



EDUCATION, SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION AND EMPOWERMENT

Prem K. Chumber

Editor-In-Chief: Ambedkar Times / Desh Doaba

Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar laid stress on 'Educate, Agitate, Organise' for the liberation of the Scheduled Castes (SCs) of India. He knew very well that education could not only stir the notion of self-respect among the downtrodden but also encourage them to locate viable solutions to the age-old evil of caste system and Untouchability in India. Educated SCs would challenge their tormentors and refuse to accept oppressive social structures around them. In fact, it was education that imbibed the glaring spirit in him of getting rid of caste system (annihilating caste) from Indian society; the most sought after goal of his life time mission.

Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was confident that once the downtrodden get educated they would never sit idly. They would definitely agitate against the system of social injustice around them and eventually organize themselves to put an end to the same. He himself set the example through his life-long struggle for the annihilation of caste. His philosophy was simple that an educated Dalit would agitate against the all-round system of injustice around him and indulge in a struggle to overcome it. It is his self-agitation against the blind system Untouchability that would force him and his fellow-beings to get organize to commence a struggle. The central thesis of his philosophy was to know the system first so that it can empower the downtrodden to challenge social injustice rationally then to set the pace for a long struggle to put an end to age-old social evil of caste system and Untouchability.

After almost seventy four years of India's independence, is there available a viable system of education to SCs in India? Government rural school system has come to standstill. They have turned dysfunctional long ago. Those who can afford costly private school education have abandoned them, thus rendering them just into 'Dalit schools'. This is an open fact that in Government rural schools majority of the students are from the SCs community. There are, of course, some other students belonging to OBC and upper caste communities but they too belonged to poor families. There is no denying a fact, however, that that majority of the SCs families belong to the poor and most poor strata of the society.

Given the dysfunctional status of Government rural schools, the basic factor of education to change the system of Untouchability as advocated by Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has been pushed to side-line. It is not only depriving SCs of genuine education but also blocking their way to social transformation. So there is an urgent need to revamp the Government rural schools so that proper and useful education could be imparted to SCs students along with others who want to join such schools. In addition an effort should be made to introduce an intensive multi language course work to enable the students to understand the available material in different languages. Along with the existing subjects provisions should also be made prepare them for job oriented courses in higher education.

Chandigarh Morcha: Historical Context of Kisan Morchas at the Borders of Delhi – III

With the formation of the Punjab Khetibari Zimindara Union (KZU) in 1972, and later its transformation into the Punjab unit of BKU in 1980, a major shift has occurred in the nature and politics of farmers' movement in Punjab. Till mid-1970s, all farmers struggles were waged under the active leadership of the communists, primarily CPI with a significant backing of Ghadari Babas. But with the founding of the KZU and later the BKU, the reign of farmers' Union politics shifted to rich farmer leaders of non-communist background, who have also established their hold over panchayats, block samities and co-operative institutions. A cursory look at the various issues taken up by the Punjab BKU reveals that it represents primarily demands of rich farmers (for details see: Gill and Singhal 1984: 1729). Though the BKU leadership is mainly monopolised by rich framers, given the clan factor, small and marginal farmers have also joined the union. "With the resources of the rich farmers, particularly tractor-trolleys and participation of the poor peasants", argued Gill and Singhal, "the union is

by the BKU, precipitated the latter to start the gherao of Punjab Raj Bhawan (Governor's residence) on March 12, 1984 (Gill and Singhal 1984: 1729-30). Comparing Chandigarh morcha of 1984 with the on going farmers' protest at the borders of Delhi, one finds several similarities that help in contextualising the genesis and the operation of the latter agitation for the withdrawal of three central agriculture laws. A large number of peasants, between 30,000 and 40,000, responding to the call of the union to gherao Governor's residence at Chandigarh, capital of two states of Punjab and Haryana, camped on



Ronki Ram

Shaheed Bhagat Singh Chair
Professor of Political Science
Panjab University, Chandigarh 160014, India
E-mail: ronkiram@yahoo.co.in
Visiting Professor, Centre for Sikh
and Panjabi Studies
University of Wolverhampton (UK)

the adjacent lush green lawns of the golf-course for a week (Thukral, April 15, 1984). Farmers camped with their own provisions, set up their own langar (community kitchen), and built thatched huts on the adjacent area around the Raj Bhawan, which came to be known as 'Kisan Nagar'. Farmers of the nearby villages of Patiala and Ropar districts regularly supplied milk and vegetables at the cite of the gherao sit-ins (Gill and Singhal 1984: 1730). Akin to the current farmers' protest going on at the gate of



Kisan Morcha at the Gate of Delhi

able to demonstrate its strength at various levels" (Gill and Singhal 1984: 1729). The current unity between the farmers and agricultural labourers witnessed at Delhi borders, and their sharing of makeshift accomodation, particularly of trolleys modified into mobile rooms, reminds Chandigarh agitation of 1984.

After the Pepsu Muzara movement, the first major kisan agitation launched by BKU started on January 20, 1983 with a campaign for non-payment of electricity bills. After a year-long mobilisation, the union planned dharnas in front of Punjab State Electricity Board (PSEB) offices. To further streamline the agitation, the union announced gherao of Punjab Governor at Chandigarh in January 1984. Parallel to the union's preparation for massive farmers' agitation on the burning issue of electricity bills, CPI and CPI(M) led Kisan Sabhas along with the Kisan wing of the Akali Dal were leading peasant struggle in the Malwa cotton belt for compensation of damaged cotton crop. It was for the first time that the rich farmers controlled BKU and Communists led Kisan Sabhas were involved in two different, but equally important, issues of peasants. After the successful conclusion of the Kisan Sabhas' agitation for the damaged cotton crop's compensation and their subsequent entry into the non-payment of electricity bills led

Delhi, farmers from Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra participated in batches in the Chandigarh morcha, which continued till March 18, 1984 when it was successfully concluded after an agreement between the union and the representatives of the Punjab government (Gill and Singhal 1984: 1729-30).

