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Paying Tribute to Mata Ramabai Bhimrao Ambedkar

(February 7, 1898 – May 27, 1935)
on her Birth Anniversary

Prem Kumar Chumber

(Editor-in-Chief: Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba)



Ramabai Bhimrao Ambedkar (February 7, 1898 – May 27, 1935) was the first wife of Babasaheb Dr. B. R Ambedkar. She had been married to him for 29 years. She passed away on May 27, 1935, after a prolonged illness, at Rajgruha, Bombay. She was not only a homemaker but also played a significant role in facilitating Dr. Ambedkar to pursue and attain higher education, which he recognised in one of his voluminous writings entitled Thoughts on Pakistan, published in 1941. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar dedicated this book to Ramabai. In the preface of the book he put on record that it was Ramabai who transformed him from an ordinary Bhima to Dr Ambedkar.

Ramabai has been remembered reverently by the followers and admirers of Babasaheb. She belonged to an ordinary family. She lost both her parents in very young age and had to abandon her native place, Mahapura locality within the village of Vanand near Dapoli Ratnagiri, along with her three sisters and a brother to live with her uncles Valangkar and Govindpurkar in Bombay in Byculla market. When Ramabai married Dr. Ambedkar in 1906, she was only eight years old and Ambedkar's age was 15 years. Ambedkar lovingly used to call her "Ramu" and she called him "Saheb". She gave birth to Yashwant, Gangadhar, Ramesh, Indu (daughter) and Rajratna. Except Yashwant (1912-1977), the other four children died in their childhood.

Ambedkar Times and Desh Doaba Weeklies congratulate all its contributors, readers and well-wishers on the Birth Anniversary of Ramabai Bhimrao Ambedkar.

Refreshing the References A Book by Sunita Sawarkar

Dr. Sunita Sawarkar, emerging scholar in history has recently published a book on *'Dhor - Chambhar (Chamar) Striyanchya Ambedkari Janiwancha Parigh*' a new dimension to the Ambedkarite study. The writer has microscopically focused on the role of women in Ambedkarite movement with special reference to Dhor and Chambhar women.

In her study she has taken a brief survey of budding women movement in different corners of Maharashtra. How different backward castes were raising their voices for Equality. Pre-Ambedkarite Mahar, Chambhar and Dhor women although on the periphery of the society but under the dominance of patriarchal mentality of Hindu religion.

The writer has studied the role of women in Pre, Post and contemporary Ambedkarite movement. The references regarding Cha. Rajarshi Shahu Maharaja and Sayajirao Gaikwad Maharaj and their visionary approach towards the progress of women in pre-independent India are quite impressive. The writer has also studied various undercurrents helping women in their progress.

There are 4 chapters, concluding and appendages in the book. First chapter is Tracing History of Untouchable Women second is Personal and Social life of Dhor-Chambhar Women, third one chapter is References to Dhor - Chambhar women in Ambedkarite Movement and last chapter is Introduction to Dhor-Chambhar Women's personal life. First chapter of the book is very important to understand history of Pre Ambedkarite Untouchable women, Untouchable saint women like Saint Kallyanamma (Chambhar) Saint Soyarabai (Mahar) Saint Nirmla (Mahar) Saint Bhagubai (Mahar), Saint Santabai (Chambhar) Untouchable women & Satyashodhak Movement, Untouchable women & Nirashreet-Sevasadan, Untouchable women, Bahishkrut Movement Untouchable women & Upper Caste Reformer.

Also covered Women from various castes who were working in Ambedkarite Movement like Matang, Maratha, Bramhin Chndraseniy Kayasth Prabhu (CKP), Tribal, Sikh and Walmiki etc. Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj & Dhor Chambhar women, Participation in different Meetings and conferences of Ambedkarite movement, relationship between Ramai Ambedkar & Dhor Chambhar women, Participations in caste elevations, Writings of Dhor Chambhar women, Mathawada University Renaming Movement & Dhor Chambhar women, Independent Chambhar women Conference, Place of Dhor-Chambhar women in caste system, Education of DhorChambhar

Women, Contribution in traditional profession and the question of women's economical contribution. Public image of Dhor Chambhar Women, Position in marriages system. Approaches of British writers towards Dhor Chambhar women these are major point elaborated by the author in rest of the chapters.

