



Ambedkar Times Weekly

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DR. AMBEDKAR AND THE QUESTION OF CASTE IN INDIA OF 21ST CENTURY

Prem Kumar Chumber

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No one till date has been able to analyze the question of caste in India in such details and struggled so meticulously against its oppressive structures as Baba Sahib Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. He was of the opinion that caste is central to the Indian society and polity. Its economy is also inextricably tied with the elusive phenomenon of caste in India. Irrespective of long boasts of the pristine Indian (read Hindu) civilization and its so-called non-mundane concerns, it remains highly segmented especially on the basis of birth; a unique social malady afflicted millions of Dalits in India and abroad. What does it matter to them whether India achieves 8 or 9 per-cent growth rate? When there remains rampant social exclusion in all walks of life. Over and above the widespread phenomenon of globalization has further pinned them down. It is based on the idea that the welfare state is a hindrance in the way of the global market; it is presumed that the marginalized need not be supported by the state at all as they used to be earlier. This has further deepened marginalization and exclusion of the marginal groups and communities that were traditionally vulnerable and excluded. The rapid pace of transformation in the context of the market forces in the contemporary world has not only heightened the exploitation of the marginalized, but also severely limited the possibilities of their eman-

icipation. Globalization may have opened up enormous opportunities but one has to map the emphasis on the 'opportunities'. In fact, in the asymmetrical world in which we live, such opportunities open many doors for the haves by further marginalizing the interests of the have nots.

The Dalits have been excluded from social, economic and political rights including the right to education and employment, other than the traditional forced and customary undignified labour, precisely because of their birth in the untouchable castes. They

also suffered from social exclusion because of their geographical segregation. They were forced to live on the outskirts of the villages towards which the wind blew and sewage flowed. Their houses were dirty, dingy, dark, and unhygienic where poverty and squalor loomed large. Until 1990, there had been some improvements in the lives of the Dalits in terms of education and employment opportunities, increase in wages, fall in poverty, access to land,

water, health, education, housing and other resources owing to the State's affirmative action. However, the trend was reverted and sidelined with the onset of the economic reforms under the process of globalization. The economic policy in India has undergone

a major transformation since the beginning of the early 1990s, under the paradigm of liberalization, privatization, and globalization. One of the main concerns of this new paradigm is to facilitate the process of the roll back of the welfare State and prepare the space for the operation of the unrestrained market forces

and open international trade. This pro-market and capital stance of the process of economic globalization has led to the widening of the gap between the privileged few and the large mass of the marginalized, and among them the Dalit laborers, daily wage workers and workers in the informal sector suffer the most.

For Dalits and other marginalized sections of the society in such adverse times, if still there is any hope to seek their genuine human

rights and chances to livelihood that is the egalitarian, peaceful, rational and social-democratic philosophy of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar who had devoted his entire life for the cause of the uplift of the downtrodden. His interpretations about the origins of caste and untouchability are not only rational but are grounded in grass-roots reality of which he himself was an integral part. He devoted his entire life for the annihilation of caste from this sub-continent size of India by deploying democratic and peaceful methods. He was a thorough democrat in his approach and strategy. He wanted this evil to go for ever. For him the question of caste is not an individual question of the Scheduled Castes only, it is in fact an all India question which is very closely tied with the larger questions of Indian nationalism and real growth of India. If India has to come forward to play an important role in the emerging new post 9/11 world order, she has to exorcise its deadly specter of centuries-old caste.

The institution of Dr. Ambedkar Chair (Constitutional Law) in Columbia University from where he learnt his lessons of social equality, liberty and democracy under the guidance of reputed scholar Professor Dewey is a great and true tribute to messiah of downtrodden. The Ambedkartimes.com, Ambedkartimes.org & Ambedkar Times in English & in Punjabi congratulate all on this occasion of Birth anniversary of Baba Sahib Dr. B R Ambedkar.

Courtesy: <http://www.ambedkartimes.com/Editorial.htm>



Man Convicted for Caste Hate Speech in UK

A man from west London receives a 16 week suspended prison sentence for producing and sharing caste-related hate video on social media.

Mr Gurvinder Singh Luthra's hearing took place on 25th May, 2021 at Highbury Corner Magistrates Court. He pleaded guilty to two counts of sending by public communication offensive/ indecent/ obscene/ menacing materials. Mr Luthra was sentenced to 16 weeks in prison - suspended for 12 months. He is also required to comply with a Rehabilitation Activity Requirement, and was ordered to pay £213 of court costs.

The videos Mr Luthra shared on TikTok in 2020, were of himself having an aggressive rant that included casteist, racist and homophobic insults. There were also threats of rape. In particular, he made offensive and derogatory comments about Guru Ravi Dass - a spiritual figure followed by millions of Indians around

the world.

The Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance (ACDA) has been cam-



paigning for caste discrimination to be outlawed in Britain since 2008. ACDA was one of the witnesses in this case. Ravi Kumar, General Secretary of ACDA said:

"The 16-week prison suspended sentence given to Gurvinder Singh Luthra should signal to others that they cannot make and share caste-related hate communications.

This sentence is woefully inadequate in view of the sufferings regularly being reported to us by those suffer-

could, and get away with it.

We understand the charge did not specifically refer to 'caste' because caste is not a protected characteristic in law. We call on the Government to provide the legal clarity required urgently, and implement the law agreed by Parliament in 2013. This would make caste discrimination and caste-related hate crimes unlawful in this country. Without such clarity, cases like this will continue to take place under the radar and not be recorded.

Social media giants -Facebook, Twitter and YouTube have recognised Caste hate speech as being unacceptable and say so openly in their guidance. It is time for TikTok to follow suit."

For more information visit our website www.acdauk.org.uk or contact the ACDA by email on infoacda@googlemail.com

07949192590

OR 07902806342

ing CBD in all walks of life in Britain. We are grateful however, to Hounslow Police and Crown Prosecution Service for taking this case to court.

Hate speech laws in the UK are designed to protect communities from such abuse. The fact that Mr Luthra was able to produce and post these offensive caste-related videos on social media implies he felt he

OUTRAGE AGAINST CASTE / RACISM HATRED IN THE UK

Joint Statement from Dalit organisations in the UK, in response to Caste / Racist comments made by Mr Gurvinder Singh Luthra from Hounslow, London.

Mr Gurvinder Singh Luthra on his TikTok account (singhluthra) recently produced and shared a video where he proceeded to abuse Guru Ravidass, who is the spiritual figure head for millions of his followers across the world, including over 200,000 here in the UK. Guru Ravidass' teachings are enshrined within the Sikh Scriptures – the Guru Granth Sahib.

During his rant, Mr Luthra made a number of highly objectionable and offending comments, including the following:

- Whilst referring to an unnamed person, he repeatedly refers to him as the "testicles of Guru Ravidass".

- He threatens to rape female family members of the unnamed person.

- He makes a homophobic slur in reference to Guru Ravidass and the unnamed person.

It has been brought to our notice that this isn't the first time that Mr Luthra has made caste / racist hatred comments on social media. A number of videos have surfaced recently exposing him using caste and offensive language that has hurt the Ravidassia community.

Hate speech laws in the UK are designed to protect communities from such abuse. The fact that Mr Luthra has been able to act with impunity on social media – is another sign that the UK Government needs to bring into effect legislation designed to protect victims of caste hatred.

In recent years - social media giants including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube have all recognised caste hate speech as unacceptable and say so openly in their guidance. It is time for TikTok to follow suit.

Members of the Anti-Caste Discrimination Alliance (ACDA) have been campaigning for legal protection for victims of Caste-based discrimination (CBD) for nearly two decades, working closely with grassroots organisations comprised of, and representing Dalits, here in the UK. Following extensive community campaigning on behalf of victims, legislation outlawed caste discrimination in the UK in 2013, however the law is yet to be implemented. The legislation has received the full support of the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the United Nations, however the Government decided in

2018 not to implement it following opposition from powerful groups.

The ACDA recently wrote to the Minister for Equalities, Ms Liz Truss and called on her to take action and outlaw CBD in the UK. The need for implementation of the law remains relevant

in light of the caste / racist videos that are being shared on some social media outlets and other recent legal cases of CBD in the UK.

This incident has been reported

United Kingdom".

Mr Arun Kumar, from The Federation of Ambedkarite and Buddhist Organisations UK (FABOUK) said: "If Caste legislation is not enforced, then Caste discrimination cases will carry on occurring here in this country".

Mr Navdeep Singh, from the Asian Rationalist Society Great Britain said: "Equality laws aren't just about legal justice. They help change behaviours and help deter discrimination".

