



Ambedkar Times *Weekly*

Editor-in-Chief: Prem Kumar Chumber Contact: 001-916-947-8920 Fax: 916-238-1393 E-mail: chumbermedia@yahoo.com, editor@ambedkartimes.com

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Sh. Ishwar Dass Pawar: Pioneer of Dalit Social Mobility in Punjab

Prem K. Chumber

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

Sh. Ishwar Dass Pawar is a household name in the Doaba region of Punjab and among the early diaspora. He was among the first selected Punjab Civil Service officer from the Ad Dharmi community of the region. Ad Dharmis of Punjab were the pioneers of the Dalit movement in the Northwest India. Sh. Pawar Ji served the cause of the



Ishwar Das Pawar
District and Sessions Judge (retd.)

Samaj through his bold decisions in the direction of Dalit empowerment. When he was appointed as the passport issuing officer in the region, he made great contribution towards helping his people reach foreign lands to improve their life conditions. To obtain a passport one needs to show some property, which lowest of the low were deprived of first because of customary regulation of razatnamas and later on Punjab Land Alienation Act of 1900.

Sh. Pawar saw to it that this formidable hurdle should not come in their way to obtain passports. It was during his tenure at the Passport office that a large number of people belonging to various Scheduled Castes (SCs) communities started reaching abroad. Currently SCs of Punjab constitute the second largest emigrant group from Punjab in North America and Western Europe.

Sh. Pawar Ji learnt to serve one's community from the teachings of Ad Dharm movement. Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, the founder of the glorious Ad Dharam movement of Punjab, influenced Pawar Sahib deeply. Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia Ji used to go to Chandigarh to meet Sh. Pawar Sahib at his residence and Mrs. Pawar look after them passionately as both of them were well aware of their commitment towards the Dalit Samaj. ID Pawar was not only a source of aspiration for his people but also great support to help them at various levels of administration for their day-to-day life requirements. Ambedkar Times and Desh Doaba weeklies take pride in popularizing teachings of Sh. I. D. Pawar by publishing excerpts from his well-acclaimed autobiography "My Struggle in Life". Our thanks also to Sh. Pamas Rai Bhatti whose contribution towards the publication of this valuable treasure of our Samaj was duly recognized by Pawar Sahib in the preface of "My Struggle in Life"

Remembering a man with a vision: Chaudhry Ishwar Das Pawar

On his 117th birth anniversary, which falls on May 9, 2024, I remember Chaudhry Ishwar Das Pawar, my father-in-law, as an anchor that I can relate to, a teacher I can learn from, a hero I can look up to, a role model I can be proud of, and a constant source of guidance.

This is an occasion to reflect upon and remind ourselves of the salient features from his life. And how he tried to change the conditions of exploited community in his own modest way. We express genuine emotion and appreciation for the significant contribution of the 'marg darshak', in order that his inspiration does not get marginalised or lost sight of.

His commitment was to spread education and knowledge, inspired no doubt by the idols like Jyotiba Phule and Baba Sahib Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. On a personal level, he talked fondly of his admiration for Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, the founder of the Ad Dharmi movement in Punjab, in his crusade and relentless fight against deep rooted caste prejudices..

Pawar Sahib lived his life with determination, resilience, and above all, love in heart. He was a pillar of support for the community, offering sage advice when needed. His strength of character was an inspiration in the face of adversity, and his unwavering faith in the goodness of others, remained steadfast throughout his life. No matter what the situation was, he upheld his principles with an unshakeable resolve.

He had a knack for imparting wisdom without making it appear instructional. He led by example. On the value of kindness, his common refrain was, 'You never know what the other person is going through, so choose kindness whenever possible.' This philosophy was reflected in every interaction he had, and it's a lesson we

should hold close to our heart.

The countless people he helped grow professionally and socially, is a testament to his legacy. It extends his official job titles and in fact beyond borders. In the U.K. and the U.S. an overwhelming number of Indians revere him, for he made it possible for their parents' generation to migrate to the lands of opportunities. It was he who made it possible, through his pioneering changes in regulation,

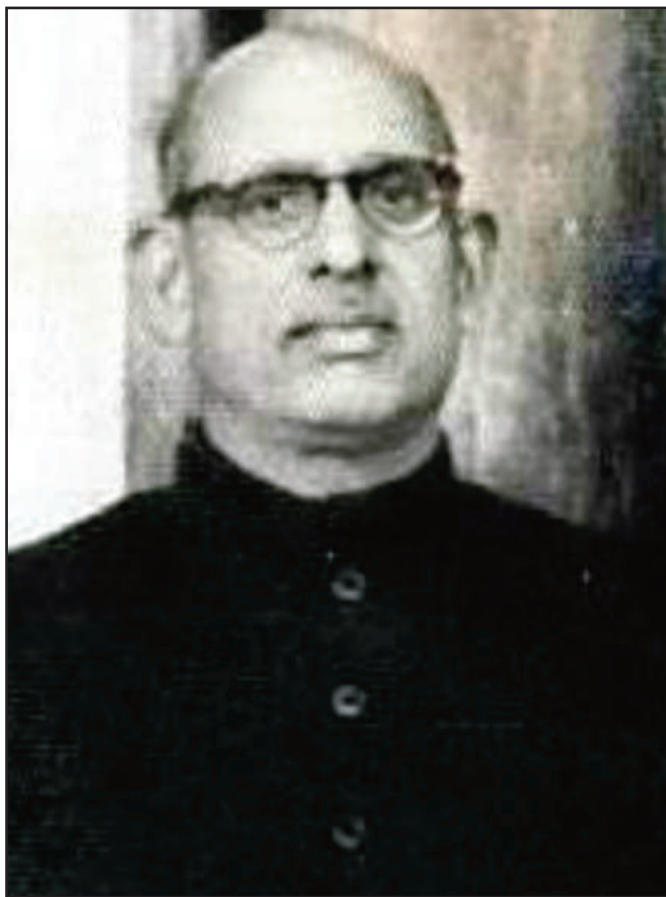
The great man is remembered as a pillar of strength for the down-trodden community. He helped lift and empower them. Love, respect, and kindness were not merely words to him. These were principles that he lived by every day.

There was a clear manifestation of the humanist's selfless devotion in Pawar Sahib, without expecting personal recognition or reward. The best

tribute to him will be to learn lessons from his life, follow the lifelong ideals for which he fought. The younger generations should shake off the inertia and throw off the yoke of subordination. Only then would they be able to occupy their rightful place as equal citizens in the society.

