



Ambedkar Times *Weekly*

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VOL- 14

ISSUE- 23

August 17, 2022

California (USA)

www.ambedkartimes.com

www.deshdoaba.com



75th Amrit Mahotsav of India's Independence

Prem K. Chumber

Editor-in-Chief: www.ambedkartimes.com

India is one of the oldest and largest democracies in the world. It also has the honor of the land of struggle for social justice. Democracy and social justice are seamlessly interrelated social processes. The one is incomplete in the absence of the other. Democracy offers desired space for freedom to germinate that in turn creates conducive conditions for the emergence of the most fundamental values of equality and fraternity. Equality and fraternity are the foundations on which social justice is rises and reaches its to its full height with the support of the principle 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, Baba Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia from Punjab, Swami Achhuta Nand Ji from Uttar Pradesh, Baba Ghasi Das Ji from Madhya Pradesh, Sri Narayana Guru from Kerala raised a consistent campaign for the prevalence of social justice in the Indian society. Baba Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia 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.

Great Gadri Baba Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia joined hands with Bodhisattva Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar in his struggle for equal rights for the socially excluded people of India. When Dr. Ambedkar spreaded 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 Punjab state in the mid-1920s. But the irony of the matter is that even after more than seven and half 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.

"SAMAJ DIAN LORAN"

NEEDS OF SOCIETY

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia (President Ad-Dharm Mandal Punjab)

The communities supported by the voice of the society always make progress. After building their structural foundations strong enough, the communities like Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians progressed only with the concerted voice of their communities. Today these communities are very stable and progressive in every phase of their existence. Just a glimpse at our own community reveals that we are far behind these communities. Today, though we are citizens of a free country but are still living like slaves. What kind of advantages the freedom can provide us. My dear fellows, we have an imperative need of our own social identity and solidarity at the earliest. Our young people should unite with Ad-Dharm Scheduled Caste federation Punjab, Jalandhar and fight for achieving our

which there used to be a "Rajatnama". The condition was that any tree we used to plant and cared for its growth was the sole right of the landlord to cut it for his use. On the other hand we were subjected to do work without any remuneration (BEGAAR) for landowners and the Government in the form of carrying away the corpses of the dead animals, under duress. In case there happened to be any scuffle or fight among the upper elites ending in a death, our Ad-Dharmi people were subjected to carry the dead body twenty or so miles away. You could expect no freedom from unending and coercive behavior of police personnel and village Lambardars which used to exist as a regular feature of repression. If there was no male member in the household the women were forced to do



rights at all sacrifices.

My dear fellows, I want to remind you of the time when we were slaves of India's upper classes on the one hand and the British rulers on the other hand. At the time of my birth on January 14th, 1886 the curse and malady of social discriminations based on higher and lower classes were very much rampant in India. So much so that if any one of us accidentally touched a clothing on the body of a upper class individual it was considered a pollution which had to be purified with a sprinkle of water and in case the water was not readily available, the Hookah water was used as a substitute for purification. Water already used by animals like dogs, cats and crows etc. was not viewed as a pollutant and the conditions and circumstances our community existed under, is depicted below for information of the youth.

The entire piece of land covered by the structure of the home, we lived in, was considered as property owned by the landlord (Zamindar). In case we happened to refuse any work for not getting paid (BEGAAR), we were told to leave bag and baggage for not doing Begaar (work without pay). Even after investing money on home did not entitle us to sell it to meet any instant needs. If we occupied a piece of land for building a home we could not have more than five marlas for

BEGAAR (work without pay). We had to drink water through Parnalas (gutters). We were not permitted to dress well or build a dwelling to live. Education was completely banned and forbidden for our people and we were forced to live in a state of servitude.

My dear fellows and young men, these are just a few glimpses of slavery I have depicted for your knowledge and information. Other conditions existing before that have been narrated in my autobiographic history which demonstrates the difficulties and the challenging situations our community and ancestors had to pass through before seeing this freedom now. Having gone through those difficult times personally I appeal to the modern youth who seem to be disorganized and split into different factions and I am afraid to think that the old times will come back.

The only way we can progress is to ensure that we have our own Samaj (Society) knitted together and backed by one voice. Looking at the higher sections of society made us realize the need to organize our community and with the consolidated efforts of some of our intellectuals we passed a resolution in 1926 which led to the foundation of Punjab Ad-Dharm Mandal and started to preach and disseminate its purpose and goals. At that time we used to be addressed

(Contd. on next page)



Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia
January 14, 1886 – April 22, 1980
Founder of the Ad Dharm Movement Punjab

MY PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS: -

Great Gadri Baba Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia has depicted a very honest and a candid illustration of the horrible conditions of lower and neglected sections of society had to face before the foundation of Ad-Dharm Mandal Punjab existed. I had the opportunity to meet Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia face to face in 1963 at his ancestral village, Mugowal and heard in details about his travel to USA in the beginning of the 20th century where he became one of the leading members of the Gadar Movement launched against the British Rule for the freedom of India. A Gadar Mela in the memory of the Gadri Babas was organized at 5, Wood Street San Francisco (California) USA for the first time under the auspices of the Consulate General of India, San Francisco on July 24th, 2022 (Sunday).

Mr. Prem Kumar Chumber as I see him, has been working with undaunted efforts to revive the rich legacies of our Great Saviors Bharat Rattan Babasaheb Dr Bhim Rao Ramji Ambedkar, Great Gadri Baba Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia and Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram Ji in the field of social liberation through the esteemed columns of his publications, "Ambedkar Times" and "Desh Doaba". I admire him for his devotion to this noble cause and urge him to keep the caravan moving towards its cherished goal.

On this historic and auspicious occasion in which I also had the opportunity to participate, a beautiful portrait of Great Gadri Baba Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia presented by Mr. Prem Kumar Chumber, Chief Editor, "Desh Doaba" and "Ambedkar Times" (weeklies), was installed in the main Gadar Hall to join the family of other Gadri Babas. This was a splendid recognition of the contributions of Gadri Baba Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia as a valiant fighter for the freedom of our motherland, India. He was also honored with the award of a TamarPatra by Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India in recognition of his services as a freedom fighter.

Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia and Manyavar Kanshi Ram were the main stalwarts to fight the vicious practice of untouchability which has been eating

like a cancer for centuries together into the very vitals of human civilization.



O.P. Balley
Founder Member
Sri Guru Ravidass
Sabha, Pittsburg (CA)
General Secretary
Supreme Council
Sri Guru Ravidass
Sabhas USA

Continue from page 1 as CHUHRE and CHAMAR and to escape from these despicable names we established ourselves under the name "AD-DHARM". We sent in writing to the Government that we should be recorded as Ad-Dharm and the identity of Ad-Dharm should be made known to the other communities too. Because of the formation of this society all the backward communities were able to achieve their rights and the amenities of education

which are now available in every Department.

As a result of our sustained struggle the current Government has taken steps against the practice of untouchability and caste discriminations and has established a secular Government. At present all the communities are able to safeguard their rights.

So, I appeal to my fellow brothers and members of the community to help the Ad-Dharm Scheduled Caste Federa-

tion, Punjab functioning in Jalandhar by becoming its responsible members. If you pay no attention to this socially oriented organization, you will know from my aforesaid statement to reaffirm that we will be pushed back into the same conditions existing before 1925. It is, therefore, our imperative need to put our endeavors together to let our concerted voice reach the Government and the fellow country-men, through this society.

Gratitudes to Mr. O. P. Balley

We put on record our sincere gratitudes to Mr. O. P. Balley, a senior respectable personality of our community, for his effort and valuable time that he spent on translating the historic statement "SAMAJ DIAN LORAN" of Great Gadri Baba and founder of Ad-Dharm Mandal Punjab Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia from Punjabi to English language along with his personal observations. Mr. Balley, who had the rare opportunity of meeting Bharat Rattna Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Great Gadri Baba Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, face to face, is also a frequent contributor to the columns of our Weekly publications, "Ambedkar Times" and "Desh Doaba" with his impartial thoughts and opinions on many social, political and other

contemporary issues.

Balley Sahib has the honor of being one of the founding members of Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha, Pittsburg (CA), the first Guru Ghar established under the banner of Sri Guru Ravidass Ji Maharaj in North America. He is also the founder member and the current General Secretary of Supreme Council, Sri Guru Ravidass Sabhas, United States of America.

I wish him the best in his future endeavors of life.

