



Ambedkar Times Weekly

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United States of America: A Vision of Freedom and Dream of Prosperity

Prem K. Chumber Editor-In-Chief:
Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba Weeklies Newspapers



4th of July embodies a vision of freedom and dream of prosperity. Every person in the world irrespective of her/his religion, class, creed and faith aspires to make the USA his home! S/he feels embolden while getting associated with this great nation - an abode of liberty, equality fraternity - of opportunities and dignity. The USA instills faith and courage to come forward to live and let live with love and peace with one- self and the rest of the humanities.

Since the end of World War II, it has not looked back to reconstruct peaceful order in the world and help attain freedom of thought, liberty and equality everywhere on the globe. Name any continent, region or a country where the USA has not left its mark of encouragement and initiatives for realizing ones dream and aspirations. One of the largest and oldest democratic countries in the world, the USA has always shown its greatest interest in allowing free flow of ideas and letting people live the way they want to be. It has remained first in all fields of human activities, be it science, technology, art, and sports. What led it to achieve all this is perhaps the freedom of thought and action guaranteed by its constitution and effective governance system. "Ambedkar Times" and "Desh Doaba" take a lot of pride on this auspicious day of freedom and independence.

Once again "Ambedkar Times" and "Desh Doaba" congratulate its esteemed readers, contributors and supporters on the auspicious day 4th of July

Mark Juergensmeyer's research reignited Dalit consciousness and radical assertion in Punjab

The publication of 'Religious Rebels in the Punjab' inspired a new wave of learning among Dalit activists and scholars of Dalit studies on the Ad Dharm movement and its founding father, Babu Mangu Ram, writes Ronki Ram

Professor Mark Juergensmeyer is a household name among social scientists, scholars, students and Dalit activists in the Doaba of East Punjab – a stronghold of Ad-Dharmi and Mazhbi Dalits. This region gave rise to a number of radical social and political movements when India was under British rule. The most prominent among them were the Ghadar, Babbar Akali and the Ad Dharm. Mark's familiarity with the people of this region evolved during his field work on the genesis, organization, ideology and functioning of the Ad Dharm movement. Half a century ago, he made this place, between two rivers – Sutlej and Ravi – the universe of his doctoral research work. He became affiliated to the Department of Political Science at Panjab University (PU) in the 1960s and from there he used to frequent different places in the Doaba to interview leaders, activists and sympathizers of the Ad Dharm movement – the most prominent among them being its founder, Ghadari Baba Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia.

I came to know about Babu Mangu Ram and the Ad Dharm movement from Mark's classic work entitled Religion as Social Vision: The Movement against Untouchability in Twentieth Century Punjab, published by the University of California Press, Berkeley in 1982. This book was based on his PhD thesis. It was re-published later in India under the title Religious Rebels in the Punjab: The Social Vision of Untouchables – in 1988 by Ajanta and in 2009 by Navayana, both Delhi-based publishers. I had stumbled upon this book while searching for another title in the A.C. Joshi Library of Panjab University, which I joined in 1995 after completing my doctorate in International Relations from the Jawaharlal Nehru University and subsequently serving there as a Research Associate for three years (1992-95) and teaching briefly in Goa University. The author was unknown to me then, and little did I know that this volume would put me on a completely different trajectory of research. The book had a profound influence on me personally as well.

As I began reading this engaging narrative on the rise of the downtrodden against the then prevalent oppressive social structures in East Punjab (Indian Punjab) – the region I myself come from – I became so completely engrossed in it that I was unable to rest until I had finished the entire book. The minute details about the Ad Dharm's organization, leadership, the socio-cultural milieu and the way all this had been so coherently contextualized – all bear witness to the intimate knowledge of the author on the subject. Despite

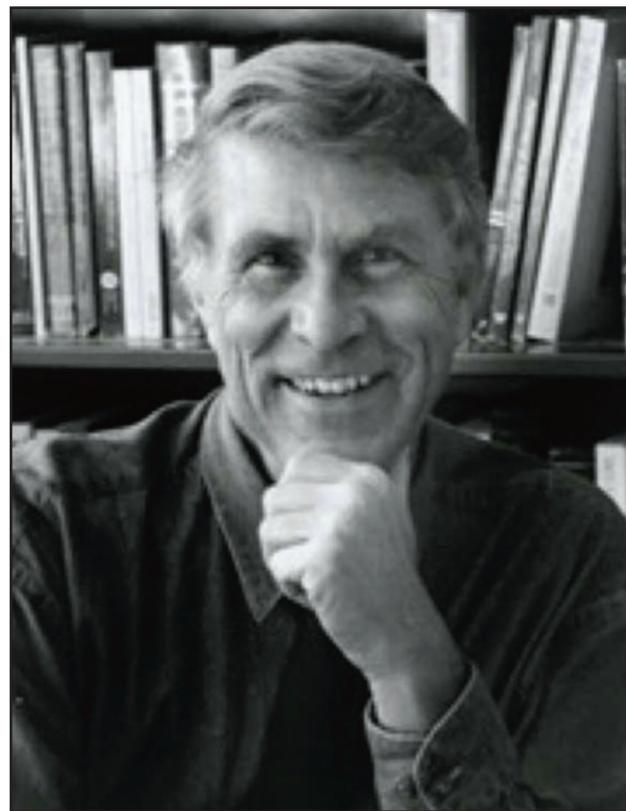
being an English speaker, he was able to capture the kernel of the local narrative in the vernacular. The book is an academic tour de force. Such a work is the distillate of years of selfless dedication.

Mark nurtured close ties with Punjab over several decades. He first visited Chandigarh in January 1966 after completing his first set of graduate studies in Religion and International Affairs from Columbia University, New York, and began teaching a course in Political Theory as part of the Economics Undergraduate (Hons) programme at Panjab University, Chandigarh.



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During this period (1966-1967) he stayed in the bachelor faculty housing on the PU campus. He worked on his PhD in Political Science at University of California, Berkeley from 1967-69 and he returned to Indian Punjab in 1970-71 to do the field work for his PhD research on Ad Dharm and other Dalit movements. He became affiliated to Panjab University and Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, as a research scholar. During his stay in Chandigarh and Amritsar, Mark used to make field trips to Jalandhar and spend time in Boota Mandi and the Dera Ballan, which were predominantly Dalit localities in the



periphery of the city.

During one such study visit, Mark met with Babu Mangu Ram himself – the founder of Ad Dharm movement – on his farm near Garhshankar. Mark also used to frequent the Centre for Sikh Studies at Baring College, Batala (near Amritsar), where W.H. McLeod, the well-known scholar on Sikhism, was teaching at the time, and continued his language studies at the language school in Landaur, above Mussoorie. In 1973, he returned to complete his research on Dalits, travelling widely in Indian Punjab. However, the focus of his study were the Dalit villages in the districts of Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, and Anandpur. In 1978, he was in Punjab to begin work on his proposed book on the Radha Soami sect. He had already written a chapter on the sect in his Religious Rebels in the Punjab. Over the following decade (1979, 1985, 1986 and 1988), Mark visited Punjab every year or every other year until the work on the book was

(Contd. on next page)

Mark Juergensmeyer's research reignited Dalit consciousness and radical assertion in Punjab

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complete. His latest research/book project is on how the Khalistan movement ended.