From my personal experience let me say that perhaps, Pawar Sahib's greatest role was that of a family man. The devotion to his noble wife Laxmi Devi was the kind of love one reads about in fiction. Pure, unwavering and eternal. Together they built a foundation of love that extended to his children. His dedication to the family was the pillar upon which they built their lives.

Long live the ideals of Chaudhry Ishwar Das Pawar and his cherished memory. His legacy lives on in each of us, who had the privilege to know him. His wisdom will guide his admirers as they navigate their lives. And while his absence may be the cause of grief, the comfort lies in knowing that his spirit and love will live on within us, eternally.



V.B. Soni
Ambassador (Retd.)



AMBEDKAR TIMES (www.ambedkartimes.com)

This site has been dedicated to Bharat Rattan Baba Sahib Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar in the memory of Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia, Gadharite and founder of Ad Dharm Movement in Punjab. The sole aim of this site is to highlight the plight of the Mulnivasis (Inhabitants) of India who have not only been deprived of their due share in the wealth of their own country, but had also been subjected to untold miseries over centuries. Atrocities against them are still rampant in almost all the parts of the country. Hardly a day passes when there is no news about the social boycott or physical repression of all sorts on them. www.ambedkar-times.com is duty bound to highlight all such incidents as well as to seek and

articulate some solid perspective for the amelioration of this age-old problem old social exclusion and blatant violation of the basic human rights of the Dalit brethren. I once again thanks for your kind support and also expect the same in future too so that this modest attempt would continue in the service of our community. www.ambedkartimes.com deeply welcomes your suggestions for its better functioning. This is your web site and it is you who have to make it successful. Kindly send your valuable articles, news reports, and opinions regularly, we would be pleased to carry them gratefully.

Prem Kumar Chumber

Editor-in-Chief: www.ambedkartimes.com

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia And Ad-Dharma Movement



While recalling the significance of the role of the Ad-Dharma movement launched by Babu Mangu Ram of Mugowal in the year 1926, for

espousing the cause of the Untouchables of the pre-partition Punjab, we must remind ourselves of the circumstances prevailing in those times. For, since then tremendous changes have taken place in the social, political and administrative fields, and not many of the present times may have a precise idea of the harrowing conditions and environments in which our people found themselves.

Till about the mid-twenties there was no social and political awakening among the untouchables. People had been fed on the deceptive and demoralising Brahmanical philosophy that the Untouchables were born as such not by any coincidence but because of their accumulated bad deeds committed in the past lives. As a consequence, they were disintitiled to get education, to own and possess property, to take to professions and avocations of their own liking and choice, and to a place of equality, honour and dignity in society. This was the divine dispensation. It was dinned

into their ears day in and day out that this was not due either to their own fault in this life or to the fault of society that they were born in the lowest and wretched castes, and, therefore, they were made to suffer untold hardships and punishments under the edict of the Almighty for their past sins. Out of sheer ignorance these misguided and gullible people tacitly accepted their cursed fate foisted on them by the clever sort. For their woeful sufferings they would beat their foreheads in utter helplessness and say pathetically that it was due to their inevitable fate and destiny. It never occurred to them, and there was none to tell them, that they were being duped and cheated by the uppermost strata of society who were interested in keeping them under their feet. They could not understand why others who were leading most sinful lives before their very eyes were enjoying all comforts of life both good and bad. The good deeds of the ignorant and unsophisticated people of this life were of no consequence for them in this life; they were being stored and preserved for consideration in the life to come. It was a very cunning ruse played on the ignorant and deprived people.

There was none among the Untouchables to raise the banner of revolt against this aggression, oppression, tyranny, deception and exploitation of the poor and the ignorant committed behind the facade of religious philosophy. There, however, appeared on the scene an inspired soul in the person of Babu Mangu Ram of Mugowal, who came back from

America after a decade's sojourn there. There he was a member of the Ghadar Party formed by the Indians living there to supplement the struggle of freedom launched by the nationalists here.

On reaching home Babu Mangu Ram founded an organisation under the name Ad-Dharma Mandal. Soon a band of enthusiastic and devoted workers gathered around him. The message brought by Babu Mangu Ram was new inspiring. It was aimed at awakening the Un-touchable. The message called upon them to know and realise themselves as they had forgotten their true selves due to the hostile influences in which they had been living for thousands of years. It caught the imagination and hearts of the oppressed and down-trodden people and soon Babu Mangu Ram's name became a household word. He succeeded remarkably well in creating awareness and awakening the people. His path was beset with difficulties and he had to work against odds and trying circumstances. Financial difficulties apart, he and his co-workers were chased everywhere and hounded out of bound out of bounds of towns and villages by the Hindus, and quite often they had to hold their meeting and conferences in open fields. One such incident also took place at Una. A weekly "Adi-Danka" in Punjabi was also started to carry the message to every nook and corner of the province. This was the beginning of the struggle for getting back the human rights of which they had been deprived of for centuries. Wherever Babu Mangu Ram went,

the people were eager to have a glimpse of their beloved leader and benefactor. He did the pioneering work to awaken the people. My own relations with him had been very close and cordial. From my college days I had been attending meetings of the Ad-Dharma Mandal and also occasionally contributing small articles to the Adi-Danka.

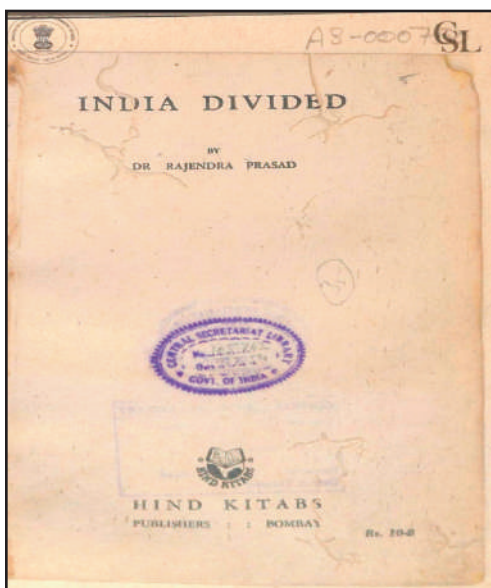
In the crucial days of the Round Table Conference held in London in the early thirties for the purpose of hammering out a new political set up for our country, Babu Mangu Ram worked enthusiastically shoulder with the greatest leader of the underdog, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who was representing the Untouchables of the County at the Conference, to strengthen his hands in his historic struggle for securing political rights for his people on the basis of their being a separate and distinct political entity.

Babu Mangu Ram will be long remembered as the devoted pioneer in the crusade against social and political injustice. He fought relentlessly even in the face of crippling heavy odds for the achievements of the goal. Whatever rights we have been able to snatch so far is entirely due to these great men.