Prem Kumar Chumber
Editor-in-Chief

Ambedkar Times and Desh Doaba

EDUCATION, SELF-RESPECT AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Prem K. Chumber

Editor-in-Chief: www.ambedkartimes.com

Babasaheb Dr. B.R Ambedkar used to lay special emphasis on the agency of education for the emancipation and empowerment of downtrodden. So much so that he coined an emancipatory slogan with education at the beginning of the Bhim mantra "Educate, Agitate, Organize." What Babasaheb Dr. B.R Ambedkar was/continues to be and what he had been able to achieve in his life-long mission of Dalit Empowerment is all due to his world reputed stature based on his brilliant academic achievements which still are hard to match not only in comparison to his own people but also with his counterparts among the so-called upper castes across the length and breadth of the country. Again, it was his world towering record of academic excellence combined with his lifelong commitment towards the annihilation of caste from the soil of Indian social set-up that brought him in the forefront of the queues of the most celebrated personalities of our time.

Babasaheb Dr. B.R Ambedkar was of the firm view that the first lesson to march on the road of social transformation could be to learn how to inculcate the quality of self-respect among the socially excluded millions of our countrymen contemptuously called Untouchables. The quality of self-respect in turn relies on the faculty of critical

knowledge based on sound education meant for self-illumination and overall awareness of ones surroundings. Education in ancient and medieval Hindu

society was restricted to those who were born in the upper three higher Varna. Fourth Varna of Shudras and the fifth/Avarna of Ati-Shudras were denied the facility of education because of their low birth. The denial of education had also led to lack of self-respect among the lower-castes that further transformed them into docile servants of those who monopolized the power structures of the society. Babasaheb Dr. B.R Ambedkar wanted to overcome this vicious circle of degradation based on the shrewdly designed system of denial of education to the downtrodden.

Education leads to self-respect that further in a logical sequence of the emancipatory mantra of "Educate, Agitate, Organize" creates the conditions for the realization of the higher goal of social justice. That is what 'Educate' is meant for in the slogan. It means to be aware of one's life conditions and the overall surrounding social set-up. Such a versatile knowledge will stir self-introspection within and creates an urge for an organization of the like-minded fellow beings to transform the unequal social structure into an egalitarian order.



In Rememberance of a noble soul – Sitaram Tayaji

Our Tayaji passed away two years ago on 23rd July 2020 but not a single day goes by when we don't miss him, in between our daily activities remembering his style of cooking, or sometimes thinking he would have loved this dish, or what would he have said at this moment while other times getting strength from his strong heart. It was destiny that our paths crossed, you might be gone but not forgotten.

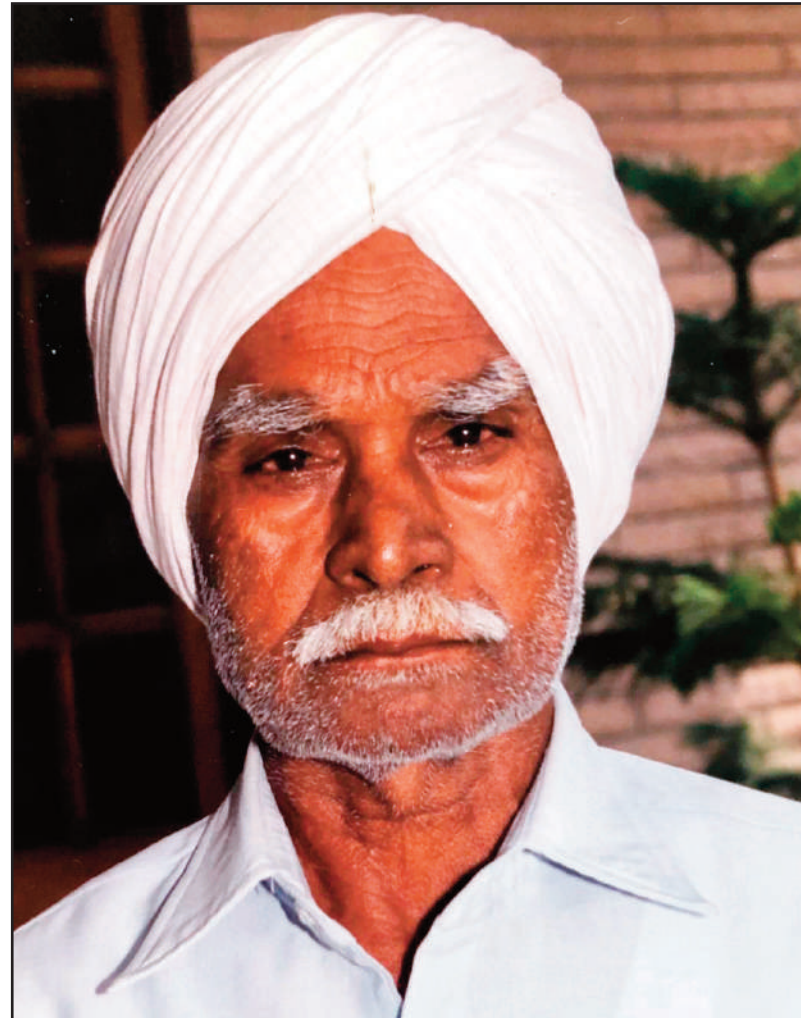
I woke up on July 23rd 2020, having slept the previous night after talking to my parents knowing my family back home was healthy and happy. As I was finishing my early morning walk, I got a text saying my eldest uncle had passed away. His name was Sitaram, we used to call him "Sitaram Tayaji". I was baffled and was unable to process the news, after all, I had called them a few hours ago before I went to sleep. My brain and heart were at a war with each other- "how could a healthy person just pass away all of a sudden"? I broke down in the middle of the street sobbing, knowing I had lost someone who was irreplaceable.

It felt like I woke up on the wrong side of the bed that morning.

He was my oldest uncle, he was a little shy of my grandfather's age but was older than my dad by many years. We weren't related by blood but by destiny. On July 2nd 1963, my dad who was 10 years old, lost his right arm in an accident while working a fodder cutting machine in his village. My grandfather and dad waited by the side of the road, looking for a ride along. In 1963 it was rare for someone to own a car in an Indian village. After a few hours, they were helped by a car which was passing by. My father was brought to CMC Hospital in Ludhiana where he was being treated for his arm amputation. My grandmother used to cook food for those hospital visits, and often the food used to be more than my dad could manage to eat. Grandma used to distribute the excess food to other people who were visiting the hospital. One day she came across a guy named "Sitaram". She offered him food, but he refused to accept it saying he wasn't comfortable receiving food from people without earning it. My grandparents then asked him if he would take care of my dad who was still healing from his accident and break bread with their family in return.

Over the next few weeks my grandparents got to know more about Sitaram Tayaji's background. His dad was in the Indian Railways. Even though he wasn't highly educated, he was very well travelled all over India. He had lost his parents when he was young. He grew up to work in Indian Railways too, got married and was blessed with a baby boy. In his adult life he had lost his brothers. Series of unfortunate events unfolded in his married life

one after the other- his wife fell down from their house rooftop and lost her life and following her untimely loss, his kid died prematurely in a house fire. He had lost his mental stability having his entire family taken away from him. His memory was foggy on how he travelled from his village in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh to Ludhiana, Punjab where some benevolent guy admitted him to CMC. He recovered in the very same hospital and eventually regained his



mental stability. He had lost everything at that point, but he decided to stay back in the hospital and help others who were suffering. In a few weeks my dad was discharged from the hospital. My grandfather was so moved by Tayaji's circumstances that he asked whether he would come to our village as their adopted son.

On 23rd July 1963, Sitaram Tayaji came to our village. It was serendipity that Sitaram Tayaji became part of my family. He spent 57 years of his life with us and raised two generations of my family. In his early years he looked after my dad and his brothers and after about three decades later he raised me and my cousins. He was loved and respected by everyone in our family.

My mom has three kids, me being the youngest of a set of twins. Sitaram Tayaji and my aunts took care of me, my siblings and our cousins while my mom went back to work after her maternal leave finished. He learnt how to change baby nappies, he cooked food for us and even lulled us to sleep. He raised me and my siblings and loved us as his own. He was more than a parent, he was our godparent.

We all moved from our village Isruto Patiala together. He walked us

to and from school. Before any travels, he used to recommend places near a location because he was well versed and knew places to visit from his astute memory. He had a strong grasp, could learn, and memorize things only after listening to them once or twice. He learnt Gurbani, used to tell us numerous Hindi, Punjabi religious tales and folklores. He was the one who taught me "Gayatri Mantra" and he was the one who told me Baba Nanak's stories. He

used to treat us to an ice-cream on a scorching day in the summer heat. He used to make lemonade for us when we came back. We used to eat lunch together. He was very fond of cooking and he was very good at it too. I was his connoisseur, after preparing every meal he used to ask me to taste test the dish. Whenever I complimented his dish, his eyes would sparkle, and he would have a bright smile glued to his face. In those formative years, he inculcated in us virtues to live our entire life by. He taught us kindness, hard work and perseverance. He made us the people we are today. He was a gem of a person. A Rare Gem.

