it ultimately



never came forward for a vote at the Board of Supervisors. Now, with this recent push I think it necessary to update readers on this subject once again.

I want to say at the beginning that I am completely in agreement with the proponents of flavored tobacco bans in the goal of reducing teen smoking. As a former emergency room nurse, I understand firsthand that we should be doing everything we can to keep teens from smoking, and educating them so that when they turn 18 they fully know the dangers associated with smoking. I also recognize that teens are illegally obtaining and using flavored tobacco products in greater volume, and in many cases transitioning to traditional cigarettes.

But Sacramento County doesn't have a wall built around it, and anyone who wants to buy flavored tobacco products can easily obtain them from other nearby areas that have not banned it. These products will still be readily available in other counties, as well as cities like Citrus Heights, Folsom, and Rancho Cordova. A statewide ban would be far more effective so that people in Sacramento County can't access these nearby, and one will actually be on the ballot as a statewide proposition in 2022.

I have also heard from many adults who legally use flavored tobacco products both because they recreationally enjoy it, and because they use flavored e-cigarettes as a less harmful alternative to smoking. While these adults will still be able to access them in other communities, it will make it more difficult for them to access something that is otherwise legal to use, and they will be sending their tax dollars to other communities instead of spending money in Sacramento County.

Instead of a ban, we could in-

stead solve this problem by increasing the penalty for selling tobacco products to a minor from the current maximum of \$7,500, to a new minimum of \$7,500, accompanied by a ramped up undercover shopper program. This increase in penalties could potentially fully offset the cost of an improved undercover shopper program, but at the very least be substantially less than the loss in revenue we will now be facing under the ban.

Leading up to my vote on this issue, I will be meeting with stakeholders on both sides of the issue to understand their perspectives in more detail. But more than anything, I want to hear what you have to say.

For a complete list of all my past newsletters, which each contain a commentary like this one, click here.

Sacramento County Redistricting

Sacramento County has made available on its Redistricting Draft Maps webpage the final draft map. The final draft map is a result of the Board of Supervisors' direction on revisions to the earlier draft maps presented at its Nov. 2, 16 and 17 Board meetings, as well as public input.

The map is still in draft form, as Sacramento County's Geographic



Information System (GIS) team will be responsible for proofing the district lines submitted by the Board and comparing it to the district lines, Census blocks and legal boundary descriptions for all jurisdictions in Sacramento County, including cities. This is to ensure all areas of the County are assigned to a Supervisorial district and the proposed revisions follow existing district exterior boundaries.

The Board of Supervisors will adopt the final map at its Dec. 7 Board meeting at 2 p.m.

If the GIS team finds any discrepancies from a district's legal boundary or a census block that may have been inadvertently omitted from the draft map, revisions will be documented and made, and the revised map would be made available for public review by Nov. 30, allowing time for the public to review prior to adoption on Dec. 7.

The public submitted more than 200 written comments containing suggestions for redistricting and supervisorial boundary lines. The public also submitted their own maps for consideration, either hand-drawn or

drawn using the mapping tools available.

Every ten years, following the Census count, the resulting census data is used to geographically define electoral districts, at all levels of government, through a process called redistricting. Redistricting ensures that each of the electoral district boundaries have about the same number of people and comply with the Federal Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Redistricting is important because it determines which neighborhoods and communities will be grouped together for the purposes of electing a Board member. Visit Sacramento County's redistricting webpage for information about redistricting, including the redistricting process, written public testimony, meetings and workshops, a timeline and more.

Board Approves Phase One ARPA Allocation

The Board of Supervisors recently approved the County Executive's proposal for how the County should spend the first \$150 million in funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

The County Executive's recommendation for the following priority areas:

- Homelessness and Housing: \$59 million (39 percent of allocation)
- Health: \$19.8 million (13 percent of allocation)
- Economic Response: \$19.8 million (13 percent of allocation)

In addition to the County Executive's recommendations, the Board of Supervisors authorized premium pay for eligible workers employed by Sacramento County who have performed essential work since the start of the public health emergency. The Essential Workers premium pay will cost \$11.4 million, or 8 percent of the County's ARPA allocation. Additionally, the Board approved at its Sept. 28 meeting a \$5 million allocation for each of the five supervisorial districts, which accounts for \$25 million or 17 percent of the Phase One ARPA funding.

Finally, in order to minimize risk to the County, ensure a centralized grant management process, and track and assure program and fiscal integrity—with no impact to the County's General Fund—\$15 million, or 10 percent of funding will be set aside for program administration.

Examples of the types of investments in each of the categories: Housing and Homelessness: Affordable housing, permanent supportive housing, rental assistance, outreach and support services for people experiencing homelessness, sanctioned encampments and community safety. Health: COVID mitigation ef-

forts, mental health services and programs, substance abuse treatment programs and services, meals for homebound seniors and access to healthcare for hardest-hit communities.