The gherao remained peaceful during its entire duration of one week. Though during the beginning of the arrival of farmers, the residents of the nearby sectors got scarred, but soon, they won the hearts of the city residents by their thorough peaceful conduct of the gherao. Late Gobind Thukral, who covered the protest for India Today reported:

The wife of a senior civil servant, who had kept her children indoors the first two days of the blockade, said: "With Punjab's violence as backdrop, one expected that they would set the city on fire. But one could envy their informal manners and friendly nature. We shall certainly miss them" (Thukral, April 15, 1984).

Similarly, scores of local residents, organisations and establishments at the borders of Delhi volunteered in the service of the protesting farmers in varied way – opening their homes, allowing their washrooms, local water supply sources, and

(Contd. on next page)

Chandigarh *Morcha*: Historical Context of *Kisan Morchas* at the Borders of Delhi – III

(Continue from page 1)

arranging 'langar seva (Sunny, December 02, 2020). Another similarity that one can notice between these two farmers agitation, with a gap of more than 37 year of occurrence between them, is that no political party is allowed to participate in their agitations and nor they are allowed to enter farmers' villages because of their (political parties) indifference to the cause of peasantry.

Why the farmers' unions are against political parties' participation in the on going protests at the Delhi borders and the entry of their members in villages has to do primarily with the non-party political character of the majority of the BKU organisations. During its Chandigarh morcha for the gherao of Raj Bhawan, BKU declined the help offered by many Congress (I), Akali Dal leaders and also Devi Lal, the then Janata Party leader from Haryana (Gill and Singhal 1984: 1730). How-

ever, the Punjab Kisan Sabhas, in total contrast to various Punjab units of BKU, are not only political in their orientations but peasant front organisations of the CPI and CPI(M), which caused the BKU considered Kisan Sabhas as their rival force in Punjab (Gill and Singhal 1984: 1729). Yet another factor that separates the BKU and the Kisan Sabhas was that the former has a strong support base among the rich farmers, whereas the latter is supported by poor peasantry and the landless agricultural labourers (Gill and Singhal 1984: 1732). But as far as the on going farmers' protests are concerned, the mature leadership has been able to build a cohesive unity between the farmers and the landless agricultural labourers. Responding to a question about ideological differences among the various farmers' unions participating in current protest at Delhi borders, Joginder Singh Ugrahan, President BKU (EU) said, "... de-

spite ideological difference, we were able to come together with a common minimum program" (Singh, January 7, 2021).

* Gill, Sucha and K.C. Singhal, "Farmers' Agitation: Response to Development Crisis of Agriculture," Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 19, No. 4, October 6, 1984, pp. 1728-1732.

* Singh, Shiv Inder, "Image that Modi government doesn't retract statements is shattered: BKU (EU) head Joginder Ugrahan," The Caravan, January 7, 2021. Available at: <https://caravanmagazine.in/agriculture/image-that-modi-government-doesnt-retract-statements-is-shattered-bku-ekta-ugrahan-joginder-ugrahan> (accessed on July 25, 2021).

* Sunny, Shiv, "As farmers protest, Good Samaritans at borders open their hearts and homes," Hindustan Times, December 02, 2020. Available at:

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/delhi-news/as-farmers-protest-good-samaritans-at-borders-open-their-hearts-and-homes/story-5D8VYSs3FgsXvC8kOwscwI.html> (accessed on July 26, 2021).

* Thukral, Gobind, "Punjab farmers block governor's residence to press for their demands," India Today, April 15, 1984. Available at:

<https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/indiascope/story/19840415-punjab-farmers-block-governors-residence-to-press-for-their-demands-802946-1984-04-15> (accessed on July 26, 2021).

Read more:

<http://www.ambedkar-times.com/Dr%20Ronki%20Ram.htm>



SKY TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS

STRIVE FOR MORE

ਟਰੱਕਾਂ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਵੀਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਲਈ
ਸਕਾਈ ਟਰਾਂਸਪੋਰਟ ਸਾਲਿਊਸ਼ਨ
ਦੀਆਂ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ



SPECIAL BIT INSPECTION AND DOT AUDIT COMPLIANCE:

WE PROVIDE
ALL TRUCKING
RELATED
PERMITS AND
SERVICES

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

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

SPECIAL DOT COMPLIANCE
FOR SAFETY, AUDITS AND
RECORD KEEPING.

PLEASE CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

Email: skytransportsolution@gmail.com

Give us a chance to provide you best services

121 E 11th St. Tracy, CA 95376 (USA)

Future of Dalits in India



Bhagwan Das

(Note: Although Bhagwan Das wrote this article in 2001, but in this he had identified the shortcomings and weaknesses of Dalits and predicted a bleak future of Dalits, it is proving to be completely correct today. Therefore, Dalits should learn from this article and fight for their rights by adopting Buddhism and forming a strong organization to secure their future. Dalits should remember that the responsibility of establishing a casteless and classless society, as envisioned by Babasaheb, rests with them. - S R Darapuri)

It is not possible to make predictions about any individual, community or group.

Only astrologers claim to know or talk about the future, which is mostly based on rhetoric and proves to be wrong. But still in our country most of the people especially Hindus believe in astrology. Marriages are solemnized by asking an astrologer for an auspicious time. The foundations of buildings are laid by asking astrologers. Election papers are filed by asking astrologers. But still women are widows, marriages fail, buildings collapse and people win and lose in elections.

the basic criteria and made a new list called the Scheduled Castes Order. It included 429 castes. In this also, the Jatavcaste of western Uttar Pradesh held meetings at many places and protested against inclusion in the Scheduled Castes because some leaders influenced by Arya Samaj's propoganda claimed that they were descendants of Krishna and were Rajputs. They should not be included in the list of Chamars. In some districts, the names of Jatavs were cut from the Scheduled Castes. The Dhanuks also protested in a similar way. Their name was also removed from the list in some states. The same thing happened with the people of Dhobi caste also. The Kolis in Himachal were trying to become "Small Rajputs" because they were heavily influenced by the Arya Samaj.

