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Happy Guru Nanak Gurpurb Day



Guru Nanak Dev Ji:Caste and gender Prem K. Chumber Editor-In-Chief: Ambedkar Times / Desh Doaba

Life and teachings of Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji brought a gigantic transformation in the way social and religious thinking were articulated in the Brahminical social order. He made the stupendous task of spiritual regeneration and social transformation his lifelong mission. He traveled long [Udasis] in all directions to convey the message of the oneness of the mankind and the Omnipresence of the non-anthropomorphic and formless God.

His social transformation agenda revolves around two main issues: Caste and gender. Guru Nanak minces no words in categorically condemning caste and gender based discriminations. His negation of caste is absolute. He said: FakarJatiphakarnau, Sabhanajiaikachau [Worthless is caste and worthless an exalted name; for all mankind there is but single refuge]. Another Shabad is: NeechanandarneechJati, Neechihunatineech, Nanak tin ke sang sath, Vadiansiyonkyarees, Jitheneechsanmalian, Tithe nadrteriBakhshish [I am the lowest of the low castes; low, absolutely low; I am with the lowest in companionship, not with the so-called high. Blessing of God is here the lowly are cared for] (Translate. as in Harish K. Puri, "Scheduled Castes in Sikh Community: A Historical Perspective", EPW, Vol. 38 (26), June 28, 2003, p. 2694).

Guru Nanak Dev's concern for the eradication of caste assumes practical shape in his taking up of culti vation of land, often clubbed with low caste professions. He took to cultivation in order to assign dignity to manual labour. In fact, regard for manual labour had always remains the hallmark of the all low caste saint-poets also. In addition, Guru Nanak introduced the institutions of 'Sangat' and 'Pangat' (eating together in Langar). Thus KiratKaro (do labour), VandChhako (eat by sharing), NaamJapo (recite God's name) became the mantra of equality for all.

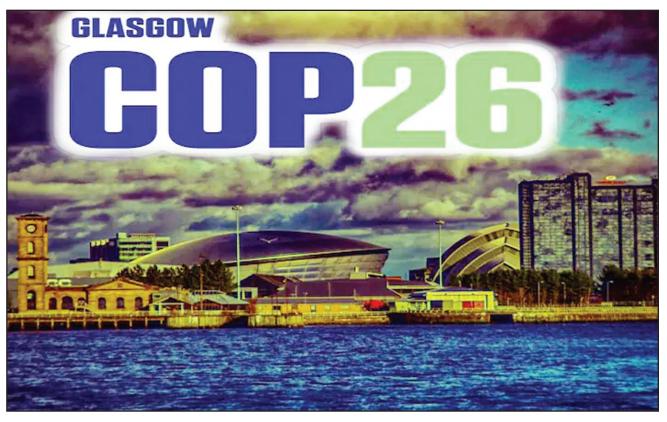
An account of the performance of the early days of the Glasgow Conference

The Conference of the Parties(COP)-26 started on October 31, 2021 in Glasgow, Scotland and will continue till November 12. The main objective of this conference is to reduce carbon emissions to zero by 2050 so that the earth's temperature does not exceed 1.5 degree Celsius above the Pre-Industrial Revolution Period temperature by the end of this century to save humanity from natural disasters.

The conference started with very emotional speeches. The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Boris Johnson said that the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015 was a commendable decision to curb global warming. Sadly, even after six years, those decisions have not been implemented by most of the countries in the world, which has made them very hollow in recent times. Even now, if we do not take action in this regard, we will be responsible for our own bleak future as we will be more prone to natural disasters due to rising temperature. Boris Johnson also said that if we still fail to take action, it would be fatal to life on earth, everyone tries survive what is becoming a hotter, harsher world or we accept that humanity faces a bleak future on this planet. The Glasgow Conference in 2021 with begins clear and emotional statements. This is not the first conference to address global warming. Such conferences began in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. At the Rio Conference, the developed countries agreed to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions



by 2000 at the 1990 levels, and decided not to impose any restrictions on developing countries' emissions of greenhouse gases. The second such conference was held in 1997 in Kyoto, Japan, in which specific targets were set for reducing greenhouse gas emissions for developed countries, and the rest of the world could reduce these gases at will. No specific goals were set for them. In both



must contribute to the success of this conference to save future generations. If the Glasgow Conference fails, the whole thing fails. After apologizing for being out of the Paris Climate Agreement in 2017, the US President Joe Biden has said that we should not delay any longer as even a day's delay could cost us dearly.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said "we are digging our own graves without cutting greenhouse gas emissions". Understanding the plight of the island nations, the Prime Minister of Barbados said that developed countries should not allow greed and selfishness to wreak havoc on the world. He also asked how man has become so selfish and hard-hearted that he is not even listening to the groans of human beings.