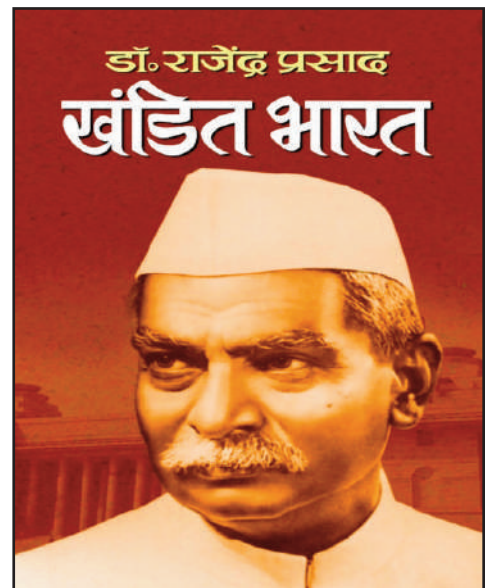
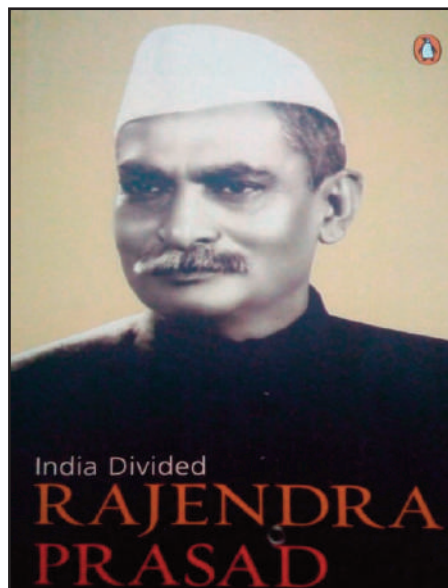
There is needed to look back lest we should forget our benefactors-the brave soldiers who fought our battles.

Source Courtesy: Souvenir, 1985
 Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia
 99th Birth Anniversary,
 By Mr. C. L. Chumber

India Divided, Authored by Dr. Rajendra Prasad



Province	Area (sq. miles)	Population (1931)	Area (sq. miles)	Population (1931)
British India	4,98,000	350,000,000	4,98,000	350,000,000
India	4,98,000	350,000,000	4,98,000	350,000,000
Princely States	1,20,000	100,000,000	1,20,000	100,000,000
Others	1,20,000	100,000,000	1,20,000	100,000,000



Source Courtesy: India Divided,
 Authored by Dr. Rajendra Prasad
 First Published in 1946

[This book by Dr. Rajendra Prasad has information about the Ad-Dharmis] Before analysing the figures given in the above table it is worth noting that under 'others' are included Adidharmis, Jains, Parsis, Jews and those who returned no specified religion or community. Of these the most numerous are the Adidharmis, who according to the Census Commissioner

though included in scheduled castes do not claim to be Hindus and are hence recorded separately not only from the Hindus but also from the scheduled castes.

They number 3,43,685 or 1.21 per cent of the total population of the Punjab. They are concentrated very largely in the Jullundur Division where their number is 2,50,267 or 4.60 per cent of the population of that Division. Their next largest concentrations are in the Multan Division

and Lahore Division where they number 68,641 or 20,488 respectively. Their number is negligible in the Am-bala and Rawalpindi Divisions being only 2,795 and 1,534 respectively. As has been pointed out in the Census Report of 1931: 'The most notable feature of the present (1931) census from the stand-point of returns of religion has been the adoption of the term Adi Dharmi by numerous Chamars and Chuhars and other Untouchables. At previous cen-

suses Chuhars unless they returned some recognized religion were always included among Hindus.

The 1941 Census Report also notes that all those who are recorded as Adi dharmis belong to the scheduled castes but have not claimed to be Hindus.

The last two census days have thus succeeded in reducing the number of Hindus in the Province by excluding the Adidharmis from amongst them.

Passion to serve his beloved country - India brought renowned economist late Professor Autar Singh Dhesi back from United Kingdom

Professor Autar Singh Dhesi – a renowned economist and policy scientist passed away on April 24, 2024 at Chandigarh, India. Professor Dhesi was a very popular teacher, strict disciplinarian, hard task master, policy advisor and researcher par excellence. He undertook quality research in the cutting-edge areas of economic development and planning, public policy, sustainable development, human and social capital, community development, rural development, higher education and NGOs to mention a few. He facilitated the village development projects undertaken by NRIs including convincing the Punjab Government to release its matching share of the grant. Thus, the passing away of Professor Dhesi has evoked waves of sadness and sorrow among academicians, NRIs, policymakers and community at large.

Born to Sardar Milkha Singh Dhesi and Sardarni Bakhshis Kaur Dhesi on July 9, 1936 at his village Kahna Dhesian, district Jalandhar,

Prof. Dhesi completed his primary education at his native village school and matriculation from Khalsa High School, Bundala, district Jalandhar in 1953. In 1955, he completed his F.Sc. from Ramgahria College, Phagwara, followed by a B.Sc. in Natural Science from Government College, Hoshiarpur, Panjab University in 1957. Professor Dhesi's thirst for knowledge motivated him to migrate to the United Kingdom in 1958 for pursuing higher education. In the mid-Sixties he began his academic pursuit in the UK, which led him to complete post graduate diploma in Development Administration from Leeds University in 1966, and an M.Sc. degree in International Economics from Surrey University in 1968. He was awarded Master's degree in Social Sciences by the Birmingham University in 1971 wherein he was also holder of the prestigious Research Council Scholarship in Social Sciences and later in 1974, from the same university, he successfully completed his Ph.D. degree in Economics on the thesis entitled "Human Capital Formation and Its Utilization," which was subsequently published by Sterling Publisher, New Delhi in 1979. Being an active scholar, Professor Dhesi was elected as member of Faculty Board, Faculty Development Committee and Senate of the University. He also taught at Coventry University, UK. As a token of gratitude to his Alma Mater – Birmingham University – Professor Dhesi paid handsome money as an endowment fund for instituting Professor Autar Singh Dhesi Lecture in September 2023. This lecture will commence from the current academic session. In the UK, Professor Dhesi was not only

active academically but also got deeply involved in community affairs. He was amongst the founder members of the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination and was Secretary of Southall Indian Workers' Association. He also worked for India while in the UK and



Professor A S Dhesi

was joint secretary of the National India Defence Fund Committee. He also worked as free-lance journalist. In 1965 Professor Dhesi was honoured with Ealing Borough of London Major Award.