I moved far away from home for undergrad and moved out of the country for my grad school.

Even though we were continents apart, I used to call and FaceTime him every week. Towards the latter years he couldn't hear us very well, so I used to ask my mom to let him know how much I loved and missed him. When I used to recreate his food, I used to tell him it wasn't as good as his cooking, and it always brought back the same old beautiful smile.

I couldn't wait to go back home and show him the new dishes I had learnt over the years. But kismet had other plans, I woke up to find that he had left for his heavenly abode and a pain seared my heart. He wasn't feeling well that day and as my parents were on their way to take him to the hospital, he took his last breath on my mom's shoulder. In his last minutes, he didn't suffer more than the

few minutes of uneasiness. Maybe all the goodwill he earned all his life did surmount to his peaceful last minutes. He was around the people he loved. I would like to think

that maybe because he was such a good soul, he passed away in peace. That day, I felt losing a crucial part of my childhood along with him.

While growing up I used to wonder the pain he would have felt to live without his kin. I always felt the urge to ask him if he missed them but knew this question would open some old wounds. Now that he has left us and I could feel the similar ache in my heart, I could finally empathize and realize how he would have felt when he lost his own family.

My parents, siblings, uncles, aunts and cousins called to exchange our lifelong stories reminiscing him through tears. His memories and tears both come in waves.

Since we are living in a pandemic, I couldn't attend his funeral in person. I hate the fact that I couldn't pay my respect to the person who literally raised me and helped me become the person I am.

I was growing restless at home, hence decided to go for a walk by the beach. It was a gloomy, cloudy day as if God was commemorating his demise. There was a streak of pink hue in the sky where the sun met the ocean. I would like to believe that his soul was somewhere out there near the pink glow in the sky. Peaceful. Contended. Free.

He was cremated on 23rd July 2020, my family has a week-long "Antim Ardaas" or the last prayer for him which ends on Friday 31st July 2020.

The thoughts that give me solace are if there is an afterlife, he will reunite with his family. The long wait he endured with an ache in his heart will finally come to an end. And if an afterlife doesn't exist, I find some peace in knowing he passed away in the arms of my parents. He loved them as his own kids, and they took care of him until his last breath.

He is gone too soon, and I missed saying my last goodbye to him. But we will meet somewhere again, until then we will remember him fondly, sometimes with smiles and other times with teary eyes, and hope he too remembers and misses us wherever he is.



Mansimran Kaur Benipal

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San Jose, CA

Homelessness on our Parkways

On August 11th, the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved two ordinances that will ban homeless encampments in several important locations. As this was an intensely controversial vote, and since homelessness is by far the number one issue that constituents talk with me about, I wanted to take the time to explain the details of these ordinances, and why I wholeheartedly supported them.

The ordinances do several key things. First and foremost, they ban homeless encampments from the American River Parkway and the Dry Creek Parkway. They also ban camps near any critical infrastructure, schools, and libraries. And they also ban the use or maintenance of a container with flammable or combustible liquid or a generator.

Now these all seem like fairly obvious things, and you are likely wondering why these were not already illegal and why it's taken until now to crack down on this. It all stems from a ridiculous 9th Circuit Court of Appeals decision back in 2018 which declared that local governments cannot enforce anti-camping ordinances if they do not have enough homeless shelter beds available for their homeless population.

So these things were illegal

locally, but were then overridden due to a court decision. So what changed? The Sacramento County lawyers have been studying this issue and have found that while we cannot make homeless encampments illegal everywhere, we can deem some areas as off-limits. While it's likely there will be a lawsuit in the future that tests this, our lawyers feel confident that these bans are legally justifiable and will hold up in court. If our lawyers thought we could do more than this, I would have also supported it – but they believe this is as far as we can safely go without jeopardizing county taxpayers with costly lawsuits.

I have just finished conducting seven community meetings in various parts of my district, and I heard the same thing at each of them. The vast vast majority of my constituents are fed up.

The homeowners and renters, especially those with young children, say that they are not alright with the status quo. These people pay their taxes, and rightly expect to be able to walk outside in safety without trash, human excrement, and homeless encampments.

They also largely agree that throwing money at the problem is clearly not working. We continue to

spend money on new housing options, as well as drug/alcohol/mental health treatment (the things I consider to be the root cause of homelessness), but our homeless population is growing at a rapid pace even as we massively increase homeless spending. People who want help can seek it and are given support, but how do we hold those accountable who don't want the help?

I believe that the long term solution to our homeless problem in Sacramento County is in our new "safe stay" encampments that we are actively building as I write this. These are essentially low cost tiny home villages that have full-time staff at them to keep it safe, clean, and provide substance abuse and mental health treatment to homeless people. Building these will allow us to then go to our homeless encampments in our neighborhoods and give them a choice. They can either move into these sanctioned encampments, or they can move somewhere else – but they can't stay there.

If they move into our safe stay sites, great! We can then move them somewhere safe, clean, and off the streets. If they decline that and move somewhere else, great! We can clean up the site, not allow these encampments to grow into the huge

sites we have now, and they can keep repeating this cycle of getting their camp moved until they actually accept the help they need.

Working towards solutions for homelessness is, and has been my number one priority for several years now. You have my commitment to find ways to legally get around these absurd court decisions, and bring back safety and cleanliness to our neighborhoods. I won't stop fighting to get homeless people the help they desperately need to get off the streets, and I won't stop fighting to bring peace and safety to our community. Thank you for reading – and as always, if you want to contact me, call me at 916-874-5491, or email me at SupervisorFrost@sac-county.net.

Sacramento County Supervisor Sue Frost represents the 4th District, which includes the communities of Citrus Heights, Folsom, Orangevale, Antelope, North Highlands, Rio Linda, Elverta, and Rancho Murieta.



Sue Frost
Sacramento County Supervisor



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Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav – Greetings

India has become a long way; it has completed 75 years of her Independence. It is a matter of joy. Mahamahim Droupadi Murmu's address to the nation on the eve of the Independence Day, August 15, her first after becoming the President, was a non-starter, frankly. The marginalized sections of the society expected more from one of their own. PM Narendra Modi, as usual, spoke for the 9th time with confidence and authority, as expected, from the ramparts of the Red Fort, a traditional annual ritual. He is a politician to the core, as demonstrated repeatedly, holding the reigns of the country for

belong to some high caste in the school. Caste system, about which the society and the government, is blissfully silent, is the biggest negation of the very edifice of our constitution which professes; Equality, Liberty, Justice and Fraternity. Anyway, today on the occasion of happiness, I have no intention to be negative. India is on rails and I take this opportunity to greet my fellow countrymen on the reaching an important milestone of 75th year in the fascinating journey to development and prosperity and also wish God Speed to the Government.

As a humble and duty con-

the National Flag as the Chief Guest at a celebratory function at the Silver Residency Apartments, an abode of more than 200 hundred cultured and well to do families in a residential complex. It was a befitting function to celebrate the occasion – Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. In my brief remarks, referring to the 'mantra of unity' of PM Narendra Modi, said that the unity starts from the family, Mohalla, City, State and reaches the country at large. Let us start and profess 'unity' from here itself – Tum Hi Tum Ho To Kya Tum Ho; Hum Hi Hum Hain To Kya Hum Hain. Congratulating the audience on the Independence Day, I

time. In spite of trials and tribulations, India remained India only because of the constitution. Referring to the recent unfortunate and condemnable incident of beating and killing of a 9 year old dalit child by his own teacher in Jalore of Rajasthan, I added that democracy



Ramesh Chander
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the last 8 years. Good or bad; history will judge it in due course but, to my mind, prima facie, he is yet to become a statesman. It takes time; India requires statesmen to steer India that is Bharat, a multi religious and diversified society. PM Narendra Modi termed India as 'the mother of democracy' in his long speech in the morning of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. But, on ground, our political democracy is yet to be transformed into social and economic democracy as visualized by Babasaheb Ambedkar. The speech was full of hope to make India a 'Developed country' in the next 25 years; a long way to go. At the same time, the speech tended to create further confusion with the assertions like 'Gulami Ka Ansh Mitana Hai' – eradicate the mindset of servitude. It would have been better and in order, if he had mentioned about the beating and killing of a dalit boy of 9 years by his school teacher in Jalore, the other day, just because he touched the water supposed to

conscious citizen of India, I joined the call of 'Ghar Ghar Tiranga: Har Ghar Tiranga', and rightly so. We should be proud of our national symbols and heritage as PM Naendra Modi reiterated this in his speech today – respect and preserve our 'drohar and Virasat'. But we should not be oblivious of the reality – Jara Dekh Jo Kuch Ho Raha; Hone wala Hai, Bhala Rakha Kya Hai Ehde Kuhan Ki Dastano Mein. There should be no acrimonious debate on this. We are yet to go a long way for that we need to remain on track. And it could only be done if we bring about 'Ekta and Ek Jut Ta' – Unity and Togetherness as asserted by PM Modi. May God show us the way to much needed 'Unity' in the years to come.