Ambedkar Mission Society, Bedford Amrit Bani O Anti Land Grab and Forced Displacement of People Asian Rationalists Society, Britain British Ravidassia Heritage Research Group Buddha Dharma Association, Southall Dr Ambedkar Mission Society, Glasgow Dr Ambedkar Buddhist Organisation, Birmingham Dr Ambedkar Memorial Trust, London Federation of Ambedkarite and Buddhist Organisations UK Indian Scheduled Caste Welfare Association, UK.

Indian Workers' Association, Great Britain International Asian Christian Front Kanshi Radio Ltd Kanshi TV Kesri Lehar Punjab Buddhist Society, UK Punjabi Writers Association Coventry Samaj Weekly Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha UK(SGRS-UK), and all associated Temples in the UK Shri Guru Ravidass Bhawan Birmingham Shri Guru Ravidass Dharmik Sabha Wolverhampton Shri Guru Ravidass Cultural Association Darlaston Shri Guru Ravidass Mission International Shri Guru Ravidass Amrit Bani Centre Tarkseel Society.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Contact infoacda@googlemail.com for further information or quotes.

What is Caste?

To put it simply the Caste system is social exclusion and social segregation. This occurs in all aspects of life in India. Sadly, the ideology persists in UK. It is rooted in religion, based on a division of labour, and the concept of who is impure and polluting and who is not. Although it's not the same here in the UK as it is in the Asian sub-Continent - the route cause – the concept of 'Untouchability' is the same.

What is a Dalit?

Dalit is a self-designation for a group of people traditionally regarded as low caste or untouchables (outcastes), otherwise referred to as Scheduled Castes in the Indian Constitution. The Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) are officially designated groups of historically disadvantaged people in India.

Caste Law in the UK

The call for the law has been supported by and called for by the EHRC, Parliament's Joint Committee for Human Rights. The UN's Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination have also advocated that the law is implemented without delay.

EHRC

You can report hate crime at the website here: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/reporting-race-hate-crime>.

UK Citizen Convicted of Caste/Race Hate Speech

Dear Editor,

Last year Gurvinder Singh Luthra from UK on his Tick Tok account shared a video in which he used very abusive and derogatory remarks against Sri Guru Ravidass Ji and offended millions of people worldwide. Some of the organizations and individuals reported this matter to police to take action against the culprit. They also issued a joint statement in September 2020 to condemn his racist/caste hatred comments. The man was charged and convicted. It's a good result of a joint effort by various organizations especially "Anti caste Discrimination alliance UK" (ACDA UK). Hopefully this conviction will help to stop other people using such offensive language against others.

Regards,
Arun Kumar (UK)

to the police. We call on the Dalit community here in the UK to remain calm, tolerant and to allow the police to conduct their enquiries on this hate crime. Members may wish to contact the police & the EHRC and to report this incident as a hate / caste crime. Let the statutory authorities take action against Mr Luthra.

Mr Ravi Kumar, General Secretary of ACDA said: "The caste hate rants and threats of rape by Mr Luthra are very upsetting and disturbing. For him to believe he can make such hate attacks and threats of rape and share this on social media tells me the Conservative Government has failed when it comes to Caste-based discrimination here in the UK."

Mr Dalawer Bagha, from the Guru Ravidass Sabha UK said: "We call on the Government to listen to the Equality and Human Rights Commission's calls for Caste discrimination to be outlawed in the UK".

Mr Sam Kalyan, from the Bhagwan Valmik Organisations said: "This Government is not listening to common sense, it is watering down human rights provisions that protect the most marginalised communities and victims in the

Mr Bhagwant Singh, from the Indian Workers Association Great Britain said: "It's shameful that the Government has failed sufferers and victims of Caste discrimination in the UK. We need the law to be implemented."

Mr Sat Paul, from the British Ravidassia Heritage Research Group said: "Guru Ravidass is a shining example of equality for India, he fought tyranny and stood for equality. For a so-called baptised Sikh to insult Guru Ravidass in this way is appalling and an insult to both followers of Guru Ravidass and Sikhs".

Mr Hansraj Banga, from Kanshi TV said: "These remarks are totally unacceptable, and they are another example of caste discrimination here in the UK. We call on Government to act now to stop this type of hate and to provide protection to victims of caste discrimination."

24 November 2020

This Statement is supported by:

Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance

All Bhagwan Valmik Sabhas and associated Temples in the UK

All India Adi-Dharam Mission UK

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Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD



Goodie Takhar, PhD

India's GDP and Its People

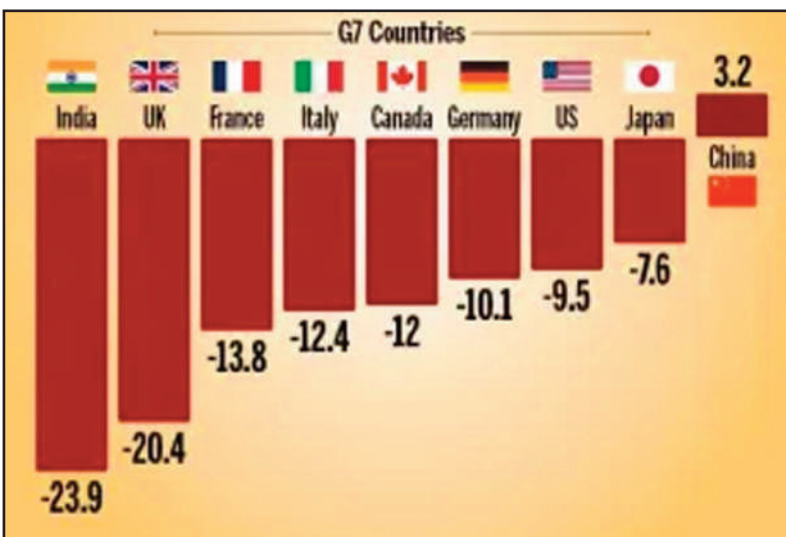
On May 31, 2021, the National Statistics Office under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation released the economic growth figures for the financial year (FY) 2020-21. India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 1.6 per cent during the fourth quarter (January-March) of FY 2020-21, while India's GDP contracted by 7.3 per cent during FY 2020-21. The Government of India has revised the figures for the second quarter (July-September) and third quarter (October-December) of FY 2020-21. According to the revised data, the contraction in GDP in the second quarter (July-September) has been revised from 7.5 per cent to 7.4 per cent. The economic growth rate in the third quarter (October-December) was revised to 0.5 per cent from 0.4 per cent. The contraction in GDP in the first quarter (April-June) was 24.4 per cent. This contraction in economic growth is the worst in the history of the Indian economy. This phenomenon has been linked to the lockdown caused by the Coronavirus Pandemic.

In terms of economic growth, the only ray of hope for all the four quarters of FY 2020-21 was agriculture, forestry and fishing as the growth rate of this sector remained positive during all the quarters. The sector grew by 3.1 per cent during the fourth quarter (January-March). The growth rate of the industrial sector, which was 3.1 per cent in the third quarter (October-December), was 6.9 per cent in the fourth quarter (January-March). The construction sector grew by 6.5 per cent during the third quarter (October-December), 14.5 per cent in the fourth quarter (January-December). The performance of the trade, hotel, transport, communications and broadcasting sectors remained disappointing throughout FY2021. These sectors recorded a contraction of 7.9 per cent during the third quarter (October-December) and a decline of 2.3 per cent during the fourth quarter (January-March).

In technical terms, India was facing economic recession as the contraction in GDP in the first quarter (April-June) and the second quarter (July-September) was 24.4 per cent and 7.4 respectively. Due to the positive economic growth rate in the last two quarters of FY 2020-21, some institutions are estimating India's economic growth rate to be 8 to 10 per cent during FY 2021-22. With the onset of the second wave of the Coronavirus Pandemic in April 2021, with large numbers of people falling ill and dying and the lockdown in various parts of the country, it is hard to estimate the economic growth rate during FY 2021-22.

The rulers, corporations, and government economists propagate the concept of economic growth and economic development as one concept having the same meaning. However, they are two different concepts having different meanings. Economic growth reflects changes in the value

of goods and services produced and economic development reflects changes in the living standards of the people in the country. The government economists seem to be propagating beyond their capacity that economic growth always leads to economic development for the betterment of the people. This is often seen at a time when economic growth is accelerating, but unemployment and poverty are rising for the people, their consumption levels are falling and at the same time economic and other inequalities between the rich and the poor continue to grow. As a result, the living conditions of the common people are deteriorating. It is because of such a phenomenon that Senior Punjabi Journalist Sham Singh Ang-Sang uses the concept of vain economist for such economists. The Coronavirus Pandemic has made it clear that humans can survive without cars, banglows, aeroplanes, phones, and many other expensive items, but without food, their very existence is threat-



ened. In order to sustain human existence, it is necessary to have agriculture and its development. Agriculture in third world countries including India is a major source of livelihood as it provides employment and income to a large number of people as well as produces a variety of food items for all people living in any country.