Passion to serve his beloved country, India and Punjab State, brought him back to India in 1975, leaving behind a lucrative academic career. On his return, he joined Guru Nanak Dev University (GNDU), Amritsar, as Reader (Associate Professor) in Economics. Professor Dhesi's illustrious academic career spanning decades of dedicated service and remarkable achievements has clear imprint of expertise and skills he acquired in the UK.

Professor Dhesi got a breakthrough in his career in 1982 when he was appointed as consultant to World

Bank, Washington DC which was rare honour to a teacher of only 7 years of standing. The GNDU, Amritsar, recognised expanding frontiers of his talent and promoted him as Professor in 1983. Subsequently he was appointed Head, Punjab School of Economics



S. Balraj Singh Dhesi paying homage to his elder brother Professor Autar Singh Dhesi

in 1984. During his headship he undertook many initiatives including starting of new courses such as M.Sc. in Industrial Economics, founding a new journal, namely, the Indian Journal of Quantitative Economics. He also served as Dean, Faculty of Economics and Business at GNDU. He was member of governing bodies of GNDU, Amritsar.

Professor Dhesi's expertise was extensively utilized by both by Government of India and Punjab. He was Member of Punjab State Planning Board besides consultant to the Bureau of Industrial Costs and Prices, Government of India and the Central Water Commission, and was on the Panel of Industrial Economics, Planning Commission of India. Professor Dhesi was very actively involved in the development of Punjab,

especially in its rural sector. In addition to his contribution in this regard as member Punjab State Planning Board in the form of extensive writings in print media, he set up Punjab Development Society (PDS) in 1997 with a mandate to promote scientific, economic, social and cultural development of North-west India with special focus on Punjab. Under the umbrella of PDS, he organised a number of seminars, conferences, special lectures and also utilized this platform for communicating with media, civil society and policy makers. Along with PDS as a formal think tank, Professor Dhesi motivated a number of NRI intellectuals having roots in Punjab to contribute for the well-being of Punjabi community which they did through research on Punjab, policy advice, lectures and rural development projects. Prominent intellectuals include Professor Gian Singh Sahota (USA), Professor Raghbir Singh Bassi (USA), Dr. Gurdev Singh Gill (Canada), Dr. Samsher Singh (USA), late Professor Darshan Singh Tatla (UK), and Professor Shinder Thandi (UK).

Retirement from active service in 1996 did not dampen Professor Dhesi's commitment to serve the society. He continued with his active involvement in the form of regular communication with policy makers concerning development and social issues of Punjab. For an instance, in November 1997, he along with four academicians wrote a letter to Sh. Inder Kumar Gujral the then Prime Minister of India to revive the shelved Chandigarh-Ludhiana rail project which finally saw the light of the day in 2013, with the commencement of rail service between Chandigarh and Ludhiana. Also, on June 30, 1998 he chalked out an agenda for the all-prospective Members of Parliament from Punjab, seeking their commitment for preserving Punjab's rich heritage culture, promotion of social harmony, national integration, expanding economic opportunities in industry and other sectors, improving quality of education and revamping of railway infrastructure in the state which is relevant even today for the prospective Members of Parliament as election campaigns are on in Punjab.

Professor Autar Singh Dhesi was appointed as the University Grants Commission Visiting Professor of Economics from October 1998 - October 2000 at Punjabi University, Patiala. Recognising his seminal contribution, he was awarded the Honoris Causa Degree by the University of Surrey in 2011. He was also Honorary Visiting Research Fellow at the Coventry Business School, Coventry University, (Contd. on next page)



Professor BS Ghuman
Former Vice Chancellor
Punjabi University, Patiala
Email:ghumanbs54@gmail.com

Floral Tribute: Prof Autar Singh Dhesi (July 9, 1936 - April 24, 2024)

Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba Weeklies paid floral tribute to Professor Autar Singh Dhesi who completed his fruitful temporal journey on April 24, 2024. Prof. Dhesi was our respected contributor. Ambedkar Times created an exclusive file of his valuable write-ups for the benefits of our esteemed readers. His passing away will remain an irreparable loss not only for the academic world but also personally for our forum as well. We pray for the eternal peace of the departed noble soul.

Prem K. Chumber
Editor-in-Chief: Ambedkar Times

Passion to serve his beloved country - India brought renowned economist late Professor Autar Singh Dhesi back from United Kingdom

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England. He was also appointed as member of Senate of Punjabi University. He published extensively, even after superannuation, in professional and popular journals and weeklies. Ambedkar Times, a weekly published from California, the USA, created a file on its website to highlight his seminal contribution.

I have had the honour of becoming his M. Phil. student in 1977 and later completed Ph.D. under his supervision at GNDU, Amritsar and thereafter also remained in touch with him till his last days. He honed my academic credentials so meticulously that straight way I got selected as lecturer at Panjab University and later on throughout my academic career his mentorship paid me rich dividends including Dean, Arts Faculty at Panjab University, Chandigarh and Vice Chancellor, Punjabi University, Patiala. I am indeed hugely indebted to him and in spite of my best efforts I could not pay

back him Guru Dakshina (the Indian tradition of repaying to one's teacher) befitting to his seminal contribution in my academic journey.

Professor A.S. Dhesi transcended intellectual arena. He was firm believer of blending theory and practice advocating that whatever we teach in the universities should be applied in one form or the other to solve societal problems as well. He was also a champion of policy research focusing on bridging the dichotomy between intellectuals and policy makers. While serving as member Punjab State Planning Board, he tried to bridge this gap. He had a passion for the development of Punjab especially rural development which he pursued through the activities of PDS, networking with Punjabi Diaspora intellectuals and writing popular articles in print media, in addition to his numerous quality research publications. During his teaching tenure his endeavour was not only to make students employable but also to edu-

cate them to eradicate economic and social evils including drug menace from Punjab. His passing away has marked a profound loss not only for academia but also for broader community. His students like me inspired by his dedication and vision will make sincere efforts to take forward his legacy for pursuing excellence in research including in the area of public policy and publishing socially relevant articles in print media. Professor A S Dhesi was cremated on April 29, 2024 at his native village Kahna Dhesian, district Jalandhar. His Bhog and Antim Ardas ceremony was held at his native village on May 3, 2024. His younger brother, Sardar Balraj Singh Dhesi, Professor BS Ghuman, Former Vice Chancellor, Punjabi University, Patiala; Professor HS Sidhu, Former Chairman, Punjab School Education Board; Professor Gurmair Singh, Vice Chancellor, Akal University, Dam Dama Sahib; Professor Ronki Ram, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Chair Professor, Panjab University,

Chandigarh; Professor Sukhdev Singh Sohal, Former Professor of History, GNDU, Amritsar and Ms. Kanwal Grewal Dhanhoya, Assistant Professor of Economics, Sri Guru Gobind Singh College, Chandigarh paid homage to Professor AS Dhesi and also shared their experiences of interaction with him. Each of them reminisced their lively engagement with Professor Dhesi, who, reiterated all, that he was a moving encyclopaedia of economic and social knowledge a popular but strict teacher; conscientious researcher with a sharp focus on socially relevant high-quality research; a thorough gentleman of impeccable integrity; secular in his vision and approach; and always keen to see Punjab back to its economic supremacy in India; bridging the gap between rural and urban areas; and putting Punjabi youth on the right track by helping them getting high quality skill education and decent jobs.