Patricia Espinosa, head of the United Nations climate office, told world leaders that they now have two options: to cut greenhouse gas emissions quickly and help communities and counthese conferences, although the developed countries agreed to reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases, none of the developed countries did so.

Even after this, the series of conferences continued. The Kyoto Protocol was replaced by the Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) at the Conference of the Parties-13 in Bali in 2007 because developed countries were disturbed by China's increasing emissions of greenhouse gases. Developed countries wanted all the countries in the world to reduce their greenhouse gases and argued that no climate agreement could succeed if China and India did not cut greenhouse gas emissions.

The next such conference was held in 2009 in Copenhagen, Denmark. This conference also did not reach any conclusion. A 2014 IPCC report raised concerns about climate change due to rising temperature. According to the report, an in (Contd. on next page)

An account of the performance of the early days of the Glasgow Conference

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crease in the average global temperature will increase the number of natural disasters and the severity of the catastrophe from which no country in the world can escape. Following the worrying and alarming revelations of this report, all the countries of the world took immediate action in 2015, and had prepared a blueprint under the Paris Climate Agreement for the reduction of greenhouse gases. The Paris Climate Agreement called on each country to submit a plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to the United Nations in the light of its economic development, but in the last six years no country in the world except Europe did take this agreement seriously. As a result, the average global temperature rose by 1.1 degree Celsius in 2020 compared to the Pre-Industrial Revolution Period. According to a United Nations report, the rise in temperature has led to a four to five-fold increase in the number of natural disasters and a sevenfold increase in economic losses since the 1970s. According to a 2021 report by the World Meteorological Organization of the United Nations, there have been 11,000 natural disasters in the last 50 years. According to a report by the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters in Belgium, the world had an average of 711 natural disasters each year in the 1970s, but that number rose to 3,536 between 2000 and 2009. In the 1970s, weather disasters cost 175 million dollars a year globally, rising to 138 billion dollars in the 2010s. According to a United Nations report, 90 per cent of the deaths from natural disasters since 1970 have occurred in developing countries.

The COP-26 in Glasgow reveals the goals of the world's new greenhouse gas emissions commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to curb global warming. The United States has already sent its upgraded plans to the United Nations to increase greenhouse gas emissions reduction and generate energy from renewable sources under the Paris Climate Agreement. China has only increased its commitment under the Paris Climate Agreement to start planning for coal-fired power generation projects after 2026 and to achieve the goal of zero carbon emissions by 2060.

It is also important to highlight some of the positive facts of the Glasgow Conference so far. India, which is currently the third largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the world, has not yet set a goal of zero carbon emission. The Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi has outlined five targets for controlling global warming. According to the first target, India will achieve the goal of zero carbon emissions by 2070. Secondly, India will generate 500 gigawatts of energy from renewable sources instead of 450 gigawatts by 2030. Thirdly, India will meet 50 per cent of its energy needs from renewable energy by 2030. Fourthly, from now (2021) to 2030, India will reduce its carbon emissions by one billion tonnes and the fifthly goal is to reduce its total carbon emissions by 45 per cent. India's plan to reduce carbon emissions is highly commendable. If India achieves these goals, it will be a major achievement of the Glasgow Conference. In addition to these five goals, the Prime Minister of India has urged developed countries to make one trillion dollar climate finance "available at the earliest", reminding them of climate justice and past hollow promises on climate technology and finance.