About 50 per cent of India's population depends on agriculture for their livelihood, but they receive only about 16 per cent of the national income. Many research studies conducted in India have revealed the fact that a large number of marginal and small farmers, agricultural labourers, and rural small artisans in the country are born in debt and poverty, and live their hard life in debt and poverty, leaving behind a mountain of debt and abject poverty for the coming generations, they either die a death of deprivation or commit suicide when all hopes for their lives are dashed. Despite the fact that suicide is not the solution to any of life's problems, this tragic phenomenon continues in a state of despair. In general, the living standards of all the agriculturally dependent sections in the country from different angles are much lower than those of the upper middle income and the extremely rich people. Out of these categories, the condition

of marginal and small farmers, agricultural labourers, and rural small artisans is very poor. In general, the two rungs at the bottom of the ladder of agrarian economy- agricultural labourers and rural small artisans who are more prone to wear and tear and who are more likely to be hit on the thighs - are in a very pitiable condition because of their landlessness. These two categories have no means of production other than selling their labour. The ever-increasing use of machinery and herbicides as a result of the adoption of the 'new agricultural strategy' package adopted to meet the country's food needs in the late 1960s has drastically reduced the number of working days in the agricultural sector. The worst hit are agricultural labourers and rural small artisans. Due to the rapidly declining employment in the agricultural sector and non-availability of employment opportunities in the non-agricultural sectors, their income level is so low that they are compelled to borrow money to have two-times meals for

their mere survival. Due to their low income levels their unpaid loans turn into debt which causes numerous awkward and unbearable problems. Despite all these facts, the three Acts enacted by the Union Government in the field of agriculture would further aggravate the plight of all sections of the agricultural sector and the consumers in general. That is why for more than six months the country's farmers, rural labourers and other sections have been struggling in democratic and peaceful manners to repeal the three acts and legal guarantee of MSP of agricultural crops.

Various international organizations have released reports indicating an increase in the number of people living below the poverty line in different parts of the world due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. India alone has seen a 60 per cent increase in the number of people living below the poverty line. In general, people living below the poverty line are the informally employed workers. They make up about 93 per cent of India's total workforce. Migrant labourers among the informally employed workers in the country have been hit the hardest by the Coronavirus Pandemic. The scourge has shattered the false propaganda of 'Corporate Social Responsibility'.

Gota-Kinari looks good only if the Chadar (cloth sheet) on which it is attached is solid and strong. The kind of economic growth that has taken place in India since 1991 to the present day has shown that the Gota-Kinari (capitalist / corporate world)

has become much stronger, but the Chadar (the working people) has not only weakened and there are not only mines in it, but in it there have been huge mounds. Such a high economic growth rate can be compared to the phrase, 'let such gold be in the kiln that eats ears-Bhath Pia Sona Jihra Kanan Nu Khave'.

Economic and other inequalities have been increasing rapidly as a result of the adoption of corporate economic models around the world over the last 40-45 years. Even the international financial institutions, which are dominated by the capitalist / corporate world, are now beginning to believe that the eradication of poverty is necessary for the proper functioning of capitalism. American Nobel laureate in economics Joseph Stiglitz, eminent French economist Thomas Piketty and Democratic senators Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren of the United States of America are emphasising on public institutions to provide education, healthcare and some other services to improve people's lives. They are also advocating for increasing taxes on the rich people.

Our economic growth rate has to be marginally higher than our population growth rate so that we can reduce the economic and other inequalities in the country with the current economic growth rate and look after the interest of our future generations. In order to do so, it is necessary to adopt a pro-people and nature-friendly development model in the country. To do so, there is an urgent need to expand and develop the public sector and to monitor and regulate the private sector. The importance of the public sector can be gauged from the fact that on May 28, 2021, the Punjab and Haryana High Court, in hearing a petition against the privatization of electricity in the Union Territory, Chandigarh, virtually called in question the Central Government's policy of disinvestment by asserting that privatisation is not a panacea for all the ills. The High Court also added that the public sector undertakings were created by the Government of India to make a self-sufficient nation and to become the master of our own destiny. It is important to ensure that the taxes levied on the super rich are increased and collected. The pro-people and nature-friendly development model will be one in which the basic needs of the people - food, clothing, shelter, education, health care, clean environment, and social security - are met in a respectful manner.



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Lessons learned from Cyclone Yaas

On May 26, Cyclone Yaas from the Bay of Bengal hit the coast in Bhadrak district near the Bahanaga block north of Dhamra port of Odisha. This is the second cyclonic storm to hit the Indian coast in just a week. Cyclone Yaas with strong winds of 130-145 kmph has caused severe damage to buildings and houses in Odisha and West Bengal. Near the Dhamra port in Odisha, high sea waves and heavy rains have caused landslides and inundated low-lying areas. Many villages in Odisha's Balasore district were also flooded. A million people from Odisha and West Bengal have been evacuated. The cyclone has killed three people in Odisha and one in West Bengal. The cyclone has caused heavy rains in nine districts of Odisha. Heavy rains in Mayurbhanj district have caused floods in Budhabalanga river.

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has said that the state of West Bengal has been affected the most by the cyclone affecting one crore people in West Bengal and three lakh houses severely damaged by heavy rains and strong winds. Many areas in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas, Howrah, Hooghly, Kolkata, and Digha districts were submerged. Rising water levels in the Bay of Bengal and Hooghly river have caused flooding on Sagar island. Flights from Kolkata and Bhubaneswar airports were canceled on May 26. About 1,100 villages in West Bengal have been hit by the cyclone.

The southern part of India is surrounded on three sides by the sea. It is bounded on the east by the Bay of Bengal, on the west by the Arabian Sea, and on the south by the Indian Ocean. The total length of the coastal area is 7516.6 km and 10 states and 4 Union Territories are located in the coastal areas of the sea. These areas are home to 40 per cent of the country's population. According to an

IPCC report (November 2014), with the rise in temperature, the sea level has risen by 0.85 cm as compared to the pre-industrialization period. Many scientific research studies brought out the fact that rapidly increasing sea level and sea water temperature have resulted in the increasing number of cyclones. The obvious proof of this is before us. Recently May 17, Cyclone Tauktae wreaked havoc on India's west coast. The cyclone has killed at least 150 people and caused \$ 2.1 billion in damage.

Cyclonic storms are more frequent in the Bay of Bengal, affecting more than five states on the east coast (Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Andhra



Pradesh, Odisha, and West Bengal) and one union territory, Puducherry. India experiences an average of five cyclonic storms each year, and one severe cyclone occurs almost every decade. In November 1970, a devastating cyclone Bhola hit the Bay of Bengal, the deadliest cyclone in world history, occurred in the Bay of Bengal and killed at least half a million people in Bangladesh. The last super cyclone to hit India occurred in 1999 causing

nearly 10,000 deaths and heavy loss of property in Odisha. Indian government took action after a devastating tsunami in December 2004. It is pertinent to mention here that before that no Disaster Management Committee was constituted in India. After the tsunami hit in 2004, the Government of India only took action and set up National Disaster Management Force (NDRF), Disaster Management Committee (DRMC) and District Disaster Management Committees (DDMCs). Earlier, only troops were called in during any natural disaster. A tsunami alert center was also set up in India in 2007 to provide advance information about tsunamis

and earthquakes in the coastal region, but it closed a year later due to lack of funds.

Although the Tsunami alert center was not operational in India, the Indian Meteorological Department has made so much progress that since the onset of the cyclone's formation in the ocean, accurate information about its path, place of landfall and speed of winds in it is given to the concerned areas in time. Thousands of lives are now being saved through advance warning of cyclones given by the Meteorological Department, which is a very commendable step. Cyclone Yaas has killed only four people but more than 150 people have been killed in cyclone Tauktae on the west coast of India due to negligence on the part of the oil company as the company did not redirect the workers' boats to safe places despite having advance notice of the severity of the cyclone. The main cause of cyclonic storms in the Bay of Bengal is its geography. According to Bob Henson, meteorologist and writer with the Weather Underground Organization, the north coast of the Bay of Bengal is more prone to catastrophic surges than anywhere on earth. Its triangular shape and shallow water are responsible for the increasing number of natural disasters. When the sea water is pushed towards the Bay of Bengal by strong winds, a strong cyclonic storm is formed here. According to meteorologists, high sea surface temperature in the Bay of Bengal is also a major cause for strong cyclones. Ac-

ording to the meteorological department, the water temperature in the Bay of Bengal was 34 degree Celsius at the time of cyclone Yaas.

India's ocean has been warmer this year than usual. The warmer the ocean water, the more likely it is that a cyclone will form and increase the speed of the winds in it.