Prof Mark's deep connections with Punjab, developed during his frequent research tours, continue even today after a long period of half a century. On his most recent visit, he delivered a talk entitled 'Reminiscing Ad Dharm' in the Department of Political Science, Panjab University, on 31 January 2020. This exceptionally long association with the region and its people is what has made Mark's research on the Dalit movement in Punjab a must-read for anyone engaged with the fast-emerging discipline of Critical Dalit Studies.

As I dug deep into discipline of International Relations, academic literature on social and Dalit movements remained unfamiliar territory. That is when I stumbled upon Religious Rebels in Punjab. While reading this classic, I had asked a number of people about the Ad Dharm movement, including in my own village in Hoshiarpur district – the birthplace of Ad Dharm – but to my surprise, they

were ignorant. This only piqued my curiosity. I spent months on end verifying Mark's findings and thus began my shift from international studies to Dalit studies. All this would not have been possible, but for my chance reading of Mark's Religious Rebels in the Punjab. This has widened and deepened my perspective, both personally and professionally, for which I am greatly indebted to Mark.

I met some of the people whom Mark had interacted with during his field study on the Ad Dharm in the early 1970s. Many of them were now in their late eighties and early nineties. Prominent among them were Isher Das Pawar, Bhagwan Das Advocate, Lahori Ram Balley, K.C. Shenmar, Chanan Lal Manak, Manohar Lal Mahey, Pritam Bala and Chattar Sen (son of Babu Mangu Ram). Only Balley and Mahey are alive today. It was a great experience to meet and hear from them firsthand about the Ad Dharm almost thirty years after they had spoken about it with Mark. Most of them fondly remembered their interactions with Mark. At the same time, I also

began studying works on Dalit society and history.

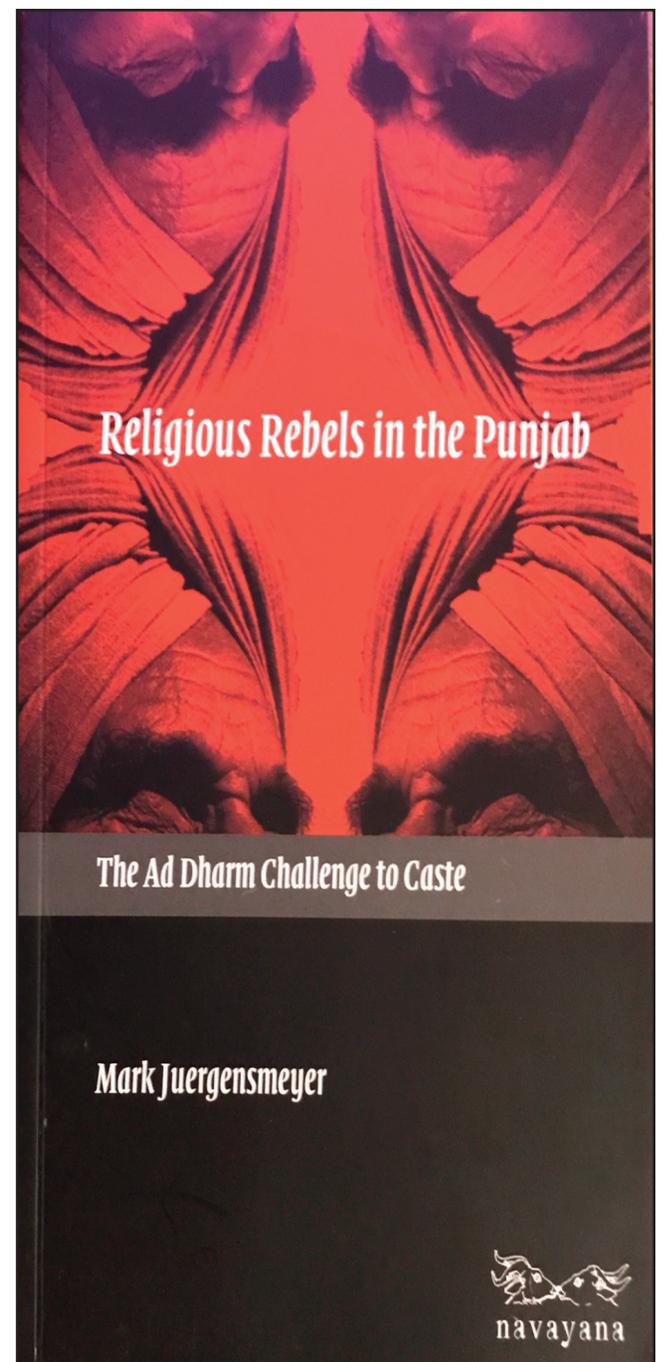
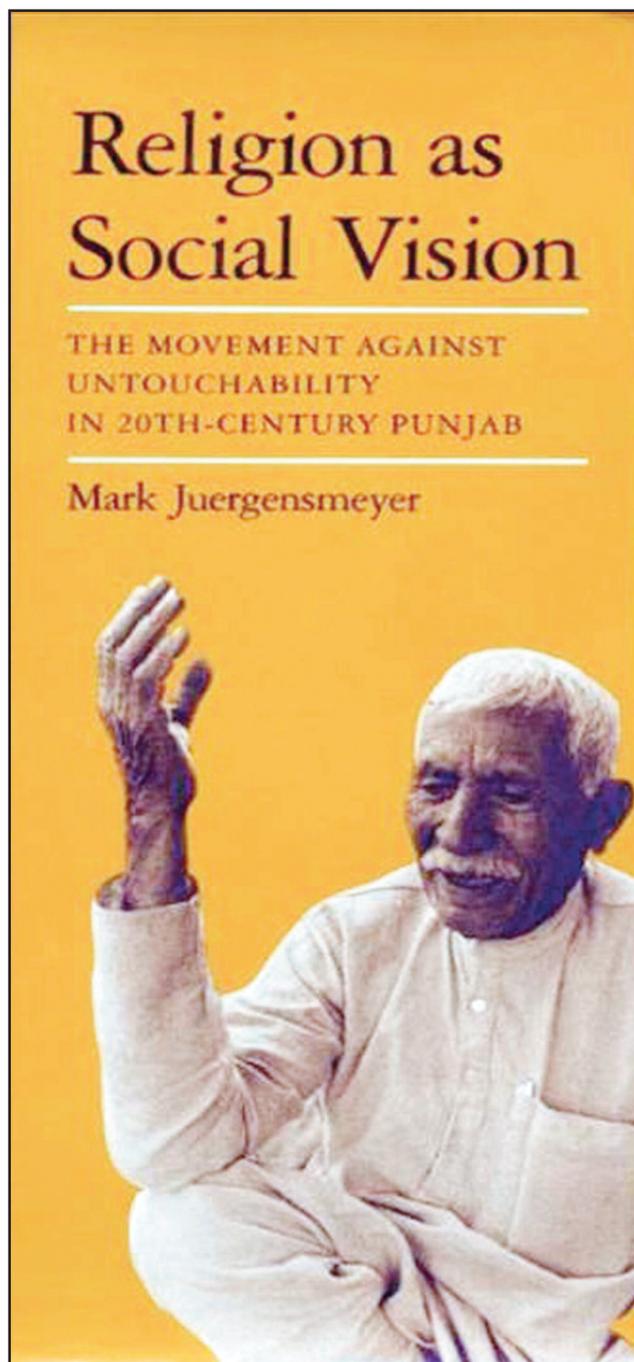
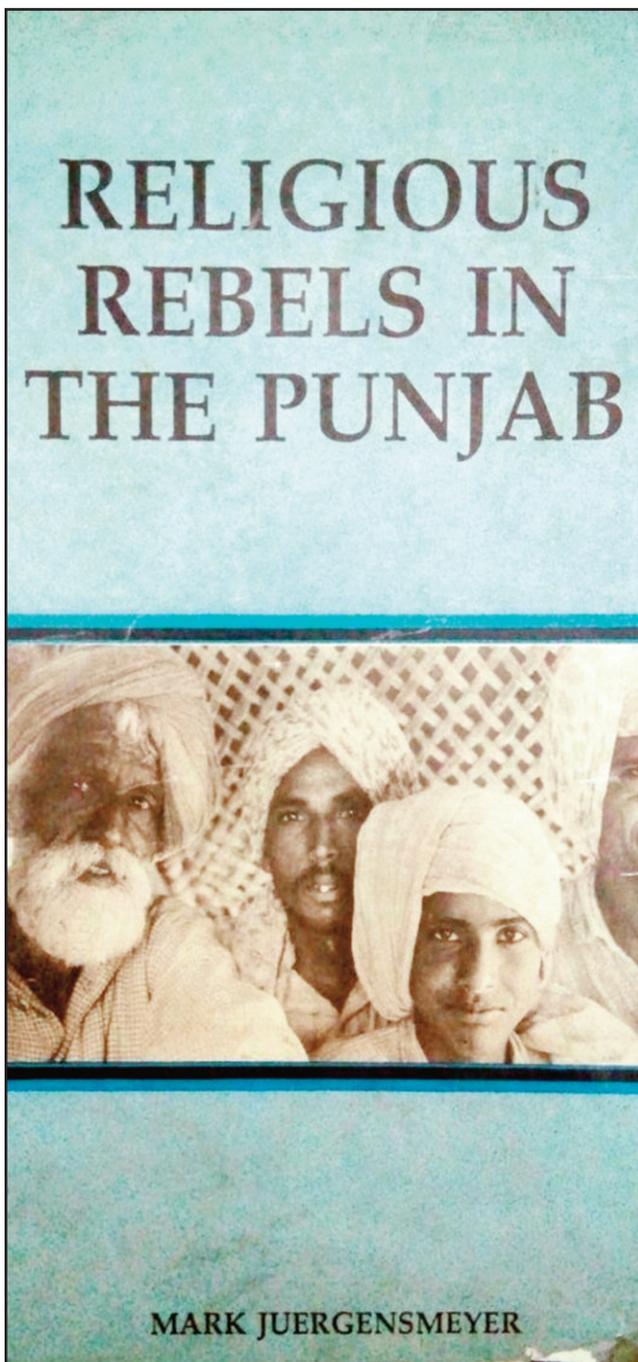
C.L. Chumber, who collected a lot of literature on the Ad Dharm, provided me with the Punjabi and Hindi editions of the Ad Dharm Mandal Report (originally published in Urdu, and translated into English by Mark and included in Religious Rebels in the Punjab). Prem K. Chumber, younger brother of C.L. Chumber, publishes two weeklies, Ambedkar Times (English) and Desh Doaba (Punjabi), both dedicated to the ideologies of Babu Mangu Ram and Dr Ambedkar, from Sacramento, California. Prem Chumber has distributed hundreds of copies of Religious Rebels in the Punjab in North America free of cost over the last few years that he has been in the US.