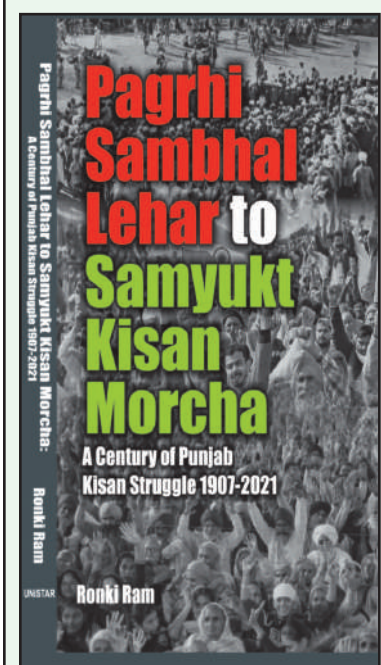
We celebrated Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav with great enthusiasm and solemnity in Jalandhar – hoisted the Tricolour at our house as 'Har Ghar Tiranga', my grand-daughters, Suhani and Rupal participated in the programme at their school and I unfurled



said that it was a matter of satisfaction that we had a functional constitution which had stood the test of

had no meaning without establishing a casteless society – Aa Gariat Ke Parde Ik Baar Phir Utha Den; Bishadon Ko Phir Mila Den; Nakshe Dui Mittan Den. Many of the smart and well groomed children of the Silver Residency presented a colourful cultural programme dedicated to the freedom and freedom fighters which was well appreciated. The Management of the Residency headed by Anil Kaul and Rahul Verma took considerable pains to arrange the function with their associates namely; Kamal Grover, Amit Garg, Raj Khara among others. Dr. Vandana Saggar shouldered the onerous duty of 'Master of Ceremonies' with her usual flair and aptness. Ladoos and Samosas added to the fun and frolic of the morning of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.

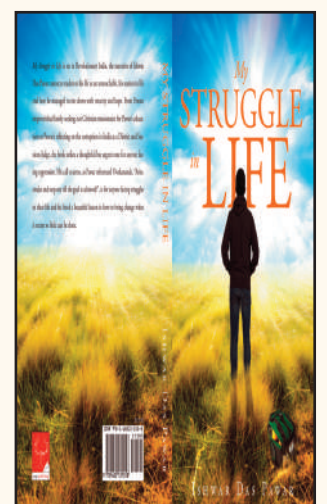
Chisti Ne Jis Zamin Mein Paigamme Haq Sunaya;
Nanak Ne Jis Chaman Mein Vehdit Ka Geet Gaya;
Mera Watan Wahi Hai Mera Watan Wahi Hai.



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My Struggle in Life:

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Status and Progress of Dalits in Punjab since Independence

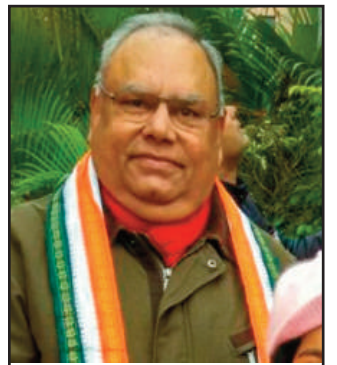
India is celebrating "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav" in its 75th year of independence. Obviously, there is much to write and celebrate and also feel proud on one hand. Certainly India has arrived but there is much to ponder over and contemplate to remain on the rails to reach in the years to come on the other. I am a Punjabi Indian and after a long diplomatic career have come back to my roots in Jalandhar and as such picked up the threads to study, understand, assess and analyse the status and progress of my fellow brethren in the socially weaker or marginalized

case of dalits in the Round Table Conferences in London which resulted in PM Ramsey MacDonald's 'Communal Award' accepting dalits as a separate entity and not as Hindus. The rest is history as to how Babasaheb Ambedkar was made to sign the 'Poona Pact' in 1932 to save the life of Mahatma Gandhi and retain the depressed classes in the Hindu fold with special provisions of 'Reservations' to cater for the social empowerment of dalits. Dalits of Punjab spearheaded the caravan of Dr. Ambedkar for the social reform and rightful space and say of dalits not only in socio-eco-

back to India – a story in itself). With this background, I would tend to say that dalits of Punjab remained in the forefront of the emerging situation with a definite sense of confidence and belonging not only in Punjab but in other parts of India too.

Both socio-political and socio-spiritual considerations remained a vital factor in shaping the role and conduct of dalits in Punjab since independence in 1947. The new constitution of India, with Babasaheb Ambedkar; a dalit himself as the chief architect of the constitution) tended to give dalits a sense of assertion for

prevalent in Punjab as compared to other parts of the country. The Muslim influence was yet another factor in this regard as the undivided Punjab was a Muslim dominated province demographically. The Sufi traditions of Pun-

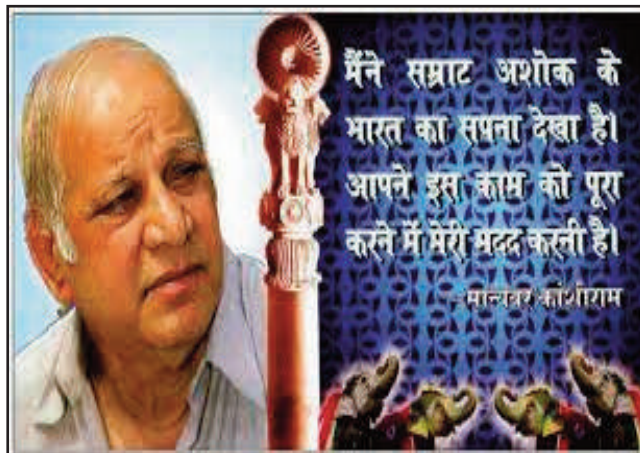


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Baba Mangu Ram Mugowalia
January 14, 1886 - April 22, 1980

A Great freedom fighter and founder of the Ad Dharm Mandal Punjab



sections of the society, the so called dalits. Social Studies Foundation (SSF) of Pune was kind enough to ask me to contribute to the Special Issue of their mouthpiece, the Unheard Voices, to write on the subject. With a view to do my bit in this regard, I venture to write not as a historian or expert but as a student and a layman to celebrate 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' with the esteemed SSF and the Unheard Voices.

In the run up to Independence, dalits of Punjab, under the leadership of Gadri Baba Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, the founding father of AD-dharam Mandal, launched in 1926, while fighting for the independence from the colonial rule, were much concerned about the social status of the depressed classes which were later came to be addressed as Harijans and Scheduled Castes and now as Dalits. Dalits of Punjab, in cooperation and liaison with Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, Gopal Singh Khalsa, Seth Kishan Dass among others, fully sided with Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and supported him in his relentless struggle to get a due and rightful space for the depressed classes against, right or wrong, but willful opposition from Mahatma Gandhi and other hardcore Hindu leaders. Punjab dalits stood by Babasaheb Ambedkar pleading the

economic structures of the country but also in the polity as equal partners. Dalits contested elections of 1937 under the banner of the Unionist Party of Punjab and also All India Scheduled Caste Federation, floated by Babasaheb Ambedkar, and made their mark on the political map of the country. It may not be out of place to mention that when all doors were closed by the Congress Party and other hardcore Hindu elements for Babasaheb Ambedkar to enter the Constituent Assembly in 1946, the Punjabi leather businessmen led by Seth Kishan Dass, Baba Budh Singh Tallan and others played a sterling role to get Babasaheb Ambedkar elected to the Constituent Assembly from Bengal on a call by Joginder Nath Mandal who later, in the wake of partition, became the first Law Minister of Pakistan (Later he came



their rights and due space in the social structures as equals which resulted in socio-political empowerment. In fact, caste system of Brahmanical order, as stated by Prof. Ronki Ram of the Panjab University, was never too strong or widely

job and also the egalitarian approaches of the Sikh religion with the teaching of 'equality, fraternity and justice' enshrined in the Guru Granth Sahib also contributed to shape the conduct and behavior of dalits. The Arya Samaj also played some moderating role to bring the Harijans or depressed classes to the mainstream Hindu fold under the aegis of Jaatpaat Todak Mandal led by Sant Ram B.A. along with other moderate Hindus. But in totality, the so called Harijans (as termed by Mahatma Gandhi) or Depressed Classes (termed by Ambedkar and Babu Mango Ram Mugowalia) or Scheduled Castes (the nomenclature used by the legal framework) remained a marginalized lot at the lowest rung of the society; both in pre-partitioned Punjab or even later in the early years of independence. The following quote from a renowned scholar and political analyst Harish Puri of Punjab University sets the position in perspective, "M. A. Jinnah was reported to have made a suggestion that the Kamins (menial labour) (who were regarded neither Muslim nor Hindu/Sikh) may be divided 50-50 between India and Pakistan after all both the dominions required scavengers, sweepers and leather workers [cf. Madhopuri 2002: 175]. Ambedkar and Nehru had to