CNN meteorologist Padram Javeheri has said that the cyclone is causing heavy rains in northeastern India and Bangladesh due to the triangular shape of the Bay of Bengal. According to Sunil Amrith, 500 million people live in the coastal rim surrounding the world's largest bay. The region is also home to some of the world's most dangerous cyclonic storms. According to a list compiled by the Weather Underground Organization, 26 of the 35 deadliest tropical cyclones have occurred in the Bay of Bengal. Cyclone Yaas has also caused heavy rains in Jharkhand after wreaking havoc in Odisha and West Bengal, affecting eight lakh people. This cyclone spells double trouble for millions of people in the country as there is no respite from COVID-19.

Millions of lives have been saved due to early warning of cyclones and National Disaster Management Force which is a commendable initiative of Indian Meteorological Department and National Disaster Management Force. As the temperature rises, the number of cyclones and the depth of their impact increase rapidly each year. The Central and State Governments should take good care of the coastal vegetation to protect the coastal areas from cyclones as it is a natural disaster prevention. The governments should refrain from establishing industries and cities in the coastal areas because on one hand the establishment of industries and urbanization will result in deforestation and on the other the natural calamities will cause more financial loss. Increasing incidence of natural calamities like floods in 2015, drought in 2019 in Chennai, heavy rains in Kerala in 2018 and floods in Mumbai in 2015 and 2017 are warning us to be prepared for natural calamities.

To cope with natural disasters, we need to be friendly with nature and conserve our natural resources. We have to take great care of the vegetation and wetlands in the coastal areas. If we continue to destroy them at the current pace, we will face more natural disasters. That is why we have to adopt a pro-people and nature-friendly model of development.



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Change of Name

I Paramjot Singh

S/O Mohinder Singh

Resident of:

735 Bobcat Ln, Manteca,

CA-95336, USA

Now I have changed my name

From: Parmjot Singh

To: Paramjot Singh

All concerned kindly note it.



Sue Frost

Sacramento County Supervisor, District 4



Sue Frost

Alternate Response to 911 Calls

As we approach the budget cycle for the 2021/2022 fiscal year, I thought I would introduce a budget item that some may already be familiar with. In September of last year, the Board of Supervisors directed county staff to begin exploring the development of a mental health crisis response system (MHCRS). The purpose of the MHCRS is to provide urgent mental health resources to individuals in the midst of a mental health crisis. For too long in Sacramento County, and in jurisdictions throughout the country, the only re-

how these crisis calls would coexist with existing dispatch centers. We also needed to know if constituents would be able to access the MHCRS by calling a 3-digit number or a 10-digit number.

Staff returned to the board with an update and expanded proposal in March. The updated proposal addressed some of the Board's concerns and we were able to instruct staff on how we expected to prefer to move forward when the budget comes up in June. The reason this item is being discussed with the budget is, of course, the fact that it needs funding. What was presented to the board in March had a scale of three versions of the MHCRS ranging in initial cost from \$6.2 million to \$10.7 million. Given that the Board's preference is for a system that operates countywide, 24 hours a day and seven days a week with a standalone call center, the higher projected cost is what will have to be met. The \$10.7 million also includes the expansion of the mental health urgent care center to ensure that individuals contacted by the newly formed mobile response teams can be taken somewhere for safe treatment.

Fortunately, there may be some relief for the county to cover the cost. Funds the County receives from the American Rescue Plan via the Federal Government may allow the county to be reimbursed for the cost of the mobile response team composed of a mental health professional and a peer support specialist. Beyond funding, a few other specifics remain to be finalized. For instance, county staff will need to determine what phone number will connect calls to the MHCRS. Unfortunately, all the x11 (i.e. 311, 211, etc.) 3-digit numbers are in use and a 10-digit number seems too long for an emergency situation. What may happen is an initial triaging of calls through 911 dispatch centers until the county may secure the ability to use 988 for the system which is the line proposed at the federal level for these types of programs.

Sacramento County is not the first municipality to go down this path. Our county staff looked at programs like "CAHOOTS" in Eugene, Oregon and the STAR Program in Denver, Colorado. All of these programs have seen great success in reducing incarceration and other, more severe outcomes for people in crisis. What I ultimately want for this program is for our communities to be safe for those struggling with mental health issues, for the mental health professionals who sign up to respond to these calls, and for our communities as a whole. Sacramento County

is on the path to achieving this and I look forward to finalizing this program during the budget process in June.

Assisted Outpatient Treatment



Great news! Today the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to approve "Laura's Law" (AKA Assisted Outpatient Treatment).

This new ordinance will allow the courts to order certain individuals (age 18 years or older) who have serious mental illness and who meet very specific criteria to comply with outpatient treatment with intense services for a specified period. It also allows the courts to commit the mental health system to providing the treatment.

I have heard from a large number of constituents who feel that there are a growing number of individuals living in the community who are either a danger to themselves, or a danger to others due to their mental health struggles, and this will allow Sacramento County to help these people earlier, without needing to send them to emergency care or jail.

In Nevada County, the implementation of Laura's Law resulted in a 47% improvement in hospitalizations, a 65% reduction in incarcerations, and a 62% reduction in homelessness, from people with mental health crisis.

I'm so pleased that Sacramento County chose to implement this, and look forward to reporting back how things are going.

Redistricting Begins in Sacramento County

The process for re-drawing boundary lines for each of the five supervisorial districts in Sacramento County has begun.



What is Redistricting?

Every ten years, following the Census count, the resulting census data is used to geographically define elec-

toral 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 will look different this year than in years past. This year, the County will comply with the Fair Maps Act, which revised the criteria and process used by counties and cities when they adjust electoral district boundaries. The Fair Maps Act intends to maximize public participation and increase transparency in the redistricting process by requiring substantial public hearing and outreach requirements for adjusting district boundaries.

To that end, Sacramento County's Redistricting 2021 webpage is live and will be a vital resource for County residents to learn more about redistricting, the importance of public participation in redistricting and how to participate in the process.

The website also includes current district and other important Sacramento County maps for reference, as well as past and future meetings/hearings, FAQs, and an explanation of the Sacramento County Redistricting Process (with printouts of the process available in ten languages).

Why is Redistricting important, and how can I participate?

Redistricting is important because it determines which neighborhoods and communities will be grouped together for the purposes of electing a Board member. Residents have the opportunity to provide input on what kind of boundaries should be drawn to best represent their community. Redistricting is based on the idea of "one person, one vote" which makes sure all people can be represented fairly, and how district lines are drawn influences who is elected.

Sacramento County residents are encouraged to participate in the redistricting process. Residents can sign up for Redistricting news stories, information and upcoming meetings via email or text. People can also view past and upcoming meetings at the Redistricting Meetings webpage and are encouraged to check in for additional upcoming workshops and hearings.

What's next?

The Board of Supervisors will work directly with County staff and redistricting consultants to engage the public through workshops, hearings, community meetings, mapping tools and public

(Contd. on next page)



sponse for those in crisis has been law enforcement. There seems to be a consensus, even among law enforcement, that status quo for mental health response needs to change.

One of the main issues is that in a mental health crisis, law enforcement lacks the training for a safe assessment and intervention and a trained professional can have a better impact. In Sacramento County, we have seen many successes with our Mobile Crisis Support teams (MCSTs) which are composed of a mental health professional and a law enforcement officer. However, even MCSTs are not right for all situations as the presence of law enforcement may escalate the crisis already occurring in the individual's mind. In either scenario, the potential for harm to the person in crisis increases and any time it is possible, we want the risk to innocent lives reduced.

After several months of preparation and an outstanding amount of community input, county staff came to the board with a proposal in February. While the proposal that came forward was an excellent start, my colleagues and I had some concerns. For one thing, the pilot project proposed would only run five days a week between 9:00 am and 6:00 pm. Additionally, I had concerns that while there was ample community input, law enforcement did not appear to have been adequately consulted with. While we knew that the Sheriff had been involved, I wanted the various cities with individual police departments, like Citrus Heights, to provide input. Mostly, this was important because we wanted to know

My Fellow-Bootan Mandian – Umesh Mahey (Sunny) – Hidden Talent

On May 24, Umesh Mahey, my nephew- son of my younger brother Paramjit Mahey, whom we call Sunny in the family, became a celebrity in a few hours. He released his maiden song – IBADAT - on Youtube and other related social media vehicles and the public response was heart-warming as the beautifully sung and presented song became viral instantly. Many of us did not know that Sunny, an unassuming young man, was such a latent and hidden talent. Kudos to Sunny and his team and congratulations to the proud parents Savita and Paramjit Mahey.

Listening to the song, sung beautifully by Sunny and written thoughtfully by yet another budding talent Satnam Argawal, I was reminded an Urdu couplet:

तू पहले बात; फरि बात का अंदाज़ पैदा कर ,
फरि दुनिया में तुझे कोई नज़र अंदाज़ क
नहीं सकता

I heard Sunny doing Kirtan of Gurbani at various family functions occasionally and singing popular numbers on Karaoke at our residence over the relaxed family get-togethers. Now to earn his bread and butter,

Sunny was diligently engaged in his business initiatives and rightly so. But it is a matter of satisfaction that at the back of his mind he was nurturing



his musical aspirations. He proved himself and deserved all due appreciation and encouragement in pursuing his musical interests.