A new Constitution was made in 1949 which came into force from 26.11.1949. A separate list was also added in the new Constitution which was much longer than the old Constitution. It includes more than 900 castes. Under Article 341 in the new constitution, the President has been given the power to specify the Scheduled Castes and the Parliament has been given the power to add or delete names. The Parliament decides who should be considered Scheduled Caste and who is not. In 1930-35, many castes wanted to be excluded from the list of Scheduled Castes. Today many are demanding inclusion. Thus, the identity of the Scheduled Castes depends only on the Parliament or the Supreme Court. There is nothing else connecting them. If their names are removed from the list, they will not remain Untouchable in the eyes of the law.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar made many efforts to organize the Dalits of the whole of India. The first attempt was made in 1927 in the form of a mass movement to take water from ChaudarTalab in Maharashtra. In the struggle, apart from the Mahars, many other untouchable castes cooperated in it, but after this movement no other movement for human and civil rights was launched. To achieve his goal, Babasaheb continued the struggle for the promotion of education and political rights and got success.

The second attempt was made in 1942 when for the first time in the history of the Untouchables; an independent party for the Untouchables was established. The name of this party was named Scheduled Castes Federation (SCF). People from many untouchable castes joined this party and an organization was formed on the ground. But this organization was for political gain, its foundation was weak. The biggest weakness was the caste system of the Un-

touchables. The castes like Chamar, Khatik, Bhangi, Mehtar, Dhobi, Mala, Madiga etc. have been created only on the basis of different professions, but due to the education and ill-effects of Hindu religion, they consider each other as high and low and also practice untouchability. It is not possible to have an organization in such a situation. That is why when atrocities happen, they can neither fight nor help unitedly.

The sentiments of caste are so strong that if people of one caste go to one religion, then people of other religion will stay away from that religion. If people of one caste go to a party, then people of other caste will stay away from it. Even within the party, caste is taken care of while giving posts and tickets. Because of this, each party becomes a party of one caste like the Republican Party in Maharashtra or the Bahujan Samaj Party in North India. Due to caste, many parties come into existence but a good organization cannot be formed.

Babasaheb tried to make a third attempt through conversion, but he died after 53 days of launching this movement. And the religious movement which could break the caste system and create a new identity unit did not materialize. The religious conversion fell victim to the same weaknesses as the political movement.

Most of the political leaders in the leadership of this movement could not give the right direction to the religious conversion movement. They tried to run politics and religion in the same way. As such more damage was caused to the movement of religion.

Babasaheb had given many methods for progress and made many provisions in the constitution. Their benefit has reached the Untouchable castes, despite the fact that he worked for the awakening and upliftment of all the Untouchables. His followers were few. Most of the people took advantage of those provisions and facilities but did not accept his teachings. They did not want to be free from the slavery of Hindu religion and caste system. Being a victim of slavery for centuries, they fell in love with slavery.

Speeches of BJP ministers, MPs and MLAs of Backward castes after demolition of Babri Masjid are good proof of this.

Today, on the one hand, atrocities are increasing in the whole of India; the opposition to reservation is also increasing. The doors of progress are getting closed through privatization; on the other hand the Dalits are not organized in any one area. Those young people who want to make a career by adopting politics, they think politics is nothing but entering Parlia-

ment and Vidhan Sabha. Instead of taking the hard route of struggle, sacrifice and mass movement, they join parties that give more hope of winning or which can give them more money. They are more loyal to their masters in Parliament and Legislative Assembly. In the eyes of Dalits, Ram is neither their ideal male hero nor god because he was a supporter of Brahminism and Varna system and when he realized it, he died by committing suicide by drowning in river Sarju, but people of Shudra castes out of ignorance and political selfishness join their masters to praise him. What can be more proof of backward class and slavery than this.

These parties or youths looking for "political jobs" do not work for the interests of the workers and the weak, the distribution of land, the fight against unemployment, inflation, corruption. They don't believe in any thankless deeds of this kind. They say when power will come in our hands then we will do whatever we want. Once upon a time, the Congress also used to raise similar slogans. Bahujan Samaj Party also used to raise similar slogans but after coming to power in hand did nothing for the upliftment of Dalits.

The Untouchables could not run the movement for the distribution of land, while the Republican Party, realizing its importance, had launched a big movement in 1964-65 and also achieved great success. Farm workers, small farmers, artisans, untouchables and backward class people started thinking of it as their party, but its urban leaders remained entangled in urban problems. The party was fragmented due to the weaknesses of the leadership and the caste system and wrong election laws. Congress and other parties did a great job in breaking it because it was becoming a big threat to them. The Untouchables could not organize because of the feeling of casteism. They love caste so much that they cannot leave their fascination even after going abroad. Organization is not possible due to high and low and hatred for each other.

It is unlikely that they will ever be able to gain political power through elections, given the laws and practices prevailing today.

Some people have benefited from reservation but very few of those who have benefited from reservation have done the work of uplifting the society but reservation is not a permanent thing. If the number of educated people increases and unemployment increases among educated youth, then reservation will become redundant.

People who follow Hindu religion and Varna system as ideal are
(Contd. on next page)

Beginning of a New Era in Punjab

The Indian National Congress Party, a grand old party of India under the leadership of Mrs. Sonia Gandhi has made a very significant decision to nominate, sh. Charanjit Singh Channi as the Chief Minister of Punjab, India. There have been many promises made for future of lower castes community leaders in the decision-making process of the state by BJP, Akali Dal and AAP. But it is the thinking of the congress party that has moved ahead with this very historic decision to give real decision-making power to a person who belongs to the lower caste in Punjab.

