



DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

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Democracy and social justice are interrelated social processes. The one is incomplete in the absence of the other. Democracy offers freedom space to realize equality and experience fraternity. Equality and fraternity are the two essential ingredients of social justice, which achieves its true form with the addition of liberty. Thus the trinity of liberty, equality and fraternity constitutes the essence of social justice and the institution of democracy provides the requisite realm for its realization. Though many scholars' boasts of ancient origins of democracy in India but it would be prudent to argue that democracy achieves its roots in the real sense of the term with the adoption of the constitution in independent India. Bodhisattva Baba Saheb Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, Chairman of Constitutional Drafting Committee, worked very hard to incorporate various provisions for the realization of social justice in the Indian society. He was of the firm views that if social and economic parity remains an elusive to the multitude of poor and historically socially excluded people in the country, then the very purpose of having parliamentary democracy would not be served efficiently. He reiterated the seminal point during his engaging discussions at various important forums within and outside the Indian parliament that for social justice to prevail in the country, India needs effective participation of the downtrodden in all the different spheres of the society.

The demand for social justice was also raised at various platforms during the freedom struggle movement in colonial India. Ad-Movements in North and South India, Justice Party in South India, Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia from Punjab, Swami Achhuta Nand Ji from Uttar Pradesh, Baba Ghasi Das Ji from Madhya Pradesh, Thanthai Periyar E. V. Ramasamy (Tamilnadu) promoted the principles of rationalism, self-respect, women's rights and eradication of caste, Sri Narayana Guru from Kerala raised a consistent campaign for the prevalence of social justice in the Indian society. Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia presented a number of resolutions to the British Government for the removal of untouchability and special provisions for the inclusion of socially excluded sections of the society in the public realm of power and social domain.

Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia joined hands with Bodhisattva Baba Saheb Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar in his struggle for equal rights for the socially excluded people of India. When Baba Saheb Dr. Ambedkar speeded its movement into the political agile lands of Punjab with the formation of Punjab chapter of Scheduled Castes Federation, there was a tremendous response from the grassroots. That was precisely the contributions of Ad Dharm movement which laid the foundation stone of social justice campaign in the state in the mid-1920s. But the irony of the matter is that even after more than seven decades of India's independence, Dalits in the country are still subjected to various types of atrocities and social discriminations. Though the Indian state, while making the optimum use of various anti untouchability clauses of the constitution, is doing its best to bridle the monster of caste, but still is more needed to be done at the social level where the people should come forward to internalize the values of liberty, equality and fraternity in order to realize the true sense of democracy and social justice.

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Political Consciousness Formation among Lower-Castes in Northwest India: Analyzing the Ad-Dharm Movement in Punjab

Lecture delivered at Symbiosis International (Deemed University) Symbiosis Centre for Ambedkar Studies, November 27, 2024

At present Scheduled Castes in East Punjab constitute one-third of the total state population – largest in comparison to their counterparts in all other states and UTs in India. However, their share in the agriculture land in the state is lowest. Less than five percent of them are small time cultivators. Though in terms of administrative set up they are enumerated along with other caste communities in the census records of the villages in East Punjab, actually they live in segregated Dalit settlements situated in the periphery of mainstream villages. The segregated Schedule Castes' peripheries are contemptuously called *Chamarlees* in Doaba, *Thathees* in Malwa, and *Vehras* in Majha: the three distinct spatial-cultural regions of the state. Nevertheless, Scheduled Castes in East Punjab, like all other communities, are Punjabi first and their religion and caste and domiciliary locations come later. Like all other integral segments of the syncretic Punjabi qaum, Scheduled Castes are too valorous and well known for their praiseworthy role during the fights of the Khalsa armies of Guru Gobind Singh against the regimes of injustice and social oppression. To live with dignity prompted them in the second half of 1920s, to organise themselves under the Ad Dharm movement (11-12

Mangu Ram faced social exclusion, for his so-called low birth, at the school in a nearby village Bajwara. He was forced to leave the studies abruptly without completing his matriculation. Thereafter, in search of easy life, like the early emigrants from the Doaba, Mangu Ram too landed in America in 1909 and earned his livelihood while working in lumber industry and agriculture farms. That was the time when Punjabi emigrants in North America were planning to form a radical organisation for the liberation of colonial India. Eventually, Mangu Ram became an active member of the Ghadar *Lehar* (movement) founded in 1913. He was one of the five proud members of a Ghadrite group who were assigned the herculean task of ferrying weapons to India for an armed rebellion against the British rule. But *S S Maverick*, the ship that was bought to transport weapons was caught in route and destiny took Mangu Ram into the Philippines, where he spent the next twelve years of his prime life incognito. Finally, hereached his native village in 1925, to the surprise of all, as everyone already knew the news of his alleged hanging.

Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia is to the Punjab what Mahatma Jyotirao Phule is to Maharashtra, and just as the Maharashtra

June, 1926), the maiden Dalit movement of pre-partition Punjab. The Ad Dharm movement was parallel but independent of various other contemporary Adi/Dalit movements (briefly discussed below) emerged almost at the same time in the South India.

Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia (January 14, 1886 – April 22, 1980) was the precursor of the Ad Dharm movement. He belonged to a Dalit family of

Dalit movement owes its origin to Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, the Punjab Dalit movement is similarly indebted to Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia. If Mahatma Jyotirao Phule was influenced by the writings of Thomas Paine, the famous English-born American political activist, theorist, philosopher and revolutionary of the nineteenth century, Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia learnt his lessons of equality and freedom from the proclaimed democratic and liberal values of the United States of America wherein he came into contact, during his sojourn, with the revolutionary freedom fighters popularly known as

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leather workers of village M u g o w a l i n d i s t r i c t Hoshiarpur. His father wanted him to educate so that he could him in his leather business by reading transactions written in English. Despite his relatively well off family background,



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Political Consciousness Formation among Lower-castes in Northwest India: Analyzing the Ad-Dharm Movement in Punjab

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Ghadari Babas, of the historic Ghadar Lehar. This further cemented his resolve to fight for a dignified life for the masses by liberating India from the clutches of the British Empire, and to establish in its place democratic and egalitarian home rule with equality and freedom for all irrespective of caste, class, creed, language, gender and regional differentiations.