Economic Response: Direct assistance to small businesses and non-profit organizations in the unincorporated County, funding to Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to support businesses countywide, and grants to chambers of commerce and Property and Business Improvement Districts (PBIDs).

Staff will develop recommended projects within each of the priority areas and, based on projects approved by the Board, will announce a launch of a solicitation of proposals for any external use of funds at a later date. The process will follow County guidelines with stipulations in place for necessary documentation tracked for reimbursement purposes in compliance with US Treasury Guidelines. The proposal was the result of feedback from residents, business and community organizations who provided input in a Community Needs Survey regarding the most important issues in Sacramento County related to recovering from the COVID pandemic. Concurrently, County departments were surveyed to identify



specific ARPA-related project requests. Following completion of the surveys, results were analyzed and ranked into priority issue areas based on their level of community importance and eligibility with allowable uses under ARPA. The priority issue areas were ranked in the following order:

- Housing
- Homelessness
- Health
- Economic Response
- Essential Workers
- Infrastructure
- Education
- Broadband

On July 27, 2021, the Board received a presentation on the priority issues areas and directed staff to develop proposed funding allocation recommendations based on the identified priorities. The Board will hear recommendations on the initial ARPA project-level funding in December or January of 2022.

For more information, visit the County's American Rescue Plan Act webpage.

Constitution Day and the People of India

India celebrated its 72nd Constitution Day, 26th November with usual festivity. It was on this day in 1949 that the Constitution of independent Indian Republic constituted as a result of merger of 14 British Provinces including three partitioned Provinces of Punjab, Bengal and Assam, and 565 Princely States (countries) of the sub-continent, was adopted, enacted and given by the people to themselves. Drafted by a seven member Committee headed by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, one of the most erudite scholars (M.A. economics with history, politics, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, and elementary French and German as ancillary subjects, and PhD. (Economics) from Columbia University New York, M.Sc. (Economics) and D.Sc. (Economics) from London School of Economics, Bar-at-Law, London), is one of the largest Constitutions in the world. It took 2 years 11 months and 17 days of hard labour to accomplish the challenging mammoth task almost single handed by Dr. Ambedkar, revered as the father of the Constitution. Approved by the Constituent Assembly of nearly three hundred members, it came into effect from 26th January 1950.

The basic philosophy, spirit and ideals of the Constitution are enshrined in its Preamble which reads: "WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens JUSTICE, social, economic and political; LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation; in OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this 26th day of November 1949, do HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION." (The terms 'SOCIALIST and SECULAR were added to the preamble in 1976 by 42nd Constitution amendment)

Measured in terms of constitutional philosophy, the performance, progress and development of the country represent a mixed bag. Notwithstanding its alarming complex socio-economic and political issues, the Republic has been able to withstand the vicissitudes of a nascent State, and rise as one of the world powers of reckoning under its Constitution. Starting from a scratch, the country is one of the largest and fast growing economies of the world today. It has made a special mark in the agricultural, health, industrial, defense, technology and manufacturing sectors. One of the nuclear powers, it has made a big leap in space research. The Constitution has stood the test of time and proved to be workable, flexible and strong enough to hold the country together both in peace and war time, as expected.

The sheen of these achievements, however, is hazed by country's social, economic and political

index. The arbitrary and irrational walled-tight stratification of Hindu Society into Varnas, the progenitor of pernicious caste system, continues to be the bane of the people and the country. The resultant blatant social and economic discrimination and injustice against more than three fourth of the population continues to be their nightmare, and an obnoxious blot on face of the society and the Republic. The hydra-headed monster of caste continues to be a perpetual serious threat to the ideals of the constitution. Despite its acclaimed economic growth, a huge mass of population continues writhing in destitution, illiteracy, malnutrition and disease. More than 80% population is reeling in poverty living a fragile economic life,



struggling day in and day out for sustenance and shelter. Most of the labor force and farming fraternity particularly the landless labor continue to suffer the life of want and hunger. The incidence of farmers' suicides mainly on account of financial distress is a sad commentary on performance and will of the ruling dispensations to enable honorable sustenance to the life-sustainers (Anadadata) of the country. The spurt in crimes particularly against women is a matter of great concern. An all round moral and material corruption is touching the nadir. The repelling sight of slums and semi-clad begging women and children crowding the cities speak loudly of the apathy and insensitivity of the state and society. What should one say of the spiritually rich land of multiple religions and millions of Gods and Goddesses where most of its people are born to suffer and die as destitute!