- Professor BS Ghuman



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Ambedkar, Caste and Nation – A Subaltern Perspective

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

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

He built a strong case against the thesis of birth-based untouchability, which forced social exclusion on those kept outside the caste system and made their life hell. He exhorted its victims to oppose it tooth and nail. He said, "It is disgraceful to live at the cost of one's self respect. Self-respect is the most vital factor in life. Without it, man is a mere cipher. To live worthily with self-respect one has to overcome difficulties. It is out of hard and ceaseless struggle alone that one derives strength, confidence and recognition." He drew a distinction between merely living and living worthily. For living a worthy life, Ambedkar said, society must be based on liberty, equality and fraternity. For Ambedkar, social tyranny was more oppressive than political tyranny and "a reformer, who defies society, is a much more

courageous man than a politician, who defies government".

Ambedkar was of the kind who defied society. In the beginning of his social-reform crusade, he tried to get respect and equality for the lower castes through reforms within the social set-up. He continued his struggle for empowerment of the lower castes by seeking changes within the fold of the society till 1935. When he realized that the liberation of lower castes within the given social setup was impossible, he began his scathing criticism and



tirade against the inegalitarian social order. Ultimately, he got convinced that the only safe passage available for lower castes lies in conversion, hence, his conversion to Buddhism. For Ambedkar, lower castes liberation was the foremost issue and he emphasized that lower castes themselves have to come forward for its realization. Thus, Ambedkar provided a subaltern perspective to see through the chameleon of Indian caste-ridden social set-up and the ways to guard the interests of the Lower castes.

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

structure, where he thought the roots of the untouchability lay.

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

Dr Ambedkar's conception of nationalism articulated and synthesized the national perceptions and aspirations of the downtrodden. It constructed a subaltern discourse of Indian nationalism. It aimed at establishing a casteless and classless society where no one would be discriminated against on the basis of birth and occupation.

Within the lower castes-bahujan framework of Indian nationalism, Ambedkar built a critique of the asymmetrical social set-up based of graded caste hierarchy. His understanding of the question of the identity and existence of the nation was based on incisive analysis of the oppressive character of mainstream religion that pervaded a society built around the caste system. Since the dominant discourse of Indian nationalism remained indifferent towards removal of the caste system; and the economic analysis of the communist secular socialist school also failed to highlight the issue of caste in its mechanical interpretation of class, Ambedkar – himself an Untouchable and victim of untouchability – formulated his

own framework from the perspective of lower castes for the understanding of the system of caste and untouchability. The foundations of lower caste-bahujan nationalism lie in this framework

developed by Ambedkar. It aimed at restructuring Indian society into a casteless and classless society – an egalitarian Sangha. Annihilation of caste was its central theme. Caste, asserts Ambedkar, was antithetical to nation.

He realized that any form of nationalism whose roots were steeped in segmented socio-religious order could not bring relief to lower castes. Any discourse of nationalism bereft of annihilation of caste was not acceptable to him at all. The agenda of annihilation of caste was so important to him that it became a central point of his struggle against colonial rule. In the first Round Table Conference, he minced no words in criticizing the British government for its failure to undo untouchability.

Swaraj without extinction of caste had no meaning for Ambedkar. In his undelivered speech to the Jat-Pat Todak Mandal of Lahore, he said, "In the fight for swaraj you fight with the whole nation on your side. In this, you have to fight against the whole nation and that too your own. But it is more important than swaraj.

There is no use having swaraj, if you cannot defend it. More important than the question of defending swaraj is the question of defending Hindus under the swaraj. In my opinion, only when the Hindu society becomes a casteless society that it can hope to have strength enough to defend itself. Without such internal strength, swaraj for Hindus may turn out to be only a step towards slavery."

Thus, it was Ambedkar's subaltern perspective, which distinguished his conception of swaraj from that of the protagonists of the various shades of the national freedom movement. In his editorial in the *Bahishkrit Bharat*, Ambedkar wrote on 29 July 1927, "If Tilak had been born among the Untouchables, he would not have raised the slogan 'Swaraj is my birthright', but he would have raised the slogan 'Annihilation of untouchability is my birthright'."



Prof (Dr.) Ronki Ram

Prof (Dr.) Ronki Ram
Shaheed Bhagat Singh Chair Professor
Panjab University, Chandigarh
E-mail: ronkiram@yahoo.co.in



Dr. Sunita Sawarkar
sunitsawarkar@gmail.com

Historicity of Chamar Women's Contribution in the Ambedkaraite Movement: Part - 3

Venubai Shivtarkar

As India is a country with a patriarchal social system, it is a lot of women to silently cooperate with the work done by men. Therefore, in the movements that took place in India; the men working in it are supported by their housewife's mother, sister, and daughter. As education began, women began to think outside the workplace. Women began to participate in various sectors like education, social reform, and many other fields; but before that, if a man worked in the movement, his wife, mother, and daughter would enter the movement through that man in Ambedkaraite Movement. It can be seen that the participation of women in the movement of Babasaheb Ambedkar's colleague Sitaram Shivtarkar's house is also similar.

Sitaram Shivtarkar is well-known as Shivtarkar Guruji or Shivtarkar Master (Teacher) as he played a vital role in the early stage of the Ambedkaraite movement. He had two wives. Earlier it was a practice to have two wives. Sitaram Shivtarkar Guruji's first marriage was to Sitabai Sambhaji Devrukhkar in 1913. The marriage took place at Barhanpur. Before marriage, her name was Vithabai. After marriage, changed her name to Sitabai as per the social tradition. In 1916, she gave birth to a son, Sahadev. In 1920, she gave birth to a son, Shankar. Then, three years after Shankar, she gave birth to two daughters. Those daughters died at birth. Sitabai died when the second daughter was born. Then the son Shankar was four years old. We have Shankar's date of birth, which means she must have died in 1924. The name of Shivtarkar's wife does not appear in documents related to the movement, but there are many references to his second wife 'Venubai'.