The second positive agreement of the Glasgow Conference is to reduce methane gas emissions by 30 per cent by 2030, which has been signed by 90 countries, including the United States, and European countries. The heating capacity of methane gas is 80-86 times higher than that of carbon dioxide over a period of 20 years. If methane gas emissions are cut by 30 per cent by 2030, it could check the rise in temperature by 0.2 degree Celsius by 2050. This is not a formal agreement. It depends on the signatory countries whether they cut methane gas emissions in their country or not. At the same conference, 100 countries also signed an agreement to stop deforestation but this agreement is also like the agreement on methane gas emissions reduction. Such agreements are often made at climate-related conferences, but they do not last long. The conference also outlines a programme to strengthen the infrastructure of the island nations so that they can protect themselves from natural disasters. At the same time, under the One Sun, One World and One Grid Action Plan, a programme has been drawn up to create a common energy grid at the international level. In Glasgow, a group of banks and insurance companies have also pledged to spend 130 trillion dollars for green transition. The United Kingdom committed 100 million pounds for making climate finance more accessible to developing countries and helping to increase the volume of green bonds to finance climate-friendly projects. Canada has also announced 10 million dollars for the project. The funds will be distributed across the global network through the National Adaptation Plan. So far, all of these programmes relate to the positive aspects of the Glasgow Conference.

There are also some negative facts about the Glasgow Conference. China, the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases, did not attend the conference. The Chinese envoy has said that China had already sent plans to reduce its carbon emissions and was in favour of limiting the rise in temperature to 1.5 degree Celsius. The presidents of the Russian Federation, and Brazil also did not attend the conference. China, the Russian Federation, and India, which emit large quantities of methane gas, have not signed an agreement to reduce methane gas emissions. According to an IPCC report on climate change, all the countries in the world should reduce their methane gas emissions by 50 per cent by 2030 to limit global warming to 1.5 degree Celsius.

Even after the United States, which is currently the world's second-largest emitter of greenhouse gases after China, announced a 50-52 per cent reduction in current greenhouse gas emissions to 2005 levels by 2030, the country's level of per capita carbon emissions would still make up 220 per cent of the global average in 2030. Although Biden has announced a commitment to completely eliminate greenhouse gas emissions in the transportation sector by 2035 and zero carbon emissions by 2050, which is a good move, the conference comes at a time when division in his own Democratic Party is forcing him to scale back ambitious climate efforts.

In 2009, developed countries pledged 100 billion dollar a year in aid to the world's islands and developing countries. Sadly, these countries have never been able to provide 100 billion dollars in aid. That amount was only 78 billion dollars in 2017 and 80 billion dollars in 2018, which is far from the promise. It is important to note here that 80 per cent of the greenhouse gas emissions that are causing rapid rise in temperature have been released into the atmosphere by the G20 countries (developed countries) which now hit the islands and developing countries.

Now all the countries in the world, especially those that are emitting large amounts of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere or those that have emitted in the past, need to make good plans for greenhouse gas emissions reduction and implement them seriously without delay. We have no time for false and unfulfilled promises, emotional and false speeches. All countries must make urgent efforts to save the planet and human life and to improve the quality of environment, and each country must play its part in solving common problems. Developed countries, therefore, need to accelerate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the same proportion as they have released greenhouses into environment and to save the island and developing countries from natural disasters. Helping as needed, of course, may be more than the agreement reached at the 2009 Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark. By doing this, we will be able to save the earth, animals, and humanity.



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Mera Jiwan Safar – Ambedkar Mission Ki Rah Per – Book Review

Mera Jiwan Safar – Ambedkar Mis- from college to the corridors of power days and later graduated from Jalandsion Ki Rah Per - is the Hindi version of Kartar Chand Sulekh's (July, 1927) autographical account pertaining to author's association and interaction with Babasaheb Ambedkar and his Mission originally published in 2019-20 in Punjabi. On my recent visit to Ambedkar Bhawan in Jalandhar on the October 14, the day on which Babasaheb embraced Buddhism in 1956 at Nagpur, from one of the book stalls; I could get the book of Sulekh Sahib, and that too gratis that is without any cost along with some other books which I purchased. I was told that the author had given them the book for free distribution to interested readers. The boy at the counter requested me it will be good if I could telephone Sulekh Sahib and inform him about this. I did not do so instead read the book and decided to write about it as a humble admirer of K.C. Sulekh Sahib. I heard quite a lot about