On return to his native village, after spending 16 years abroad, Babu Mangu Ram did not find any change in the predominance of untouchability. In his own words: "While living abroad I had forgotten about the hierarchy of high and low, and untouchability; and under this delusion returned home in December 1925. The same disease from which I had escaped started tormenting me again. I wrote about all this to my leader Lala Hardyal Ji, saying that until and unless this disease is cured, Hindustan could not be liberated. Hence, in accordance with his orders, a programme was formulated in 1926 for the awakening and upliftment of the Achhut qaum (untouchable community) of India" (*Kaumi Udarian* 1986: 23-24). Consequently, he decided to dedicate rest of his life for the emancipation and empowerment of his fellow so-called low-caste people. He established an elementary school in his native village for the lower caste children of those self-same socially excluded sections of the society that later came to be designated Scheduled Castes (SCs) under the Government of India (Scheduled Castes) order, 1936, which contained a list (or schedule) of castes throughout the British-administered provinces. Following into the footsteps of his revolutionary Ghadarite leadership in the United States of America, he aspired to both fight against the caste-based social evil of untouchability and to replace it with an all-encompassing social freedom, as well as to join the fight to free the subjugated India and return to it its political freedom. Like his predecessor in Maharashtra, he faced stiff opposition from the so-called upper castes in his fierce struggle against oppressive structures of domination including untouchability – the most egregious one among them.

The Ad Dharm movement, pioneered by Mangu Ram, soon became a household name among the Dalits of the Punjab like the Satyashodak Samaj movement of Phule in Maharashtra. Seth Kishan Das of Bootan Mandi – a well-known local leather merchant – helped build its headquarter named 'Ad Dharm Mandal' in Jalandhar. Mangu Ram with his untiring efforts literally took the movement to the doorsteps of all the untouchables in the region and soon emerged as a cult figure of the Dalits. Under the flag of Ad Dharm movement, he fought for the long denied land rights of the lower castes who were legally debarred along with other non-agriculture castes from owning agriculture land under the Land Alienation Act of 1900. Moreover, under the local customary law, popularly known as 'rayit-nammas', the lower castes were also deprived of ownership rights on the residential plot of their houses in the segregated neighbourhoods. They were not allowed to build pucca houses in these separate Dalit localities. They were only permitted to build mud/thatched houses and in return were supposed to perform some begar (forced labour without wages) in the agriculture farms of the legal owners of their residential plots.

Another important task towards the material empowerment of the lower castes that was undertaken by the Ad Dharm movement was special legal provision of education and government employment reservation for the lower castes under the state affirmative action. Like the *Satyashodak Samaj* movement in Maharashtra, the Ad Dharm movement soon became a household name among the Dalits of Punjab. It was for the first time in the forgotten history of the lower castes in the state that a golden opportunity knocked at their doors to get them united on a common and distinct platform under the leadership of their fellow-travellers to fight for the most sought after goal of dignified life and to collectively press their long-pending claim for a share in the local structures of power.

In the wake of the limited democratic political process in 1919 prised from the British Government for the institutionalization of the electoral system, every community was busy in organizing its respective members into well-organized socio-political forces (political parties/organizations); and as a young man freshly-returned from the US, and meticulously chiselled in the superb companionship of the proud Ghadarite Babas, Babu Mangu Ram able bring together many of his fellow community members to build a separate social and political organization at par with that of the upper caste communities like the Hindu Mahasabha of the Hindus, Muslim League of the Muslims and Singh Sabhas of the Sikhs. This limited election-based legislature-forming-process also led to the formation of similar Adi-movements in other parts of the country like Adi-Andhras, Adi-Dravidas, Adi-Karnataka in the South India, and Adi-Hindus in the Uttar Pradesh province of the North India. Though these different Adi-movements emerged almost at the same time in different regions of the country, there is no evidence to prove that they were instrumental in the rise of one and another. Each Adi-movement was influenced by the then prevailing situations in its own specific context in the given state.

In the posterannouncing the first annual meeting of the Ad Dharm movement, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, along with Swami Shudranand and Babu Thakur Chand, devoted the entire space to the hardships faced by the *Moolnivasis* at the hands of the caste Hindus. He also made an appeal to the *Moolnivasis* to come together to chalk out a programme for their liberation and upliftment. Addressing them as brothers, he said:

We are the real inhabitants of this country and our religion is Ad Dharm. Hindu Qaum came from outside to deprive us of our country and enslave us. At one time we reigned over 'Hind'. We are the progeny of kings, Hindus came down from Iran to Hind and destroyed our Qaum. They deprived us of our property and rendered us nomadic. They razed our forts and houses, and destroyed our history. We are seven crores in numbers and are registered as Hindus in this country. Liberate the Adi race by separating these seven crores. ... Our seven crore number enjoy no share at all. We reposed faith in Hindus and thus suffered a lot. Hindus turned out to be callous. Centuries ago, Hindus suppressed us; sever all ties with them. What justice can we expect from those who are the butchers of the Adi race. The time has come; be cautious, now the Government listens to

appeals. With the support of a sympathetic Government, come together to save the race. Send members to the Councils so that our Qaum is strengthened again. British rule should remain forever. Make prayer before God. Except for this Government, no one is sympathetic towards us. Never consider ourselves as Hindus at all; remember that our religion is Ad Dharm (Kaumi Udarian: 1986: 21-22).

Keen readers of Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia have observed that he was conflicted on the issue of the British Raj – on the one hand he feared even greater oppression under Hindu majoritarian rule than under the British – whom he also viewed as possible partners in facilitating a more equal Indian society – but on the other hand he aspired for the dignity of national independence, which necessitated the removal of the British. This remained a recurring paradox in his political approach till the achievement of Indian independence in 1947. In the meantime, he along with other leaders of Ad Dharm movement chose to restore the lost dignity and freedom of the untouchables by detaching them completely from Hinduism and re-consolidating them into their own ancient religion (Ad Dharm). The long domination by the Aryans, they alleged, made them oblivious of their native religion.

