



Ambedkar Times

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**Mooknayak Anniversary Day (31 January)
Bahut Bahut Mubarak!! Long Live Babasaheb's Caravan!!**

Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and the Emergence of Dalit Consciousness

Prem K. Chumber

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Since India's independence the surge of Dalit literature has continued to cover divergent aspects of the historically neglected domains of the so-called lower castes. In almost all states in the country various Dalit organisations have their own newspapers and journals focusing on the social, cultural, economic and political concerns of their respective communities in particular and the overall conditions of the downtrodden in the country at large. The credit for such a wide spread of the written word goes to Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and the rich journalistic legacy he left behind for his caravan to move on. The newspapers that Dr. Ambedkar started during his life-long struggle for the emancipation and empowerment of the lower castes made enormous contribution in the form of inculcating critical thinking among the different strata of the socially excluded economically marginalized and politically neglected Dalit-Bahujan samaj. Unfortunately most of the contemporary Dalit writings on Ambedkar and Dalit politics hardly focus on the rich heritage of the newspapers established by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, which at a time played a significant role in building Dalit consciousness and Dalit movement in the different parts of the country and at the national level. The news-

papers founded and nurtured by Dr. Ambedkar are sources of enormous material that can throw immense light on the evolution and the growth of Dalit political consciousness and activism in India. Unlike his various volumes of books in English, he published his newspapers in Marathi. Historically speaking, the tradition of bringing out Dalit newspapers goes back to Satyashodhak Movement started by Jotirao Phule in Maharashtra in the late 19th century with the establishment of the first Dalit newspaper named Din Bandhu. Though some other prominent Dalit leaders such as Shivram Janba Kamble and Kisan Faguji Bansode founded newspapers primarily dedicated to Dalit cause before the arrival of Dr. Ambedkar, but they could not stir the docile mind of the centuries old socially excluded sections of the Indian society.

It was with the entry of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in the realm of journalism that a new era had dawned in the emerging history of Dalit consciousness. Mooknayak - voice of

the voiceless - was the first Marathi fortnightly that Dr. Ambedkar launched on January 31, 1920. It ran for three years before being closed. Later, he went on to found



three more newspapers - Bahishkrut Bharat (1927-1929), Janata (1930-56), and Prabuddha Bharat (1956). He was deeply convinced that if Dalits were to rise on their own feet, they must have their distinct newspapers managed and run by their own efforts. In the editorial of the inaugural issue of Mooknayak's Dr.

Ambedkar wrote that "There is no better source than the newspaper to suggest the remedy against the injustice that is being done to our people in the present and will be done in the future, and also to discuss the ways and means for our progress in the future." In the same editorial, he wrote, "The Hindu society is just like a tower which has several stories without a ladder or entrance. The man who is born in the lower storey cannot enter the upper story however worthy he may be and the man

who is born in the upper storey cannot be driven out into the lower storey however unworthy he may be ... The alienation produced by the absence of inter-dining and inter-caste marriages has fostered the feelings of touchables and untouchables so much that these touchable and untouchable castes, though a part of Hindu society, are in reality living in worlds apart." What Dr Ambedkar wrote hundred years ago remains a bitter truth even today. The upper caste rich houses monopolize media in India. News concerning the lives of Dalits are hardly carried in national newspapers. If at all some coverage was given, it remained highly prejudiced.

It was to overcome such a biased state-of-the-affairs in mainstream journalism that Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar emphasized on the urgent need of having distinct Dalit Media Centres. He was of the firm view that only separate Dalit journalism could give a befitting reply to the blatant lies of the tormentors of the lower castes and empower them to fight injustice valorously.

The forums of Ambedkar Times (www.ambedkartimes.com) and Desh Doaba (www.deshdoaba.com) sincerely pay its obeisance to Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar on the auspicious day of 31 January 2020, the hundredth anniversary of the launch of Mooknayak newspaper!

Journalistic Legacy of Babasaheb Ambedkar



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Editor-in-Chief of the esteemed Desh-Doaba and the Ambedkar Times, Prem-Chumber, brought to my notice, an obscure facet of Babasaheb Ambedkar's persona, his love and

recognition of the intent and efficacy of media and press in generating public awareness and debate which are essential for the larger interests of a healthy polity and society. The mention was in view of the forthcoming anniversary of Babasaheb's first media outfit "The Mooknayak" - Leader of the Dumb, falling on January 31. The Mooknayak was started in January, 1920 by the visionary



leader. I thought of writing this piece with a view to touch upon the cursory infor-



mation available on the journalistic fervor of Babasaheb Ambedkar, not as an expert

but as a layman.