The Constitution empowers the citizens with one vote one value to elect their own Government for themselves. It conceives India as one people one nation. But the Constitution is followed more in breach in this regard. Caste, creed, community, money and muscle power, and manipulations infest the electoral process. People with criminal record manipulate to enter the Parliament and the state Legislatures. Instead of the Gov-

ernment of, by and for the people, it appears to have been reduced by and large to the state of a hereditary ruling class with despotic overtones. The ruling dispensations aim to decimate the opposition. They go unbridled in pursuing their agenda of power and self with interest of the people and the country getting a back seat. No wonder the poor get poorer and the rich richer, and the gap between the two goes on ever widening! The dismal scenario is obviously not attributable to any flaws in the Constitution, but to the vileness of man responsible to work it.

The perils and pitfalls which the country is faced with today were well foreseen, pronouncedly highlighted and repeatedly warned

against by the father of the Constitution before, during and after making of the Constitution. In its very first meeting, the Constituent Assembly witnessed an impasse due to an amendment to the Congress Resolution moved by Dr. M.R. Jayakar – a staunch Congressman seeking adjournment until the Muslim League and Indian States' representatives, who had abstained, came into the Constituent Assembly. Amid this tense situation Dr. Ambedkar, an avowed critic of the Congress, who had lashed at their ideology and scoffed at their leaders privately and publicly, was unexpectedly invited out of turn by

the President Dr. Rajendra Prasad on 17th December 1946 to help break the impasse. Supporting the amendment in national interest, he said in a candid and forceful speech:

"...Today we are divided politically, socially and economically in warring camps. In order to make us willing friends, in order to induce every party, every section in this country to take on to road, it would be an act of greatest statesmanship for the majority party even to make a concession to the prejudices of the people who are not prepared to march together. Let us even make concession to the prejudices of our opponents, bring them in, so that they may willingly join with us on marching upon that road which if we walk long enough, must necessarily lead us to unity. When deciding the destinies of nations, dignities of people, dignities of leaders and dignities of parties ought to count for nothing. Destiny of the country ought to count for everything... That is the only way by which we can carry with us all sections of the country...". His logical and convincing oration was met with thunderous applause from his deadly foes. The amendment was accepted and Resolution postponed to another session.

Introducing the first monumental Draft Constitution to the Assembly for consideration on 4th

November 1948, Dr. Ambedkar warned against the fanaticism of the diehards saying: "... To diehards who have developed a kind of fanaticism against minority protection, I would like to say that minorities



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are an explosive force which, if erupts, can blow up the whole fabric of the State. The minorities have agreed to place their existence in the hands of the majority which is basically a communal and not a political majority. It is for the majority to realize its duty not to discriminate against minorities. The moment the majority loses the habit of discriminating against the minority, the minorities will vanish." Concluding his speech, he said: "I feel that the Draft Constitution is workable, flexible and strong enough to hold the country together both in peace time and in war time. If things go wrong under the new Constitution, the reason will not be that we had a bad Constitution. What we will have to say is that man was vile".

Explaining the philosophy and vision of the Constitution and cautioning against the likely pitfalls and vulnerable areas in country's march, he said in the historical speech delivered on the occasion of presenting the final Draft in the Constituent Assembly on 25th November 1949: "... On 26th January 1950, India will be an independent country. What perturbs me greatly is the fact that not only India has once before lost her independence, but she lost it by the infidelity and treachery of some of her own people. In the invasion of Sind by Mohammed-Bin-Qasim, the military commanders of King Dahar (Brahmin) accepted bribes and refused to fight on the side of their King. It was Jaichand (Rajput king of Kannauj) who invited Mohammed Ghori to invade India and fight against Prithvi Raj, the last Hindu – Rajput ruler of Delhi. When Shivaji was fighting for the liberation of Hindus, the other Maratha noblemen and the Rajput Kings were fighting the battle on the side of Mughals... Will history repeat itself? It is this thought which fills me with anxiety. This anxiety is deepened by the realization of the fact that in addition to our old enemies in the form of castes and creeds we are going to have many political parties with diverse and opposing political creeds. If the parties place creed above country, our independence will be put in jeopardy a second time and probably be lost forever. We must be determined to defend our independence with the last drop of our blood." (Contd. on next page)

Constitution Day and the People of India

(Continue from page 8)

Warning against dangers to the new born democracy, he said: "It is quite possible for this new born democracy to retain its form but give place to dictatorship in fact. If there is a landslide, the danger of the second possibility becoming actuality is much greater. If we wish to maintain democracy not merely in form, but also in fact, we must hold fast to constitutional methods of achieving our social and economic objectives. We must make our political democracy a social democracy as well... it means a way of life which recognizes liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life."

Cautioning against hero-worship or Bhakti, he said: "We must not lay our liberties at the feet of even a great man, or to trust him with powers which enable him to subvert our institutions... Bhakti in religion may be a road to the salvation of the soul, but in politics, it is a sure road to degradation and to eventual dictatorship."