Thus, what made the Ad Dharm-movement the most politically noticeable and popular of its time was the farsightedness of its visionary leaders in setting the goal of bringing divergent lower caste communities under a single flag and to transform them into a distinct single community at par with other separate communities of Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Christians etc and to become an appropriate part of the Punjabi qaum. This was the most crucial political move on the part of Babu Mangu Ram, the master strategist, who intervened at a vital moment when limited direct elections were scheduled to be held in the state. He pressed for a separate religion for the lower castes of Punjab to be recorded in the 1931 Census, who in his opinion were neither Hindus, Sikhs, Muhammadans nor Christians. The lower castes, reiterated Babu Mangu Ram, were the original inhabitants – *Moolnivasis* (aboriginal people) of this nation. The alien Aryan invaders, he continued further, deprived them of their kingdom, looted them, and finally enslaved them. In his brilliant article entitled *Achhut da Swaal* (The Question of Untouchability) published in the *Kirtimonthly* of the *Kirti Kisan* party in 1929, penned under the pseudonym of Vidrohi, Shaheed Bhagat Singh supported the Ad Dharm leadership in its tirade against the caste system and for a separate religion, but at the same time also cautioned them to keep their distance from the British.

The Ad Dharm movement, under the leadership of Babu Mangu Ram, aimed at restoring the lost dignity and freedom of the untouchables by detaching them completely from Hinduism and re-consolidating into their own ancient religion (Ad Dharm). However, the task of reviving their ancient religion, in fact, was not an easy one. To revive Ad Dharm was tantamount to developing a new religion for the native people. *Moolnivasis*, the natives of this region, had forgotten their Gurus and other religious symbols during their long period of persecution under the rule of the outsiders. They had been condemned as impure and declared unfit to have their own theology. In order to establish their hege-

mony and legitimacy over the enslaved *Moolnivasis* of Bharat, the Aryan invaders successfully metamorphosed themselves into upper castes of the first three Varnas (Brahmans, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas) – the fourfold Hindu social order based on *Chatur-Varnavyavastha*. The natives of the conquered land were allegedly pushed into the fourth Varna of Shudras – consisting of artisan castes and still other further reduced into lowest of the low castes, contemptuously dubbed as Untouchable peoples.

The assertion by Babu Mangu Ram that Dalits were the real inhabitants of this land made an enormous psychological impact on them. It provided a theological podium to them to sustain and reinforce the new Dalit identity. The British Government granted them, as demanded, distinct status of a separate religion – Ad Dharm. The Ad Dharm was based on the teachings and inspiration from the saints of the North India Bhakti movement, particularly Guru Ravidass, Bhagwan Valmik, Sant Kabir and Sant Namdev. In fact, the leaders of the Ad Dharm movement placed the spiritual figure of Guru Ravidass in the centre of their discourse around which the entire socio-political and spiritual paraphernalia of the movement and the separate Dalit religion was woven. In this way, Babu Mangu Ram played a dominant role in chiseling the distinct markers of separate Dalit identity and restoring the natives their lost heroes, Gurus, and rich cultural heritage. He imbued them with the yearning to become rulers themselves.

During the Census of 1931, around half a million Scheduled Castes in Punjab returned themselves as followers of their newly recognized religion – Ad Dharm. Thence forth, the followers of Ad Dharm took pride in being addressed as Ad Dharmis. Another equally great achievement of the Ad Dharm movement was that it swept the reserved Provincial assembly elections in Punjab in 1937 & 1946, which made it an important stake-holder in the Punjab legislature, perhaps for the first time in the history of the lower castes in the colonial India. Moreover, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia and the Ad Dharm movement provided a fertile ground for sowing the seeds of the mission of Babasaheb Dr B.R. Ambedkar in Punjab. During Dr. Ambedkar's struggle for the separate electoral status for the Depressed Classes at the London Round Table conferences, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia supported him by sending many telegrams in his favour in a tie with Mahatma Gandhi over the question of the leadership of the Depressed Classes in India. An eminent American social scientist, Mark Juergensmeyer, documented in his classic 'Religious Rebels in the Punjab: *The Ad Dharm Challenge to Caste*,' the incredible contribution made by Ad Dharm movement in generating social and political consciousness among the lowest of the low to help them rise against the centuries old discriminatory caste system and to establish an egalitarian socio-political order in the image of 'Beghampura' of Guru Ravidass.

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Democracy at peril: Conditions Precedent for its Successful Working

06 December is commemorated the world over as 'Mahaparinibbana Day' of the Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, father of the Constitution. It was on this fateful day that he peacefully departed from the mortal world but not before giving final shape to the Preface and Introduction of his seminal work 'Buddha and His Dhamma' a few hours before breathing his last. His life is a saga of struggle and sacrifice for the liberation of his people from the abominable thralldom and inhuman injustice under which they had been groaning since ages, for bringing out social reforms and writing the Constitution - the supreme law of the Sovereign Democratic Republic of India. Honouring his philosophy in letter and spirit as contained in the Constitution is the befitting tribute to the great soul and son of India. The instant article is my modest homage to the pious soul.

"Loktantra Bachao Desh Bachao (Save Democracy, Save the Country)" is the rallying cry for many in the country these days. The electronic media, particularly social media, is abuzz with such sloganeering. Many political and social outfits are also seen echoing such voices across the country expressing strongly and loudly their concern for the alleged erosion in the authority and values of various constitutional institutions such as the Election Commission, Enforcement Directorate, Central Bureau of Investigation, Income tax et al under pressure from the ruling dispensations for their political advantages against their opponents. The opposition Parties are openly criticizing that these institutions are acting as tools of the ruling dispensations serving their political interests. Some of the leaders of particular political and social organizations are heard openly talking of replacing the Constitution with the controversial code of ancient laws called Manu Smriti. Copies of the Constitution were seen set ablaze in front of the Parliament some time back by such anti-constitution anti-democratic elements. The protagonists and flag bearers of Hindutva agenda are often seen crying hoarse for converting the Indian Secular Republic into a Hindu nation causing trepidation among the secular forces, intellectuals and the minorities in particular. The setting up of an extra-constitutional court to reinforce Manu Smriti in Uttar Pradesh, installation of Manu's statue in the Rajasthan High Court, tardy implementation of Constitutional provisions, and judiciary's attitude are ominous indications of dilution in democratic structure and values as enshrined in the Constitution. It may be recalled that the Manu Smriti was set ablaze by Babasaheb, Dr. Ambedkar, on 25 December 1927 at Mahad (Maharashtra) as a black book of draconian anti-social, anti-women, inhuman and anti-nation laws. Of late, the ruling dispensation is alleged to have assumed dictatorial posture aiming at marginalizing the opposition as it passed certain Bills in a tearing hurry at the back of the opposition.