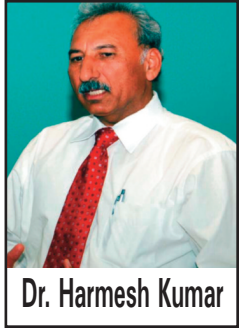
tion, focus, hard work, sense of responsibility, treating everyone equally with respect and dignity, ability to stand against tyranny, fight social justice and exploitation of the poor and down trodden by the power elite and stand for human rights even if one has to risk his life.

It is very hard for a single individual to achieve these tasks without the grace of the higher power. Our Sikh gurus did not promote these principles only for Sikhs rather these are universal principles applicable to all humanity. We have seen the living example of these principles in Amer-

ing lower caste people free education and economic incentives to bring them at par with higher communities. Even though it has been a slow process of transformation. We have seen in America how past American presidents were seeing the Indian Iron Lady (Late Mrs. Indira Gandhi) because she did not bow to their pressures and agenda. She was called very derogatory names but she did to care about those threats and ultimately, she has to lose her life. What she is still living in the hearts of her country men. We see the results of those policies today that people from

der Singh Randhawa, Mr. Sunil Jakher and all the other legislative team members to govern with the same spirit as our gurus have promoted. There are going to be too many challenges

in these few months when Punjab economy is in very bad shape, long farmers agitation, central government most probably will not support his agenda due to upcoming elections,



Dr. Harmesh Kumar



On the one hand there is no doubt that it is a occasion for celebration for the lower caste community members to have their representation at the top level in Punjab but it is also a time to unite under one banner. It is a challenge to govern a state that has been very independent and adventurous in taking risk and bold decision to make all Punjabis proud wherever they have been living in the world. The Punjabis are respected all over the globe due to their hard work, risk taking behaviors and standing for human rights no matter who is in front of them whether a local, state, national and or international leader. The tenth Sikh Guru Gobind Singh ji has instilled a sense of fighting spirit, with a slogan Lord Krishna also stood with the aggrieved party to fight the injustice by Duryodhan in Mahabharat. It requires discipline, dedica-

ica, Canada and other Western countries where Punjabis have created successful businesses and excelled in politics due to their industrious nature and faith in higher power.

Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, being born and raised in Italy does not have the same conditioning or implicit bias which other Indian leaders who are born and raised in India have i.e., putting upper castes agendas on the top and ignoring the fate of those who work hard on a daily basis to sustain the country. The former Prime Ministers, Late Pundit Jawahar Lal Nehru and Late Mrs. Indira Gandhi have put policies and welfare schemes by giv-



Ramesh Faqira Mehmi on behalf of the Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha Pittsburg (California) is honoring Honorable S. Charanjit Singh Channi, Chief Minister of Punjab.

these lower castes are able to compete with upper castes in the competitive exams, in higher jobs, be successful economically and recently we have in seen in sports at the world Olympics once they are given equal opportunities. They made it clear that once merit is considered then they are less than none.

Therefore, this is an opportunity and challenge for Mr. Charanjit Singh Channi and his team including Mr. Navjot Singh Sidhu, Mr. Sukhjin-

his opposition will try everything in their power to defeat his agenda and make him look bad but his actions and decisions to better the lives of all Punjabis will be his rewards.

He needs to focus on people's agenda not his own or his near and dear ones but keeping his near and dear one happy because he has to live with them. *I wish him and his team a great success in delivering the best services for the people of Punjab.*

Future of Dalits in India

(Continue from page 3)

becoming powerful every day. They want to establish Ramrajya (Hindu Rashtra) and a large number of people belonging to Dalit and Shudra castes are helping them in establishing Ramrajya. Ram Rajya would mean the varna system and the rule of the upper castes. This Constitution which claims equality, talks of rights will be abolished in Ram Raj because Ramrajya was a state of inequality. It was a state of injustice in which Shudras and women did not have the right to live with dignity.

Under these circumstances the future of the Untouchables is in danger. They have no friends and no allies. Some people are able to form organizations to come to power sporadically but are unable to get organized. The most pathetic condition is seen of those who claim to be

Ambedkarites. Now people have started laughing at them because while they criticize Brahmins on stage, in daily life they follow the rules, high and low, superstitions, customs made by them. They do not consider it any mistake to remain Mahar, Chamar, Bhangi, Khatik even after adopting Buddhism. They don't want to learn anything from history. Given these circumstances and feelings, the future of Dalits looks bleak. The intoxicating and dangerous slogans of "Hindutva" will cause great harm to the Dalits. Gandhi and the Congress prevented them from organizing and created obstacles in their identity. Tried to keep them away from other minorities. The main reason for this was that they wanted to strengthen the Hindu religion. Leadership in the Congress was in the hands of the so-called upper castes.

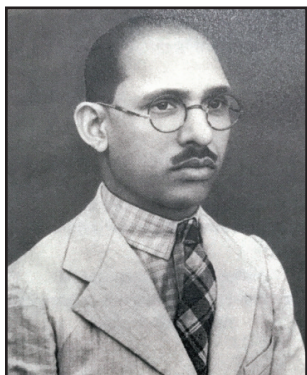
Now the party, which came to power by raising the slogan of Hindutva, is also doing what the Congress used to do. Make the untouchables fight with the Sikhs and then defame them. Make the untouchables fight with the Muslims so that they cannot join hands. Promote Hindu customs and caste among the Untouchables so that they cannot organize and become a danger to them. There may be difference in the methods of both the parties but not in the objectives.

It is in the interest of Dalits that they follow the path shown by Babasaheb Ambedkar and become independent from the slavery of casteism, conservatism, customs and make their own identity. Remove the effects and traces of Hindu religion from your life as poison. In clear words, they should free themselves

from the slavery of Hindu religion. Set aside your name, lifestyle, food, clothing, make your own identity. Build a new society, a new social and economic order based on the principles of Buddhism. Only then will they be able to live with dignity in the times to come. And liberate the victims of their own kind of exploitation.