I spoke to Sunny and Paramjit to know more about Sunny's involve-

ment in this lofty activity of music. It was happy to note that Sunny was initiated to music by our uncle, Chacha Jai Ram, himself a poet and singer of sorts, under the expert training of Master Girdhari Lal of Bootan Mandi who belonged to the genre of renowned Sufi-singer Bibi Nooran when Sunny was in his teens. He



showed promise and his father Paramjit, who himself nurtured some interest in writing spiritual poetry and songs, fully supported Sunny and was placed and enrolled in the Shagirdgi (studentship/disciple) of a living legend of classical music, Sujit Singh Samundar of Jalandhar. Ustad Samundar Sahib honed the raw talent of Sunny into a budding vocalist.

Since 2013, Sunny said that he was still a student under the wings of his Guru Ustad Sujit Singh Samundar ji. In the run up to the first sound



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

track – Ibadat – Sunny was a much sought after performer in his college days at CT College Jalandhar and won many awards and recognitions.

I quote Allama Iqbal with all the best wishes to express my fore-sight about the coming phase of Sunny's journey to further success: -

परदों में जो पनिका है चक्षु मे वीना देख लेती है,
ज़माने की तबीयत का तकाजा देख लेती है।

I am confident that Sunny would not lower his guard and keep himself on track for further glory in the days to come as famous English poet Robert Frost said:

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

(Continue from page 5)

outreach to complete the redistricting requirements and adopt new boundaries. Sacramento County will schedule public workshops in all five supervisorial districts, virtual workshops, and Board of Supervisors presentations about redistricting, the process, mapping tools and other information beginning in June and running through the rest of the year.

The County will receive 2020 Census data from the state as early as September 30, 2021. The original plan was to deliver the data to states on or before March 31, 2021; however, COVID-19 significantly impacted Census operations which caused the nearly six-month delay in data delivery.

The County must adopt final maps no later than December 15, 2021, which means the County will have approximately six weeks to complete its redistricting work—a very compressed timeframe.

Timeline for Redistricting Work

May-September 2021: Hold public hearings and community workshops about the Redistricting, the process, mapping tools tutorials and other redistricting information.

October-November 2021: Draft map preparation and review

November-December 2021: Map adoption.

Nov. 17: First reading of County ordinance adopting final district maps.

Dec. 7: Second reading of County ordinance adopting final district maps.

Welcome Back to SMF, We're

Excited to See You!

As California opens up and people begin to travel again, things may look a little different at the Sacramento International Airport (SMF).

SMF has enhanced its health and safety measures over the last year and passengers will notice some changes, but they're all designed to make your time in the airport as safe and comfortable as possible.

Here are a few tips that will help make your trip seamless:

General

Passengers will notice counter sneeze guards, social dis-



tancing signage, many hand sanitizer stations and employees in face masks. Passengers should minimize touchpoints and are encouraged to use touchless options, like online check-in, mobile boarding passes, prepayment of bag fees, etc.

Federal law requires that passengers wear face masks at all times in the airport to prevent the spread of infection. Without one, passengers may be removed and denied re-entry to the airport.

Parking & Ground Transportation

The East Economy Lot is currently open on a first-come, first-serve basis. Shuttles are operational.

Parking is still available in the Daily Lot for a rate of \$12 per day. The Hourly Lot located across from Terminal B is still \$29 per day. Customers are encouraged to check our website for up to the minute parking availability and additional information.

Cash is no longer accepted at parking lot cashier booths in all parking lots at SMF. Customers who want to pay with cash will need to pay prior to returning to their car at specifically designated pay-on-foot self-service kiosks in the parking garage and outside Door 1 at Terminal B. The airport has installed social distancing signage in areas where passengers wait for pick-up, taxis, rental car shuttles and ride hailing apps.

Security Checkpoints

In an effort to be as contactless as possible, passengers will scan their own boarding passes and not hand them over to TSA employees.

Liquids still must be in 3.4 ounce or smaller containers with the exception of hand sanitizer, which can be in a 12-ounce container. It must be removed from baggage before it goes through the X-ray and will be screened separately. If passengers bring their own meal or snacks for their flight, they should be placed in a clear plastic bag, in a separate tray from their luggage, for scanning.

TSA recommends that all personal items (keys, phones, wallets, etc.) should be placed in carry-on bags instead of directly in the bins, to avoid contamination. Travelers can visit the TSA website for more information.

Arrive Early

The airport is also encourag-

ing travelers to arrive at least two hours before their scheduled departure time to accommodate for any unforeseen delays before boarding.

Dining and Shopping

Some retail shops and restaurants at the airport have reduced their seating capacity, limited their hours or closed until further notice. For an updated list of operating hours, please visit our website.

International Travel

The CDC issued an order requiring all air passengers arriving to the United States from a foreign country to get tested no more than three days before their flight departs and to provide proof of the negative result or documentation of having recovered from COVID-19 to the airline before boarding the flight. For more information, visit the CDC website.

COVID-19 Testing

SMF has also made it easier for travelers to get free COVID-19 testing through a partnership with CityHealth Urgent Care. Testing takes place daily at one of the airport's parking lots and meets Hawaii's more restrictive travel requirements. For more information on safe travel during the COVID-19 pandemic, visit sacramento.aero.

CONTACT INFO:

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Special on 'World No Tobacco Day'

If you have true mind, confidence in yourself, determination, you can quit tobacco and smoking: Uday Randev

Every year on May 31, * No Tobacco Day * means World No Tobacco Day is observed all over the world. To celebrate this day, a special theme is also kept every year and this year i.e. in 2021 its theme is 'Commit to Quit'.

The World Health Organization started No Tobacco Day in 1987. In the same year, it was considered an epidemic in view of the increase in deaths due to tobacco use. After this, it was celebrated for the first time on 7 April 1988 on the anniversary of World Health Organization and since then May 31 is celebrated as World Tobacco Prohibition Day every year.

an objective

The purpose of celebrating this day is to make people aware to ban or reduce the use of tobacco or its products so that people's health is good and they should not only listen or read the lines like 'Smoking is injurious to health'. Adopt it as well.

Tobacco diseases

Its use causes serious health problems like cancer, severe heart disease, dental disease.

The purpose of celebrating World Tobacco Prohibition Day around the world is to create health conscious and motivate people to stay away from things that harm health. This is the reason that many campaigns on the occasion of World Tobacco Day are made aware of the

harm caused by the consumption of tobacco and the fatal effects on its body. The deadly corona virus is damaging our lungs and leading us to death, despair, then it becomes even more important that we take some important steps to maintain our health.

In such a situation, some natural ways can be helpful for you to quit tobacco/smoking to lead a healthy life-

Strong will required



Among tobacco users, the desire to smoke is very strong, so when someone decides to quit, first of all you should prepare yourself for this and stick to the fact that you have water to quit smoking. In this case, your strong will will be helpful. The stronger the will, the easier it will be to reach the goal. Do not change your decision and persevere with it.

Set a date

Once the mind has decided to quit, the next step is to set a date. Set a date when you will completely

get rid of the habit of smoking. For example, a person who is very much a smoker is two months away. May set the date. Reduce the number of cigarettes every day or within a certain number of days and keep the number of cigarettes to a minimum or zero until the last week. Setting a day to be completely free from import will make the person slowly Will help reduce smoking and reach the goal in an organized manner.

Choose option

Smokers often feel a strong urge to chew something in their mouth while trying to quit smoking, so you can keep a bowl of salad with you to chew. Chewing gum can also be taken. Apart from this, chewing cardamom or fennel also helps in fighting the urge to smoke.

Create support system

Instead of struggling on your own, build a support system around you. At the moment your family or friends can help you stay away from the habit of smoking. Their constant

reminders can be an inspiration to avoid. , Will also help in staying upbeat. If your addiction is severe, you can also seek the help of a professional or support group.

These methods will be helpful

The desire to smoke often stresses when stressed. So when you are under stress, try to adopt natural calming techniques like deep breathing, massage, meditation, listening to calming music or closing your eyes for a while. In the meantime, a walk would also be better.

Keep yourself busy

It is very important to stay busy to avoid smoking addiction. So start your day in a way that starts with breakfast, workout, meditation and then work. Apart from this, engage yourself in activities of your choice like reading, gardening etc., so that the urge to smoke can be avoided. Apart from this, if you are in isolation at home, you can make new dishes or watch Motivational videos.

Do like this

Try to avoid smoking at all levels. For example, if you have a habit of smoking while reading a newspaper, you can instead make a habit of holding a pen in your hand. To avoid this, keep yourself busy at all times. Try and try to get rid of this habit by doing it slowly.