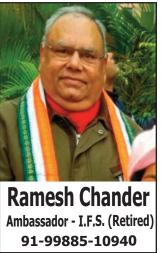
in the Ministry of External Affairs climbed the ladder of life through various examinations of UPSC and reached the coveted position of an Ambassador of India in the IFS. I cannot match the involvement and dedication of Sulekh Sahib - Ambedkar Mission Ki Rah Per - but nevertheless one thing is certain that Babasaheb Ambedkar had been my motivator and icon like that of legendary Sulekh Sahib. It is yet another co-incident that, as repeatedly revealed in the book under review, Sulekh Sahib started his journey from the famous 'Chubara' of Seth Kishan Dass at Bootan Mandi in Jalandhar, my native place first as a student and graduating to be leader by his own right as the General Secretary of AISCF and Chief Editor of Ujala, an Urdu periodical - mouth-piece of the under privileged. Sulekh Sahib impressed Babasaheb Ambedkar, one can make

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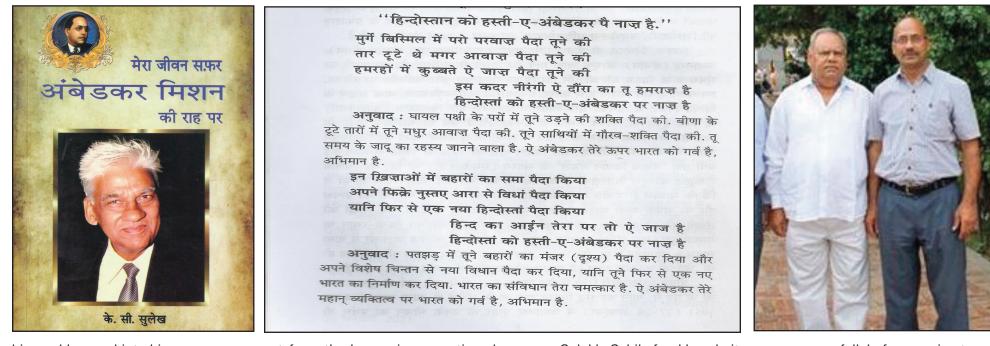
har Doaba College in 1949. One can easily make out the intellect and dedication of Sulekh Sahib that he could achieve all this at an early age of mid 20s as he joined Punjab Government service in 1952 and an inspiring political career of Sulekh Sahib was cut short. Perhaps it was not destined like that as wrote in the book that Babasaheb wanted him to contest elections in 1952 but could not do so because of some technical reason. One of his close associates, K.C. Leel, as mentioned in the book, rightly lamented, 'He should not have got the job' as with his joining the government job, the community lost a talented and dedicated leader in Sulekh Sahib. Even after joining service, Sulekh Sahib did not detach him from his intellectual pursuits and wrote extensively under one 'penname' or the other on matters of interest and concern.

behest of Babasaheb, in settling the dalit refugees in the wake of partition in 1947 and Sulekh Sahib's help in the process Babasaheb got angry with the Punjab del-

egation



headed by Mota Singh on hearing from him as to how the respect and dignity of dalit women was at stake (page 48-49) in the emerging situation in wake of partition. Babasaheb was so furious that he said, "Why you could not die while saving and guarding the respect and dignity of



him and bumped into him once some years before at a function at Ambedkar Bhawan at Jalandhar. We sat together but could not interact with each other as the function was in progress. It was a missed opportunity to know Sulekh Sahib, a man of sterling worth for the community, a bit more closely.