Saint Kallyanamma, Saint Santabai took a stand against caste system, Savitribai Borade & Gunabai

Gadekar comes from common background although they worked with Dr Ambedkar. Venubai Shivtarkar, Anusaya Shivtarkar is from Sitaram Shivtarkar's family. He was close associate of Babasaheb Ambedkar and Secretary of Bahishkrut Hitkarini Sabha, Rukhaminibai Rajbhoj And Shanta Rajbhoj from P. N. Rajbhij's family. Malanbai Waghmare & Kamal Parkhe also from common background. They worked in Dalit Panther, Dalit Yuvak Aghadi and Renaming Movement. Kashibai Jadhav, Urmila Raimane, Baby Mukane, Kesharabai Ghumare also contributed in Ambedkarite movement at various stages

The book helps to study and raise our curiosity regarding the role of these women in the Ambedkarite movement. Well known creative writer and activist Urmila Pawar has covered the

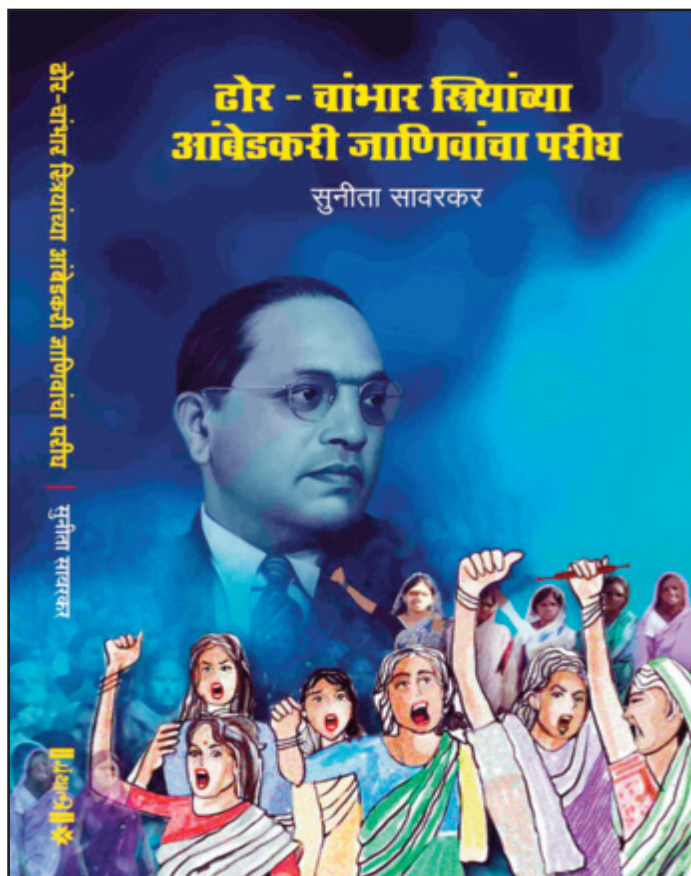
highlights of Dalit women movement in her preface to this book. Dr. Sunita has also another equally important book at her credit. "Role of Bhilla tribal community of Northern Maharashtra in Ambedkarite movement" which was published in 2020. Which is also vital contribution for this movement.

I would like to congratulate her for this type of valuable contribution and unveiling the new topics which helped the social movement. She has provided sufficient references in the form of Books, Research Articles, Pamphlets, and Photographs. Well known publisher 'Granthali', Mumbai has published it suitable to its reputation. The cover design by

Mr Satish Bhawasar is very supportive to the theme of the book. I hope this book would be helpful to study some more hidden aspects of Ambedkarite movement history and its impact on the people. Considering the historical importance of this book, even before its release, it has received good response for pre-publication booking not only from the State but also from across the country. Getting. That's why within span of three and half months second edition of this book is published. First edition was published on 14th October 2023 (On Dhammachakra Pravartan Din) and now second edition is published on 2nd February 2024.

Book review by- Prof. Uttam Ambhore

Retd. HOD Dept. of English, Dr.Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad



Dr Sunita Sawarkar
Author of the book



Prof. Uttam Ambhore *

Historicity of Chamar Women's Contribution Ambedkaraite Movement: Part -1

Gunabai Gadekar

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar played very important role in the liberation of untouchables in India. He believes men & women are very important part of society. Both should take part in the social reform movement to bring change in the society. He encourage women to participate in social movement. Dr. Ambedkar gathered people of scheduled caste for their emancipation. Dalit Women also played very important role in movement. Women actively participated in different stages like, establishing Mahila Mandal, organizing events, giving money to the movement, delivering speeches etc. some women came in movement because their father, mother, bother and husband and some women came from very common background. Gunabai is one of those who don't have any legacy of social reform but still she actively participated in social reform movement and create

6 at Dharavi Mumbai, then education up to third year trade completed at Seva Sadan Pune. In 1926, she left the Seva Sadan and joined a school in Mahawada, Mangalwar Peth at Pune. While working for Chamar Student Board in Pune, she went to various places to collect help for boarding. In 1930, she remarried to Ramchandra Gadekar who was highly qualified in chamar community of Maharashtra. She was one of the earliest women from depressed classes to get formal education and went on to become first female headmaster from the community. She strongly advocated for women education and boarding facilities for women.