(Contd. on next page)

Status and Progress of Dalits in Punjab since Independence

(Continue from page 6)

personally intervene to secure the release of Scheduled Caste people who were prohibited from leaving Pakistan for India by the Government of Pakistan through an order under a special Essential Services Ordinance." Here in India too, the situation was so precarious that dalits were not permitted to live in refugee camps by the caste Hindus. Babasaheb Ambedkar spoke to PM Jawaharlal Nehru and the then Minister of Rehabilitation and sent Dadasaheb B.K. Gaikwad, an associate and close aide of Ambedkar, to Punjab to oversee the rehabilitation of dalits. Harish Puri has said to explain the situation, "During the half a century and more after independence one witnessed the working of complex and multi-dimensional process of change. A major difference was made by the demographic change following the Partition and the later reorganization of Punjab state." Independence and the new constitution, which engaged Babasaheb Ambedkar in the lead, resulted in power awareness among the dalit masses in Punjab in the early years of independence. Dalit leaders; particularly those who decided to side with the ruling Congress party to counter the increasing influence of All India Scheduled Caste Federation and Ad-dhram Mandal and also the Shiromani Akali Dal like; Prithvi Singh Azad, Yashwant Rai, Master Gurbanta Singh, Chaudhary Sunder Singh, Chaudhary Chand Ram, Chaudhary Dalbir Singh (both the Chaudharies of Haryana) found berths in all successive Congress Party governments right from Gopi Chand Bhargav – Bhim Sen Sachar era (early formative years) to 1965-66 and formation and demarcation of Punjabi Suba. Several and varied cross currents to woo the dalit vote banks came and shaped the status and progress of dalits not only in socio-political but also socio-economic and also socio-religious spheres. Babasaheb Ambedkar himself visited and toured Punjab in 1951. With a view to undermine Ambedkar and Akalis under Master Tara Singh, Congress Party propped up Prithvi Singh Azad (Ravidassia), Yashwant Rai (Balmiki), Chaudhary Sunder Singh (Ravidassia), all of them professed to be Arya Samaji in the Hindu fold and Master Gurbanta Singh (Ad-dharmi turbaned Sikh), Master Sadhu Ram (Ad-dharmi) among others. Master Tara Singh to garner the support of Ravidassia and Mahazbi Sikhs roped in Gopal Singh Khalsa (Ravidassia tur-

baned Sikh). The Hindu outfit, Jan Sangh appeared on the scene but could not make much dent politically among the dalit Hindus though the Hindu vernacular press, based in Jalandhar partially succeeded in attracting an influencing Hindu dalits culturally; particularly with reference to the demand of Punjabi Suba on linguistic basis. A large chunk of dalit Hindus registered their mother tongue as Hindi. Republican Party representing dalits of Ambedkaite orientation slowly gained strength in 1960s. Dalits started going abroad particularly UK in 1960s and later to the Gulf and other greener pastures in developed countries which resulted in their economic wellbeing and awakening raising their social and political aspirations back home. The main stream of Republican Party led by Piara Ram Dhanowalia among others, against the faction led by Lahori Ram Balley who opposed, ostensibly, Punjabi Suba allegedly on the behest of lobby headed by the Hindu Lala Press of Jalandhar, sided with Akalis on the issue of Punjabi Suba and even join the first coalition government of Justice Gurnam Singh after the formation of Punjab in 1966. With these developments, dalits got fragmented and divided to the liking of vested interests both in Sikhs and Hindus on one hand and among the political outfits viz. Congress Party, Akali Dal and Jan Sangh on the other. Dalit consciousness received a much needed boost with the growing economic muscle, increased influence of all embracing spiritual Deras like Sat-sang Beas, Nirankaris and outfits of Gurmit Ram Rahim Singh and also, inter alia, dalits deras like Sachkhand Ballan in Jalandhar, Swami Gurdip Giri Dera in Pathankot among others. Kanshi Ram appeared on the scene in mid 1970s with BAMCEF, DS4 and ultimately Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and successfully galvanized the dalit psyche and made dalits, a force to 'reckon with' in the political landscape of Punjab. With the favourable demographic profile with almost 35% and 34 reserved seats in the Assembly and 4 in the Lok Sabha, dalit vote banks became a much sought after activity on the political agenda of all political parties. Though there is no doubt that the constitutional provisions made by our forefathers; particularly Babasaheb Ambedkar tended to help dalits, as visualized, to stand up and assert for their due space in the polity, economy and the society yet it was not to be because the political and caste based so-

cial structures and the avoidable 'disunity' among the dalits themselves did not allow to avail off the opportunities for the real 'empowerment' of dalits. They remained on the fringes in spite of all visibly requisite parameters of much needed and intended progress and prosperity of dalits. In the last three decades, governments of Akalis, Congress Party and coalition governments of Akali-BJP dispensations successfully, and I think willfully, kept the dalits on the margins. The reasons for this undemocratic, undesirable and unethical situation is not far to seek – dalits are a divided lot, dalit leadership of all parties could not prove themselves as true representatives of the masses, dalit Deras are not alive to the political situation and are mostly headed by uneducated so called spiritual gurus without any 'Think Tanks' working behind them and traditional caste bias in the society which still, unfortunately, exist in the society at large. The so called dalit party, BSP of Mayawati failed Kanshi Ram and the dalit masses with their restricted motivation and agenda.

The dalit intelligentsia including the retired top ranking bureaucrats, appears to be at loss to understand what to do? What how far it will remain like this? The question needs to be addressed. Dalits themselves would be required to think and find a solution to get a due space and say in the power structures of the state where they are 35% of the population of the state.

Of late, it has been observed that dalit youth and the educated segments of the community are getting interested, concerned and even agitated with regard to the existing and emerging socio-political scenario and rightly so. In the recent 2022 elections, Congress Party played their tactical move to name Charanjit Channi the Chief Minister a couple of months prior to the elections and contested with Channi as the CM face. The move boomeranged not only because of the infighting in Congress Party but also the underling social hierarchy which does not like the idea. Earlier, BJP Appointed Vijay Sampla as an MOS in the Central Government and also made him the head of the BJP's Punjab Unit. They made Som Parkash as MOS in Delhi. Akalis thought of wooing the dalit vote banks by forming an alliance with BSP. In the recent years, all major political parties viz. Congress, Akalis, BJP and new entrant AAP could manage to win reserved seats to their

kitties which resulted in further fragmentation and division among dalit MLAs and ultimately adversely affected the strength of dalits. But there is no way out to address the systemic malice; it seems, in the given situation. Besides, legal and constitutional framework, constitutional morality is needed as advised by Babasaheb Ambedkar to send 'Gyan-sheel' elected representatives to the legislatures. Let me add a recent instance. AAP, the ruling party in Punjab, with its strength of 92 in the Punjab Assembly has 28 SCs, who won from the reserved seats. But AAP did not show magnanimity or political prudence in nominating a single dalit for the 7 seats of the Rajya Sabha in the recent elections. The ones who shout from the roof tops against Reservations should take note of this.

My hosts, Social Studies Foundation advised me to limit my take to about 1500 words but I have already crossed the limit with about 2400. What awaits dalits of Punjab in the years to come? It is a big question. I think, dalit's 'tryst with destiny' in the year of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' has to be revisited. Political democracy has no meaning if it is not transformed into social and economic democracy, said Babasaheb Ambedkar.