All these will encourage us to live a healthy life and our mind will also remain cheerful.



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Ishwar Das Pawar
District and Sessions Judge (retd.)

My Struggle in Life

The DAV High School, Una

There was yet another ordeal. I came home.

fault of ours. The admission of untouchable boys in the school would have posed a challenge to the purity and sanctity of the oldest civilization and the dharma, which had for centuries condemned our people as untouchables. Therefore, if the students and the members of the staff were prohibited from coming into contact with the untouchables because this would be sacrilegious. How could we be admitted to the school? They saved their dharma by refusing us admission in the school.

Then what's next? Somebody, I do not remember who he was, advised us to try out luck with the Arya school, which had that very year been upgraded to a high school and had started the ninth class. Also starting there were the senior classes. We did not know what kind the Arya Samaj or the DAV Institutions were. But we had to try there too. However, we were quite apprehensive about meeting the same fate at the hands of the management of the Arya school as well.

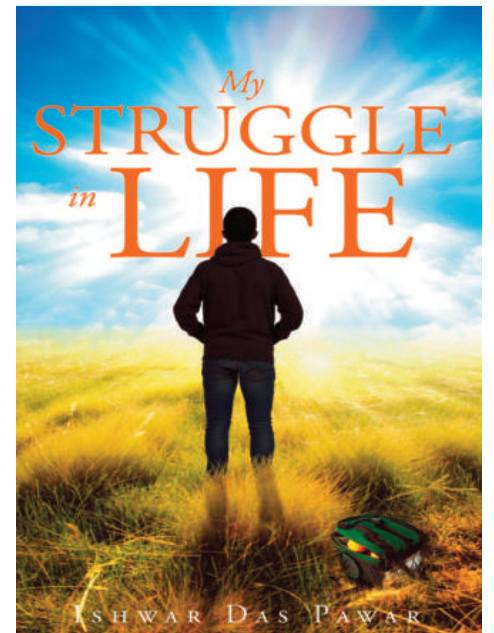
We wended our way to the Arya school which was situated beyond the wide khud (ravine), which bounded the town on the southeast side. We reached the school with faint and subdued hopes. There we met one Ved Prakash, who was said to be the principal of the school. He was attired like a true Indian in kurta pajama (long shirt and loose trousers), and pagree (turban) and wearing desi (of local style) shoes besides glittering golden earrings. His voice had a pleasing, ringing, and whistling element in it. He was soft spoken and ideally unassuming. We shared our problem with him. Very unexpectedly, he did not take any time to accede to our request. He also observed that our admission in the school would be in fulfillment of the mission of the Arya Samaj as enjoined by its founder Swami Dayanand. We heard the name of Swami Dayanand for the first time. This made us jubilant; we were being allowed admission in a school which suited us well.

No member of the staff had raised any objection. But soon after, it became clear that by our admission, the school had purchased trouble for itself. Most of the students of the school were not of Samaji views. They belonged to orthodox Hindu families. Next day, practically all the students except those who belonged to the Arya Samaji (person belonging to Arya Samaj "noble society," a Hindu reform movement founded by Swami Dayananda in 1875) families, kept away from the school. They did not like to study in a school where untouchable students would be sitting in the same classroom in their very proximity. The school bore a deserted look. This posed a ticklish problem. How would the school run without sufficient number of students? There was already a tussle, a rivalry about the students between

the Arya School and the Sanatan Dharma School. It was a serious situation indeed! The management and the staff held a meeting where it was decided not to yield and that, in case it became necessary, the school would be run for the two untouchable boys even if all the other students left the school on this issue. It was also placed on record that the mission of the Arya Samaj would not be sacrificed for a temporary gain. It was a very bold decision.

It caused considerable commotion in the Hindu circles. Something unprecedented and unimaginable had happened. "If educational institutions could be defiled like that, who would like to remain there?" they murmured. There were grumblings and rumblings all around. But the school authorities stood firm. The situation continued to be tense for some days. The stir did not, however, go beyond certain limits. The school had lost its humming atmosphere. Then came the anticlimax. After a few days, some students, though small in number, came back. During the following days, the trek back to the school continued and, slowly but surely, picked up.

In two to three weeks, practically all the students who had left in a huff came back, and the school got back its lost hustle and bustle. Everybody heaved a sigh of relief. The mission of the Arya Samaj had been vindicated, and the school was also saved. And it got back to normalcy. The anger and displeasure of most of the students, however, continued showing. All the students, except a few belonging to the ardent and faithful Arya Samaji families, shunned us. They would not sit close to us and even on the same wooden benches. My brother and I were in different classes. But the pattern of behavior from the students of our respective classes was naturally the same. Sometimes, I would occupy the whole bench as no other boy would dare sit near me. But gradually, their stiff attitude started softening. By and by, it dawned on them that our presence or nearness was not that dreadful. The change in their attitude was to some extent due to our patient bearing of the brunt of their uncalled for and unprovoked anger. It may also be mentioned that the behavior and attitude of the staff on the whole was sympathetic. But it would be wrong to say that all of them were that happy. Some of them in the main shared the views of the orthodox Sanatanists. But that was not of much importance. The Arya Samaji element dominated. I was admitted to the sixth class. I had Urdu as one of my subjects. But in this school, Urdu was not taught. Hindi was the subject instead. So I had no option in this matter. But my weak point in regard to Hindi was that I did not know anything about it, and as a matter of fact, I had not heard the word Hindi



before. I had been in Christian schools so far. Now for me, this subject was unavoidable. Master Dhani Ram was our Hindi teacher. As suggested by him, all of us purchased the Hindi book prescribed for the class. I did not disclose that I was a complete stranger to Hindi, which was no better than Greek to me. It was quite a voluminous book, and its language was sufficiently advanced, commensurate with the standard prescribed for the sixth class. Propaganda and development of Hindi was like a pious duty for the Arya Samaj. For them, this language is the gateway to Hindu religion, civilization, and culture. The reason was obvious though not known to me at that time. For the Arya Samaj, it was a national necessity. At the end of the period, the Hindi teacher gave us a paragraph from the book to be copied out in the exercise book and shown to him the next day. I did not and could not note the particulars of the passage as I could not locate it. On coming out of the classroom, I asked a classmate of mine to help me locate and mark the paragraph, which he did. I had never seen before even the alphabet of Hindi. Therefore, the question of my reading the passage did not arise. But the copied passage was to be shown to the teacher the next day. I was in a fix. I did not like to tell the teacher that I did not know Hindi at all. What to do? I then decided to copy the passage in a blind way.

Every letter, its shape and construction, had to be copied with the utmost care. It took me quite a time to accomplish the assigned job knowing little what it was. Was it a fraud to do so? This question apart, it was an honest effort on my part to do my homework.

The next day was the day of trial. My heart throbbed. I feared my device would be detected. We stood up with the exercise books in our hands, showing the copied passage. One by one, the teacher looked at the homework, and my turn came in due course. I showed my exercise book with the copied passage. He took the exercise book from me though he had not taken the exercise book of any other student. I thought I was caught. I trembled in my heart and felt very jittery. I could not think what explanation I could give. The only alternative for me was to disclose what I wanted to keep a secret. A student of sixth class was expected to know

(Contd. on next page)

Going back to the Ludhiana school was out of the question. In the middle of the winter, Sohan Lal and Mohan Lal, sons of Babu Moti Lal, a Christian missionary stationed at Garhshankar, and I were sent back home to bring the amount required for the school and boarding house dues already payable and for the rest of the academic year dues before we would be permitted to take the forthcoming annual examination.

I was, in addition, required to bring woolen clothes as well. This put us on the horns of a dilemma. The school and the boarding house expenses were moderate and reasonable, but it involved the question of the capacity of the payee to meet them. We were doubly burdened. The family had no money, but the payment had to be made. It was after strenuous efforts that the required money could be raised as loan. Any future burden of that kind had to be avoided as a matter of unavoidable necessity. The question for living in a boarding house must be eliminated, and that was possible only if we could get admission in a school within a reasonable distance from home. So we set out in search of a school at Una. This town is about five miles from our village of Dehlan. One could shuttle between the village and the school daily.

We had heard that at Una there was the Sanatan Dharma High School and the only one to our knowledge. For the pursuit of further studies my father took me and my brother to Una, a distance of fourteen miles from our new village, Naangran, where the family had partly moved some time ago. We had reached the place a bit earlier than the opening time of the school and sat on a vacant site between the school building and the sub-judge's court and the tehsil (county) buildings. A short time thereafter, a middle-aged teacher, well-built and well-dressed, passed by us and went toward the school. My father inquired of him whether we would be admitted in the school. He felt very diffidently but advised us to see the headmaster in that connection. Saying so, he went into the school premises. After the school had started operating, we went in to see the headmaster. We told him that we were untouchables, and that fact had to be disclosed as it was the crux of the difficulty. He heard us and firmly but politely said that the school being a Sanatan Dharma institution, untouchables could not be admitted. This reply was not wholly unexpected, but we had at the same time not lost all hope.