On reading the book, I could relate myself with the author - more and more from within. The book has been dedicated to father Biru Ram for 'enlightening the lamp of learning' in his son, the author. I felt the same for my father and incidentally dedicated my book to my parents 'The Bits and Pieces - Reminiscences and Reflections of a Novice" released two years ago. Sulekh Sahib wrote that it appeared that he acquired much needed maturity quite early and climbed the ladder of life in the formative years of youth as - a poet of sorts, orator, student activist, community activist and a political leader as General Secretary of the Punjab Chapter of All India Scheduled Caste Federation (AISCF) under the wings of Seth Kishan Dass and an aide and associate of Babasaheb Ambedkar in the process. I felt like sharing here that it remained the case with me too - I could get a good grounding in General Knowledge and contemporary political history even during my high school years, straight out from the happenings mentioned in the book, a great deal - his steering the stage of Babasaheb Ambedkar's public function at Bootan Mandi in October, 1951, his role in planning and executing the entire visit of the great leader to Punjab in the run up to the first general elections in 1952, his apt and candid head-on take on matters of concern and interest in the Ujala. I felt by reading the book that I am in one way or the other is related to the whole exercise in which a number of my fellow BootanMandians were engaged - Kartara Ram Madhas's untiring but unsung role and support to the mission particularly to run and sustain for some time, the Ujala, Pritam Ramdaspuri's poetry and total dedication to Babasaheb and his mission, association of K.C. Leel and Adhyatma Ram among others with the caravan - found a mention in the book and rightly so. Sulekh Sahib's book gave much needed information on hitherto unknown facts like IAS Kartar Singh's, whom I have had seen as Health Secretary in my formative years in 1974-77 in PMO, closeness to Babasaheb Ambedkar, Pakhar Ram Ahir's whom I had known in Delhi as a senior of village Bathan near Nakodar, very supportive role in sustaining and saving the reputation of the Ujala. Sulekh Sahib was a brilliant student in his school

Sulekh Sahib frankly admits that his initial up-bringing pertained to traditional orthodoxy and rituals in the rural set-upof that time. Later with influence of Babasaheb Ambedkar and Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and also other intellectual stalwarts like Gurbax Singh Preetladi. Gopal Singh Khalsa, Sohan Lal Shasti among others, Sulekh Sahib became rational to follow his emerged icon Babasaheb Ambedkar and remained so till now at the ripe age of 94. The chapter 'Babasaheb Ko Samprit Yadden' is one of most interesting chapters of the book. Many of the anecdotes and narratives are not only informative but also reveal hitherto unknown small facts about a number of personalities and developments in the struggle in which Sulekh Sahib was fully involved - selfish and unbecoming role of some of the leaders who ultimately sided with the Congress party just to oppose and stand against Babasaheb Ambedkar like Master Sadhu Ram, Master Gurbanta Singh, Prithvi Singh Azad, Yashwant Rai among others, on the other hand, some leaders like Seth Kishan Dass, Charan Dass Nidhadak, Bhag Mal Pagal, Pandit Bakshi Ram, Chanan Gobindpuri, inter alia, steadfastly sided with and stood by their leader Ambedkar - Dadasaheb B.K. Gaikwad's role and contribution, on the

your womenfolk before coming to me with this kind of complaint" - More details of Ambedkar's take on Hindu Code Bill in the face of opposition of orthodox Hindus and Jawaharlal Nehru's inability to stand by Ambedkar and also Babasaheb's resignation are informative and educative for the students of contemporary political history. I envy Sulekh Sahib on the fact that he was sitting in the visitor's gallery, along with Seth Kishan Dass, of the Constituent Assembly when Babasaheb was delivering his historical and epoch making speech on November 25, 1949 before "We the people of India" finally enacted and gave to ourselves the Constitution of India - the anecdote when Sulekh Sahib and Pritam Ramdaspuri were turned off from the residence of Ambedkar at Alipur Road in Delhi by the wife, Maisaheb Savita Ambedkar and told them to come later and Ambedkar's reaction and sensitivities when he came to know of this unacceptable behaviors of the lady, is really touching and speaks laud of the character of the leader - Information regarding Shanta Bai Dani, an associate of Babasaheb, and the proposal of her marriage with Babasaheb which he declined on grounds of functional morality and pragmatism - Pritam Ramdasspuri's poetic honour in (Contd, on next page)

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Jiwan Safar – Ambedkar Mission Ki Rah Per – Book Review Mera

(Continue from page 3) Persian laced composition at the public rally on October 27, 1951 at Bootan Mandi and Ambedkar's desire to listen to it again is interesting. Babasaheb knew a bit of Persian language. Media people asked Babasaheb, at the rally at Bootan Mandi, to say something on the Kashmir issue but Babasaheb like a statesman refused to distract and tactfully said, I am here today to talk to my people on matters of interest and concern to us, If someone intends to question me on some other issues, I would be available separately." -Ambedkar was very much impressed by Sant Braham Dass of Ludhiana when Santji said, "Babasaheb you have the pen in your hands; kindly cut the chains of misery and slavery of poor people with this pen." Contrary to the general belief that Babasaheb was against spiritual deras, commenting on Sant Braham Dass's assertion, he said, "By doing their job in rightly guiding the dalits, they could play a big role in raising the standards." Our Deras must take a cue from this and act. On reading the book, one can know more such details of oral history from the horse's mouth, Sulekh Sahib.