It was this dangerous situation against which the father of the Constitution had forewarned during constitutional debates, his speeches and

writings, and particularly in his historical speech delivered at the time of presenting the final Draft of the Constitution to the Constituent Assembly on 25 November 1949.¹ Cautioning the leaders and the people against the possible danger to the Constitution and democratic values, he said, "If there is a landslide, it is quite possible for this new born democracy to retain its form but give place to dictatorship in fact". Today, the Constitutional Institutions are seen as being under great threat of subversion due to dictatorial majoritarianism. His words are proving right. He had sternly warned against hero worship and its perils, which according to him was a sure road to degradation and to eventual dictatorship in politics. Bhakti or hero-worship in politics is the order of the day in our country.

Emphasizing the importance of social and economic equality, he said: "Social democracy is the pre-requisite for the success of political democracy. If we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which this Assembly has so laboriously built up". The victims of social inequality and injustice are today up against the lackadaisical attitude of the Governments to remove the prevailing socio-economic contradictions which Babasaheb had warned against. The situation may assume dangerous proportions adversely impacting the political democracy if ruling dispensations fail to act on Babasaheb's advice with deserved promptitude. Speaking of the continued deprivation of the downtrodden classes and its political and social ramifications, he forewarned: "Political power in this country has too long been the monopoly of a few and the many are not only beasts of burden, but also beasts of prey. These downtrodden classes are tired of being governed; they are impatient to govern themselves. This urge for self-realization in them must not be allowed to develop into a class struggle or class war. It would lead to a division of the House. That would indeed be a day of disaster. Therefore the sooner room is made for the realization of their

aspiration, the better for the few, the better for the country, the better for the maintenance of its independence and the better for the continuance of its democratic structure. This can only be done by the establishment of equality and fraternity in all spheres of life". As things stand today, the majority of the downtrodden and backward sections continue to be in a miserable state with perpetual destitution, slums, illiteracy, unemployment, marginalization, discrimination and criminal victimization as their destiny mainly because of tardy implementation of the Constitution. The



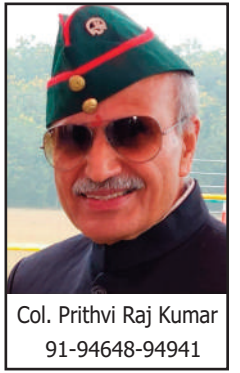
situation is so volatile that if it is not handled with deserved alacrity it may prove to be a serious threat to the democratic structure.

Emphasizing the role and responsibility of the people and the Government in effectively working the Constitution, he said: "However good a Constitution may be, it is sure to turn out bad because those who are called to work it happen to be a bad lot. However bad a Constitution may be, it may turn out to be good if those who are called to work it, happen to be a good lot. If things go wrong under the new Constitution, the reason will not be that we had a bad Constitution. What we will have to say is that man was vile."² The prevailing dismal socio-economic, political and democratic conditions, cannot but be attributed to the vileness of the authorities responsible to work the Constitution.

In his address to the members of the Poona District Library on 22nd December 1952 on the subject 'Conditions Precedent for the Successful Working of Democracy',³ Dr. Ambedkar defined democracy as a form and method of government whereby revolutionary changes in the economic and social life of the people are brought about without bloodshed. Such a democracy, he says, can be successful only under certain conditions precedent to its successful working.

The first condition precedent to democracy's successful working is that there must not be any glaring inequality and an oppressed and suppressed class in the society. There must not be a class which has got all the privileges and a class which has got all the burdens to carry. Such an organization of a society

has within itself the germs of a bloody revolution, and perhaps it would be impossible for democracy to cure them. History of Democracy reveals that the existence of deep social cleavages between class and class in the society turn out to be one of the causes for its breakdown.



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Dr. Ambedkar says democracy is primarily a model of associated living. But the Caste System, which is the soul of Hindu Society, is anti-democracy. Graded inequality is another feature of the Caste System Constitution. The situation is so volatile that if it is not handled with deserved alacrity it may prove to be a serious threat to the democratic structure.

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Dr. Ambedkar says democracy is primarily a model of associated living. But the Caste System, which is the soul of Hindu Society, is anti-democracy. Graded inequality is another feature of the Caste System with its evil effects. It is an ascending scale of hatred and

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Conditions Precedent for its Successful Working

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descending scale of contempt. This has the most pernicious consequences as it destroys willing and helpful co-operation. Graded inequality, which is the soul of the Caste System, is the first obstacle to put an end to it. A Society to be democratic should open a way to use all the capacities of the individual. Stratification is stunting of the growth of an individual and deliberate stunting is a deliberate denial of democracy. The first obstacle to put an end to the Caste System is therefore the system of graded inequality which is the soul of the Caste System. Education to the downtrodden is one of the most potent and effective tools to bridge social and economic disparities, and achieve associated living.⁴

The second condition precedent for democracy is the existence of an opposition. Democracy requires that not only the Government should be subject to the long term veto of five years at the hands of the people at the time of elections, but there must be people in the Parliament immediately ready there and then to challenge the Government. Opposition means that the Government is always on the anvil. It is because of this that the leader of the Opposition in England and Canada is paid salary and necessary staff and accommodation to discharge his functions smoothly.

The third condition precedent is equality in law and administration. It means equality of treatment in administration. The civil service is permanent as it serves all the parties in the office and carries out admin-

istration without any kind of interference from the Minister. The Government is to lay down the policy and not to interfere in the administration and make any discrimination.