Sitaram Shivtarkar Guruji's second marriage was to Venubai Devlekar on June 11, 1916. Their Gandharva marriage took place at Kurla. In 1917, she gave birth to a daughter named Anusaya. This girl is later seen active in the Ambedkaraite movement. It is seen that Shivtarkar Guruji had strong support from the women of his family. Because of the support of Venubai and Anusaya Shivtarkar Guruji

played important roles in the Ambedkaraite movement.

On October 25, 1931, a meeting of untouchable women was held in the grand courtyard of the Improvement Trust Chaul. Mrs. Venubai Shivtarkar participated in this meeting. In this meeting, the 'Bahiskrit Samaj Mahila Mandal' was formed. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's role in the Round Table Conference was supported. Along with this, the Samaj Samata Sangh used to organize a family co-meal program. Sitaram Shiv-

According to Khairmode's description, Mrs. Shivtarkar was a good cook. Also, it can be seen that her action was done with the intention of people from different castes coming home to eat and to break the constraints of caste rules. This means that Venubai Shivtarkar can be seen actively contributing to the struggle for social change. Despite facing the opposition of their fellow castes along with Sitaram Shivtarkar Guruji. This experiment of family meals was started to eliminate the differences between

vey the special information. The pledge of jewelry has been cancelled. Answering as soon as the check arrives means that the worry of missing it will be removed. To Shivtarkar Master, Check no. M54084 Thomas Cook Cross order Date 21.03.34 Industrial & Provincial Assurance & Co. Ltd. (it is from the letter of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar in 1934)

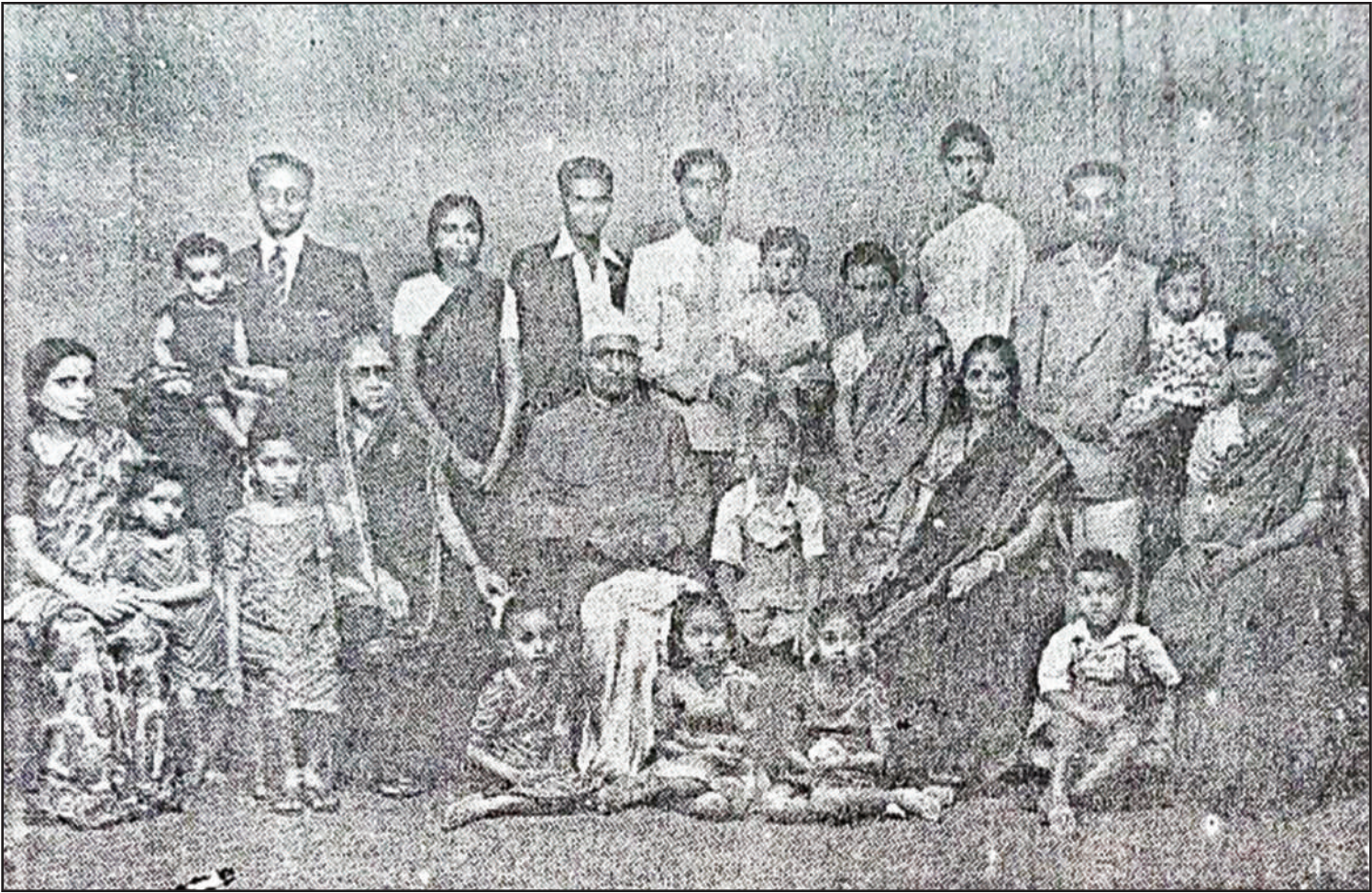
According to Shivtarkar's son, first the wife mortgaged the jewelry. Later it is seen that Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar paid the money by check and cancelled the system of pawning the jewellery. Even if Sitaram Shivtarkar Guruji does all these things, Stridhan (jewelry, money, and gifts that are received to women from her parents) belongs to that woman only. Venubai Shivtarkar also donates Gold Stridhan to the movement, which is a very important contribution.

Venubai suffered from a very serious disease like cancer in her old age. In 1952, she was ill for a whole year. About this Sahadev Sitaram Shivtarkar says in his autobiography, 'December 6, 1952 when I was on duty at Bhijpuri Power Station at 2 midnight on I was told

over the phone from the Dharavi receiving station that, my mother succumbed to cancer. Of the year 1951 from the very beginning, this disease kept gnawing at my mother's body as my father was kept awake by the doctor beforehand. After his success in the January 1952 elections, my father hurriedly a group photo of our Shivtarkar family at Khapade in Boribandar Went to the art studio, and took it off. The mother was suffering from internal pain'.