Warning against the dangers of inequality and absence of fraternity in the Indian society, he said: "On the 26th of 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... 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 this Assembly has so laboriously built up... In believing that we are a nation,

we are cherishing a great delusion. How can people divided into several thousands of castes be a nation? The castes are anti-national in the first place, because they bring about separation in social life. They are anti-national also because they generate jealousy and antipathy between caste and caste... There can be no gainsaying that political power in this country has too long been the monopoly of a few and the many are not only beasts of burden, but also beasts of prey. This monopoly has not merely deprived them of their chance of betterment; it has sapped them of what may be called the significance of life. These down-trodden classes are tired of being governed; they are impatient to govern themselves. This urge for self-realization in the down-trodden classes must not be allowed to develop into a class struggle or class war. That would indeed be a day of disaster. Therefore the sooner room is made for the realization of their aspirations, the better for the few, the better for the country, the better for the maintenance of its independence and the better for the continuance of its democratic structure. This can only be done by the establishment of equality and fraternity in all spheres of life."

Concluding the historical speech, he said: "If we wish to preserve the Constitution, let us resolve not to be tardy in the recognition of the evils that lie across our path and which induce people to prefer Government for the people to Government by the people, nor to be weak in our initiative to

remove them. That is the only way to serve the country. I know of no better." Holding the idea of every citizen being 'Indian first and Indian last', uppermost in his heart and mind, he said in his separate report submitted to the Simon Commission way back on May 17, 1929: "I am of the opinion that the most vital need of the day is to create among the mass of the people the sense of a common nationality, the feeling not that they are Indians first and Hindus, Mohammedans or Sindhis and Kanarese afterwards, but that they are Indians first and Indians last and nothing else but Indians". Such a patriotic fervor and his love and concern for the country and its people earned him the epithet of 'Patriot of sterling worth' from none other than Mahatma Gandhi.

Despite the ideals and philosophy of the Constitution and its father being loud and clear, the ideal of equality and fraternity in the society remains to be a distant dream only. Hero-worship or Bhakti in politics is rather order of the day. Placing the political creeds above the country appears to be the first priority of the politicians. Social democracy is a non-agenda and the political democracy sans true democratic values. The idea of every citizen being 'an Indian first and Indian last' does not seem to have even crossed the minds of most of the people. The demon of caste seems to have entered the DNA of the people, and the so called high caste people take pride in glorifying and perpetuating it. Mutual trust between the minorities and the majority is by and large missing. Hullabaloo of Hindutva and the jingoistic cries for a Hindu nation on the other hand appear to be not only widening the chasm between the minorities including marginalized sections and the majority but also causing social tension, mistrust and fear among them. The continued discrimination and injustice against the perpetually marginalized and deprived population is ominously pointing towards a class war scenario assuming volcanic proportion. The responsibility for such a dismal situation may undoubtedly be attributed to the fossilized Brahmanical mind-set and vileness of the leaders and administrators responsible to work the Constitution. It is indeed a wakeup call for the powers that be and the true patriots, genuine intellectuals, social reformers, liberals, true secularists and well wishers of the country, to rise up and move in tandem to achieve and uphold the ideals and vision of the Constitution with a missionary zeal in the interest of the nation and its people.

The task is not impossible. We need to take cue from the life and mission of true patriots particularly Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, to actualize the constitutional aspirations of establishing an egalitarian society and a strong democratic nation where every human being is able to lead a life of self-respect, dignity, prosperity, happiness, peace and harmony. Religion to Babasaheb means the propounding of an ideal scheme of divine governance the aim and object of which is to make the social order in which the men live a moral order. Man is the centre of divine order called Religion. His social philosophy is an appeal to the Hindus to liberate Hinduism and solidify Hindu society, revitalize the Hindu thought and abolish the caste system and the touch-me-notism to

save it from decadence and degradation. He started not only a war against Hinduism and Hindu Social Order but also a mental revolution unprecedented in the history of Hinduism for this purpose. He firmly believed that the breach in the impregnable citadel of caste could be made with the dynamite of reason and morality, and the Hindu reformers must apply this weaponry to achieve the aim of egalitarian society and one nation one people living together inter-dining and inter-marrying.