The fourth condition precedent is the observance of constitutional morality. The Constitution contains legal provisions, only a skeleton. The flesh of that skeleton is to be found in constitutional morality. Lack of constitutional morality is a great threat to the success of democracy. If George Washington, the first President of America had wished he would have been elected the President unopposed many times. But he stepped down after his first term as President on the ground that it was not morally correct for him to violate the principle on which they had fought to get rid of the hereditary rule. He accepted the second term only to honor the loyalty and fidelity of the people but he spurned them away when they approached him for the third time. Similarly in English history also there are many such illustrations. The fifth condition is that there must be no tyranny of the majority over the minority in the name of democracy. The minority must always feel safe that although the majority is carrying out the Government, the minority is not being hurt, or the minority is not being hit below the belt. It is also not a happy situation if the Opposition is constantly bringing in motion of adjournment or censure as pressurizing tactics.

Functioning of moral order in society is the sixth condition. Democracy is spoken of as a free Government which means

that in vast aspects of social life people are left free to carry on without interference of law or if law has to be made, then the law makers expect that the society will have enough morality in it to make the law a success. According to Professor Laski, if there is no moral order, democracy will go to pieces.

The seventh and the last condition precedent is the 'public conscience'. It means conscience which becomes agitated at every wrong, no matter who is the sufferer and it means that everybody whether he suffers that particular wrong or not, is prepared to join him in order to get him relieved. For example, the people who were suffering the wrong in South Africa were Indians. Yet the white Reverend Scott and a large number of white young boys and girls joined the struggle of the Indians there to get the injustice removed against them. That is called "public conscience". In our own country, there is South Africa everywhere in the village, and yet one finds very seldom anybody from the non-Scheduled Castes taking up their cause and fighting for them. It is because there is no "public conscience". If the minority suffering from injustice does not get the help of others to get rid of the injustice, it develops a revolutionary mentality which puts democracy in danger.

In terms of the above conditions precedents to the successful working of democracy, we still have a long way to go. The ruling dispensations try to neutralize the opposition by weaponizing the constitutional

institutions. Big Businesses play a great role in the political life of the country by contributing to the election funds of the political parties on a quid pro quo basis. The bureaucracy is found by and large subservient to the political masters, and influencing the elections in their favour. The political leadership does not seem to be anywhere near constitutional morality. It goes all out to grab and stick to political power by hook or crook. The minorities in the country have been under constant fear of the majoritarian tyranny leading to perpetual communal tension in the society. Moral order in our society seems like a distant dream as corruption is conspicuously rampant in every walk of life. The public conscience is rarely seen in the country.

The success of democracy lies in addressing these perils and establishing the conditions necessary for its effective functioning. Beyond educating and raising awareness among the people, it is the responsibility of the intellectual community, true patriots, constitutionalists, and conscientious well-wishers of the nation to strive tirelessly to uphold democratic ideals and principles in their true spirit and implement them effectively. It also requires soul-searching from political leaders and public servants, urging them to listen to and answer their conscience to genuinely serve the people and the country.

(Reference: 1. BAWS, Vol.13, pp.1213-1218; 2. BAWS, Vol.13, p.1210; 3. BAWS, Vol. 17/3, pp. 472-486; 4. BAWS, Vol. 17/3, pp. 520-523)

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Historicity of Chamar Women's Contribution in the Ambedkarite Movement: Part -10

Mrs. Keshrabai Ghumare



Dr. Sunita Sawarkar
sunitsawarkar@gmail.com

Kesharabai Januji Ghumre is born at Mohoj Devde, Tal. Pathdari, Dist. Ahmednagar. Her father's name was Tukaram Sonone. He had

two wives. Together they had 6 sons and 5 daughters. Tukaram Sonone gave one of his sisters, Parubai, to the house of Gyanuji Ghumre in Antri Deshmukh, Tal. Mehekar, Dist. Buldhana in Vidarbha. Therefore, Kesharabai was given as a daughter-in-law to the house of Gyanuji Ghumre. Kesharabai got married to his son- Januji Ghumre. At the time of marriage, she was 14-15 years old. Generally, the family of the Chambhar community makes a living from the shoemaking business. The same situation was with Januji Ghumre's family. Januji Ghumre was an artisans who made new chappals and shoes. He had acquired this craft from his father. Januji Ghumre's father and cousin were famous wrestlers from Panchkroshi. This legacy seems to have been preserved by Januji Ghumre as well. The Ghumre family used to be a Balute. Since there were only two groups of houses in the village, half of the village belonged to the Bhosale family and half to the Ghumre family. These families had a Balute. But even though they had a shoemaking business, it was difficult to run the house on it, so Kesharabai Ghumre also used to go to the fields to do work like seeding, weeding, threshing, picking cotton, threshing jowar and threshing, etc.

How did the most important event in Januji Ghumre's life, i.e. his journey in the Ambedkarite movement, begin Kesharabai says about this, "One day, while the bhajans were being sung as usual on our Maruti temple, people from the opposite party in the village accused my husband of touching the Maruti and worshipping God, and my husband had to face the wrath of the entire village. At that time, there was an atmosphere of almost boycott at our house. A meeting was held in the village and this dispute stopped. This incident had a great impact on his mind and, leaving the Deshmukh/Maratha community, he started living with his friends in Mahar Wada; he used to go to the taluka places with them. That time was the time of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's reformist movement. In our house, we did not eat beef; but we did eat goat and chicken meat. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's movement was still going on. He was taking part in it; he was working in the Republican movement. He used to go from village to village and say, 'We should stop living in a careless manner, do not drag dead cattle, do not eat cow-buffalo and bull meat, we will tolerate casteism.' Don't; oppose it; send your children to school; get a good education. As Dr. Babasaheb said, stay united. He used to travel from village to village day and night for eight or ten days to spread social change. He would not come home. At that time, I was earning wages and supporting my young children."