It goes without saying that Dr. Ambedkar was one of the best read intellectuals of his times and remains so even today. His liberal education and interaction in the developed countries of both Europe and the Americas helped in fully recognizing the potent role of media and press to shape and set a meaningful public discourse particularly with regard to his agenda and vision to address the amelioration of socially and economically weaker sections of the society based on the lofty ideals of equality, liberty and justice. The first step in this regard came with the launch of the Mooknayak on January 31, 1920 on his return from abroad. This endeavor could not last long and was closed after about three years. The reasons were obvious - lack of financial resources and Babasaheb's on and off educational pursuits abroad. Later, he founded three more newspapers -
Continued on page 2



Heartiest Congratulations on "MOOKNAYAK"'s 100th Anniversary
Mooknayak Anniversary Day (31 January) Mooknayak -
Beginning of the thundering of Dalit Voice long live!!

Maharishi Valmik Sabha USA, Yuba City (CA)

ਸਥਾਨ 84/86 ਪਰਸੀ ਐਵਨਿਊ, ਯੂਬਾ ਸਿਟੀ, ਕੈਲੇਫੋਰਨੀਆ 95991
(ਪਰਸੀ ਐਵਨਿਊ ਤੇ ਗਾਰਡਨ ਹਾਈਵੇ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਨਰ 'ਤੇ)

Journalistic Legacy of Babasaheb Ambedkar

BahishkrutBharat (1927-1929), Janata (1930-56), and Prabuddha Bharat (1956). He was directly involved in the editorial management of the first two newspapers, Mooknayak and Bahishkrit Bharat. From 1930 onwards, he delegated the task to his most important colleagues, such as, DevraoNaik, B.R. Kadrekar, G.N. Sahastrabuddhe, R.D. Bhandare, and B.C. Kamble. Interestingly, just to register that Babasaheb's approach to address the ills of the society was not narrow; DevraoNaik, B.R. Kadrekar and G.N.Sahastrabuddh were not Dalits.

The newspapers associated with Ambedkar are repositories of vast information on the history of Dalit political activism which was, unfortunately, completely ignored by his opponents and Babasaheb's contribution to free and fair journalism never got due appreciation. S.N. Sahu who was the Press Secretary to President K.R. Narayanan rightly wrote in an article in the Tribune "His journalism

was the journalism of regeneration and reconstruction to unchain the exploited and uplift the excluded. The very titles of the newspapers he established testify to his passion and ardour for journalism for social justice and regeneration. The titles, such as the Mooknayak (Leader of the Dumb), Bahiskrit Bharat (Excluded India), Samata (Equality), Prabuddha Bharat (Enlightened India) and Janata (People) brought out his vision and the content of his editorials flowed from his action which aimed at progressive social transformation".

BabasahebAmbedkar was one of the votaries of free and far media. He stipulated all the lofty ideals of freedom of thought and expression in the constitution of India. But later he realized that the media was increasingly becoming a tool of the rich and powerful and bemoaned "Corporate control of media was the bane of our times" and said "Journalism in India was once a profession. It has now become a trade. It has not more

moral function than the manufacture of soap. It does not regard itself as the responsible adviser of the public." It is a matter of regret that media in India is increasingly succumbing to the dictates of the money bags and vested political forces. The journalistic legacy of BabasahebAmbedkar is a potent one to address the socio-economic issues to transform and reform the society. To prove this I quote from one of his articles published in the Mooknayak and as quoted by Dr B.P. Mahesh Chandra Guru is professor in the Department of Communication and Journalism, University of Mysore "It was not enough for India to be an independent country. She must guarantee equal status in matters religious, social, economic and political, to all classes, offering every man an opportunity to rise in the scale of life and creating conditions favourable to his advancement. There did not exist such a despicable man who, continued the voice in the article, would object to the statement that if the Brah-

mins were justified in their attack upon and opposition to the unjust power of the British government, the depressed classes would be justified a hundred times more in their opposition to the rule of the Brahmins in case the transfer of power took place. The article asserted that if the protection of the British were withdrawn, those who condescended to look at the untouchables would trample upon them. In another article Ambedkar wrote that the Swaraj in which there were no fundamental rights guaranteed for the depressed classes would not be a Swaraj but a new form of slavery."Unfortunately, these issues are still alive and required to be addressed head on both by the society and polity. With this, I conclude with the hope that Babasaheb's potent legacy would ultimately prevail and set the desired standards for the Indian media to be a free and fair organ as the fourth estate of the democratic edifice so laboriously stipulated and visualized by our forefathers.