While her social active Participation, she got to know Dattoba Powar, Vinayak Karnataki and Indumati Rani Saheb (Daughter in law of Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj), Sant Gadage Baba, P.

ternoon for their classes. Gunabai is witness of this incident as a student. After she completed her education she joined school and also actively participated in community reform movement.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had the honor of presiding over the first Mahila Parishad (1930) held by All India Depressed Classes at Nagpur. (1930). H. L. Kosare has also mentioned in Vidarbhatil Dalit Chal-



a legacy for chamar women. Gunabai Gadekar was an Indian social activist and one of the early women leaders of the depressed classes in 20th century. Under the leadership of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, she presided over the women council of All India Depressed Classes Association twice in 1930 and 1936.

Gunabai was born in 1906 in an erstwhile 'untouchable' Chamar family in Maharashtra. She started her primary education as a child, after the second pass in 1918, at the age of just 12, she got engaged to Anandrao Marutrao Waghmare (South Africa) in Mumbai and got married in the same year. Her husband died in the same year. After that, education up to class

N. Rajbhoj and many other contemporary social reformer. She also contributed for social justice in Pune Parwati temple Satyagrah as well as Dhor - Chamar community conferences.

Dr. Ambedkar and Gunabai

When Gunabai was in Seva Sadan Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar visited Pune for some work also visited to see Seva Sadan. Seva Sadan was started Ramabai Ranade for women's education and self-reliance in 1909 at Pune. When Dr. Ambedkar saw living arrangement of untouchable girls at long attic. Dr. Ambedkar asked, aren't these girls suffocate here? Answer was given to Dr. Ambedkar's question was, the girls are downstairs in the af-

speech on radio from Pune centre on the topic of 'Dalit issue and duty of women'. Only women can do a real and substantial job of dispelling the ignorance and crazy ideas of the Dalit class especially among their women and spreading knowledge among them, they will make the idea of high morals and thoughts easy to this class due to their natural loveliness, woman is a very important element in the family, she is a well-educated and a good housewife. She put forth an important idea that if the families will improve and if the families improve, the name Dalit class will become history, in fact it will become extinct, then real

valichaltihis that Gunabai was the president of the convention. But we don't have her presidential address. Re: President Mahila Parishad All India Depressed Classes Nagpur (1936). After this she engaged in her personal and family life.

Gunabai Gadekar made a



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democracy will not be established in India.

Gunabai Gadekar's memoirs from 1959 to 1974 are included in Smritigandh. In the autobiography, Gunabai's lifelong struggle reflects the contemporary social system. As a social account of the movement and as a sociological document, this book is of unique importance. Also important references of social history are in this autobiography. While studying, Gunabai Gadekar came into contact with Ramabai Ranade, Babasaheb Deodhar, Bapusaheb Mate.

She also came in contact with Maharishi Vitthal Ramji Shinde and his sister Janakka Shinde, who were leading the movement to end untouchability. The family relationship of Saint Gadage baba and Gunabai Gadekar used to be on top. Her autobiography is a detailed account of her experiences in Seva Sadan and contemporary social reform with its limitations. The information about Babasaheb Ambedkar and the movement led by him is in this autobiography. Gunabai Gadekar's experiences of the caste system is a very important part of her autobiography. This great social reformer Gunabai Gadekar died at the age of 1969 in Mumbai.



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The Bits and Pieces – As I Please

I liked the caption 'As I Please' which was generally used by scholar diplomat, Natwar Singh, my favorite writer in his columns. I copied this style often in my blogs. With a view to beat the scorching heat of June which keeps me confined and glued to my computer in my modest study, I have decided to write a weekly blog on current topics of interest which appear in the media under the heading – The Bits and Pieces – As I Please. Here we start, please bear with me.