As regards the marginalized and down-trodden classes, his mission was to liberate them from the age old abominable thralldom and inhuman injustice, and to develop among them the sense of self-respect, self-confidence, self-realization, dignity and pride of a normal human being. Nature made none a slave and no man was born a dullard. To him nothing was more sacred than learning. Therefore, education of the people was his top priority. His message to the children of lesser God is 'Educate, Agitate and Organize'; 'Self-help and Self-belief'; 'Unite and fight'; and "Do or die". He did not like the hungry men to envelop themselves in the coils of Bhakti, the cult of devotion, the opium of helplessness. Exhorting them to be self-dependent he

said, "Do not depend on God or Superman. Devotion to scriptures would not free you from your bondage, want and poverty. Your religious fasts, austerities and penances have not saved you from starvation." He asked them to shun all superstitious beliefs and rituals, astrology, wearing of stones, threads and talisman, sacrifices, tantra-mantra, holy baths, Yajnas and horoscopes etal. To him, the causes of poverty lay in the richness of the exploiters, and the way out for the poor was to organize a common united front without any regard to caste or creed, and to elect their real representatives. This way, they who produced food and wealth of the nation would have shelter, clothing, and would not die from hunger. Law being the abode of all worldly happiness, he exhorted them to capture the power of law-making which was the only way of their salvation and end to starvation. Finding the philosophy of Buddha to be dynamic, democratic and egalitarian, he embraced Buddhism with lacs of his followers on 14th October 1956, and redeemed his vow "Unfortunately I was born a Hindu Untouchable. It was beyond my power to prevent it. But it is within my power to refuse to live under ignoble and humiliating conditions. I solemnly assure you that I will not die a Hindu." It was rock determination, steel resolve and unflinching commitment to his Mission that Dr. Ambedkar could achieve the unachievable. He sacrificed his three sons and a daughter, his family and the life itself in the process. His erudition, intellectual honesty, humanism, patriotism and versatile vast knowledge won the hearts of his determined perpetual opponents and foes, the congress bosses, who found him to be worthy of writing the supreme law of the land to guide the destiny of the country and its people. He put his heart and soul in meeting the most daunting challenge. The gem of Constitution produced by him was thunderously cheered with shower of encomiums from all quarters of the Constituent Assembly. His glorious vow

'If I fail to do away with the abominable thralldom and inhuman injustice under which the class, into which I was born, has been groaning, I will put an end to my life with a bullet' was fulfilled when Untouchability was abolished, rule of law established and democratic principles of equality, liberty, fraternity and justice enshrined in the Constitution as its soul. Emphasizing the utmost need of unity and sincerity to preserve and secure what was achieved, and make further progress, he said in a speech: "I have built the house for you. It is up to you to maintain it in proper order. I have planted the tree, if you water it, you will enjoy the fruits and its shade. If not, you will have to sit in the sun and our Community will be ruined. Only if we unite, we can achieve something..."

He expected the people of Bharat to become a well knit strong family and resolve all the issues as a family. He wanted to see the deprived people a governing class sharing the political power in terms of equality with other communities. He expected them to pay back to the society and work for the uplift of the down-trodden. Unfortunately the people including his own followers and lieutenants proved to be unworthy of the task. Expressing his agony, he said: "...My own people including my lieutenants in whom I had full faith and confidence live for themselves and their personal gains, and are fighting among themselves for leadership and power... I have brought this caravan where it is seen, after passing through crushing miseries and endless troubles all my life fighting with my opponents... If my people, my lieutenants are not able to take the Caravan ahead, they should leave it where it is seen today, but in no circumstances should they allow it to go back..."

The ideal of one India one people can become a reality when we the people of India cleanse our mind of the age old socio-economic and religious prejudices, and start thinking and acting as Indians first and the Indians last. It is the responsibility of everyone in the country particularly the ruling dispensations, administration, civil society and all those who matter to ensure working of the Constitution in its letter and spirit so that the distinction of upper and lower, majority and minority, forward and backward, exploiter and exploited and flourished and the crushed becomes a matter of the past. That is the only hope and way for the 'one nation one people'.

A period of seven decades may appear to some inadequate to realize completely the ideals of the Constitution in an orthodox and retrogressive social environment, but when viewed in larger national perspective and from the standpoint of those who suffered inhumanity, deprivation, indignities and injustice since ages, the period may look to be long enough with their patience touching the brim. It is imperative to listen to the resounding wakeup call before it is too late for the young Indian Republic.

(Source: Writings and Speeches of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Vol.1, Vol. 2, Vol. 3, Vol. 13, Vol.17, Pt, 1, 2, and 3, Constituent Assembly Debates, Dhananjay Keer, life and Mission of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, N.C. Rattu, Last Few Years of Dr. Ambedkar and Wikipedia)



Ishwar Das Pawar
District and Sessions Judge (Retd.)