During my fieldwork on the Ad Dharm movement in Jalandhar city, C.L. Chumber also helped me in locating old copies of Adi Danka (Drum of the Indigenous People), which was the newspaper of the Ad Dharm movement, published in Urdu. It took me a long time to cover the various villages in the districts of Ja-

landhar, Hoshiarpur, Nawanshahr and Gurdaspur where some of the activists of Ad Dharm movement and their families live now. The more I came to know about this historic Dalit movement, the more I realized that what Mark had accomplished was much more than just the documentation of a socio-cultural and political journey. Mark's pioneering work has once again ignited Dalit consciousness and radical assertion. The publication of Religious Rebels in the Punjab inspired a new wave of learning among Dalit activists and scholars of Dalit studies on the Ad Dharm movement and its founding father, Babu Mangu Ram. More research has now been done in the universities of north India. Mark's study made it amply clear that Ad Dharm was the only movement of its kind in north-western India which aimed at securing a respectable space for Dalits through cultural transformation, spiritual regeneration and political assertion among them, rather than by seeking patronage from above.

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A person who wants to learn humanity must visit Mansa-Bathinda, India

While conducting a field survey for a research study titled "Socio-Economic Conditions and Political Participation of Woman Households in Rural Punjab", as a team of 4, Dr. Gurinder Kaur, Dr. Dharmapal, and Dr. Rashmi and I went to the villages of Mansa district. On the day our survey was completed, we were preparing to return to Patiala, Dr. Dharmapal was so impressed with the behavior of people around, he told us before leaving Mansa, "A person who wants to learn humanity must stay in the villages of Mansa-Bathinda area for two weeks to a month in a year." This conversation led me down the memory lane of how my life was shaped by the incidents and the people I met in the Mansa-Bathinda area.

I was born and raised in Isru village (village of Martyr Karnail Singh) in Ludhiana district. Majority of my life has been spent in Patiala teaching at Punjabi University, Patiala. Ludhiana and Patiala are two districts where, despite its many virtues, most people suffer from two major vices, excessive individualism and acute materialism.

After completion of my post-graduation degree in 1975, I went to Bathinda to attend an interview for the post of lecturer in Government Rajindra College. After being selected as lecturer by DPI (Colleges) in 1977, I taught in Government Rajindra College, Bathinda for sometime. In 1981, I went to the villages of Bathinda district to conduct a field survey for my Ph.D. research work, at the time Mansa city was a

tehsil of Bathinda district. During 1984-87, working as a lecturer at the Punjabi University Regional Center, Bathinda, I stayed in Bathinda city and had the opportunity, once again, to visit the villages of Bathinda district. Many such visits have led to the warm relationships I have built with a number of people in the Mansa-Bathinda area.

During the course of my life and many interactions, I have learned a lot from the people of the Mansa-Bathinda area. Most of the people living in this area are social and self-sacrificing, transparent and bold. One such fortuitous meeting happened with Ishwar Dass, an M.A. student, a resident of Mansa, who later became my friend or more so as a brother. I met Ishwar Dass while I was doing my M.Phil. in Punjabi University, Patiala, we were staying in the same hostel. I came to find Ishwar Das as a very social and humble person. For my Ph.D. research work in 1981, when I went to Bathinda to conduct a field survey, Ishwar Dass invited me to stay at his house. The invitation was done with so much warmth and a sense of family belonging that if I had not done so, Ishwar Dass would have disliked the thought of me staying anywhere else. I went straight to his house in Mansa and to

my surprise his Bai Jee (father), Bibi Jee (mother) and sisters all knew me, even when I had never met them before. They gave me a room with all the comforts to live in. For as long as I stayed there, my day started early but before going out for field survey to any village, every morning Bibi Jee would come to me with Parathas, curd, butter, and milk. That was her Motherly way of caring for me, she would say that the people of our villages would give you a lot of food and drinks but I would be happy if you had breakfast in front of me. While surveying Ishwar Dass's village Bapiana, I had the opportunity to visit the house of his friend Advocate Amrik Singh, who helped us a lot in different field surveys. Since 1981 whenever we go to Bapiana, we feel a deep kinship. When I visited the villages of the Mansa-Bathinda area, I recollected a Punjabi story "Bhua" seeing the services of the people there, which highlighted the hospitality and warmth shown to house



guests. In the evening when I was preparing to return to Mansa, the people of those villages often said, "Stay here, we will serve you chicken and drinks (alcohol) at night".