Hitherto Unknown attribute of Pakistan's diplomacy and defense prowess – Former Media Advisor to PM Manmohan Singh, Sanjaya Baru in an article in the Tribune under the caption – Time to reassess, size up Pakistan has written and I quote. "The Print's Swastirao, a European diplomat reminded Indians of the many strengths and capabilities of Pakistan's air force. Apart from its hard power, Pakistan has always enjoyed the soft power of its elite. In a highly feudal and unequal society, Pakistan's elites continue to be groomed to interact with confidence and class with their Western interlocutors. India's new middle class that now populates its politics and diplomacy is no match". These assessments by the elite of India tend to underline the defense and security strengths and capabilities of India on one side and our diplomatic take on the Pakistan's behavior and action. Sanjaya Baru, in his own wisdom, has tried to compare and match the Pakistan's feudal elite with the middle class of India. I am reminded of the appointment of many high-ups from the Princely States as Ambassadors and High Commissioners by PM Jawaharlal Nehru immediately after our independence in 1947 and in the run up to establish IFS to make and execute diplomacy of India.

There is no need of any elite to man our diplomacy as they aid to do in Pakistan. Our middle class diplomats and our diplomatic establishment are fully capable to act and deliver. Frankly speaking, there was no need to send, to my mind, even the much hyped parliamentary delegations to tell and explain our take on the Pakistan's terror. It should have been left to our diplomats to handle the matter as they are fully competent and

of military actions in the recent skirmishes between India and Pakistan. General Michael Kurilla testifying before a parliamentary committee in Washington termed Pakistan a 'phenomenal partner' in counter terrorism and

argued in favour of strengthening ties with both India and Pakistan. President Trump's statement equated India with Pakistan and de-



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scribed both Modi and Sharif as "very powerful leaders, very strong leaders, good leaders, smart leaders" and registered his role in the so called ceasefire between India and Pakistan. Earlier President Trump now the Military Brass of the US has equated and hyphenated Pakistan with India. Where do we stand? Let us not waste our time and energy on emotional gestures of 'Firm handshakes and embraces – Jaffiya Baffian'. At the end of

the day no lunch is free in diplomacy. We need to be on our own. There is no other way out. We are to fight our own battle

ChupaKar Asteen Mein Bijliyan Rakhi Hain Gardoon Ne Anadil Bagh Ke Ghafil Na Baithen Ashiyon Mein

The sky has kept thunderbolts concealed up its sleeve Garden's nightingales should not slumber in their nests

able to do and deliver. It could have saved us from the unnecessary and avoidable controversies in India and also saved the public money in the larger interests of the country.

Yet another attribute in the India-US Relations– The cat is out of the bag. The more we talk of the change the things remain the same – from Richard Nixon of 1971 to Donald Trump of 2025. General has applied salt to the proverbial wounds inflicted by President Trump in his assertions on the question of halting

(The writer is a retired Indian career diplomat)



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Sri Guru Ravidass Temple Pittsburg - Upcoming Programs



Guru Piyari Saadh Sangat Ji:

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa Waheguru Ji KI Fateh!

The following programs will be celebrated
at the Gurdwara Sahib:

June 27-28-29, 2025

Pittsburg Gurughar's 40th Anniversary

Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha will be celebrating 40th anniversary of Sri Guru Ravidass Temple Pittsburg on Sunday, June 29, 2025, with great enthusiasm.

Akhand Path will start on Friday 6/27/2025 at 10:00 AM and will be concluded with Bhog ceremony on Sunday, 6/29/2025, followed by Kirtan Deewan. Jatha of Bhai Kapoor Singh ji - Khande Wale, along with Jatha of Giani Balwinder Singh ji will delight Sangat with Shabad Kirtan.

Nishan Sahib Chola Sewa will be hosted by S. Balbir Singh ji on Saturday, June 28, 2025 at 11:00 AM. Kirtan Deewan will be from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM on Saturday.

There will be a health camp on Sunday from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Doctors and nurses will be available to help with any health questions or issues. We are always looking for medical professionals to help with this free community service. Please contact Ramesh Suman at 925.366.3618 or Dilbag Singh at 209-834-4641, for information.

Path and Langar Sewa will be hosted by Guru Ki Sangat. For stalls or any langar Sewa, please contact Chairman Vinod Kumar at 408-718-2506 or President Sunita Singh at 415-233-3319. Please contact us if you would like to volunteer for Langar Sewa, Jorha Sewa, maintenance or any other Sewa.

We are extremely thankful to our founding members for creating this wonderful place of worship for the community. We are also thankful to Sangat and all the Sewadars, this could not have been possible without their continued, tireless Sewa and support. With Guru Sahib's blessings and guidance, this Gurughar has been continually making progress since June 2, 1985, the grand opening day. This is a testimony of the love and unity of our community.

We look forwards to celebrating this major milestone with all of you. May Guru Sahib bless His Sangat with peace, love and unity.

"NANAK NAM CHARDI KALA TERE BHANE SARBAT DA BHALA"

"NANAK NAM CHARDI KALA TERE BHANE SARBAT DA BHALA"

Sangat Sewadars

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