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Mooknayak - Beginning of the thundering of Dalit Voice long live!!

Supreme Council of Sri Guru Ravidass Sabhas, USA

MOOKNAYAK (Voice of the Voiceless)

Journalistic Legacy of Dr. B.R.Ambedkar(Birth Centenary) Congratulations

After taking a break from his academic attainments in USA and England, Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had to return to India in 1920 to fulfil his commitments to serve in the state of Maharaja of Baroda, who had financed his scholarship for studies abroad. Instead of being greeted back in his native land he had to face a hostile environment in a stratified society divided by prejudices driven by caste affiliations. Babasaheb, though educationally equipped and prepared to express his mental frustrations through his writings by starting to publish a Newspaper, could not do so because of his financial hurdles and hostile environment. It was through the generous help of Maharaja Shahu of Kolhapur who supported social transformation that Babasaheb could start a weekly paper in Marathi - "MOOKNAYAK" (Voice of the Voiceless) on January 31st. 1920. In spite of initial blockades caused by other con-

temporary publishers belonging to do called higher caste Hindu Nationalists, Dr.Ambedkar demonstrated his journalistic acumen and capabilities through his editorials for awakening Dalit consciousness against the rigid caste divisions.

In MOOKNAYAK Dr. Ambedkar argued that a society which forecloses opportunities to individuals to intermix with one another was very detrimental to national unity and integration. It thus created a new platform to translate Dalit grievances into an effective, political and organizational language. Mooknayak and Bahishkrut Bharat played an important role focussed on mobilizing Dalits in India, especially in Maharashtra.

Though Dr. Ambedkar's stint as an Editor of "MOOKNAYAK" was short lived because of financial hardships as well as Babasaheb's departure to complete his unfinished education in

London School of Economics and Gray's Inn in England, yet it definitely helped him to rise to National prominence as a Dalit leader and played an important role in setting the tone of new thinking and awareness, oriented towards mass activism among the suppressed sections of society.

On January 31st,2020 we are arriving at an historic date commemorating the centenary of "MOOKNAYAK" which made Babasaheb a mouthpiece of his struggle for social liberation.

On behalf of Supreme Council of Sri Guru Ravidass Sabhas,USA we convey our congratulations to the entire community of Babasaheb's followers for celebrating the completion of 1st centenary of "MOOKNAYAK".

This commemoration bears a special significance especially

when Manuwadithinkers in Indian subcontinent are again getting active to undo what Babasaheb labored so hard all his life to accomplish for INDEPENDENT, SOVEREIGN and SECULAR INDIA.

With best wishes

O. P. BALLEY
General Secretary,
Supreme Council of
Sri Guru Ravidass Sabhas,
USA





SHRI GURU RAVIDASS SABHA (GURUGHAR)

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Jaila Jaggi



Salinder Bhatia



Ajai Paul Ram



Shashi Paul

The New Committee appreciates the services of the previous committee and the selection panel and is looking forward to continued support. Guidance and cooperation of the entire Sangat who is the backbone of our Gurughar. Thank you.

Sangat De Sewadar

Chairman
Jagtar Bhatia

President
Shinder Paul Narabu

General Secretary
Dharam Pal Chonkria

Treasurer
Vinod Kumar



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Sri Guru Ravidass Temple Yuba City (California)