Another incident which left an indelible impression on me happened when I went to Bir Talab village near Bathinda on a field survey day. That day I met Jeet Singh, a resident of that village, who helped me a lot in my field survey. The topic of my research for my Ph.D. degree was "Levels of Living of Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers in Rural Punjab". After two days my field survey in that village was completed. That's when Jeet Singh asked me to fill out a questionnaire for his family too. I followed up with a question about what his family was doing. He replied that he belongs to an agricultural labour household and his family owns 25 acres of land. I thought perhaps Jeet Singh was under some illusion that I was collecting details to provide some government aid. Failing to see the connection in his story, I immediately told him that I failed to understand how his family could own 25 acres of land and still belong to an agricultural labour household. Jeet Singh said that he will answer the remaining questionnaire but first I should visit his field. The visit to his

field had revealed that it was a huge mound of sand touching the sky where no crop could grow. Knowing this I now know he was an honest person and I also felt deeply thankful about his earlier help. While I was surveying the agricultural labour households in Bir Talab village, an old blind man brought a Garhbi (Jug) of tea and asked me to drink it. I replied that I would not be able to drink the whole Garhbi, but I would drink a Bati (bowl) of it. I took my first sip of tea, when the tea reached my throat, I felt that I should pour the rest of the tea on the earth because Gurh (jaggery) used to make the tea was salty instead of sweet was from a land with a salinity problem in the groundwater, the quality of tea leaves used was very poor and a very small quantity of milk was used only for colour change of tea. Even if I poured tea, the old man who brought me the tea probably would not know because being a blind man he could not see and the earth was sandy. But my con-

meant he had to suffer loss of business at his own shop. This behaviour of the shopkeepers clearly highlights the fact that even amongst the urban shopkeepers there is no communal feeling on the basis of religions/castes. Consumer interests are paramount amongst urban shopkeepers.

During my teaching years in Bathinda we noticed that the interest of the students in learning and moving forward, the attitude of the students towards their teachers and the parent-like respect with which they treated the teachers was highly commendable and will always be remembered, they will always remain members of our extended family.

While teaching at Punjabi University Regional Center Bathinda, we rented four houses and good memories of those houses will always remain with us. One of these houses was located at Natha Singh Wali Gali near the bus stand. The owner of this house was S. Atma Singh Samagh. In that house, Dr. Surjit Singh Bhatti, Dr. Balbir Singh Chahal, and I lived together. During our long stay in that house, we never realized that we were renting someone's house because their generosity exceeded way more than the rent we used to pay them.

They were providing us Panjiri/Khoa, food and many more items absolutely free. When I was selected as a lecturer at the Punjabi University, Patiala in December 1987, the entire Samagh family invited us for a tea party. We used to call S. Atma Singh Samagh as Papa Jee and his wife as Bibi Jee (Mother).

During the tea party, I asked Papa Jee why was he so nice, he replied that while working as a manager in different branches of District Co-operative Banks, he experienced misbehaviour by the house owners where he rented in different cities of Punjab but he had decided to stop this inhuman behaviour in his own house. I think it definitely goes to show the character and thinking of the people of the Mansa-Bathinda area. Memories of the Mansa-Bathinda area and the observation given by Dr. Dharampal to become a human being will continue to be very helpful in avoiding the vices of today's excessive individualism and acute materialism and invoke the humane spirit.



Dr. Gian Singh

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Jalandhar – Citadel of Dalits of Punjab

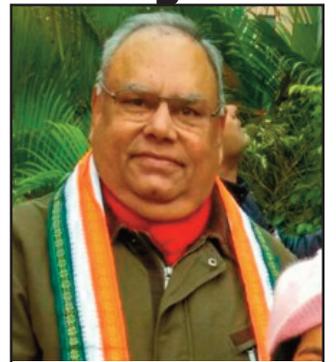
Jalandhar is one of the important 'smart cities' of Punjab. Immediately after partition in 1947 and in the run up to building the capital city of Chandigarh, Jalandhar enjoyed the status of un-official capital of Punjab as well as a centre of excellent educational institutions and a hub of print media for northern India. Jalandhar boasted of cultural glory with Harbalabh Sangeet Sammelan, educational excellence with DAV and Doaba Colleges, media presence with the Hind Samachar, Vir Partap, Milap, Ajit and Akali Patrika group of publications and State Headquarters of almost all political outfits, industrial development and manufacturing of sports goods and hand tools, sports excellence with village Sansarpur for the game of hockey, frontline air defense with Air Force base at Adampur

Chowks, Maharishi Balmik Chowk (earlier called Nakodar/Jyoti Chowk) up to the city limits at around Eldeco Estate/Khambra, important symbols of dalit assertion in the area are located on this road namely; Guru Ravidass Bhawan on Link Road, Satguru Kabir Mandir at Bhargo Camp, Bhawan Balmik Mandir at Abadpura, Ambedkar Bhawan- the hub of dalit socio-cultural and political awakening, Guru Ravidass Chowk, Satguru Ravidass Dham at Bootan Mandi, Seth Kishan Dass's Chaubara (Building) which was visited and adorned by Babasaheb Ambedkar in 1951, Ambedkar Municipal Park, Community Centre at Sidharath Nagar, Satguru Kabir Chowk (Wadala Chowk) and Sant Ramanand (revered Sant of Dera Sachkhand Ballan who was assassinated in Vienna) Chowk at

Chowk (a symbol of strength from the Hindu mythology) already houses important landmarks, fully supported and aided by the Government, pertaining to dalits, in the city – Bhawan Balmik Complex, Babu Jagjivan Ram Chowk, Guru Ravidass Complex and some more projects leading to Master Gurbanta Singh Road, named after one of the senior Ministers in the Congress Party Governments who belonged to village Dhariwal Qadian adjoining Basti Danishmanda. All political outfits are falling on each other to do something or the other to attract and win-over dalits for political gains. I think the magic of 'one vote-one value' unleashed by Babasaheb Ambedkar is showing its efficacy in empowering the weaker sections of the society in a democratic polity.