Hinduism is the main cause of slavery, backwardness, poverty, illiteracy, ignorance, mental and physical weakness and disorganization of Dalits. To live a life with dignity, progress, it is necessary to be completely free from this slavery as it is necessary for a slave country to be free.

(Bhagwan Das (1937-2010) was an associate of Dr. BR Ambedkar. He was instrumental in internationalization of the issue of Untouchability in Indian subcontinent. He presented this issue in the UNO in 1983.)



Ishwar Das Pawar
District and Sessions Judge (Retd.)

My Struggle in Life

Land Reforms

Land to the tiller" was one of the most conspicuous slogans of the Indian National Congress during the struggle for independence. It was made a plank of land reform policy.

This reform was necessary for leveling up those who were standing at the bottom and leveling down those who were riding the crest mounted on a lion. It was common knowledge that land had been grabbed and monopolized by a handful of jagirdars (land owners), zamindars (landlords), and big landlords, and that the existing exploitive system would not be in tune with the new socialistic pattern of society that was being promised. Monopoly and exploitation could not coexist with the concept of social justice. This slogan was raised with bona fide intentions and was meant to be faithfully honored and given a practical shape. It was rightly thought that the pernicious system of haves and have nots could not be allowed to be perpetuated in the new setup sought to be established on the principles of social justice, equality, and fair play. Let us see where we stand now in this matter after more than thirty-five years of independence.

The necessity and importance of agricultural land for scheduled castes living in rural areas cannot be overemphasized. In village life, land is a symbol of status. A person without land is at best a landless laborer, a second-class citizen, and in the final analysis, a slave. He is surely doomed to a life of indignity and misery, entirely depending on the haves in the village. He has to depend on them in matters of necessities of daily life like collecting firewood, plucking saag (green mustard leaves), answering the call of nature, cutting grass, and making a path to and from his house. Such a situation would mean for him simply a change of masters, but no change for a better socioeconomic status and the style of life. Even a small area of land, say one acre or even half of its size, would put spirit and a spark of life into the hitherto landless person. The lives and honor of the family would become safer and would thus infuse a new impulse into his unenviable and lifeless existence.

After the attainment of independence laws on the subject of land reforms were duly enacted as a preliminary to the fulfilment of the pledge of "land to the tiller" policy. A ceiling on land holdings was also provided but with glaring loopholes, which are rightly considered to be a deliberate attempt at whittling down the aim and purposes of the legislation. In the face of these maneuverings, the desired results are impossible to achieve. Now let us examine what other factors have contributed to the virtual collapse of these reforms. It is acknowledged on all hands that land reforms have flopped and ended in a fiasco. Why it so happened? is a question that calls for an answer. In this connection, it needs to be noted that the reins of governments and the administration are in the hands of big landlords, the rich, and others with vested interests. Obviously, they would not allow land reforms to succeed as they themselves would be adversely hit. They do not want to part with even a small strip of their large areas of land, and therefore, they would do all that lies in their tantalizing power to thwart and set at naught all attempts at the distribution of the surplus land. A number of chief ministers, ministers, legislators, and public men of influence are in possession of big areas of land over and above the ceiling prescribed by the law. In quite a number of cases, surplus land has been transferred fictitiously in the names of their wives on the basis of fake divorces, their other relations, and in many cases, in the names of domestic servants and animals like buffaloes, cows, and even dogs. These instances of flagrant violations of the law have been brought to light a number of times.

These landlords go to inspect the fields in their brand new cars, sporting spotted ties round their heavy necks, their hands and wrists on the steering adorned with smuggled golden watches. They park the cars on the roadsides, cast covetous and gleeful eyes on their lush green fields by protruding their necks through the windows of the cars, and then return to the steering. They dare not go about the fields lest their shining shoes and spotless gaudy dresses should get soiled with the glittering dew pearls and mother earth. And mind you, they are the farmers, leaders of the farmers' lobby.

Amusingly enough, the duty of implementing

the land reforms has been entrusted to these people—a mockery of the first water, a cheap joke with the landless for whom surplus land is said to be meant. Voices have been raised time and again against the malpractices, but nobody cares. These reforms will simply remain on paper unless some good and effective arrangement is made and the work of implementation is entrusted to those who have the will, the honesty, and the strength to fulfil the plighted word. All the benami (unnamed) transactions, whether made in the names of human beings or animals existent or nonexistent, should be declared by suitable legislation to be null and void ab initio, and the land so transferred made available for distribution among the landless, particularly the scheduled castes. Malpractices and foul tactics should not be allowed to succeed. Only an honest and strong person can do this job.

Even the Bhoodan (donation of land) movement has been successfully sidetracked, and it has fizzled out. This must have given a rude jolt to the author of the movement, the well-intentioned Vinoba Bhave. A very interesting disclosure has been made on how he was mocked and ditched. It is said that the Maharaja of Darbhanga donated five lakh acres of land as Bhoodan. It looked to be a commendable act of munificence on the part of the donor. It was, however, discovered subsequently that most of the donated land was either forest, unfit for cultivation, or was the subject of civil litigation. Therefore, it was of no practical use either to the maharaja or to the peasants. Vinoba Bhave was not in the know of these facts. This is only one instance how land reforms have been reduced to a farce and a mockery. Bhave was dodged by a person no less than a maharaja. This incident alone should serve as an eye-opener to those who, by their goodness and purity of heart, repose faith and trust in those who, on account of their vested interests, resist with all the might at their command the implementation of land reforms. It should also be remembered that the figures announced from time to time regarding alleged donations of big areas of land toward Bhoodan are either untrue or, in any case, highly exaggerated. This is also true in a sizeable number of cases of allotment of land made by various governments.

There has been no such movement either in Punjab or Haryana or Himachal. There is no zamindari (landlordship) or jagirdari (landownership) system in these states in the sense and form they existed in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. There is, however, big landlordism in these states. The blurring line of distinction between the zamindari or jagirdari system on the one hand and landlordism on the other is not easily discernible to the naked eye. The difference between them is primarily in the form and a little of degree and not in the substance. It is an open secret that almost all the big guns in Punjab operating in public life, as also those in the administration, are in possession of vast areas of surplus land under one cover or the other.