From this we can see that if the Chamar community touch the God, the

entire village would boycott it. Because the Chamar community is a group outside the Varna; therefore, there was a difference of touch. As it was in the case of people, it was also in the case of God and religion. Then another important thing is that this experience that Januji Ghumre had has been experienced by many Chamar people; but very few Chamars are seen who become wise from this experience and follow the path of transformational thoughts. Therefore, the role of Januji Ghumre is very important. The movement was gaining momentum with the inspiration of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. It is seen that he devoted himself to the movement. During this period, his wife Kesharabai took the responsibility of the house. This means that Kesharabai supported the role taken by Januji Ghumre. That is why Kesharabai had accepted the responsibility of the house. Kesharabai has experienced that it is natural to get reactions from the social sector after accepting Ambedkar's thoughts. In her thoughts, she says, "Once, when he came home from a program, he was wearing a blue cap. There was a lot of back and forth discussion about it. People started saying that a Chamar had become a Mahar and relatives also started talking. We were very upset at home; but we were firm on the decision taken by husband."

This reaction is common to almost everyone when a person from the Chamar community participates in the Ambedkarite movement. It was the same for Januji Ghumre. At this time, the family also suffered; but Kesharabai accepted the struggle by showing faith in the decision taken by her husband. This is very important. In her autobiography, she further says that, "While working in the movement for the conversion of the Dhamma, a Mahar person from Deulgaon Sakarsha in Mehkartaluka was not ready to become a Buddhist. He tried to convince him to accept Buddhism; but he would not listen. One day, when he came to the village of Ghatbori as a guest, the people there informed the Saheb (Januji Ghumare) that he had come to Ghatbori. He immediately went to Ghatbori and caught him in the Maharawada settlement and explained to him. Still, he did not listen; then everyone caught him, pulled his hair in the settlement and announced that he had now become a Buddhist. Therefore, he got angry and went to Deulgaon and filed a complaint against my husband at the police station. When the police came to arrest him for questioning, the Buddhist community had taken out a huge march to Mehkar. After that, the complaint was duly investigated and the case was filed in the court at Mehkar.

In this case, Adv. Avchar Saheb (Washim) who was the president of Vidarbha Republican Party and the late leader Shankarrao ji Khandare (Akole) used to appear on every date. Finally, the verdict in this case was passed and he was found guilty and he was sen-

tenced to six months of jail and a fine of one hundred rupees in one month in case of non-payment of the fine. After this decision, an appeal was filed in the district court in Buldhana. There too, the same lawyer used to look after the case. In this case too, he said in the court I have committed this crime. Since he said so, the sentence was again upheld. Everyone said that we will appeal to the High Court. I have committed the crime; I will not lie, this sentence will remain the same. Then there is no benefit in going to appeal. He said that I am ready to serve the sentence I have received and he went to jail. They refused to pay one hundred rupees; due to which he had to serve seven months of jail. During



this, we suffered a lot. However, the people and leaders of the Buddhist community in the rural areas went to every village and sorted out the food grains and brought them to Antri, so our household life continued. During this time, the men and women of the Buddhist community gave us courage. Even in this difficult time, I faced the situation with unwavering faith in the work of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar."

From the above incident, it is clear how sincerely Januji Ghumre was working in Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's religious conversion movement. The Republican Party solved the issue of the landless through Satyagraha. Januji Ghumre's role in this Satyagraha was also very important. Thousands of Satyagrahis participated in Ghatbori Taluka Mehkar, District Buldhana from 6.12.64 onwards and more than 2000 Satyagrahis were arrested. The Satyagraha was led by Januji Ghumre."

Januji Ghumre worked very hard in the Republican Party. When Januji Ghumre was serving his punishment in jail; his family suffered a lot. However, the leaders of the Buddhist community in the rural areas went from village to village and collected food and brought it to them. Even in such difficult circumstances, Kesharabai Ghumre did not waver. She supported Januji Ghumre in working in the Ambedkarite movement until his last breath. She was responsible for taking care of the family, looking after the children, doing the housework, arranging food for the movement workers who came to her house. At the same time, she herself was fighting with full strength on various levels, such as bearing the financial burden of running the house. In her memories, she says, "The children of the mother-in-law who were

staying at home were sent to Mehkar's school. Later, as his reputation in the Republican Party increased, leaders from the state and district levels would come to my house continuously. I had to make all the preparations for that. Some activists would come with work at the taluka level. I also had to provide them with tea, water and food. While doing that, My son would work in the school during the day and in the ginning at night. Later, Saheb became the taluka president of the Republican Party. He was famous in politics and social work. However, there was extreme poverty in the house. We had to support the people coming and going from the house and outside with some grain from the fields. It was a very difficult time. But without wavering, I had endured all this hardship for my husband and was supporting Saheb." The wives of activists working in the movement try to win the movement's favour as much as they can through this silence. The hard work they put in and the opposition and humiliation they endured never come to the fore.

Kesharabai also says, "Saheb became a great leader of the Republican Party. He became the district president. Leaders who came for meetings and ceremonies constantly came to us. I used to make arrangements for their food and accommodation. When the late Bhaiyyasaheb Ambedkar came to Mehkar for the second time, Barrister Rajabhau Khobragade Saheb, the late R.S. Gavaisaheb and many such leaders grew up having food at our house. At that time, leaders working at the state and district levels used to have a place in our house. I used to do their work continuously without any complaints, I used to enjoy it and I considered myself lucky when this service was being done by my hands."

The man of the house fights with an idea. However, for him to be able to work outside with a clear head, the cooperation of the family members is very necessary. In this, the cooperation of the wife is especially important. It is seen that Kesharabai gave similar support to Januji Ghumre. Kesharabai Ghumre recalls the simple funeral of her husband Januji Ghumre, she saying, "We performed the funeral under a blue flag and with a Panchshila Flag. There was some opposition from relatives to that too. Since my son and I were firm, that program was also carried out smoothly."

Januji Ghumre's family is one of the many Chamar families who were born in Chamar society and embraced new revolutionary ideas by setting aside traditional ideas. The entire Chamar society of Maharashtra is not seen following the revolutionary ideas; because they are still part of Hinduism. Therefore, it is very difficult to accept Ambedkar's ideas and follow that path. Januji Ghumre, who worked regardless of the hardships he faced, got important support from Kesharabai Ghumre. On that basis, he tried to spread Babasaheb's ideas in the post-Ambedkarite movement; he went to jail at times; but he lived with his ideas and principles. The hardships that were incurred for this are seen to have been endured by Januji Ghumre and Kesharabai Ghumre.