Now let us come to the flip

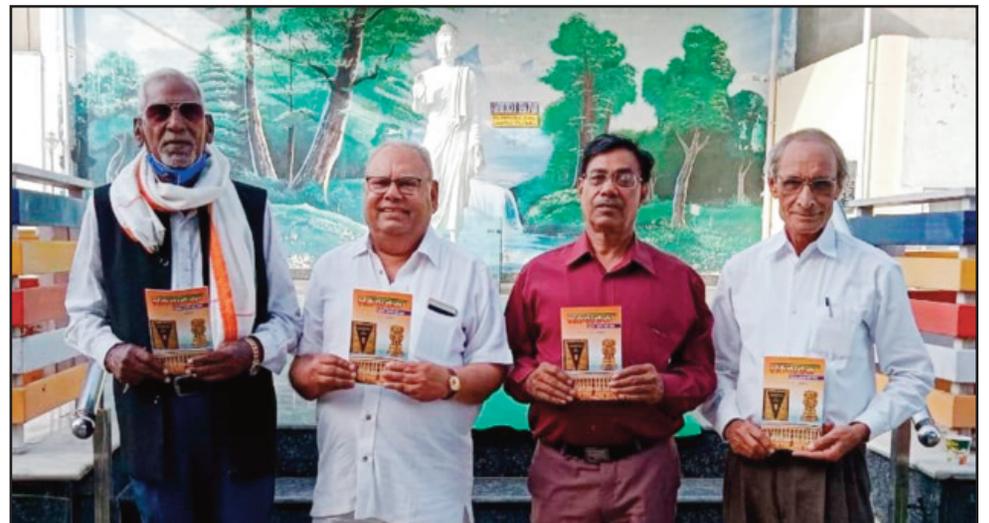
Balle y, inter alia, who remained in the fringes of power. Thanks to the political reservations provided in the constitution, these political worthies could make it to the echelons of power. But, let me say my mind somewhat candidly. These arrangements (political reservations as against separate electorates) have reached the 'dead end' and out-



Ramesh Chander
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Guru Ravidass Dham at Bootan Mandi



At Ambedkar Bhawan



Function to announce Satguru Kabir Complex



At the Hall of Fame of DAV College Jalandhar

among others.

With this background, of late, Jalandhar has acquired yet another silent distinction as the citadel of dalits, socially and otherwise sections of the society. I wrote sometimes ago in one of my blogs about the secular credentials of my native place Bootan Mandi in Jalandhar, the nerve centre of dalit awakening in Doaba and beyond, which may boast of – a Sangatpura Sikh Gurdawara, Guru Ravidass Dham and Guru Ravidass Mandir, a Masjid, a Budh Vihar and a Church coexisting in one vicinity without any animosity and ill-will.

I also wrote about Ambedkar Circuit or Arcade which has come up unnoticed and without any fan-fair over the years. Let me elaborate a bit. One of the important state highways historically called Nakodar Road (about 20 km. road from Jalandhar to Nakodar) has been officially named as Ambedkar Marg since 1980s. Starting from one of the important

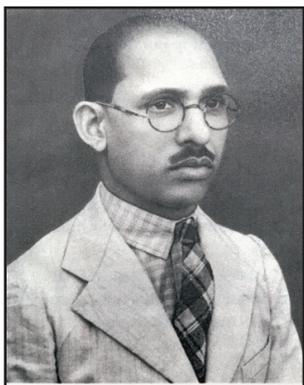
Khurla Kingra. More recently, the BMC Chowk situated in the heart of the city and leading to the district courts has been officially named as the Savidhan Chowk dedicated to Babasaheb Ambedkar. Besides this many residential habitats on both sides of the road are named after Guru Ravidass, Bhawan Balmik, Satguru Kabir and Babasaheb Ambedkar. One may easily see, from these details, the ground situation with regard to the presence of dalits in the region.

Today, I will add yet another feature which is silently emerging in and around another area called Bastis – starting from the cross-junction of Basti Sheikh, Basti Nau and Basti Danishmanda. Just a couple of days ago on June 24 on Satguru Kabir Jayanti, a huge project of a complex to be built in honour of Sant Kabir was announced by the Punjab Government to be built at the famous thorough-fare '120 Footi Road'. This '120 Footi Road' starting from Babrik

side of the situation and the ground reality. The Doaba region of Punjab in particular and Punjab itself is the state with 35-40% dalit population, the highest as compared to the other states of India. There are 34 reserved seats out of the total of 117 in the Punjab Assembly. Dalit community has always been strong in Punjab since independence in 1947, in terms of socio-economic and political well-being with the Ad-dharam Mndal and spiritual Deras like Dera Sachkhand Balan and Dera Chak Hakim among others. In the process, political lineage of dalit leadership have also been impressive with names like Prthivi Singh Azad, Master Gurbanta Singh, Buta Singh, Dhanna Singh Gulshan, Piara Ram Dhanowalia, Chaudhary Jagjit Singh, Darshan Singh Kaypee, Chaudhary Sunder Singh, Vijay Sampla, Som Parkash among others who tasted power under various governments and also leaders like Seth Kishan Dass, Kanshi Ram, Lahori Ram

lived their utility. Dalits need to stand up on their own and grab power. If it could not be done with 35-40% share in the population when will it be done? How long dalits would remain sitting in the fringes? The major reason for this situation is that dalits are a divided lot and it suits to their opponents to keep them divided. It is not understandable that a party like BSP, said to be a party of dalits who are 35-40%) succumbs to the dictates of Akali Dal or of some other party and made to play a second fiddle with 20 seats in the forthcoming elections in 2022.

I leave it here with the question – Will it not be appropriate for dalits to float a new regional outfit, for Punjab alone, to represent the dalit interests on the basis of their share in the 'vote kitty'? Let the dictum of 'one vote – one value' work as stipulated in the constitution. Some brainstorming is definitely called for in this regard.



Ishwar Das Pawar
District and Sessions Judge (retd.)

My Struggle in Life

The DAV College, Lahore

I decided to go to Lahore to join a college there. The obvious choice was the DAV college. With small bedding carefully tied with a thick rope, a change of clothes, and a small amount of money, I left for Lahore in the middle of June 1927. I had not been to that city before. Our headmaster, Shri Wazir Chand, had given me an introductory letter for Professor Sri Ram, who belonged to our neighboring village. He was on the staff of the college as a life member. When I reached there, my classmate Tara Chand Puri (now a leading advocate at Una) and Rulia Ram (now a retired principal settled at Chandigarh), who was senior to me by one class in the school and belonged to our neighboring village, were already in the college; and they received me very well. They rendered me all possible help so as to make me feel at home. Lahore was, however, a new life for me. I found myself in a big place and a new world. So far, I had remained confined to small places, mostly villages. Adjustment was naturally to take its own time.

Through the good offices of Professor Sri Ram, I got admission to the college without any difficulty, and I was also given fee concession. My admission to the college hostel was also assured. In addition, I was awarded a college stipend of Rs 5 a month, which was later replaced with another stipend of Rs 12. So I got settled very well.

Here also, like at the DAV high school, Una-type trouble awaited me but with a difference. While the stir at Una was started by the students belonging to orthodox families, now it was the turn of the cooks and their servants, who were running all the twelve kitchens of the hostel. All these persons belonged to our ilaqa (area) in the Una tehsil (county) (as it then was), and they knew that I belonged to an untouchable caste. They refused to give me food with their utensils and then to scrub these. All of them were Brahmans, and they considered it not only below their dignity but sacriligious to serve an untouchable that way. Such a trouble might not have arisen if I had belonged to some other ilaqa or were not known to them.

This problem was not for me to solve. It became a big issue between the management and the cooks and their servants. The management and

the students were unanimous in their stand that I should be treated on par with other boarders in the matter of taking food. But the cooks were determined not to yield to this pressure. As the question posed a grim problem, a meeting of the management and the students was held on the premises of the hostel presided over by the president of the managing committee of the college, Bakshi Tek Chand, who was also one of the eminent judges of the Lahore High Court. In their view, the problem involved an all-important question of principle for the Arya Samaj based on the ideals and religious concept propounded by its founder Swami Dayanand, and those ideals could not be sacrificed for the sake of the convenience of smoothly running the affairs of the hostel. In agreeing to the intransigent and unreasonable stand of the kitchen runners, the Arya Samaj was sure to damage its reputation as a truly reformist section of the Hindus. But the orthodox Brahman cooks were not concerned with these ideals, which were derogatory for them. As a follow-up action on the decision taken in the meeting, they were given an ultimatum either to accept the decision or quit.