It is yet to come in our polity and society and Punjab is no exception. Political scientists and historians would observe that in the Punjab Elections – 2022, dalits did not support Charanjit Singh Channi on caste basis. They did not vote SAD-BSP alliance because of caste considerations. They did not support BJP, I think, because of historical and socio-cultural reasons. It is a matter of gratification to note that though dalits are sitting still on the fringes yet they are increasingly following the dictum – "Educate – Organise – Agitate" of their icon Babasaheb Ambedkar. The political stake holders would engage themselves and do their job, I am confident, to accommodate dalits and their aspirations with 35% share in the demography of Punjab. The socio-cultural outfits like RSS, SGPC and others are expected to jump in and come out of the 'Lip Service' phase before it gets too late.

I am a firm believer of 'Sam-rasta' in the society to keep India on track. We would ignore this vital need at our own peril. In conclusion, my poetic advice to my fellow brethren in dalit communities would be:

तू पहले बात; फरि बात का अंदाज़ पैदा कर,
फरि ज़माने में तुझे कोई नज़र अंदाज़ कर नहीं सकता।

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Global Public Health Emergencies and their relation to Environmental Degradation



Dr. Gurinder Kaur
Former Professor, Department of Geography, Punjabi University, Patiala.
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On 23 July 2022 the Director General of World Health Organization (WHO) declared monkeypox virus a global public health emergency in view of increasing cases of monkeypox disease at the international level.

This disease has spread in 88 countries of the world including India. According to the data released by the Center for Disease Control and Pre-

vention of the United States of America, 28220 cases of this disease have been confirmed in the different countries of the world till August 5, 2022. As many as 27875 (98.77 per cent) cases of monkeypox disease were found in 81 countries where the disease has not historically been reported and only 345 cases (1.23 per cent) were found in 7 countries that had historically reported monkeypox. Upto 5 August 2022, the United States of America has recorded the highest number of cases (7509) of this disease in the world so far (Map 1).

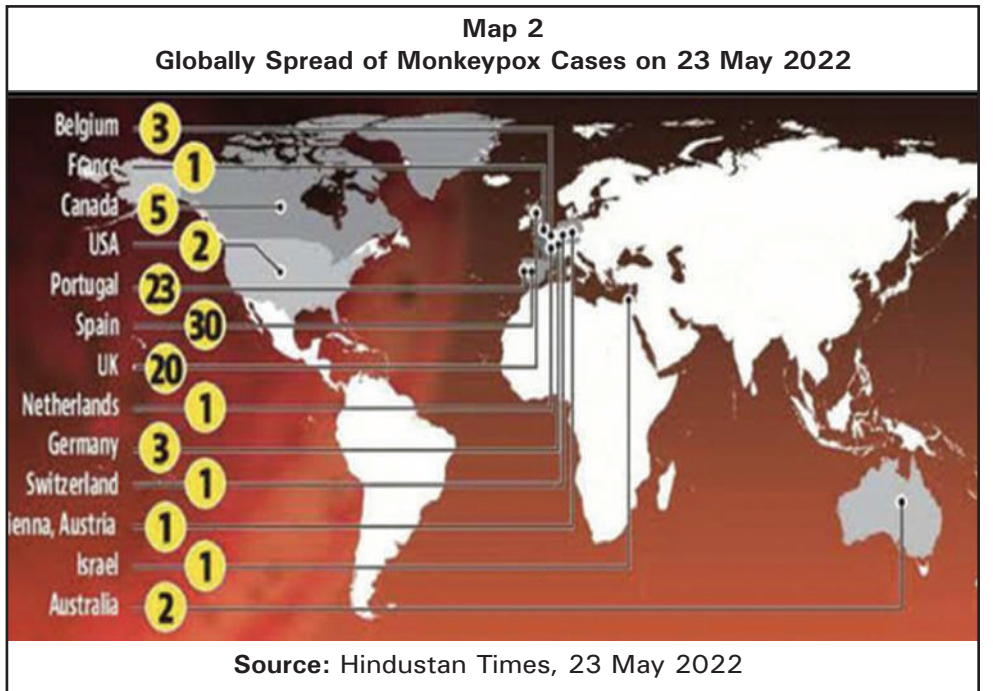
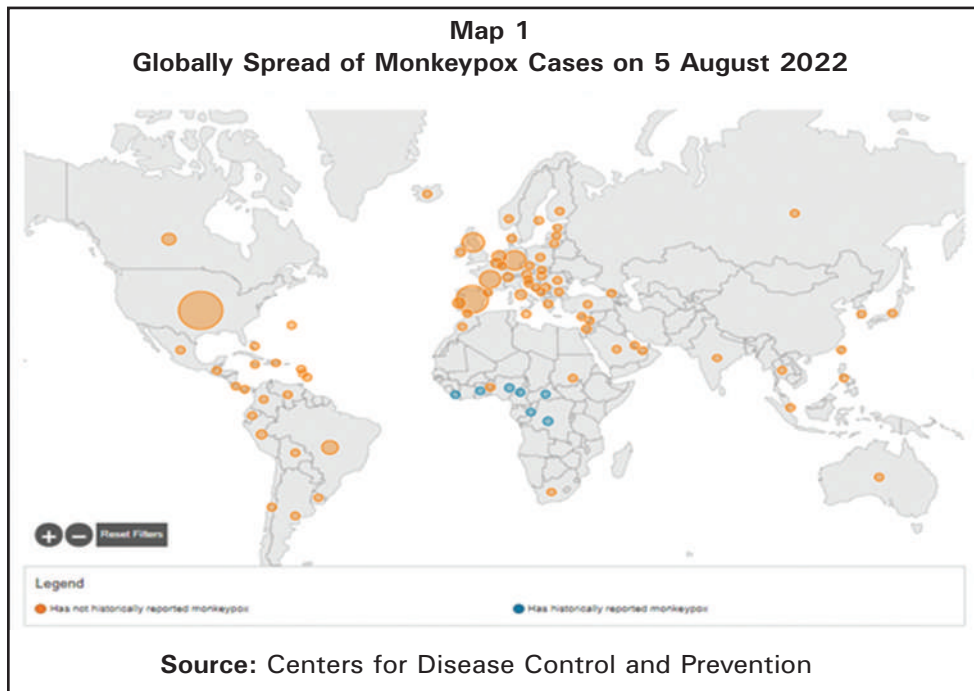
clinically less severe than smallpox. In the early days of this disease, the sufferer has high fever, intense headache, and swelling of the lymphes on the body that fall from face to hands and feet. Along with this, the sufferer may also experience fatigue, backache, palpitations, sore throat, and cough. The symptoms of this disease usually last for 2 to 4 weeks and then the sufferers get better on their own. In some cases, this disease can be dangerous, which can lead to death and in some cases, eye and skin infections can also occur. In this disease, the size of the rashes is much larger than that of smallpox.

The monkeypox virus was

started from China and spread to almost all the countries of the world, which even the developed countries of the world are still unable to control. Now monkeypox disease has also spread in 88 countries of the world and the number of countries affected by it is increasing rapidly.

The host of the COVID-19 virus is bats, and the host of monkeypox virus are various species of squirrels, rats and other small mammals. The COVID-19 and monkeypox diseases are not the only two diseases that are transmitted to humans from animals. If we look at the background, there are many diseases like plague, swine flu, bird flu, malaria,

direct link between deforestation and malaria in Brazil. The study has also revealed that a 10 per cent increase in deforestation per year from 2003 to 2015 has led to a 3 per cent increase in malaria cases. Similarly, in Sabah (Malaysia) malaria has outbreaks due to clearing of forests for palm and other plantations. Clearing forests for palm cultivation (commercial farming) in Liberia, has spread Lassa virus among humans when they come into contact with food or objects contaminated with feces or urine of virus-carrying rodents from forest. This virus spreads the same kind of disease caused by Ebola virus among humans. In Liberia, 36 per



vention of the United States of America, 28220 cases of this disease have been confirmed in the different countries of the world till August 5, 2022. As many as 27875 (98.77 per cent) cases of monkeypox disease were found in 81 countries where the disease has not historically been reported and only 345 cases (1.23 per cent) were found in 7 countries that had historically reported monkeypox. Upto 5 August 2022, the United States of America has recorded the highest number of cases (7509) of this disease in the world so far (Map 1).

On 4 August 2022 the United States of America also declared that monkeypox virus is a public health emergency. Eight people suffering from the monkeypox disease have also died. So far only 9 cases of this disease have been found in India out of which one person has died. This disease is spreading very fast internationally. As on 20 May 2022, the disease had spread in only 13 countries and 90 cases had been confirmed (Map 2).