We were all convinced after seeing the group photo. I am from Bhivpuri camp 7:30 hrs. By trolley by Karjat local from Bhivpuri railway station arrived at Kaivalyadham at Shivaji Park at 11:30 am. After landing at Dadar. More than a thousand people had gathered in the cemetery for paying homage. In the cemetery, almost giving speeches on the character traits and qualities of my mother At 2.30 pm, we returned home.

From this it will be noticed that the silent contribution of Venubai to the movement with her husband. Venubai's end was very sad. Although we have very less written references of Venubai's contribution it is true in Indian society women became a part of her husband's work eventually.



tarkar was an untouchable member of Samaj Samata Sangh. So a co-meal family dinner was organized at his home. Accordingly, On November 3, 1928, a family dinner was held at Sitaram Shivtarkar Guruji's house. About this collective meal Written by Khairmode. He says, on the date 3.11.28 he had lunch at Shivtarkar's house. Mrs. Shivtarkar also cooked well; but the members were in no mood to give her that kind of appreciation because, at the time, the dinner was held on the first floor of the Noble House. At the same time, a Chamar Panchayat meeting was going on the ground floor regarding the Caste exclusion of the Shivtarkar family by the RohidasChambharSamaj. The faces of Shivtarkar himself and his wife were fallen. We all felt great sympathy for the ambivalence. This statement of Khairmode is very important. Because when this was happening, among the members Changdev Khairmode also present at the dinner was given. Evidence that he was an eyewitness to the incident is found in the November 16, 1928 issue of Samata Pakshik. In this issue, there was news of a family dinner. Also a list of names of members of various castes who were present. Khairmode's name is also there.

castes. It is seen that Venubai Shivtarkar also contributed to this effort regardless of the opposition of the society.

Sitaram Shivtarkar's contribution to the Ambedkaraite movement till the formation of the Independent Labour Party is very important. His role is very important in the development of the movement at every stage in the early times. When Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was in abroad, Shivtarkar also did the very difficult task of taking charge of the movement. Shivtarkar Guruji devoted himself to all this work. Shivtarkar tended to work by offering all his heart and money for it. ShivtarkarGuruji's son has written the biography of Sitaram Shivtarkar. In this biography, Shivtarkar Guruji is said to have pledged his wife's jewelry for the cause of the movement. In 1934 Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar wrote a letter to Shivtarkar Guruji.

In that letter, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar says that, on the date 15 had written to the insurance company, But there is no reply from them yet, I don't know what is the matter, however, to be careful, I am sending a check of twelve hundred and forty as per the account you have written, to go and pay it immediately and to con-

Accept it as it comes !

The Journey from status
To ordinariness ,
From middle age
To the aged peerage
Is a down-hill slide
Full of a sense of slight
That pulsates
In every encounter
With the latest human editions.

A smooth, gradual slipping
Into the limbo of being forgotten
And pushed into the region
Of the not known.
Most familiar faces
Aren't visible on the street !

And those trotting the scene
Don't know you ,
Nor do you know them.
And wonder where is the relevance
Of the vision that you once shared
And stood for ?
Where are people once eager
To talk to you
And to walk with you !

Timelines of different editions
Make this mandatory !
And you need neither miss
That which once was!
Nor must you grudge
This one that here and now is !

Empowered 'Me' !

Empowered by education ?
And perhaps , by a job ?
No , only a semblance, yet !
Taboos stay !
Mother-in-law is still
In her terror image.
Only my burdens have increased.

I have a time table to maintain
Between private and official time.
I have to be a multi-tasker.
Have to do most of my phone-calling
While commuting back home on a scooter
And balance it with traffic hazards!
No choice, really !

I , sometimes jump the traffic lights
Because there is the waiting child,
And the kitchen chores,
And the impatient husband,
And the devouring eyes of the old Mum !
My externals have some new dressing
But that is not the true me!

Cynical fears !

Though not more than sixty
He looked eighty!
Panting even as he spoke
In utterly feeble tone
That sounded like whistles !

As I walked to a Mall
He asked me for some work
As a labourer in a home garden.
May be some tending of flower beds .
Said , his son was in hospital
After a road accident.
And started weeping
To prove the truth of his petition.

I parted with some money
And bade him seek work elsewhere.
Five minutes later while going home
I saw him walking unsteadily
Towards nowhere!



DESH BIR
+91-98780-24304

Born in 1951 and brought up and schooled in Kangra district of erstwhile Punjab (now Himachal Pradesh), Desh Bir did his M.A. in English from DAV College, Jalandhar and topped the GND University, Amritsar. Taught at DAV College, Jalandhar for three years before joining Punjab Govt. Education Service in 1976 as a Lecturer at Govt. College Hoshiarpur. He was selected in Central Services based on combined UPSC exam for IAS etc in 1978, but chose to stay in Education. He was promoted as Principal, Govt. College, Hoshiarpur, in July, 2006 and retired in October, 2009. After retirement, he was appointed as Ombudsman, NREGA for five districts of Punjab for four years. Has nearly 170 creative articles published in English Newspapers like Daily Post, Deccan Herald, The Tribune, Daily World, Punjab Advance and Kashmir Vision. Lately, he has taken to poetry for pouring out his intensely felt perceptions

I waved to him .
Asked him if he really wanted work.
When affirmed, I took him home
And showed him a small stretch
Of grass outside the house
To dig from the roots.
I thought, he might sulk away.

But , no !
He said , he would visit his son
Lying in the ward
And return at eight-thirty the next day
to do this chore !
I had cynical fears
And doubts if he would come at all.

And today, he is there!
Exactly on time to prove
That I need not suspect
The bonafides of a poor man !

Dance of Discord

Align by design,
Assume a new name.
And so start the blame game
And bring the nation to shame !

Accord gives way
To all pervading discord .
Choosing any excuse,
Or unreasonable reason
To hurl slander on others.

Forgetting the nation
And its people ..
Abusing and cursing each other
In season or out of season!
To almost brand the others
For maladies that defy definition.

They have a fun time
At the common man's cost!
Gods serve their purpose
To mount to the altar of power!

One almost reigns supreme alone
While the other horde
Has a dozen spirants
Who wish to make it to the throne!
I , the common man , suffer !
They have the bull fight

And I am used
As a straw-filled buffer!

Either of them shall make it
To the cherished goal
While I shall ever groan
Under the weight of this discord !

Your Own Script

You script your own story--
A fabric of curious weave !
So very disparate by turns.
Of laudable moments of empathy,
And sometimes
Simply of damnable and culpable apathy!