Therefore, an attempt was made, though it failed, but through no

My Struggle in Life

(Continue from page 8)

quite a lot of Hindi. The situation seemed difficult to face. At the end of having seen the homework of all the students, the teacher showed my homework to the class, commending how homework should be done neat and clean. I rubbed my eyes; I could not believe what the teacher had said. It was like a dream, but it turned out to be a reality. Nature came to my rescue.

I started learning Hindi in right earnest, seeking help from anybody and everybody. My progress in this regard was quite rapid. With the passing of every day, the complex due to lack of knowledge of the subject started fading away. I had acquired sufficient working knowledge of the language. This also put a lid on the fraud, and it laid buried deep, forever.

The first quarterly house examination approached. Our drillmaster, Thakur Prithvi Singh, an ex-serviceman who belonged to the neighboring village Malahat, was supervising the examinees in our room. He was moving about. A couple of times I noted that he stopped a little by my side and then moved on. That made me suspicious. I was not indulging in copying. Why should he supervise me so closely? It was the combined paper of geometry and algebra. To my astonishment, he took my answer book to the headmaster who was sitting in the office. I accompanied him. A mysterious move! He showed the answer book to the headmaster with the observation, "This is how a sixth class student is answering the paper, beautifully."

They looked very happy. I was obviously overjoyed to find my work done on the answer book being appreciated. The results of the house examination were announced in a few days. I had acquitted myself quite well in all the papers except that of Hindi in which I passed but not very creditably. I had, however, done very badly in the upadesh (religious instructions) paper. I got only 27 marks out of the total of 100 marks and thus failed. Why did I do so badly in this paper while I did quite well in other papers and passed in Hindi, which I had only just started learning? Two questions of the paper led me to this disaster. The first one was on writing an essay on Swami Dayanand, and the second one required an answer as to how many Vedas (the oldest scriptures of Hinduism) there were, what were their names, and who were their authors? Very unusual and unexpected questions. I had heard the name of Swami Dayanand only after coming to this school and did not know practically anything about him. The Vedas and their authors! I knew something about Jesus Christ and the Bible, and I had also won a prize for my "faithful work in Bible." I had been in Christian schools throughout before joining this school. I knew nothing about the Vedas or their authors and had not even heard these names. Therefore, I failed in the paper on religious instructions.

My case was considered by the staff. They held the view that it would not be proper to declare me failed in view of my good performance in all the other papers. They therefore very kindly gave me six grace marks, and I was declared passed. Thus, I was made aware of another weakness in my way, and I started making up for my deficiency. I learnt about these matters by reading some small books on the subject. All this was new to me; therefore, it aroused my interest to know the new things. I was quite fond of studying. It also made me conscious of the fact that, in the field of religion, there was something else also besides Jesus Christ and the Bible. I belonged to an illiterate family of untouchables. It was an environment where complete ignorance prevailed. People were given to superstition, and there were no prospects of acquiring any true knowledge. The names of Rama and Krishna, Ramayana (a great Hindu epic) and Mahabharata (a great Hindu epic) were never heard. We untouchables were meticulously kept away from the pale of knowledge and civilization, whatever it was. That was no fault of ours. Society was that way and is still hugging the old ideas and outmoded ways of life.

I will here say a few words about the second quarterly house examination and that too was only about the paper on religious instructions. In this paper, one of the questions again was an essay on Swami Dayanand. This great Hindu reformer was the founder of the Arya Samaj, and therefore, he was a passion with them and still continues to be. So I wrote an essay on him and finished the paper in two hours, i.e., one hour before the time allowed. During this period of one hour, I wrote one page more on Swami Dayanand in the rustic form of poetry. This question carried 15 marks. The paper examiner awarded me all the 15 marks for this essay. As he said, he felt like giving me more marks, but it was not permissible. I continued making steady progress all around as time passed. I was doing well with my studies. This was evident from the results of house examinations.

Teachers started taking interest in me and formed a good opinion about my work and conduct. Master Wazir Chand, who was a life member of the Arya Samaj, took over as headmaster on coming back after successfully completing the teachers' training course. He developed a special liking for me. In view of my position in the class, I was made monitor of the class. The very congenial and hopeful environment thus created became a source of great encouragement. I continued with sustained progress in my studies. I passed my sixth and seventh classes and was now in the eighth class.

The eighth class demanded more arduous work as the annual examination was to be conducted by the DAV Schools Examination Board. An outsider examiner would not be so

kind to me. I would get marks strictly on my performance in the examination. So I had to put in more labor to strengthen my position. The annual examination came and was over. The result was quite good. I stood second in the district while the first position was claimed by one Mast Ram, a student of the Hariana (Hoshiarpur) school. He was awarded a monthly stipend of Rs 6, and I got a stipend of Rs 4 a month for two years. This was not only an encouragement but also a substantial financial help.

This took me to the ninth class. That year, a sad incident took place. There was an acute rivalry between our school and the Sanatan Dharma School. Except for the two pucca (built with bricks and cement) rooms, the built part of our school consisted of thatched rooms. One day, early in the morning, some unidentified person set fire to the school building. All the thatched rooms were completely gutted and destroyed, and along with them went the school furniture that was there. It was a big loss. The management, the staff, and the students stood there in the morning with grim, sad, and drawn faces.

A great damage had been done to a poor school and that too at the very outset of its upgrade. They soon gathered courage and braced to face a virtual calamity. By and by, the destroyed part of the building was reconstructed. Everybody responded generously. The headmaster stole a march over others by reducing his pay and bringing it down to the lowest level of mere subsistence. The bright side of the sad incident was that it generated abundant enthusiasm among those connected with the school, and all contributed their mite to their best. We started afresh.

I will be failing in my duty if I miss to record a few words about our headmaster, Shri Wazir Chand, a simple and unassuming saintly person following the principle of simple living and high thinking. Though belonging to a Brahman family of the backward ilaqa (area) of the tehsil, he did not, in practice, believe in the caste system. Not only that, he treated Muslim students as he treated others—there was absolutely no discrimination. He was a devoted and selfless Arya Samaji in the real sense of the term. This can be judged from the fact that he, along with all the other members of his family, were boycotted by the village community on the ground that they were mixing with the untouchables and were also fighting for their right to draw water from the village common well. On this question there had been some skirmishes also, but they faced the situation with courage and determination. Master Wazir Chand has been an embodiment of sacrifice and selfless service. A man of versatile talent, he could teach any subject to any class. In the matter of discipline, however, he was quite strict. He had identified and completely associated himself with the school, and it was difficult to think of

the school without him.

For me, he was not only a source of inspiration but also of positive help in every way. If my spectacles came from Lahore by post, it was he who would pay for them in the first instance, and if I needed any other help, he was always there. An incident comes to my mind in this context. I was not paying my school dues regularly every month with the idea that the same would be defrayed out of the amount of the stipend when received. I was allowed this concession of the relaxation of the rules. After sometime, stipend for five months amounting to Rs 20 was received through the headmaster.

After school hours, he called me to the office to settle the account. The dues when worked out were found to be in excess of the amount of the stipend received. He laughed, saying, "What will you get out of the stipend?" I had nothing to say. It was a matter of calculations. He started thinking and making alterations in the items of the outstanding dues against me. By a process of computation and permutation, he brought down the figure of the dues to Rs 16. He gave me Rs 4 out of the stipend with the observation, "You should also feel that you are getting a stipend." How good and kind of him. I not only gratefully remember this act of goodness on his part but have narrated it to a number of friends on various occasions. This is only one example of the many good acts he did to me. An unforgettable event in life! He has since gone back to lands unknown. Sita Ram, who comes from a well-known Khatri family of our village, had been very nice to me. He was ahead of me by one class.