After almost two months, it has now spread to 88 countries. All the countries of the world have not yet come out of the COVID-19 pandemic that the new disaster of monkeypox virus has surrounded.

According to WHO monkeypox is a virus that is transmitted from animals to humans and then from one person to another. Its symptoms are similar to those seen in the past in smallpox patients, but it is

first discovered in 1958 in monkeys used for research in Denmark, but the disease had not originated from monkeys. According to scientists, the main sources of this disease can be squirrels, different types of mice or other small mammals. Monkeypox virus was first transmitted from animals to humans in 1970 in a 9-year-old boy in Democratic Republic of the Congo. After this WHO recorded 54 cases from 1970 to 1979 and 334 cases from 1981 to 1986 in Democratic Republic of the Congo alone. In the last 30 years, there have been several outbreaks of the monkeypox virus in Africa, in which many people have been affected by the disease. From 1970 to 2003, cases of monkeypox disease were confined to countries in Africa alone but in 2003, 71 humans contracted monkeypox disease in 6 states of the United States of America. The spread of monkeypox virus to the United States of America was caused by animals imported from an African country, Ghana.

In 2017, 200 people from Nigeria were affected by monkeypox disease. In 2022, the scope of this disease has increased and now has reached countries of Europe, Asia, and North America. This disease is an infectious disease. When a person or animal comes in contact with an infected animal or person, they also get the disease. The number of diseases spreading from animals to humans and their scope is increasing day by day. First, the COVID-19 pandemic

dengue, nipah, ebola, zika, and some others which have been and are happening from animals to humans. There are many reasons for this, such as large-scale deforestation, climate change, human migration (increasing tendency to move from one place to another), import and export of wild animals and a rapidly increasing trend to own more pets (dogs and cats).

Almost all the countries of the world are clearing forests at a fast rate for economic development and commercial agriculture. According to a 2020 report by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, 178 million hectares of forests have been deforested in the last three decades. During 2010-2015, 12 million hectares and during 2015-2020, 10 million hectares have been deforested per year. Wild animals are also being displaced on a large scale due to rapid deforestation. As a result, the animals displaced from the forests come closer to the human population along with their diseases and viruses. This puts humans at high risk of being exposed to the diseases of wild animals. Sometimes, due to lack of proper medicine, these diseases spread from local to national and international levels and take the forms of pandemics/epidemics like the recent cases of COVID-19 and monkeypox disease.

It is a well established fact that deforestation can be a strong driver of infectious disease transmission. A 2019 research study by Katrina Zimmer, shows that there is a

cent of people infected with the Lassa virus died. The mosquito that spreads the Zika virus is found in the forests of Uganda and could sicken millions of people. This virus spreads rapidly in cities. The more we degrade and clear the forest habitats, the more likely it is that we are going to find ourselves in those situations where epidemic/pandemic of infectious diseases occurs.

Scientists have been warning for a long time that with the increase in the average temperature of the earth, the diseases that occur in tropical countries, which are carried by mosquitoes, and bats found in forests, can spread rapidly in countries known to have colder temperatures. According to a research study (2021) published in The Lancet Planetary Health Journal, by 2080 nearly 90 per cent of the world's population could be infected with malaria and dengue fevers. According to the United States Agency for International Development, there is a possibility that 75 per cent of the diseases affecting the human population in the 21st century would be related to animals.

According to a research study conducted by Carson and his fellow researchers, there are at least 10,000 viruses in wild animals that have the ability to infect humans but, at present, they are circulating silently in wild animals. Since human activities are directly affecting the climate and land use, in the coming times it puts

(Contd. on next page)

Ambedkar in London

Edited by

William Gould

Santosh Dass

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Description

Dr Bhimrao R. Ambedkar (1891-1956) was one of India's greatest intellectuals and social reformers; his political ideas continue to inspire and mobilise some of the world's poorest and most socially disadvantaged, in India and the global Indian diaspora. Ambedkar's thought on labour, legal rights, women's rights, education, caste, political representation and the economy are international in importance.

This book explores his lesser-known period of London-based study and publication during the early 1920s, presenting that expe-

rience as a lens for thinking about Ambedkar's global intellectual significance. Some of his later canon on caste, and Dalit rights and representation, was rooted in and shaped by his earlier work around the economy, governance, labour and representation during his time as a law student and as a doctoral candidate at the London School of Economics.

The Indian diaspora in the UK is the country's single largest national minority. This volume connects Ambedkar's influence during his lifetime, and his legacy today, to this early phase of his career and intellectual life in London, and its immediate aftermath. It contains new material on the establishment of the city's Ambedkar Museum, explores Britain's Ambedkarite movement, and charts the campaign to outlaw caste discrimination in the UK.

Editor(s)

William Gould is Professor of Indian History, University of Leeds.

Santosh Dass MBE, a former senior civil servant, is a human rights and equality campaigner, fighting for UK caste-based discrimination to be outlawed.

Christophe Jaffrelot is Avantha Chair and Professor of Indian Politics and Sociology at the King's India Institute.



Ambedkar in London

WILLIAM GOULD, SANTOSH DASS
& CHRISTOPHE JAFFRELOT (EDS)

Global Public Health Emergencies and their relation to Environmental Degradation

(Continue from page 8)

humans at higher risk to come in contact with those viruses.

With the increase in the average temperature of the earth, due to the change in the climate of the colder regions, the temperature has also started to increase there. Due to the increase in temperature, the animals of the hot regions have started moving towards the regions where they can find the temperature according to their physiological needs. With the migration of animals, they go to other areas with their diseases and viruses, but the people of those areas are not able to bear the new diseases and viruses. So these new diseases and viruses can prove to be very fatal for them. During the import or export of animals, parasites and viruses that live on animals also move with them to other places and spread diseases there. Another unique trend emerging these days is that domesticating dogs

and cats is increasing among people. Many households have more than one dog and one cat. These people not only sit with them, but also love pets (dogs, cats). At that time they forget that animal diseases and viruses are different which can give them fatal diseases. Animal-borne diseases can spread widely. Technological development has led to amazing advancements in the means of transportation. Now we can travel distances earlier completed in days and months in hours and days by airplanes. Due to globalization, the Coronavirus spread to almost all the countries of the world and took the form of a pandemic. Now monkeypox disease is also spreading rapidly even in those countries where this disease has never occurred before. The main reason for this is that when a person infected with any infectious disease moves from one place to another, he/she spreads that disease there

(new place). Earlier means of transportation were not so developed. Therefore, any disease that used to occur in a particular area used to stay localized and disappear within a few months or days, but now it spreads rapidly from one place to another through air travel. Instead of cutting down the forests, we should conserve them to avoid displacing animals and hence preventing diseases caused by animals. By increasing the area under forests, wild animals should be provided with safe habitats. In order to control the increase in the average temperature of the earth, besides increasing the area under forests, public transport facilities should be provided to reduce the number of private vehicles.

To reduce greenhouse gas emissions, energy should be generated from wind, water, and the sun instead of coal and oil. A person infected with any infectious disease

should travel only after the disease is cured so that the disease does not become a pandemic. Now more than ever, we need provisions to identify and control a disease. Government of each region/country should ensure that the people infected with any infectious disease are tested before traveling from one place to another to reduce the risk for others and so that the disease does not spread so far to become a pandemic/epidemic. A medical examination should be ensured for any animal imported or exported for hobby or zoo. For their good health, all the people should avoid keeping pets in their homes because diseases transmitted from animals to humans are very deadly. It takes a lot of time to make medicine or vaccines for these diseases. These recent public health emergencies are trying to alert us to take action as soon as possible else the future might hold frequent or worse occurrences of such cases.

BABA SAHIB DR. AMBEDKAR (A Revolutionary)

W"e will have equality in politics and inequality in social and economic life. We must remove this contradiction or else those who suffer inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which this assembly has so laboriously built." These are the words which Baba Sahib Dr. Ambedkar spoke on 25th November 1949 while addressing the Constituent Assembly after completing the Indian Constitution piloted by him which he presented to the President of India Dr. Rajendra Prasad on 26th January 1950 in the presence of Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and other prominent leaders.

In my view, these words were more directed towards the sufferers of inequality i.e. downtrodden and unprivileged of India rather than administrators of it. Baba Sahib extremely worked hard to frame the constitution and get it passed with its preamble:-

JUSTICE Social, economic, and political;

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, and worship;

EQUALITY of status and opportunity and to promote among them all;

FRATERNITY assuming the dignity of the individual; Inter alia he included the Fundamental Rights, such as Equality before law (ART 14); Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or the place of birth (ART 14); Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment (ART 16); Abolition of untouchability (ART 17); Protection of traffic in human beings and forced labor (BEGAR) (ART 23); Remedies for enforcement of fundamental rights (ART 32, 226); by the judiciary i.e. the Supreme Court of India and the High Courts of States. Besides this, the directive principles of state policy under which states shall endeavor to secure social order for promotion of welfare of the people were also provided.