The author has raised a very

valid question s to who should hold and own the legacy of Babasaheb Ambedkar? - A relevant but difficult question indeed. Even at his 94 long years, Sulekh Sahib is totally drunk with the 'intoxicating' experience to know, interact and work with the great leader, Babasaheb Ambedkar. He writes with pride, "Yeh who Nasha Nahin Jise Turshi Uttar De." As I said earlier that by reading the book, I could revive my memories pertaining to most of the personalities engaged in the process who have been mentioned already in the preceding narration but still some more; Vimal Chandra, Piara Ram Dhanowali, Lahori Ram Balley, Prabhati Ram, RC Paul, Chaudhary Sunder Singh, Dr. Surinder Ajnat, Gindha brothers, Yoga Ram, Sucha Ram Bagha of Glasgow whom I met during my tenure as Consul General of India in Edinburgh (Scotland). In fact, I vividly recall once Yoga Ram, a close relation of Sulekh Sahib, telling me that when I go to India, I must meet his uncle, K.C. Sulekh, a legendary figure and a son of the soil. The author after his retirement from government service in 1985 engaged himself in various community activities such as Ambedkar Mission Society, Ambedkar Bhawan Trust, Samta Sainik Dal,

Bhartiya Soshit Samaj, Paigam among others with a view to carry forward the caravan of Babasaheb Ambedkar.

Sulekh Sahib has been proactive in taking on some of the 'mischief makers' for Babasaheb and his mission. He wrote in the Ujala "Khuda Ganje Ko Nakhun Na De" to expose the then Minister Yashwant Rai, replied to Arun Shourie's infamous book 'Worshipping False Gods" on Babasaheb Ambedkar in articles "Mischievous and Preposterous" and 'Shourie Benakab", issued a pamphlet "Why Ambedkar Embraced Buddhism and Not Sikhism" to set the matter in perspective, replied to IAS Karam Singh Raju's various assertions on Guru Ravidass, Maharishi Valmik, Sikh Gurus and Babasaheb Ambedkar in an article 'Whither our Writers", replied to Balbir Madhopuri's book on Babu Manguram Mugowalia in which he allegedly tried to create a new narrative about Dr. Ambedkar by writing a book "Addharam, Mangu Ram Aur Dr. Ambedkar - Sach Kya Hai". From these details one can easily make out that Sulekh Sahib always remained 'ill at ease' with self-appointed and selfseekers pretending to be the 'flag bearers' of Ambedkar and his Mission and exposed them in a pamphlet

"Dalit Samaj Aur Uske Marg-darshak Lekhak" with reference to author's friend and Chief Editor of the Bheem Patrika (author did not specify the name of his friend but one can easily make out) and guoted an Urdu couplet "Kya Kia Khizar Ne Sikander Se; Ab Kise Rehnuma Kare Koi". In the concluding chapters, Sulekh Sahib recommends the 'Budh Marg" as the only potent way to establish an equal and egalitarian society for peace and harmony all around and quotes Allma Iqbal, "Ashkara Usne Kya Jo Zindgi Ka Raj Tha; Hind Ko Lekin Khiyali Falsfe Pe Naaz Tha" The Last Chapter "Yeh Bhi Janna Zaroori Hai" is a must read which gives the crux of author's thoughts on Ambedkar and his legacy. It would not be fair to conclude this without referring to Prof Ronki Ram's scholarly introduction of the auto-biographical narration of K.C. Sulekh and also the indulgence of Prem Chumber of the Ambedkar Times and the Desh Doaba of California of USA for publishing the book of Sulekh Sahib for making it reach the wider audiences which has been duly acknowledged by the author.

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With this, I wish K.C. Sulekh Sahib many more years of life for the advantage and benefit of the Ambedkarites and the society at large.