A story of graft accepted
And of gratification offered !
Of flashes of stoic wisdom,
And of heights of greed !
A tale of victims made,
And of tyrants suffered !
Of roars announcing rage
And of piety that others envy !

You spin and offer dreams
And can also rob people's dreams.
You are now an angel of peace,
And now an igniter of clash !
You are a staunch atheist
As you speak about Marx
Also an exemplary idol worshipper
While you address a devout crowd !

You are the voice for human rights ,
You are the hope of the people !
But when it suits
You also trample all rights
Under your jack boots!
Could you really define
Who you really are ?

My Dilemma

I move to office
And to field areas
In a flag car !
They offer me respect
Which I shockingly lost
But only one hour ago
At the hands of a lout
Called people's man !

Newspapers complimented me
When I graduated to this service--
The coveted cadre
Called Steel Framework of India!
At the ideal training
They inspired us to become
Flawless creators
Of an ever- new India !

Yet , each day
I have to re-assure myself
That I should not lose
The ability
To offer some good
To the common man
Who approaches me
With hope and dreams
Of a fair treatment!

Still the clout
Of the wealthy and the strong
Poses so many hurdles
Which I have to tide over each day
And each hour
So that I do not
Let down myself
In spite of the weight
Of negatives popping from
Every unseen angle!
That is my chosen destiny!
And I am trying to keep it intact !

Assemblyman Hoover's Representative Report

Oversight Hearing on Homelessness

Next week I will be joining Assembly Budget Subcommittee 7 on



Accountability & Oversight for a hearing on homelessness. Among the topics of discussion will be the results of my bipartisan audit of homelessness spending. To watch this hearing, you can tune in live on Monday, May 6th at 11:00am by clicking here the day of the hearing.

Legislation to Increase Transparency and Accountability Over Homelessness Spending Clears Housing Committee



Next week I will be joining Assembly Budget Subcommittee 7 on Accountability & Oversight for a hearing on homelessness. Among the topics of discussion will be the results of my bipartisan audit of homelessness spending. To watch this hearing, you can tune in live on Monday, May 6th at 11:00am by clicking here the day of the hearing.

Lifetime Regional Transit Pass for Seniors

Yesterday, a bill I co-authored (AB 2634) passed the Assembly and will now head to the Senate for a vote.



The bill will allow Regional Transit to offer seniors 75 years and older a lifetime pass to ensure their continued mobility and access to essential services. I was grateful to partner with SacRT on this bill and I appreciate the work they are doing to modernize light rail service with new low-floor trains to improve accessibility.

Soon you will be able to take light rail to our District Office located at 13405 Folsom Blvd, Bldg 700, Ste. A in Folsom with trains every 15 minutes. Once construction is completed on a secondary track at the end of July 2024, just hop on the Gold Line to

ward Historic Folsom and get off at the Glenn/Robert G. Holderness Station. From there it is about a 10 minute walk to our office.

Rancho Cordova Feeding Families Golf Tournament

Last week I was delighted to sponsor the inaugural Feeding Families

lies Golf Tournament which benefited the Rancho Cordova Food Locker. Food insecurity and hunger are growing problems in our community, but together we can work to make a difference. The Food Locker's vision is to create a welcoming center where our friends and neighbors who are facing food insecurity can access healthy



food at no cost with ease and dignity. The Food Locker currently serves nearly three times as many households as they were just one year ago.

Thank you to the Rancho Cordova Chamber of Commerce Leadership Class 17 for putting on an amazing event for such a great cause!

Carmichael and Rancho Cordova Community Events

My staff had a great time this past weekend talking and meeting with constituents from throughout the District at two wonderful community events.

The Carmichael Chamber of Commerce hosted its first Community Open House and Craft Fair that served as an opportunity for residents to get connected with various organizations, community groups, local nonprofits, and learn of the many ways for them to get involved in their neighborhoods.

The Cordova Community Council hosted its 34th annual Kids Day at Hagan Community Park, which



focused on Super Science providing kids and their families with a fun day filled with activities and resources. Kids Day has been a favorite Rancho Cordova special event for more than three decades and I was thrilled to be

a part of it this year.

My staff and I look forward to seeing you and your family at more community events as we enter into the spring and summer months.

New Podcast Episode



In this week's episode of the Point of Order Podcast I was joined by Janus Norman and Amanda Gualderama with CalBroadband to discuss the issues facing broadband and internet connectivity. Other topics discussed include legislation that would limit airport screening company CLEAR in California airports.

Folsom Ribbon Cuttings

We celebrated several ribbon cuttings in Folsom this week and my staff was in attendance to provide each of them with certificates of recognition to commemorate the occasions.

Zen Day Spa, located at 2750 E Bidwell St, Folsom, CA 95630 is a brand-new spa that offers true relaxation and their team is devoted to calming your mind, body,



and soul.

Natoma Lodge No. 64 (Charles F. Anderson Masonic Center), located at 1000 Duchow Way, Folsom, CA 95630 was established on May 4, 1854, and is the oldest continuously operating organization in Folsom. The Lodge celebrated their 170th birthday and the community came together to celebrate this incredible milestone.

Erik's DeliCafe, located at 411 Blue Ravine Rd, Folsom, CA 95630 recently joined the Folsom Chamber of Commerce. Erik's provides a perfect place to grab a fresh sandwich for lunch or a dessert from their bakery section.

Air Force Junior ROTC Awards Ceremony

This week we honored cadets in the Air Force Junior ROTC (AFJROTC) Program established at Casa Roble High School. Each cadet learns and uses the code, values, and mission taught to them over the course of their time in the program and well

into their adult life. The Cadet Honor Code states, "I will not lie, cheat or steal nor tolerate those among us who do." The United States Air Force Core Values includes, "Integrity First, Service Before Self, Excellence In All We Do."

Our office honored over 70 cadets and celebrated the graduating class being sent off, as well as the



changing of leadership for their new Captain.

The Cadet group is a military type organization, completely managed and operated by cadets. It is through this cadet organization that cadets learn leadership and organizational skills that will serve them well throughout their lives. They work together to plan and conduct a wide variety of school and community service projects and thereby learn the true meaning of "Service Before Self" and

"Excellence In All We Do."

Rosemont Community Association Annual Meeting

I joined the Rosemont Community Association for its Annual Meeting where community organizations and elected officials had the opportunity to



share what we are working on for the residents of the Rosemont area. It was great to see such engaged participants who truly care about the neighborhoods they live in. This is always a great event for residents to learn about their community association, engage with their local elected officials, and get a sneak preview of upcoming events for the neighborhood. Thank you to everyone who attended this great event.



Assemblyman Hoover