These principles specially include an adequate means of livelihood to all citizens, men or women, equally (ART 39); Rights to work, to education, and public assistance in certain cases (ART 41). Living wage etc. for workers (ART 43); and promotion of educational and economic interests of the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other backward sections (ART 46).

This all would show that all these provisions have been made especially to confer, to protect, and safeguard the basic rights upon and for the S.Cs. and S.Ts. who had been hitherto deprived of them for centuries under the Manu's Laws contained in the Manu Smiriti due to which these communities became downtrodden, unprivileged and untouchable. So that such castes, tribes may not be ignored, their list was drawn out later on by the President of India in consultation with Governors of the States and made a part of the Constitution as directed by it under articles 341 and 342. To further insure the amelioration of these classes, a particular section has been added as part XVI to the constitution

under the caption, special provisions relating to certain classes under which seats shall be reserved in the house of people and legislative assemblies of the states in proportion of their population in the states, for S.Fs* and STs, (ART 330).

Reservation of S.Cs, and S.Ts in the services and posts has been provided under article 335 in connection with the affairs of the Union and the States. To watchdog and safeguard the interests of the S.Cs. and S.Ts., a National Commission (ART 338) consisting Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and three other members has been provided.

Considering the concerted effort accompanied by versatile genius put in by Baba Sahib in framing the constitution and unique leadership of the downtrodden, Mr. Sharad Pawar the former chief minister of Maharashtra, paid his heartiest tribute to Baba Sahib in his Foreward of "Ambedkar's Writings". In the following words;

In Baba Sahib Ambedkar, we have not only a crusader against the caste system, a valiant fighter for the cause of the downtrodden in India but also an elder statesman and national leader whose contribution in the form of Constitution of India will be cherished forever by posterity. In fact, his fight for human rights and as an emancipator of all those enslaved in the world gave him international recognition of a liberator of humanity from injustice, social and economic. Pt. Jawhar Lal Nehru, the then prime minister of India paid a glowing tribute to Dr. Ambedkar while moving a condolence resolution in the parliament as follows, "Dr. Ambedkar was a symbol of revolt against all oppressive feelings of the Hindu society," (Foreward to Dr. Ambedkar's writings and speeches) Pt. Nehru once said that he was accidentally born in a Hindu family to indicate that he did not believe in casteism and its edicts.

But during his lifetime he did not shed off Hinduism. As against this Baba Sahib Dr. Ambedkar, after thoroughly studying the Hindu religion and its social and cultural tenets took the vow that though he was born a Hindu because it was not in his power but he would not die as a Hindu. To keep his solemn vow, Baba Sahib embraced Buddhism and took, "Diksha on Dusehra Day in 1956. Before his death on 6th December 1956. Baba Sahib adopted Buddhism because it is the most secular and scientific religion in which there is no caste and class prejudice but equality, fraternity, love, and affection." The former prime minister Indira Gandhi also said, "The life of Dr. Ambedkar gives a lesson to us



**R. C. Paul (Late)
(Retired Judge)**

that most of evils in our society can be eliminated by domestic reforms as introduced by this great leader." In framing new constitution, Baba Sahib was undoubtedly a larger than life persona. This is established from further words of Sharad Pawar," Dr. Ambedkar incorporated the values of liberty, equality, and fraternity in the Constitution of free India,

it is a living tribute to his juristic genius and social conscience that over the years, the high courts and supreme court have shaped the law to serve the social ends of governmental efforts to improve the lot of the poor."

In pursuance of edicts, of the constitution, certain laws have been enacted and certain ordinances/directions have been promulgated for the upliftment and welfare of the S.Cs. and STs but little has been achieved so far. Protection of Civil Rights Act

1955 and S.Cs and S.Ts. (Protection of Atrocities) 1989 have been passed but despite this the offences to attract these provisions are still being permitted in Indian societies. Very few cases are registered, tried, or result into conviction due to general prejudice.

Reservations in central or state appointments proportionate to the population of these caste or classes have been notified but their quotas have not been fully filled up. There is a great backlog, though there is no dearth of qualified candidates among the SCs and STs for appointment on such posts. There is no reservation in private sector. Now the state trading is also being squeezed to be picked up by private firms and agencies. This will further limit the appointment scope of the SCs. and STs. candidates on key posts.

The reservation in legislation of course is fully implemented but the MLAs and MPs belonging to the SCs and STs are doing nothing tangible to better the fate of the castes or tribes whom they are supposed to represent, because they occupy the reserved seats for and on their behalf on reserved quotas. They are elected on the tickets of national or regional parties of non- S.Ss, and non STs, financially supported by the millionaires and as such they never raise any point in the parliament or the state assemblies for the welfare of the S.Ts. and S.Cs. to whom they are expected to represent. They are after filling their own coffers with money by indulging in corruption. They are in a way running with the hares and hunting with the hounds.

Ours to be elected members do not form a strong independent party to press for the fulfilment of the demands of our people on account of whom they contest the reserved

seats in the elections. They do not gain the political power which is most needed in the words of Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar as expressed by him in the following lines/Political power is the most precious thing in the life of the community especially if its position is constantly being challenged and the community is required to maintain it by meeting the challenge. Political power is the only means by which it can sustain its position" (in Pakistan or Partition of India) According to Baba Saheb," lost rights are never regained by begging and by appeals to conscience of usurpers. It is out of hard and ceaseless struggle alone that one derives strength, confidence and recognition." He has asked us, "write down on the walls of your houses that you were Dassees (slaves) of yesterday but want to be Rulers of tomorrow." During more than 6 decades from the adoption of Indian constitution there has not been caused an appreciable dent in the abysmal plight of S.Cs. and STs. Also untouchability has been abolished by the constitution it still exists in some parts of India. Yet it exists in the mind of caste Hindus and non SCs. who feel ill at ease in the matters of reservation in the appointments and the posts. There is lack of education among the S.Cs. and S.Ts. due to poverty and unemployment. The schemes of their welfare are not fully implemented. The funds earmarked and given the disposal of the states by the central govt. for the purpose are either misappropriated or mis-utilised. Most of the S.Cs, and S.Ts. constitute labor class but suffer from unemployment.

The higher education and medical facilities have become out of their reach being most expensive. Still these people have not blown up the structure of political democracy as prophesied by Baba Saheb. This is because they have not united under one banner. Their population in all the states is not less than 25% of the total population. In Punjab it has risen up to 32%. In case they all get together and form a compact unit like Sikhs in Punjab and BSJ? in U.P and make alliance with some national or regional parties, they can have balance of power in their hands to form the govt, of their choice and rule as contemplated by Baba Saheb. Let a better sense prevail upon the S.Cs. STs. and their leaders to recollect Baba Saheb's philosophy and attain political power. Let them shed off fatalist notion that they are born to suffer the atrocities at the hands of Hindus due to their mythological previous deeds. They should learn the universal truth, "The fault does not lie with our stars but with us that we are underlings" in the words of Shakespeare.

According to Baba Saheb, "The political power is the most precious thing in the life of a community, especially if its position is constantly being challenged and the community is required to maintain it by meeting the challenge. Political power is the only means by which it can sustain its power".

Marking South Asian Heritage month in Bedford, UK

South Asian Heritage Month was celebrated from 18 July to 17 August all over the United Kingdom. The aim was to celebrate the heritage of the people with roots in South Asian countries including India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangla Desh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives. It was also an opportunity to commemorate, mark, and celebrate South

Asian history and culture, as well as to better understand the diverse heritage that continues to link the UK and South Asia.

On Sunday 14 August, 2022, a great event took place in the Shri Guru Ravidass Community Centre, Bedford to showcase the heritage and culture of South Asian diaspora. A number of organisations including

Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Bedford, Hindu Council UK, Royal Air Force and British Army participated and displayed their exhibitions. Many dignitaries from local government including Director of National Health Services, Mayor from Luton, Member of Parliament, Speaker of Bedford Borough Council and representatives of the Indian High Commission also

attended. Ambedkar Mission Society, Bedford also displayed a photo exhibition on the life and contribution of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar. A number of people took great interest in the contribution of Dr Ambedkar in building India a modern state through the constitution drafted by him and also in the matter of protection of human rights. (See next page)



Marking South Asian Heritage month in Bedford, UK



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