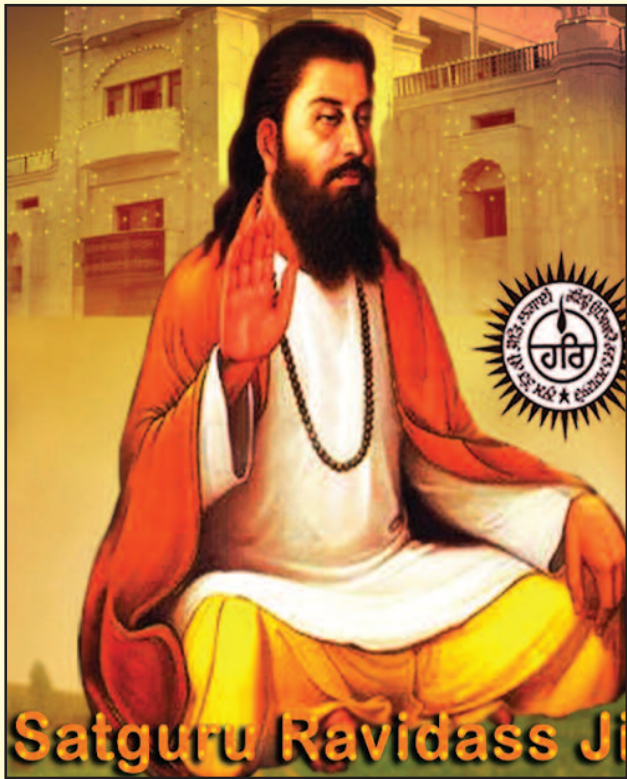


ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਟੈਂਪਲ ਯੂਬਾ ਸਿਟੀ (ਕੈਲੋਫੋਰਨੀਆ) ਦੇ ਅਹੁਦੇਦਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਮੈਂਬਰ

ਗੁਰੂ ਘਰ ਦੇ ਸੇਵਾਦਾਰ

ਗੁਰਨਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਭੰਡਾਲ (ਚੇਅਰਮੈਨ), ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ੋਤਮ ਸੂਦ (ਵਾਇਸ ਚੇਅਰਮੈਨ), ਸਿੰਗਾਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਰੱਲੂ (ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ), ਮਹਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਰੱਤੂ (ਵਾਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ), ਕੁਲਦੀਪ ਸਿੰਘ ਸੁੰਮਨ (ਜਨਰਲ ਸਕੱਤਰ), ਦਲਵਿੰਦਰ ਰੱਲੂ (ਵਾਇਸ ਜਨਰਲ ਸੈਕਟਰੀ), ਜਸਵਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ (ਵਾਇਸ ਸਕੱਤਰ), ਰਾਮ ਸੇਵਕ ਭਾਟੀਆ (ਮੁੱਖ ਕੈਸ਼ੀਅਰ), ਜੱਸਪਾਲ ਜੱਸਲ (ਵਾਇਸ ਕੈਸ਼ੀਅਰ), ਗੁਰਦੀਪ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੀਰਾ (ਸਟੇਜ ਸਕੱਤਰ),

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Bheem International USA



Heartiest Congratulations on "MOOKNAYAK"s 100th Anniversary Mooknayak Anniversary Day (31 January)



S. Avtar Singh Dodd & Dodd Family





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समूह पृथियत्र वमेटी

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Avtar Singh Bains Ex Treasurer

Debho Bains Ex Chairperson

Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha Pittsburgh CA



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Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Educational Aid Society Fremont (California)

It is a matter of pride and pleasure to see the remarkable role played by Dr. Ambedkar Education Aid Society, Fremont, California, USA. Ever since its inception about 30 years ago it has successfully provided financial help to thousands of poor and needy students who could not afford to pay for their school and college education in India. The society also extends financial help to needy and helpless widows in India who are struggling to raise their children in the absence of their spouse. The society has made available to us a list of students who have benefited from this financial help to reach their educational goals in life.

The main idea behind the creation of this society was the vision of Bharat Rattan Babasaheb Dr. B.R Ambedkar who struggled his whole life to alleviate the sufferings of all the

down-trodden and economically disadvantaged people of India. Babasaheb realized the importance of education which is a window to the opportunity to create a distinct and a respectable identity of our own. Ambedkar Education Aid society is helping in that noble effort very successfully.

www.ambedkartimes.com conveys its hearty congratulations and complements to the society for their devoted and sustained efforts in this direction and we hope that this will inspire the establishment of many more initiatives like this in other parts of the world too to help fulfill the ideal dream of Bharat Rattan Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar for the liberation of the deprived and unprivileged sections of society in India.

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DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR EDUCATIONAL AID SOCIETY, FREMONT (CALIFORNIA)