My Struggle in Life

Why I Admire Indira Gandhi

I have my own reasons why I admire Indira Gandhi. The reasons are various, but I will list only a few of them. Indira Gandhi is a woman, and for that reason alone, she is entitled to respect and sympathy. Both women and Sudras (people from low caste), not to speak of the untouchables, have been common victims of the unjust and barbarous socioreligious laws of the hierarchical Hindu society, and they have been subjected to untold indignities and atrocities. They have been denied even their elementary human rights, most importantly being the denial of equal opportunity to them in social and public life. Their place and status have been clearly defined by Tulsidas, the author of the book known as *Tulsi Ramayan*. According to his thesis based on the hoary laws, "All of these, namely, the cattle, the idiot, the Sudra, and the woman need and deserve to be chastised." This puts the woman and the Sudra in the correct perspective in accordance with the injunctions of shastras (Hindu scriptures), and the so-called high caste made laws to which neither the women nor the Sudras were a party or had any say in their enactment. Every right-thinking person will therefore welcome any change for the better of these categories. That a woman of great eminence is occupying the exalted position of prime minister in this land of social injustice and exploitation of the worst type, must inspire a righteous sense of gratification and atonement for the ghastly sins committed against women, Sudras, and untouchables.

More importantly, Indira Gandhi understands and realizes the importance and urgency of the problem of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. She had all sympathy for them, and it must be said to her credit that she has brought to the forefront this problem by making repeated references to it in her public speeches and utterances. This had never been done before by any non-scheduled caste public person of consequence. The concept of social justice now finds a place conspicuously in all the development plans and schemes. This is not a small gain. She is trying to help these people and raise their social and economic status. It must be remembered that it is due to her that a scheduled caste person has recently been elevated to the bench of the Supreme Court. This appointment is of course on the merits of the person concerned, but who cared for our merit before? It should be noted here that this appointment was challenged in the Supreme Court by means of a writ petition filed by a so-called highcaste Hindu. Motives are not very relevant in politics. Politicians do not belong to the galaxy of saints who live in Sadhu Ashrams (hermitages for saints). They have political aims of their own. But how does it matter? The real criterion is who is prepared and does help the hapless people to attain to a position of equality and self-respect. It is a matter of study in comparisons.

Indira Gandhi is not caste-minded though not so rational a thinker as her father Jawaharlal Nehru was. He never showed any fascination for rosaries, idols, and temples. His true temples were the developmental projects like the Bhakra Dam and the educational, technical, and scientific institutions. He used

to say that the stars and the planets were not interested in the affairs and destiny of man, and that these things are the concern of man himself. Superstition is a corroding disease of the mind, and it becomes all the more dangerous if the people who are expected to set an example and give a lead to the common man themselves fall prey to it.

At the moment, when multidimensional difficulties, both internal and external, lie ahead, Indira Gandhi seems to be the only leader who is capable of solving the intricate problems confronting the country. All other leaders who count have since been tried and found wanting in their capability to deliver the goods. When they were in power, they had no time and mind for solving the problems of the public as they were too busy in their inner-party and interparty squabbles. Indira Gandhi is a courageous and fearless leader who can boldly face and deal with even the mighty persons who are at the helm of their countries' affairs but are not favorably disposed toward our country. Again, it is she who can build and project the image of the country in the comity of nations. She is a recognized international figure.

Incidentally, she belongs to a family whose contribution to the struggle for independence has been conspicuous. To this may be added the fact that the family has donated to the nation whatever valuable property it owned and possessed—the huge and magnificent Anand Bhawan (in Allahabad was the birthplace of Jawahar Lal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India signifies India's struggle) in Allahabad. However, Indira Gandhi is great in her own right. A word about the much-talked of emergency. Emergency was a necessity. The opposition parties had created conditions in which there was no way out. Without such a drastic step, chaotic conditions would have engulfed the country. Common people hailed the promulgation of this measure as it promptly gave them relief in the matter of prices of essential commodities as well as in the matter of the law and order situation. There was a struggle for political power between the combined opposition on the one hand and the constitutionally and democratically established government on the other. From this struggle, the common man had nothing to gain, and if anything, he was to lose. It were the big guns—the contenders for power and the social and economic offenders such as profiteers, hoarders, smugglers, and other antisocial elements—who were put behind the bars. Emergency rather came to the common man's rescue as he was being crushed under the weight of the skyrocketing prices and the threatening law and order situation. People wished the emergency to continue for a long time. As is so well said, "Whenever high-humped bulls fight, they only spell ruin to the nearby lush green fields." In a struggle for political supremacy by the big rivals, it is the common man who suffers the most. But paradoxically, even then he allows himself to be used and exploited by the political bulls in the furtherance of their selfish ends.