They have flouted the laws very successfully and with impunity. They themselves are the makers of the laws and, at the same time, breakers of those laws. There is another political and administrative stunt. It is claimed and proclaimed that sites for houses have been allotted to all those who were without them. This is patently unfounded. House sites were carved out at ridiculously odd places, such as places flanking rivulet and khud (ravine) beds, low-lying areas always prone to devastating floods, near and on the cremation grounds, places reserved for flaying dead animals, and distant and out of the way places—very inconvenient and inaccessible. When the allottees were asked to take possession of these sites, they flatly refused for these reasons. Symbolical possession was, however, entered in the relevant papers. This was a futile exercise in the matter of so important a public welfare scheme. It has nothing but a propaganda value.

There is another matter that relates to the subsidy admissible to the scheduled castes for the purchase of agricultural land. As already noted, a person living in a village but owning no land has no standing as a self-confident and equal member of the village community. It may be observed that it is not necessary, and may not be feasible, in the case of scheduled castes that they should own and possess a viable unit of land, which would ensure them exclusive reliance on agriculture. In their case, even a smaller area can be a source of augmentation of their meagre earnings from other sources.

If viable units of land can be arranged for them, it will be most welcome. The maximum amount of subsidy admissible to a scheduled caste person is Rs 5,000, the amount of subsidy per

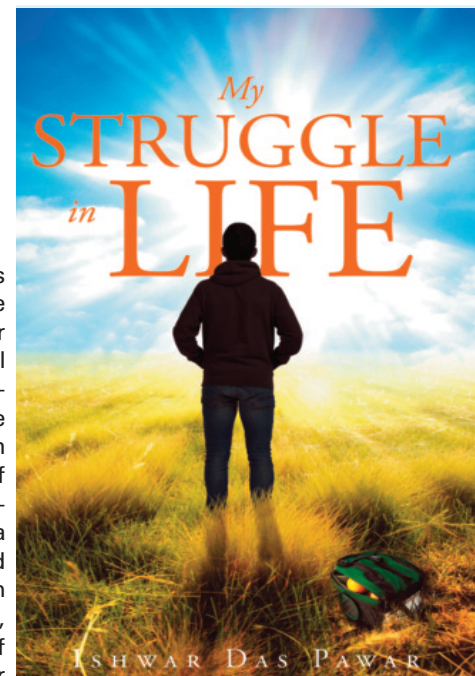
acre being only Rs 2,000, and three acres is the minimum area that must be purchased. This amount is wholly inadequate in view of the very high prices of land. In order to make the scheme a success, the amount of the subsidy should be raised to at least Rs 5,000 per acre up to a maximum of five standard acres, the total amount thus being Rs 25,000. Under the existing rules, it is well-nigh impossible for a poor Harijan (person from low caste) to arrange for the remaining amount of consideration. At my instance, when I was a member of the Punjab Planning Board, the minimum limit of land to be purchased was lowered by the board to one acre to make the purchase more practicable and meaningful. Left to myself, I would have lowered the limit even to half an acre. It is only in this way that the benefit of the aid can percolate to the poor and deserving persons. Small areas also result in increased production, as it admits of better looking after and intensive cultivation. In these purchases also, benami transactions should be banned and declared null and void. The desirability of making such transactions penal should also be considered in order to save simpleminded people from being exploited by others who are clever and better off.

It is also common knowledge that purchases of land made through the instrumentality of the department occasionally led to scandals. Sales were affected not only in respect of very inferior quality of land, but deeply sandy and stony lands were purchased. It is said that in one such case, on complaint, the official deputed to find out the quality of the land allotted probed the soil with a long stick and practically the whole length of the stick went down into the sand with ease. It was indeed a big fraud. Reasonable quality of land must be ensured. In many cases, lands are purchased situated at places far distant from the home of the allottee where he is expected to go with his family, bag and baggage. This was one of the reasons why the allottees were soon in for disappointment and frustration, and the scheme was put in jeopardy. It is therefore necessary that such purchases should be made within a reasonable and convenient distance from the allottees original home so that he is not uprooted and thrown on the roadside.

Another important point is not taken note of those who are allotted land, especially those quite away from their homes, are without financial means and resources needed for the fresh adventure. They should be given necessary financial aid in the form of credits and inputs so that they can stand on their own feet and make a success of the allotted lands. The assistance given at present is not at all adequate. The allottees have to reclaim the land to make it culturable, to buy bullocks and other domestic animals, and to arrange for manure and related implements. Sinking of tube-wells may also be necessary. They also need something for their subsistence at least for some time to start with. They cannot meet all these requirements on their own. Many an allottee has failed to make full use of the allotment on account of these difficulties.

To say that the scheduled caste people are not capable of doing the job of agriculture independently is a motivated propaganda to malign them. If they can do this job efficiently as landless laborers why can they not be equally efficient, if not more, when doing it independently? As one of the methods of meeting this situation it should be made obligatory for the Punjab Scheduled Castes Land Development and Finance Corporation to make necessary funds available to the allottees, interest-free as far as feasible and at nominal rate of interest if need be. It is only in this way that real help can be rendered to enable them to settle down and lead a

(Contd. on next page)



THE AD DHARM

Prem K. Chumber
Editor-In-Chief:

Ambedkar Times / Desh Doaba

The Ad Dharm movement, the glorious Dalit movement that not only envisaged an egalitarian social set-up but also struggled hard for the same, was founded formely on June 11-12, 1926 in village Muggowal near Mahilpur (Hoshiarpur) under the dynamic leadership of Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, a famous Gadhrite. Sarva-shriBasant Rai, Thakur Dass and Shudranand were the equally powerful other lieutenants of the Ad Dharm movement. However, when it comes to the brass stack, it was

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia who emerged as the leading star of the movement.