Supervisor Frost December Newsletter



Sue Frost

Serving You: The Honor Of My Lifetime

As my tenure as Supervisor for District 4 comes to a close, I am overwhelmed with appreciation. It has been a profound honor to serve the diverse and vibrant areas of Sacramento County. From the soulful avenues of North Highlands to the tranquil settings of Rancho Murieta, each community has its own unique charm, and a collective will to enhance our region.

During my years in office, I've had the pleasure of seeing and contributing to significant improvements that have positively impacted the lives of our residents. Together, we have achieved notable progress, all aimed at enriching the Sacramento Region.

We successfully allocated \$4.5 million in ARPA funds to bolster services and housing initiatives across District 4. These projects have spurred growth and enhanced the quality of life in our communities.

Significant projects include the revitalization of the Rio Linda Firehouse and restoring Fire Engine #2 to operational status. These upgrades are critical, ensuring that our emergency services are well-prepared to safeguard our community. Community gatherings like the Rio Linda/Elverta Country Faire and the Christmas Light Parade have not only spread cheer but also fostered a strong sense of togetherness.

I had the privilege of leading efforts that substantially supported local veterans' services, aiding veterans and non-profits, and fostering economic vitality. The enhancements to the Orangevale Library and our support for the Orangevale History Museum have played pivotal roles in preserving our local heritage and expanding access to educational resources. The Orangevale-Fair Oaks Big Day of Service exemplifies the positive outcomes that arise from community cooperation and common goals.

In safety and preparedness, we secured a significant \$400,000 grant from Caltrans to fortify emergency evacuation routes for Rancho Murieta, enhancing the area's readiness for any emergency.

This year, I played a pivotal role in fostering unity and collaboration in North Highlands by engaging with local leaders committed to enhancing well-being and economic vitality. This collaboration led to the successful "Celebrate North Highlands" event, which brought together over 2,000 residents on September 28, 2024, to celebrate the spirit of the community.

I have always stood firm in my commitment to our local economy, advocating for a strategic approach to reopening that maintained the competitiveness of our businesses and kept our shopping local. My commitment to openness and honesty has been central, admitting to and learning from any missteps to maintain a transparent relationship with you.

Reflecting on these efforts, I am proud of what we have accomplished to-

gether. Serving you has been a tremendous privilege, and I am thankful for the opportunity to have been part of your stories and your advocate.

Thank you for your trust, your active participation, and your steadfast commitment to our community. Although my role as Supervisor is concluding, my dedication to supporting and uplifting our region remains steadfast.

If you would like to stay in touch with me, please feel free to reach me at sue@suefrost.com

Thank you all for a wonderful and impactful journey. God Bless. Sue

Tune In To The County's Budget Workshop

Want to know where your tax dollars go? Curious about how Sacramento County spends its budget? You're invited to an interactive, virtual Sacramento County Budget Workshop on Thursday, Dec. 12 at 6 p.m. – and it's your chance to learn, ask questions and get involved!

Here's what participants can expect:

Kickoff by County Experts: The Sacramento County Budget and Debt Management team will dive into all things budget – from major programs and historical funding trends to what's on the horizon for the County.

Insights from the County's Airports, Health Services and Finance Departments will give quick rundowns of the services and funding that keep everything running smoothly.

It's Virtual, It's Easy: Tune in from the comfort of your home via Zoom or watch on the MetroCable website. No commute required!

How to Join the Meeting via Zoom:

Date: Thursday, Dec. 12

Time: 6 p.m.

Join the Webinar: [Click Here](#)

Passcode: 172649

Or, dial in:

Phone: (669) 254-5252

Webinar ID: 160 818 6092

Note: Phone lines will be for listening only (no Q&A over the

phone, but you can write questions and comments in the Zoom Q&A feature).

Get Involved! After the presentation, you'll have the chance to ask questions or share your thoughts using the Zoom Q&A feature. This is your time to provide input on the budget and its process!

Can't make it live? No problem! The workshop will be available for replay on Sacramento County's YouTube channel, so you can watch anytime! Don't

miss out on this event to get a behind-the-scenes look at Sacramento County's budget!



SACRAMENTO COUNTY LAUNCHES CARE COURT PROGRAM

Sacramento County Launches CARE Court

Program

Sacramento County officially launched its Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Act Program (known as CARE Court) on Dec. 1 to connect individuals struggling with schizophrenia spectrum or other psychotic disorders with voluntary, community-based treatment through a civil court process.

The program is available to individuals aged 18 and older who are diagnosed with a schizophrenia spectrum or other psychotic disorder, currently experiencing behaviors and symptoms associated with severe mental illness (SMI), unable to stabilize through existing voluntary treatment, and unlikely to survive safely in the community without supervision.

The CARE process begins with an individual, family members, behavioral health professionals, directors of organizations or hospitals involved in their care filing a petition, which is reviewed by a Sacramento County Superior Court judge to determine eligibility.

If criteria are met, the court may order Sacramento County's Behavioral Health Services Division to investigate and develop a CARE agreement or plan tailored to the participant's needs. Through this process, participants can receive support through the program for up to 24 months, ensuring continuity of care and ongoing access to essential

services.

The CARE Act embodies Sacramento County's commitment to a compassionate, recovery-focused approach for addressing mental health challenges. By empowering individuals with the resources and support they need, the program fosters connections within the community, prioritizing dignity and respect throughout the recovery process.

For more information about the CARE Court Program, including eligibility details and the forms to fill out a petition, visit Sacramento County's CARE Court program webpage.

Explorer Program: Path to CHP Career

The California Highway Patrol's Explorer Program caters to young individuals aged 15 to 20, providing a foundation in law enforcement through community service and discipline.

Participants gain practical skills applicable to law enforcement careers by assisting in CHP operations, both administratively and in the field. They undergo training in physical fitness, medical procedures, and office skills.