The only snag regarding the emergency was an element of compulsion in some cases in the implementation of the family planning program. This lapse occurred due to overzealousness on the part of some political leaders and workers who wanted to show

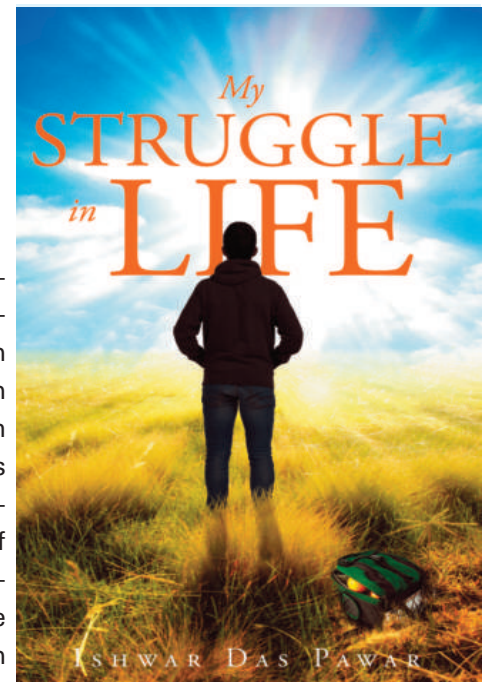
their spectacular achievements in order to win favors from their bosses and also because of those elements in the opposition who, with a view to tarnishing the image of the party in power, were interested in fomenting trouble.

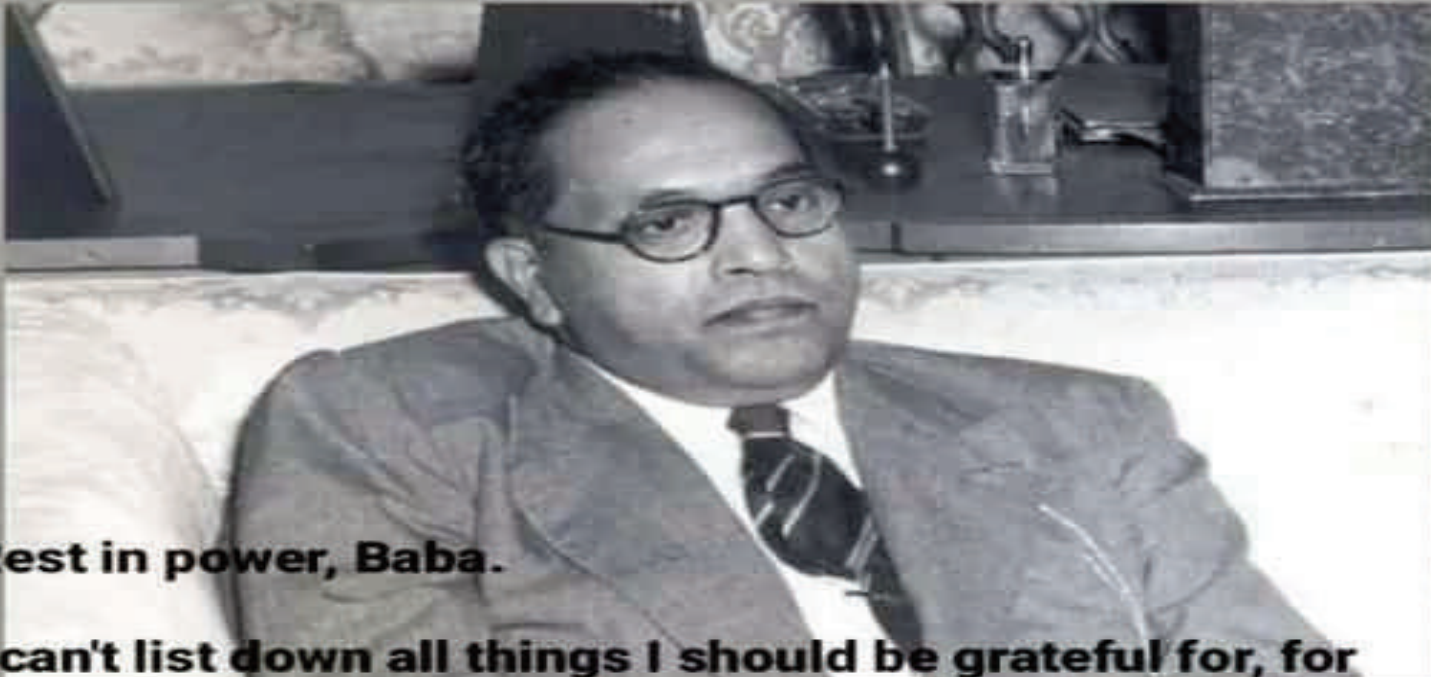
The opposition parties stretched and magnified the point beyond all reasonable proportions. The inevitable result was that during the Janata rule that followed, the family planning program came to a grinding halt. It must be recognized that proper and successful implementation of this program is a must if the country is to make a meaningful headway in its development programs. If the population grows at the present alarming rate, the nation will be heading for a disaster. Something concrete must be done and done without any delay to check this dangerous tide. But the opposition is not in a mood to cooperate with the government on any issue howsoever good it may be. Their attitude is negative. They have not accepted their defeat at the hustings with grace. They are opposing tooth and nail all the efforts of the government to raise the living standards of the poor people and are evidently siding with the vested interests and antisocial elements. However, they pay lip service to these people.