Ad Dharm is a name of the indigenous religion of the Dalits of the region who are the natives of this land (India). The invading Aryans subjugated them and established their rule over the natives. They see to it that the culture and religion of the natives had to be wiped out fully so that they could not stage a revolt. Mangu Ram Mugowalia thought it appropriate to relocate the lost native religion in order to re-establish sovereign Dalit Raj once again. He named his movement deliberately after the name of the religion of the natives: Ad Dharm.

Thus Ad Dharm is both 'Religion' as well as 'Movement'.

Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia made concerted efforts in the direction of laying solid ground for the revival of Ad Dharm in Punjab . He was of the opinion that if the ex-untouchables have to live a dignified life they had to revive their gurus, religious scriptures, festivals and religious places as well. He approached Sant Sarwan Dass Ji Maharaj at Dera Sachkhand Ballan for concretizing the Bani of Sahib Shri Guru Ravidass Ji Maharaj and the proliferation of his mission. The Ad Prakash, a holy Granth containing the Bani of Sahib Shri Guru Ravidass and other Dalit Gurus was

prepared. Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia expressed his will among close circle that his last rites should be performed amidst the chanting of the holy Bani of Ad Parkash.

aln the Ad Dharm Mandal approach, it is clearly mentioned that every Ad Dharmi should live his/her life according to the tenets of Ad Dharm and should not believe in any other religion. He said our Gurus are Guru Nam Dev Ji, Guru Ravidass Ji, Guru Kabir Ji, Guru Valmiki Ji and all other Dalits saints. Thus Ad Dharm movement has very early shown the vision for the establishment of a separate Dalit identity based on distinct Dalit native religion: Ad Dharm.

FIRST M.L.As. OF AD-DHARMA MANDAL in First Legislative Assembly of Punjab—1937 A.D.



Picture courtesy Souvenir 1985
 Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia
 99th Birth Anniversary by C. I. Chumber

(From Left to Right)
 1st Row Sitting : (Last Three)— Mr. Gopal Singh Khalsa, Seth Kishan Dass, Ch. Jugal Kishore.
 6th Row Standing : Mr. Mula Singh (8th), Mr. Bhagat Hans Raj (9th), Master Harnam Dass (Last).
 P. Mr. Matu Ram & Mr. Faquir Chand M.L.As. are not seen in this picture. (Courtesy : Seth Kishan Dass)

Land Reforms

(Continue from page 5)

better life. We should not make only a political show of this gigantic and grim problem without honestly and earnestly doing what we profess to mean. This much is clear by now that land reform is a most difficult task largely for the reason that those responsible for its implementation are neither earnest nor honest as they themselves have grabbed and misappropriated large areas of surplus land and are fattening on the easy income. They do not know how to do farming, and they entirely depend on the landless laborer. They live an os-

tentatious life like maharajas on the toils of the poor people and have palatial residences. For them the slogan "land to the tiller" is a red rag and a killer. To expect land reforms from them is to expect the impossible.

It is these people who have scuttled land reforms. They are capable of stooping too low for preserving their vested interests by perpetuating their hold on land by all means, fair or foul.

Then what is the remedy? Tinkering with the problem cannot yield the desired results. At best, it can lead only to small and marginal benefits. All said and

done, the real solution to this Himalayan problem lies in the complete nationalization of land. And then time is not far off when serious thought shall have to be taken to this aspect of the matter.

This however needs a strong and honest government backed by a team of dedicated reformists to bring about this most important and yet a most delayed reform in the socioeconomic life of the country. Unless this aim is achieved, the country cannot march on to socialism, the objective it has placed before it.

URGENT CARE CLINIC

DR. TAKHAR'S FAMILY MEDICINE & URGENT CARE CLINIC

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

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

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

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



Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD



Goodie Takhar, PhD

Kanshi Ram Tells Dalits

SPECIAL SPEECH DELIVERD BY MR. KANSHI RAM Ji

AT 1ST WORLD DALIT CONFERENCE IN MALAYSIA ON 10TH & 11TH OCTOBER, 1998



Dalits should become rulers instead of being ruled. We must not be always at the receiving end, instead become the givers, Dalit Leader Mr. Kanshi Ram told the world Dalits. It's long we have been ruled. It is long we have been taking. Now it is time we change the destiny to rule and give, he said. Mr. Kanshi Ram who is the Founder President of Bahujan Samaj Party delivered a key-note address at the opening of the 1st World Dalit Convention 'A new vision towards a casteless society' at the Kuala Lumpur Mines Resort City.

The two day convention held on 10th and 11th October 1998 was well attended by more than 700 delegates throughout the world including famous politicians noted leaders from Dalit movement, champions of down-trodden, social reformers, renowned economists, famous educationists and great scholars.

The Malaysian Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture Datuk Sabbaruddin Chikofficially opened the conference which saw the opening very colorful with Malaysian cultural and traditional dances performed by Indians, Malays and Chinese. Mr. Kanshi Ram garlanded the Portrait of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar while Dalit Sena President Ram Vilas Paswan garlanded the portrait of the great Periyar.

Mr. Kanshi Ram in his speech

continued to trace the history of caste and Brahminical social order. He asserted by virtue of his vast experience that elimination of caste was impossible at this stage. He also elaborated the very purpose of creating caste. In context of caste oppression and Justice Mr. Kanshi Ram referred the role of Dr. Ambedkar. He commended the merit of 'Communal Award' which he achieved after a long struggle.

Dr. Ambedkar could not sustain the going due to the constant pressure of the mighty upper caste Hindus, Mr. Kanshi Ram told the delegates who packed the hall. 'Babasaheb Ambedkar was able to get reservation for the oppressed in legislative houses, job opportunities in government departments and also places in higher educational institutions.