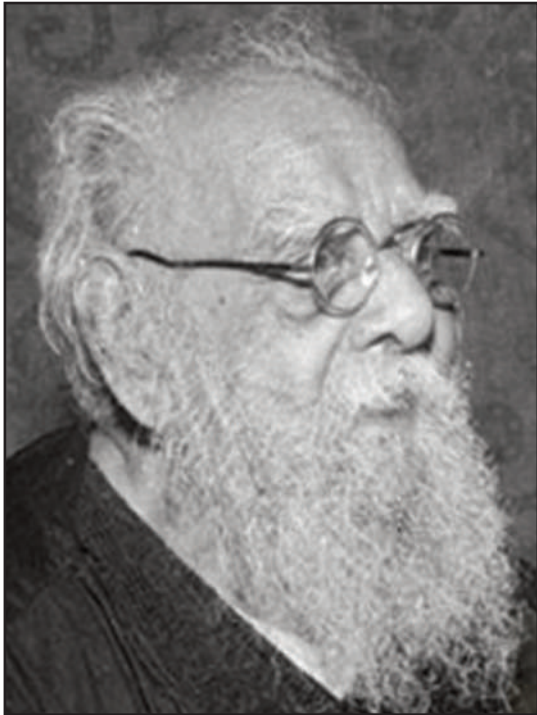
Bhagat Ram of the adjoining village Basdehra and Sita Ram, the two top-most students of their class, were running a neck-and-neck race for the first position in the class. Sita Ram and his elder brother Chint Ram were among the large number of boys of our village who used to shuttle on foot between the village and the school, covering a distance of ten miles (sixteen kilometers) every day. Their brother Babu Ram, the head of the family, was known for his good and helpful nature. Sita Ram used to give me his class books of the classes he had passed free of cost. In those days, the usual practice was to sell spare books to booksellers who, in turn, would resell them to students who could not afford to purchase new ones. He would also give me the class notes he had prepared, and these were of great help to me. The memory of the generosity of Sita Ram continues to be very much alive in me even today. It was undoubtedly a substantial help to me even in terms of financial gain. After his studies, Sita Ram took the celebrated profession of journalism where he has made a mark.

With the exception of geography, I was good in all the other subjects. But in geography too, I never
(Contd. on next page)

REMEMBERING DALIT SAVIOURS

Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, E.V. Ramasamy Naicker (Periyar), Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Narayan Swami Guru, Achutananda, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia are among the fore-

runners of Dalit saviors who devoted their entire lives for the emancipation and empowerment of the downtrodden. During their lifetimes they had to struggle very hard to articulate as well as build a 'counter public' for reclaiming the long lost Dalit space.



Braving untold sufferings and persistent opposition from all the possible quarters, they remained steadfast in their mission to prepare a solid base for grooming the cause of the community. Despite the innumerable hardships, they succeeded in their bold endeavours to pave the way for Dalit liberation leading to 'equality, liberty, fraternity'. Of late their struggle as well as vision/philosophy started getting recognition even in the political



circles of their opponents. Almost all of them now feel proud of owning/appropriating them as and when they deem so fit. The recent praises showered on Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar by almost all the main-stream political forces in India is a case in point. Year-long preparation by the ruling as well as opposition parties for the celebration of his 130th Birth anniversary are being reported in almost all the national newspapers.

During the 1920s, a large number of Adi movements took roots in different parts of India. Ad Dharm movement of Punjab is one of them.

It born in the background of series of political developments in the region. It was founded and led by Great Gadarite Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, who wanted that his people

contested provincial assembly elections and pleaded meticulously for the rights of his people at all the platforms available during his struggle.

Now when all the major political



parties in India are promising to follow and implement the thinking of Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, it would be in fitness of things that the Punjab government should rename one of the coming up institutes of higher education in the state after the name of B a b u

Mangu Ram Mugowalia who was among the pioneers of the Dalit freedom fighters, founders of Dalit movement in Punjab, visionaries and educationists in the state on the occasion of 95th anniversary of first annual convention of the Ad Dharm movement held on June 11-12, 1926.

Prem K. Chumber
Editor-in-Chief:

www.ambedkartimes.com

My Struggle in Life

(Continue from page 9)

did so badly. There were three top students in our class—Tek Chand Syal, Dalip Singh, and myself.

I had been scoring high continuously. There was a sort of race among us three. Tek Chand Syal and Dalip Singh were students with keen intellect and sound judgment. Tek Chand was also gifted with the additional quality of having a poetic bent of mind. Both of them embodied real qualities of head and heart. It will be just meet and proper to record that all of us were on very good terms. No rivalry, no ill-will. We loved and respected one another.

My brother and I lived in village Dehlan and used to go to school daily from there. A short statement of this part of the story has already been given. But for a period of about two months immediately preceding the matriculation examination, I joined the boarding house. There was not enough accommodation for all the boarders in the boarding house. Some of them, including myself, were therefore accommodated in the schoolrooms. We would roll up our bedding and other articles in the morning to make room for the classes to be held there and would unroll them for the night. There was some difficulty in my taking the food. The

cooks and other kitchen servants belonged to the nearby villages, and they were not agreeable to my taking food in the kitchen along with the other boarders. But there was no idea of creating a fuss over it as my stay there was only temporary and very short and also because the examination was at the threshold. To bridge over this difficulty, my coboarders would bring food for me, and generally, it was my close friend Dev Raj who did me the favor of this service. I remember him every time. Another good friend of mine whose name comes to my mind was Durga Das.

Both Dev Raj and Durga Das were Brahmans. Alas! Durga Das is no more. He died very prematurely after attaining a big position in the Arya Samaj and the business community of Pune.

The high classes started with an eye on the university examination. So far, it had been a matter of house examinations, and we knew only our little world of fellow students. The university examination would expose us to a much wider world of scholars and would confront us with the brilliant element of the students of the entire province, a very big province. The staff of the school was also conscious of the results to be obtained as it had to build the image of the

school, justifying its existence, as it was in its infancy. Therefore, evening classes were also started, and in those good old days, the practice of charging extra fee for such classes was conspicuous by its absence. There were quite a good number of students who took their studies seriously.

The work of the school in regard to the tenth class got in full swing. We fully cooperated with the staff who worked for our welfare.

The courses were completed, and their revision too was done. About a month and a half before the examination, we got preparatory holidays. For me, remaining in the village would have been a distinct disadvantage as I would not have the opportunity and facility of help and the guidance of the staff. Therefore, I joined the boarding house for the rest of the period.

I have never been an early riser. But for me, daytime was enough for studies. Along with some other students, I would retire into some secluded place in the Rakkar (hillock) area about a mile away from the school, a place of solitude with no disturbance, all calm and quiet, and stay there the whole day till about sunset. Before dusk, we would be back in the hostel. After taking

evening meals and a little stroll and doing some writing work, I would be in bed even before ten o'clock in the night to get up only by about sunrise. There were quite a number of students who would burn midnight oil. That method did not suit me. I had my own way of working. The staff was ever ready to extend all help and guidance we needed. We were in the thick of preparations, heart and soul for the forthcoming trial.

This was my daily routine! Working hard the whole day and for an hour or so in the night was becoming somewhat tiring and burdensome. One reason for the semiexhaustion was the lack of nutritious food to match the demands of the body. My parents did all they could to help us, but it was much short of the necessary requirements.

The examination was at the doorsteps. Any slackening in the preparations could be disastrous and suicidal. I must pass the examination. Only then I could get some job. For ten years, my parents and I had been struggling in this matter. Therefore, I must succeed come what may. After the examination, there would be ample time for rest. But at this stage, there was no scope for any laxity in studies.

SUKHMANI SAHIB PATH AND LANGAR SEWA HOSTED IN THE MEMORY OF RISING STAR DILJAAN

On May 23, 2021, Sukhmani Sahib Path and Langar Sewa was hosted at the Sri Guru Ravidass Temple Pittsburg (California) by Ricky Pal of Pal Films, in the memory of a rising star Diljaan , a famous Punjabi singer, who died in a tragic car accident on March 30, 2021 near Amritsar. He visited the Sri Guru Ravidass Temple Pittsburg (California) just a few

months ago. He is survived by his father Baldev Kumar, mother Bimla Devi, wife Harman a daughter Soraya, 3 brothers and a sister. He was very close to Ricky Pal. He sang Master Kundan Pal's Ghazal also. Most of Diljaan's songs are on YouTube - US BEATS.

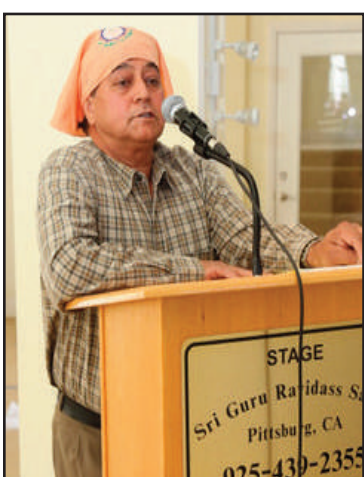
He received his music education from Master Madan Madhar(Pa-

tialaGharana). In 2007 he won an award from Aawaz Punjab Di. He was picked as the top performer in SURSHETRA out of approximately 3000 artists. This show was India vs Pakistan in 2011.

Diljaan was a very pleasant young man with a great future. He became very famous in the music world in a very short time. His death

is a big loss to his family and the community. Rajinder Kumar, Dharam Pal Chonkria, Ramesh Suman, Abhishek Pal Narabut & Ricky Pal shared their memories of Diljaan and gave a touching tribute.

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



SUKHMANI SAHIB PATH AND LANGAR SEWA HOSTED IN THE MEMORY OF RISING STAR DILJAAN