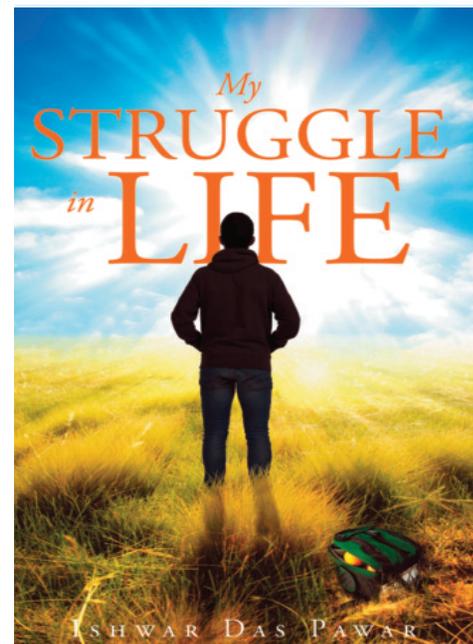
They preferred the latter course. And in the evening, they were seen leaving the hostel, carrying their beddings and other belongings on their heads. Before sunset, all the twelve kitchens stood deserted, and there was nobody to run them. A piquant situation had arisen. The students who were very enthusiastic about the matter made a self-help arrangement. The arrangement was to run the kitchens turn by turn in groups formed by them. This system worked very well and was to continue till an alternative arrangement could be made. After some days, the management was able to find persons to run the kitchens on a contract basis. This incident was given a wide coverage by the newspapers, particularly those belonging to the Arya Samaj (people belonging to Arya Samaj "noble society," a Hindu reform movement founded by Swami Dayananda in 1875). The news got a flash throughout the country, and the management and the Arya Samaj received numerous congratulatory messages from every nook and corner of the country for defending and upholding the high ideals even in the face of a really difficult situation. It created a sensation everywhere. The principles of Arya Samaj had triumphed. There were scenes of rejoicings and jubilation in our circles

even in remote villages.

After remaining out of their jobs for a few months, the cooks and their servants realized the folly of their action, which harmed them more. They were well on their jobs and were earning decently. After leaving the kitchens, they found themselves stranded on the roadside. Therefore, they started making conciliatory approaches for a comeback, and they ultimately succeeded. And all of them were back in their kitchens within six months on the express condition that they would treat me on a par with other boarders in the matter of serving food and cleaning the utensils used by me. As a bad luck would have it, I started losing my health. Therefore, I could not devote myself fully to my studies. For the two years of intermediate classes, I had no financial difficulty because of the scholarship and the stipend I was receiving. I passed my intermediate examination in 1929. The next two years of BA classes, however, posed financial difficulties as the period of the scholarship and the stipend had ended. Therefore, I left the hostel and started living outside. As I did not get any financial help from my family, I had to earn money by tuition work which I got in plenty. I was regarded quite well at it. But everybody was not a good paymaster. At the instance of a professor, I took up tuition work for the children of a rich landlord. At the end of the month, he paid me an amount which I considered only half of what I should have been paid. For this reason, I gave up the work. The father of the children then fervently requested me to continue with the job, but all grace had run out.

He felt disappointed. In another case, I took up tuition work with a well-to-do family at the instance of a friend of mine. I did the job honestly and conscientiously, and the children and their parents were very appreciative of my work. For the first month, they offered me an amount which, according to me, was not even 50 percent of what I should have got. I told them that I would not accept the amount and would not continue with the work. They were rather rude. "Take it or not," was the curt reply. I decided to forego the amount. They felt no qualms of conscience in keeping the amount to themselves. My friend felt let down, but it was no fault of his.

A professor who had been my teacher asked me to spare one hour to coach his ten-year-old daughter Indira. Out of deference, I gladly agreed to do



the job. Indira was a very intelligent and at the same time a strong-willed girl, not easy to deal with. Both the professor and his wife were very nice to me. During the period I was a tutor to the girl, I would generally take my midday meals with them.

One day, they asked me to see if it be possible for me to arrange for a boy servant. Without a servant, the housewife was finding it difficult to cope with the domestic work single-handedly. In those days, the major suppliers of servants were the Hoshiarpur and Kangra districts. A peon, Duni Chand by name, who hailed from the Kangra district, was known to me. On my asking, he arranged for a boy servant about twelve years of age. I took the boy to the house of the professor where he was employed at a monthly pay of four rupees.

That was the prevalent rate of wages for such boys. They were happy to have him to assist them in the household chores. After some time, the boy told his employers that he would be leaving the job, saying that he would be going home. The employers were visibly displeased as the boy was leaving service without giving advance notice. Therefore, they refused to pay him for the previous month he had worked for them. I argued with them that the servant should be paid his wages as he wanted to go home irrespective of the fact whether the plea of going home was right or wrong. But I failed to bring them round to my view, and they remained adamant. But why should the poor mundoo (a lad who works as a domestic help) suffer? It was I who got him employed there. I had a moral responsibility. He had put in hard labor for the month. In the circumstances, I had no option but to pay the poor servant four rupees from my own tight pocket. It relieved me of mental tension.

I passed my BA examination in the year 1931. This period of two years was, on the whole, dull, drab, and uneventful.

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Shahu ji Maharaj: The saviour king of the Backwards and Dalits

About 115 years ago, Shahu ji Maharaj introduced 50 per cent reservation for the first time ever in India. He belonged to the Kunbi caste (a backward caste). He took several steps to break the back of brahmanism. Remembering him on his death anniversary is Dr Siddharth

In the brahmanical tradition, "Ramrajya" is the ideal kingdom and Ram is the greatest ruler ever born. But subjects of the Ramrajya had to follow the varna system. In other words, the Shudras and the Ati-Shudras had to serve the dwijs, and women were had to be subservient to men. Violation of the tenets of the varna system invited death and the king, Ram, himself executed the sentence. In contrast, the Bahujan-Sraman tradition witnessed many kings who upheld justice and worked for public welfare in every sense. They devoted their lives to the arduous task of dismantling the varna and the caste system, and the elaborate structure of discrimination based on it. Shahuji Maharaj was one of them. He concretized the

over as ruler, Chitpavan Brahmins had monopolized most of the positions in the administrative set-up of Kolhapur. Brahmins occupied 60 of the 71 senior administrative positions. There were only ten non-Brahmins among the 500 clerks. Following the implementation of Shahuji's reservation policy, only 35 Brahmins were left among the 95 administrative officers in 1912.