I wish to stress upon that reservation is not the solution to our problem. We must become rulers instead of being ruled; givers instead of being takers, Mr. Kanshi Ram told the crowd to a thunderous applause. It is my duty to prepare my people not to get reservation but to grant reservation. Who can gain reservation? Only rulers can grant reservation. Hence, I will prepare my people to become rulers. If we do not become rulers, our problems will remain forever, Kanshi Ram said.

In order to become rulers we must learn how to handle caste. Dr. Ambedkar, Nehru, Gandhi and Indira Gandhi were experts in handling caste. Nehru handled caste so well that he made Dr. Ambedkar helpless and retain the Brahminical Social Order. Indira Gandhi also handled caste well to benefit the Brahminical Social Order. Dr. Ambedkar prepared the SC/ST to handle Caste. That is how we could get many benefits from the British, he added.

Mr. Kanshi Ram expressed concern for 10 crores slum dweller, which are deprived of proper drinking water and electric supply. People migrating from villages to cities are also being denied of many facilities and end up in polluting the environment. But those refugees who came from Pakistan after independence were duly taken care of by the then government and a special budget was allocated to meet their basic necessities, he pointed out to the delegates.

According to Mr. Kanshi Ram, slum dwellers presently living in urban areas are the Dalit refugees who have migrated from the villages because of acrimony's & atrocities committed by upper caste Hindus.

They have not been able to influence the Planning Commission and the Government of India to allocate separate budget to provide them bread, clothes and shelter.

A decent life is a matter of fundamental right of every citizen in accordance with the constitutional mandate, Mr. Kanshi Ram asserted.

He advocated separate settlement for Dalit people as once formulated by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. He was very critical of the evil impact of caste-system in India.

Wherever the Indians went they never failed to carry with them this spreading disease he told the laughing and cheering crowd. The Indians are prepared to leave anything behind.

They leave behind their little property, small land and their huts. But they will never leave behind their caste. They carry with them wherever they go, he said. While urging the Dalits to unite he also called upon the Dalit intellectuals to shed away the approach of existing analysis only.

They should instead come with forward-looking approach in education, economic and social problems. They must also come up with some sort of effective solution programme, Mr. Kanshi Ram added. Mr. Kanshi Ram impressed upon the delegates that Dalit problem can only be solved through political power to rule the country. 'We must become the rulers instead of being ruled,' he told the cheering and applauding delegates.



SHRI GURU RAVIDASS SABHA (CA)

2150 Crestview Drive, Pittsburg CA 94565
Tel : (925) 439-2355

Sri Guru Ravidass Temple Pittsburg (CA) Gurughar's coming programs

Diwali Celebrations November 4, 2021

Diwali will be celebrated in the Gurughar with Sukhmani Sahib path starting at 6:00 PM. Jatha of Bhai Ajit Singh and Bhai Nirvair Singh along with Giani Gurnam Singh/Giani Ompal Singh will do the Kirtan Sewa. Guru Ka Langar will be hosted by Suman family. Sangat is requested to come for Ardas and celebrations. May Waheguru bless His Sangat with good health and happiness.

Sukhmani Sahib Path & Langar Sewa by Jatinder Singh Ralmil and family November 14, 2021

Sukhmani Sahib Path and Langar Sewa will be hosted by Jatinder Singh Ralmil and family to thank Guru Sahib for blessing them with a daughter. May Waheguru keep Ralmil family in Chardi Kala.

Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Parkash Utsav November 21, 2021

Satguru Nanak Pargateya - Miti Dhund Jag Chanan Hoya

Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Gurpurab will be celebrated at our Gurughar on November 21, 2021. Akhand path will start on Friday 11/19/2021, at 10:00 AM

and will be concluded on Sunday morning 11/21/2021 followed by Kirtan. Path and Langar sewa will be hosted by devoted family of Pt. Kewal Krishan Sudhir, Phagwara Wale. Giani Ompal /Giani Gurnam Singh will adorn the occasion with Shabad Kirtan along with other Kirtani Jathas.

Guru Nanak Sahib Ji (The founder of Sikhism) was born in 1469 at Talwandi, now known as Nankana Sahib. His life and spiritual teachings, as enshrined in the holy pages of **GURU GRANTH SAHIB**, are an embodiment of truthfulness and godliness which illuminated the millions of ignorant souls. HIS simple message of "**UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD**" **EQUALITY** and Love of Mankind formed the basic principles of Sikh Religion. His firm belief that God is formless, infinite and all pervasive, dwelling within us awakened the entire mankind.

The entire Sangat is humbly requested to participate in this "Gurupurb" and do the SEWA with TAN, MAN and DHAN.

For food & other stalls, please contact the management committee. We have a limited space, so please call as soon as possible to reserve the stall space or for any other Sewa. First come, first choice.

"NANAK NAM CHARDI KALA TERE BHANE SARBAT DA BHALA"

2021-2022 Committee of Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha Pittsburg (CA)



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Kulwant Kaur Banga (Chairperson), Surinder Rattu (Vice-Chairman), Jagtar Singh Bhatia (President), Harmesh Bangar (Vice President), Harbans Kalu (2nd Vice President), Abhishek Pal Narabut (General Secretary), Naresh Kumar (Assistant Secretary), Joginder Singh (2nd Assistant Secretary), Sunita K. Singh (Treasurer), Vinod Kumar Jakhu (Assistant Treasurer).

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Ramesh Suman, O.P. Balley, Balbir Mall, Jagdev Ram, Jaila Jaggi

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ashok Kumar Ralh, Dharam Pal Chonkria, Gurnam Singh Rattu, Gyan Suman, Harbans Singh Rattu, Kashmiri Bhatia, Major Bhatia, Paras Ram, Prem Lal Saroy, Santokh Madhar, Shinder Paul Narabut

CO OPT MEMBERS

Baksho Jaggi, Salinder Singh Bhatia, Simer Kaur, Satya Dass

LEGAL COMMITTEE

Shashi K Paul, Ajay Pal Ram