Some over-clever people and organizations are also playing the double game of running with the hare and hunting with the hound and want to assure both the weaker sections and the vested interests that they are with them. Unbeatable hypocrisy! A new glorious chapter in the history of our nascent democracy started on 25 July 1982, the day Giani Zail Singh was installed as president of India. All the credit for this evidently must go to the great leader, Indira Gandhi, who made it possible for a man of humble origin to be elected to adorn the highest office of the country.

Besides possessing a rich, varied, and lifelong experience as a freedom fighter, politician, and administrator, Giani Zail Singh is a man of the people. By sheer dint of hard work, sacrifice, and dedication to the cause of the motherland and the common man, in particular the weaker sections of society, he has successfully traveled from a mud hut in a small village to the capital's Rashtrapati Bhawan (presidential residence).

The fact that the president belongs to a backward artisan caste, a carpenter, makes the event all the more significant and charming. The massive verdict recorded by the chosen representatives of the land in his favor is symbolic of the victory of the socially and economically deprived sections of society. This great and noble act of social justice and statesmanship accomplished by Indira Gandhi shall go down in history as a unique landmark in the building and development of the secular and democratic character of our social and political structure.





Rest in power, Baba.

I can't list down all things I should be grateful for, for everything we are is because of you, our education, our wealth, our names, our dignity. India wouldn't have its democratic soul without you, this society wouldn't have its moral compass and human rights without you, we wouldn't have a life of self respect without you, and a kid in a small, fucked up city with a lower caste identity wouldn't have had a reason to survive and have a chance at a decent life without you.

If there's one person I owe my everything to, it's you. Jai Bhim! I don't think anyone here would understand how powerful these two words are - for those have never experienced the journey to be called thousand different insulting names to go on to say Jai Bhim in those same faces who insulted you.

Thank you for holding our hands while the rest of the country and its Mahatmas, Pundits, and Babus didn't. Thank you for giving us a motherland when we had none. I wish you didn't pass so soon, for you deserved some time for yourself, you deserved some rest.

There's nothing that can make us prouder except being called your children. I wish one day I would also deserve to be called one.

Till then, your words are our pledge. Educate, Agitate, Organise. Jai Bhim.



Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD

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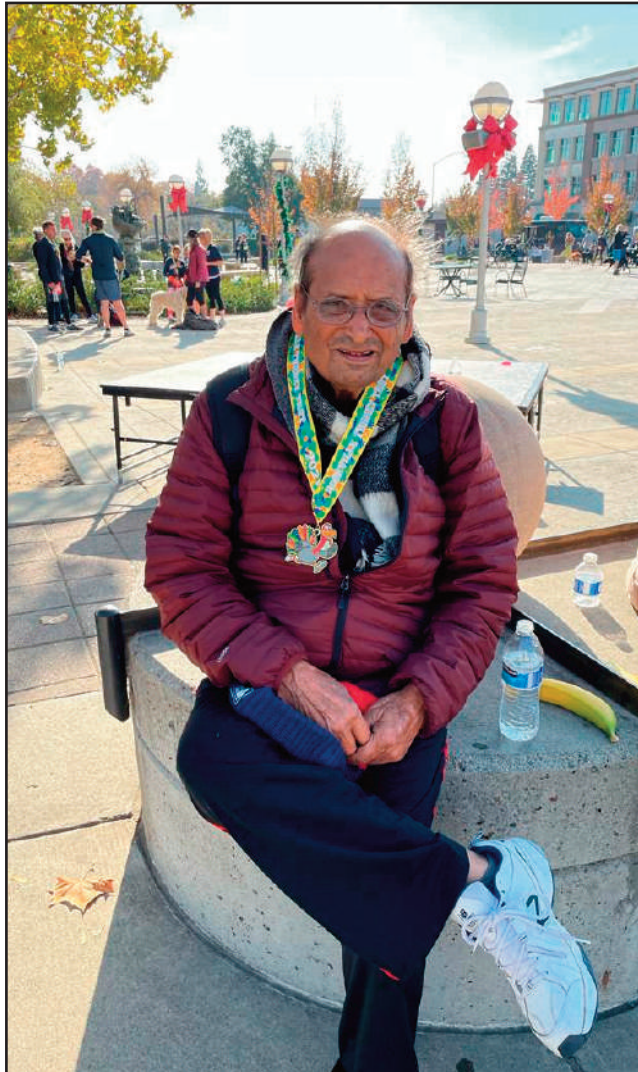
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Goodie Takhar, PhD

Turkey trot walks or run Roseville (CA)



We planned this year Turkey trot to walk or run three miles for charity in Roseville CA. It was very good experience and enjoyable. We followed American way of enjoyment and to take care of needy. Around 2500 people participated. We appreciate the American spirit to help needy and desperate. Long live & God bless the United States of America.

- Sukhchain Singh



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