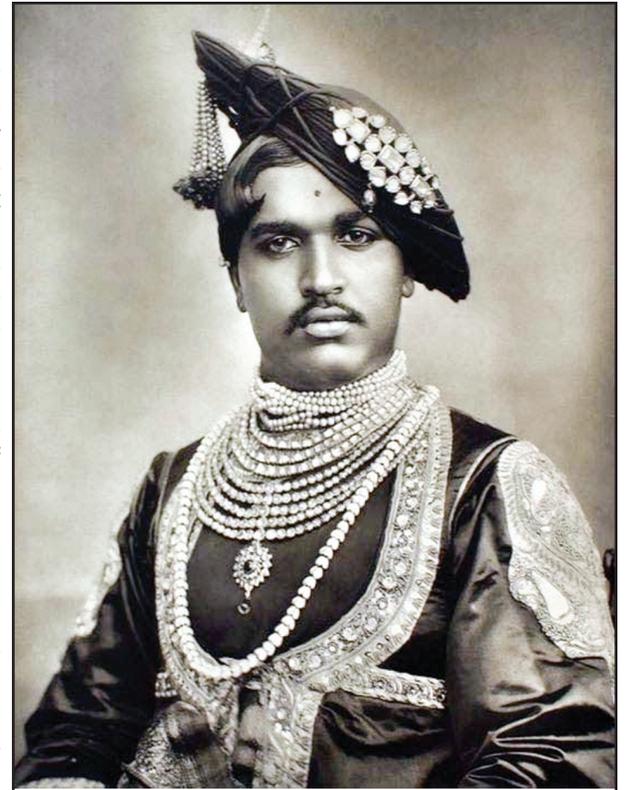
Shahuji was in complete agreement with what Phule wrote in his Gulamgiri:

"Without education, wisdom was lost, without wisdom, morals were lost, without morals, development was lost, without development, wealth was lost,

supremacy on religion. On 9 July 1917, he issued a declaration that the income and the assets of religious institutions in Kolhapur belonged to the government. He also ordered that Marathas (a backward caste) be appointed priests in temples. In 1920, he established a school to train priests in conducting religious rituals. We all know about Dr Ambedkar's Hindu Code Bill, but few of us are aware that Shahuji Maharaj also passed a Hindu Code Bill on 11 November 1920, ending the stipulation that Hindu succession laws would be governed by the Mitakshara School of Law. Mitakshara is Vijnaneswara's commentary on Yajnavalkya Smriti and broadly rules that women cannot inherit the property of their families. It imposes several conditions and restrictions. Shahuji also brought to a close the tradition of assigning villages to Brahmin priests,

Shahuji took a series of steps to ensure that the Untouchables (Dalits) were treated on a par with others and to improve their living conditions. Until 1919, no Untouchable could get treatment in a hospital. In 1919, Shahuji issued a declaration that any Untouchable could visit a hospital and get treatment. In the same year, he issued another order outlawing discrimination in primary and high schools and in colleges against students on the basis of caste. Besides ensuring that Dalits got a foothold in government service, he also issued an order that said Dalit government employees should be treated with dignity and respect, and that government offices should be free of the practice untouchability. "The officers who are unwilling to follow this order should resign within six months," the order said.

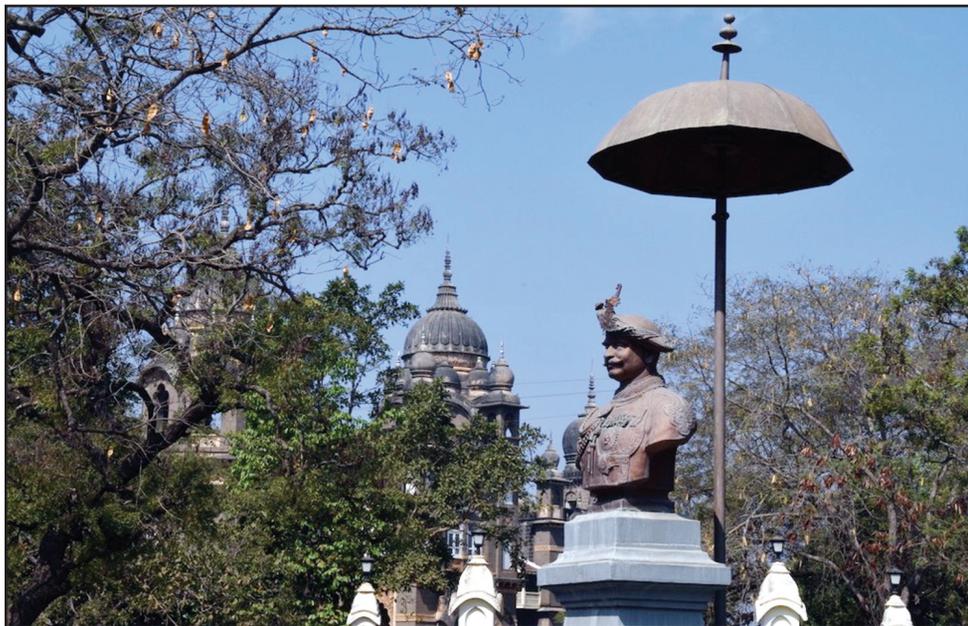
He outlawed two obnoxious traditions, thus bringing about a sea change in the position of Dalits in society. First, in 1917, he abrogated the archaic Balutdari system, under which an Untouchable was given a small piece of land and in return, he and his family had to render all kinds of services to the entire village without any compensation. Second, in 1918, he



A young Shahuji Maharaj

promulgated a law putting an end to the oppressive Vatandari system and introduced land reforms to enable Mahars to become owners of land. This ended the economic slavery of Mahars to a great extent. The pro-Dalit Kolhapur ruler, with obvious pride, told a vast assemblage of Dalits in Manmad in 1920: "I believe you have got an emancipator in Dr Ambedkar. I hope that he will break your chains of slavery." He not only showered praises on Ambedkar but also helped him complete his education abroad and make politics a weapon for the emancipation of Dalits.

Shahuji's efforts to secure equality and justice for the Backwards, Dalits and women earned him
(Contd. on next page)



Shahuji's statue outside his palace in Kolhapur, Maharashtra
(Photo: FP on the Road 2017)

dreams of Jotirao and Savitribai Phule.

Shahuji was anointed the king of Kolhapur on 2 July 1894. Soon, he was loosening the stranglehold of Brahmins on the administration and society. On 26 July 1902, he took a path-breaking step—something no one had even imagined. Amid stiff opposition from the Brahmins, he implemented 50 per cent reservations for Dalits and the Backwards in educational institutions and in government jobs in his state. This was the first instance of caste-based reservation in modern India. That is why Shahuji Maharaj is often described as the father of modern-day reservations. Later, Dr Ambedkar incorporated the pioneering initiative of Shahuji Maharaj in the Indian Constitution. The Constitution mandated reservations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, but the decision on OBC castes was kept open. The OBCs got reservations on 16 November 1992, about 45 years after Independence and 90 years after Shahuji made the provision for his subjects.

In 1894, when Shahuji took

without wealth, the Shudras were ruined, so much has happened through lack of education."

Shahuji Maharaj took upon himself the task of combating ignorance and lack of education among Dalits and the backward castes. By as early as 1912, he had made primary education compulsory and by 25 July 1917, he had made it free. He was the first Indian ruler to do so. Like the Phule couple, he laid great stress on women's education. He opened schools in all villages, each to serve a population of at least 500 and up to 1,000. In 1920, he established a free hostel named Prince Shivaji Maratha Free Boarding House.

We all know that the brahmanical Peshwa rule had led to Brahmin dominance in every field of life — religious, political, economic and social — in Maharashtra. They were in control of almost everything. With the provisions of 50 per cent reservation and free and compulsory education, Shahuji aimed at ending that dominance. He also decided to dismantle the brahmanical



Shahuji's bust installed at his palace in Kolhapur (FP on the Road 2017)

Ensure victory of SAD-BSP alliance in Punjab Assembly elections, Mayawati tells cadre

Ravi S Singh

Tribune News Service

New Delhi, June 29, 2021- U p - ping the ante in Punjab, BSP supremo Mayawati has asked the cadre to ensure the success of party's alliance with the SAD in the upcoming Assembly elections.