Activities include attending community events, staffing DUI checkpoints, participating in ride-alongs, and competing in Explorer competitions. This program not only prepares participants for a potential career with the CHP but also fosters responsible citizenship.

For more information, contact a CHP recruiter at (916) 843-3275 or visit your local CHP office.

Recruitment Under Way for 2025-26 Grand Jury

Nineteen Sacramento County residents and 11 alternates will be selected from among qualified applicants. The one-year term for volunteer jurors runs from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026.

The Grand Jury is appointed to provide oversight of county, city, school and special district agencies and operations within Sacramento County.

The Grand Jury is also authorized to hear criminal indictments and is tasked with visiting regional detention facilities. Grand Jurors receive a small stipend for their volunteer work.

To serve on the Grand Jury, you must be a Sacramento County resident over 18 and able to speak, read and write English.

Applications must be received by Dec. 31, 2024, to be considered. The Grand Jury will be empaneled in June 2025.

For more information about the Sacramento County Grand Jury, applicant criteria and how to apply, please visit the Sacramento County Grand Jury website.



Learn to live in this world with self-respect. You should always cherish some ambition of doing something in this world. But remember that the age of selflessness has ended. A new epoch is set in. All things are now possible because of your being able to participate in the politics and legislature of your country.

- Dr. Ambedkar



We pay glowing tribute to Bharat Rattan Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar on his 68th Prininirvan Divas.



Momi Brothers



The minorities in India have loyally accepted the rule of the majority which is basically a communal majority and not a political majority. It is for the majority to realize its duty not to discriminate against minorities. Whether the minorities will continue or will vanish must depend upon this habit of majority. The moment the majority loses the habit of discriminating against the minority, the minorities can have no ground to exist. They will vanish.

Dr. Ambedkar



We pay glowing tribute to Bharat Rattan Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar on his 68th Prininirvan Divas.



Late Bihari Lal Chahal



Amardeep Chahal with his wife Promila Chahal

ਸਮੂਹ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਬਿਹਾਰੀ ਲਾਲ ਚਾਹਲ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ



Untouchability has ruined the Untouchables, the Hindus and ultimately the nation as well. If the depressed classes gained their self-respect and freedom, they would contribute not only to their own progress and prosperity but by their industry intellect and courage would contribute also to the strength and prosperity of the nation. If the tremendous energy Untouchables are at present required to fritter away in combating the stigma of Untouchability had been saved them, it would have been applied by them to the promotion of education and development of resources of their nation as a whole.

-Dr. Ambedkar

I pay glowing tribute to Bharat Rattan
Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar
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"Freedom of mind is the real freedom.

A person, whose mind is not free though he may not be in chains, is a slave, not a free man. One whose mind is not free, though he may not be in prison, is a prisoner and not a free man. One whose mind is not free though alive, is no better than dead. Freedom of mind is the proof of one's existence."

— Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar,

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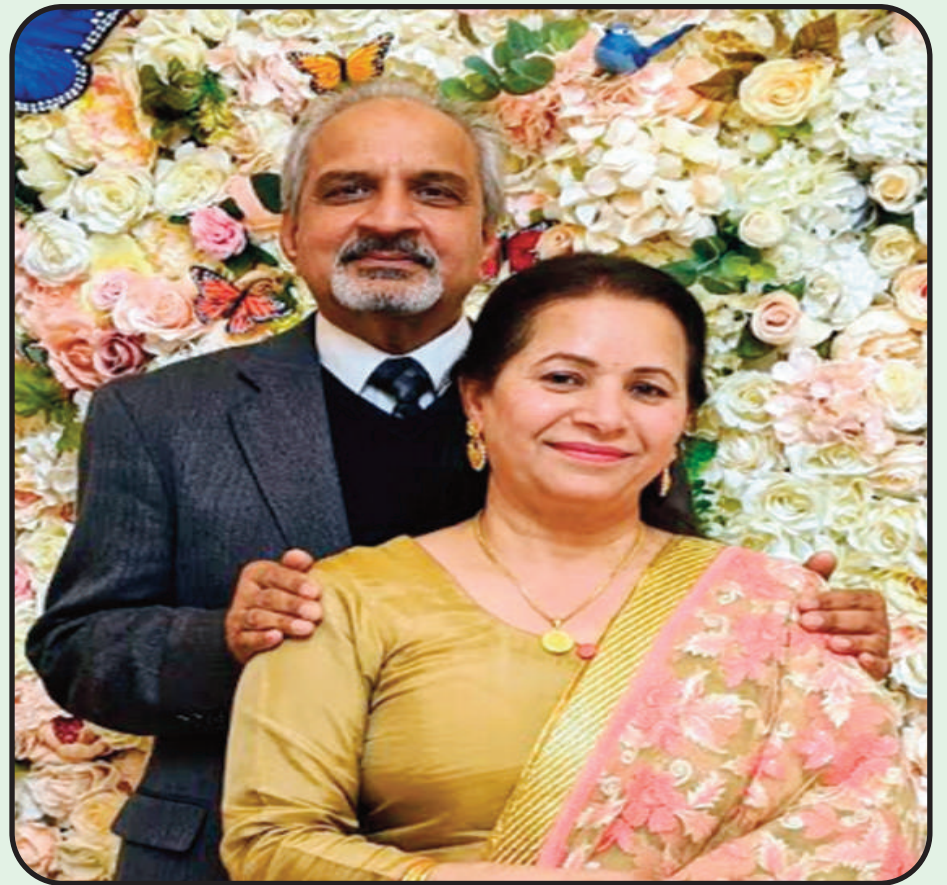
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Ambedkar on his 68th Prininirvan Divas.



We pay glowing tribute to Bharat Rattan Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar on his 68th Prininirvan Divas.



Ramesh Suman & Family



Shashi Paul & Family



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 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.

- Dr. Ambedkar



Kamaljit Kaur Bhatia & Kashmiri Bhatia

We pay glowing tribute to Bharat Rattan Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar on his 68th Prininirvan Divas.

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- Dr. Ambedkar



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ਅਤੇ ਸਮੂਹ ਚੰਦੜ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ

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-Dr. Ambedkar

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