"The cadre must ensure victory on all seats being contesting by the alliance in the Punjab Assembly elections," Mayawati told party leaders during a meeting to review the working of party's Delhi unit.

The elections in Punjab are due in February-March next year. Referring to the BSP-SAD alliance, she urged party activists to ensure its victory on all seats. "In the larger interest of the people and to ensure they are liberated from the failed Congress government, a robust effort by the BSP is imperative," Mayawati told

party functionaries.

"The present Congress government is ridden with internal squab-

"In the larger interest of the people and to ensure they are liberated from the failed Congress government, a robust effort by the BSP is imperative,"



bles and factionalism. The party's internal feud has led to neglect of

public issues and welfare of the people for long," she said.

Mayawati further said in the

present situation, people had hopes from the SAD-BSP alliance.

BSP's moves in Punjab will be keenly watched by the Congress, BJP, and the AAP, which has all the more reason to worry.

AAP's meteoric rise in the state is generally attributed to the support of a sizeable chunk of Scheduled Caste voter, and other poorer and weaker sections of the society.

The state has a high percentage of SC population, which the SAD would like to wean away with BSP support. Party founder late Kanshi Ram hailed from the state. He launched his campaign to mobilise SCs ("Bahujan Samaj") politically.

After strenuous efforts, he took the campaign across the country, following which Uttar Pradesh emerged as the BSP citadel, with Mayawati becoming the Chief Minister, and its supremo after his demise.

Courtesy: The Tribune

Shahu ji Maharaj: The saviour king of the Backwards and Dalits

(Continue from page 6)

the ire of the Chitpavan Brahmins of Maharashtra. Numerous efforts were made to humiliate and run him down. Ordinary Brahmins hating Shahuji can be understood. After all, he had ended their dominance in society. But what was painful was that people like Balmangadhar Tilak and Sripad Amrit Dange, a founding member of the Communist Party of India, also

brimmed with anger and hatred towards him. Tilak fought a running battle with him. Born into a Kunbi (Kurmi in North India) family on 26 June 1874, Shahuji Maharaj became the ruler of Kolhapur when he was just 20 and ruled the state for 28 years. He was the grandson of Chhatrapati Shivaji and the son of Aapasaheb Ghatge Kagalkar. Yashwant Rao – as he was called in his childhood – lost

his mother when he was just three years of age. Anandibai, the queen of Kolhapur, adopted him on 17 March 1884, and the title of Chhatrapati was conferred on him. In June 1902, the Cambridge University conferred on him an honorary doctorate of law. He was the first Indian to receive the honour. He was honoured with the title of Rajashri at the 13th national convention of the Akhil

Bharatiya Kurmi Mahasabha held in Kanpur from 19-21 April 1919. He was also a recipient of the titles of GCSI, GCVO and MRES. This great emancipator of the Backwards and Dalits breathed his last on 6 May 1922, aged 48. But the lamp which he had lit, inspired by Phule, is illuminating our lives even now.

Translated by Amrish Herdenia
Courtesy: Forward Press

Pal Singh Samaon



Pal Singh is an international trainer of gidha, Punjabi folk dance. He is very passionate about bhangra and gidha. Pal Singh studied at Punjabi University and obtained MA in Politics, Religious Studies and B. Ed. He is also pursuing his Phd in Folk Dance.

His teams from different Universities have been achieving gold metals with their phenomenal performance.

His students have won awards in contests like gidhe di rani, dhi punjabi di, miss punjaban, miss international punjaban

He also authored a book named 'gidhiyaan pind vadd ve'.

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Kanshiram Sena celebrates 95th Anniversary of June 11-12, 1926 the Ad Dharm Movement

Bahujan Dravida Party would celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Ad Dharm Movement in 2026

Tuticorin (Bureau):-Kanshiram Sena took pride in hosting the celebration of 95th anniversary of June 11-12, 1926 the Ad Dharm Movement in Tuticorin, near Kanyakumari District, Tamilnadu (India). Manyawar Jeevan Kumar Malla, the National President of Bahujan Dravida Party (BDP) graced the occasion as Chief Guest and formally opened the portrait of Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia at the headquarters of Kanshiram Sena. It is to be noted that Ad Dharm Movement is recognized as the First Socio-Political-Cultural Organization for the oppressed people in India.

In his key note address, Mr. Malla revealed that the Ad Dharm Movement was founded by Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia Ji on 11th June 1926 at Muggowal village near Mahilpur in the Hoshiarpur District of Punjab (India). He further stated that the Ad Dharm Movement was the consortium of all the forums of untouchables in Punjab and the mother of all the untouchables' movements at the time.

Mr. Malla described separating of the 'Untouchable' community from the Hindus as the main aim of the movement, then. The Ad Dharm Movement had firmly believed such separation to be the remedy the 'Untouchables' could resort to as a

counter-measure for fighting and resisting generational impacts of caste atrocities such as mental trauma, lack of access to free primary education and absence of separate representation in all public bodies and legislature.

It was further revealed in his address that the movement had been launched with a great Ideology, wise strategies and rock solid action plans - all aimed at protecting and empowering the oppressed people.

"Any movement founded on truth cannot be destroyed. On the contrary, anyone who thinks of destroying such a movement will perish. Ad Dharm Movement was built on the foundations of truth. That is why it has outlived every threat that came in its way and we are celebrating the 94th anniversary today", said Mr. Malla.

The speech further highlighted certain milestone achievements of the movement:-

1. In 1928, Ad Dharm Movement had addressed the problem of 'Untouch-

ables' in the Simon Commission.

2. On October 12, 1929, the Ad Dharm Movement had met the Governor of Lahore and made an appeal. This meeting obtained for the Ad

Dharm Community a historical 8 % reservation for a s s e m b l y seats.

3. In 1931, owing to the vibrant presence of the Ad Dharm Movement, the religion of the indigenous people of India was accepted by the Britishers and this religion was included in the census report too.

"Those who follow Kanshiramism will come forward to acknowledge the struggles undertaken by all the oppressed communities in India. In fact, only after the rise of the Kanshiram movement that the history of unsung Mahapurush strugglers and enshrouded struggles of the Bahujan Samaj of India surfaced on the public domain and caught the attention of 90% Bahujan Masses. Even today, why do you think we are celebrating Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia and

singing his praises from Kashmir to KanyaKumari? The reason is Manyawar Kanshiram's political training", continued Mr. Malla.

He declared that Bahujan Dravida Party would celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Ad Dharm Movement in 2026 across the whole country and that BDP had begun its challenging work of consolidating all the caste based victim movements at the international level.

Giving a clarion call to the international Ad Dharm Movement-community, Mr. Malla said, "We have to seize the Parliament through our votes. This alone could be a true tribute to Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia. Remember: actions are more meaningful than words! And, as a believer in the power of action, I urge you to act according to the directions given by Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia and Manyawar Kanshi Ram Ji if you really want our Bahujan Dravida Samaj to get a taste of what is known as 'Social Transformation and Economic Emancipation'.

The Programme was organised by Kanshiram Sena, South India. In Kanshiram Mission KorkaiPalaniSamyKudumber National Commander (South India) Kanshiram Sena Contact: +91-97156-46452



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