



Ambedkar Times Weekly

Editor-in-Chief: Prem Kumar Chumber

Contact: 001-916-947-8920

Fax: 916-238-1393

E-mail: chumbermedia@yahoo.com, editor@ambedkartimes.com

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Sahib Kanshi Ram and Dalit Emancipation

Prem K. Chumber Editor-In-Chief:
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Sahib Kanshi Ram devoted his life for the eradication of caste from the domestic structures of Indian socio-religious realm. The sole aim his life-long struggle was to facilitate the Bahujan Samaj to acquire power through the medium of ballot. He was a firm believer in the nonviolent power of democracy that he inherited from the teachings of Babasaheb Dr B.R Ambedkar. A chance reading of one of the numerous valuable writings of Dr. Ambedkar transformed his vision and he did not only prefer to live unmarried but also renounced his family life once for all. After he plunged into social struggle for the acquisition of political power for his people he did not look back at all toward his home in village Khauspur in Rupnagar district of Punjab. He did all this for helping his people to stand on their own feet to get rid of centuries' old slavery and blind faith in the chaturvarna system of social hierarchy, which deny them their bare minimum human rights. He ingrained among his people that the political power is the only key to Dalit emancipation and empowerment in the real sense of the term.

Sahib Kanshi Ram Ji was an innovative thinker and a charismatic mass leader who coined new political vocabulary for the mobilization of downtrodden. The slogans he chiseled adroitly caught the imagination of all and sundry throughout the length and breadth of India. He told his people unless and until they formed their own social and political organizations, no upper caste political party will allow them to come to rule India. And he was confident that given the 85 percent strength of Bahujan, if the latter joined hands no one in the world can stop them reach Delhi. His untiring efforts and firm faith in his people brought success though in some parts of the country. But as far as awareness among the Bahujan is concerned his was a great success.

Liz Truss to focus on economy, energy and healthcare as British Prime Minister

Former U.K. Foreign Secretary Liz Truss, who was declared the winner of the Conservative Party leadership contest on Monday, beating former Chancellor Rishi Sunak, was appointed Prime Minister of the United Kingdom on Tuesday by its monarch, Queen Elizabeth II.

Ms. Truss said she would focus on three priorities: the economy, the energy crisis facing the country and improving the National Health Service (NHS). The new Prime Minister faces enormous economic challenges domestically — starting with combatting burgeoning energy prices and a cost of living crisis. She also faces political challenges, such as resolving a messy consequence of Brexit involving Northern Ireland's customs borders. She will also have to navigate another call for Scottish independence. Ms. Truss had vehemently opposed a call for a second referendum.

Speaking outside Downing Street after her arrival from Scotland, where she was appointed by the Queen, the new prime minister said she would transform Britain into an "aspiration nation", cutting taxes and pushing reforms to grow the economy.

"I will deal hands-on with the energy crisis caused by Putin's war," Ms. Truss said, having promised over the weekend that she would announce a plan within a week of assuming office to tackle short-term energy price challenges and longer-term supply issues. The Financial Times reported that she was working on a GBP 100 billion plan to protect households and businesses from soaring energy bills this winter.

She will also attempt to unite her party while putting together a cabinet to deliver her program. For the first time in history, the 'four great offices of state' — the posts of Prime Minister, Chancellor, Home Secretary and Foreign Secretary are likely to be held by people who are not white males, as widely noted by the British press. The job of Foreign Secretary is likely to go to the former government's Education Secretary, James Cleverly. The Johnson government's Business Secretary, Kwasi Kwarteng, who is of Ghanaian origin, is likely going to be Chancellor — the first black person in the role. Attorney General Suella Braverman, whose parents are of Indian ancestry and from Kenya and Mauritius, is likely to be the Home Secretary.

Her predecessor Priti Patel resigned from her post earlier on Tuesday and said it was her

choice to leave government, according to the BBC. Ms. Patel said she would support the new Prime Minister.

Rishi Sunak to not be part of Truss government

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace, who had signalled his support for Ms. Truss early on, is likely to get a cabinet role, while Work and Pensions Secretary Therese Coffey is tipped to get the health portfolio. Mr. Sunak and his highest profile supporter, Deputy Prime Minister

Dominic Raab, will likely be backbench MPs. Ms. Truss has shown an openness to giving Mr. Sunak a position in her government, an outcome Mr. Sunak seemed to shy away from due to a lack of agreement "on the big things".

ON HER PRIORITIES INCLUDING TAX CUTS AND ENERGY SUPPORT

"As prime minister, I will pursue three early priorities. Firstly, I will get Britain working again. I have a bold plan to grow the economy through tax



cuts and reform. "I will cut taxes to reward hard work and boost business-led growth and investment. I will drive reform in my mission to get the United Kingdom working, building and growing. We'll get spades in the ground to make sure people are not facing unaffordable energy bills and we will also make sure that we are building hospitals, schools, roads and broadband.

"Secondly, I will deal hands on with the energy crisis caused by Putin's war. I will take action this week to deal with energy bills, and to secure our future energy supply.

"Thirdly, I will make sure that people can get doctors' appointments, and the NHS services they need. We will put our health service on a firm footing. By delivering on the economy, on energy and on the NHS, we will put our nation on the path to long-term success."

ON THE NEED FOR ACTION

"We will transform Britain into an aspiration nation with high-paying jobs, safe streets and where everyone everywhere has the opportunities they deserve. I will take action this day and action every day to make it happen."

ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

"United with our allies, we will stand up for freedom and democracy around the world. Recognising that we can't have security at home without having security abroad." *Courtesy: The Hindu*



Sue Frost

Sacramento County Supervisor. District 4



Sue Frost

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.

Final Recommended Budget Hearings Begin Sept. 7

The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors will begin Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-23 Revised Recommended Budget hearings on Wednesday, Sept. 7, at 9:30 a.m. in the Sacramento County Administration Building located at 700 H Street, Sacramento, 95814. If necessary, hearings will continue on Sept. 8 and 9 at the same time and location.

The hearing schedule, in order:



IHSS Public Authority Budget Deliberation and Approval

Introduction by the County Executive to the FY 2022-23 Revised Recommended Budget

Public Comment

Board Deliberation and Approval to Revisions of the Approved Recommended Budget

The numbers in the recommended budget change between June and September when the County receives new information, including the impact of the State Budget and updated revenue totals. Because of that new information, the Revised Recommended Budget comes back to the Board for review and adoption in September.

The Board of Supervisors approved the FY 2022-23 Recommended Budget on June 9. The \$7.3 billion spending plan reflected substantial investments in new and enhanced programs based on the Board's priorities and a survey of Sacramento residents. The budget included annual commitments of an additional \$6.5 million to fund new programs and services addressing homelessness in the County; \$10 million to procure an additional 156 beds annually for substance use disorder residential treatment; \$7.5 million in Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) and Federal matching funds to fulfill permanent supportive housing commitments; and \$20 million in one-time costs to fund pavement maintenance and road rehabilitation

in the unincorporated County, among others.

Members of the public may attend the hearings and be heard on any item in the budget, either publicly, over the phone or through written comments. The budget hearings will also be telecast live on Metro Cable 14 and on the web.

Severe Weather Sheltering & Tips for Staying Cool

Due to high daytime temperatures this weekend and into next week, the Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance has opened the offices and hours listed below to serve as Cooling Centers for the community from Thursday, Sept. 1 - Wednesday, Sept. 7. All community members are welcome. Protective facial coverings are required and will be provided to all visitors. Pets must be on a

leash or contained in an animal carrier at all times. Snacks and water will be provided.

In addition, DHA will be initiating outreach for Weather Respite Motel Sheltering with check-in starting Wednesday, Aug. 31 and a tentative check-out of Thursday, Sept. 8. Respite motel sheltering will follow the same process we used during previous weather events. Navigators will make contact with those experiencing homelessness to offer a motel stay and will assist in reserving the space at the motel. Participants in the weather respite sheltering program will work with their referring party on transportation to and from the motel and are allowed to bring partners, pets, and a limited number of possessions with them for the duration of their stay.

The cooling center locations, days open and hours are below.

Locations:

DHA Annex: 1725 28th Street, Sacramento, CA 95816

DHA Customer Service Center: 5747 Watt Avenue, North Highlands, CA 95660

DHA Customer Service Center: 2450 Florin Road, Sacramento, CA 95822

Hours:

Thursday, Sept. 1 and Friday, Sept. 2: Offices are open to the public from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m., extended hours for weather respite are 4 - 8 p.m.

Saturday, Sept. 3 - Monday, Sept. 5: from 2 - 8 p.m.

(Contd. on next page)

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Tuesday, Sept. 6 and Wednesday, Sept. 7: Offices are open to the public from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m., extended hours for weather respite are 4 - 8 p.m.

In addition to the DHA service centers, the following locations will be open as cooling centers:

Auburn Boulevard Outreach and Engagement Center: 3615 Auburn Blvd, Sacramento

Thursday, Sept. 1 - Wednesday, Sept. 7 from 2 - 10 p.m.

Capitol City Seventh Day Adventist: 6701 Lemon Hill Ave., Sacramento

Thursday, Sept. 1 - Monday, Sept. 5 from noon - 7 p.m.

Wackford Community Complex: 9014 Bruceville Road, Elk Grove

Thursday, Sept. 1 - Saturday, Sept. 3 from 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.

The Center at District 56: 8230 Civic Center Drive, Suite 100, Elk Grove

Sunday, Sept. 4 - Wednesday, Sept. 7 from 2 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Police Station Lobby: 455 Industrial Drive, Galt

Thursday, Sept. 1 - Wednesday, Sept. 7 from 2 - 8 p.m.

Citrus Heights Senior Center: 6300 Fountain Square Drive, Citrus Heights

Wednesday, Aug. 31 - Wednesday, Sept. 7 from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Citrus Heights Police Lobby: 6315 Fountain Square Drive, Citrus Heights

Wednesday, Aug. 31 - Wednesday, Sept. 7 from 9 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Folsom Public Library: 411 Stafford St., Folsom

Friday, Sept. 2; Saturday, Sept. 3; and Tuesday, Sept. 6 from 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Sunday, Sept. 4, and Monday, Sept. 5 from noon - 7 p.m.

Rancho Cordova City Hall: 2729 Prospect Park Drive, Rancho Cordova

Thursday, Sept. 1 - Tuesday, Sept. 6 from 2 - 8 p.m.

Sacramento Public Libraries: Multiple Locations Throughout the County

Wednesday, Aug. 31 - Wednesday, Sept. 7 from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

County-wide cooling center information will be current and updated day to day on the 2-1-1 website.

Sacramento County Public Health reminds residents to take steps to keep cool during the upcoming heat event. With these seasonably high temperatures expected, it is important that you take precautionary steps to keep yourself, your family, your neighbors and your pets cool, and remember to check on seniors and those with mobility issues at

least twice a day.

Keep as cool and hydrated as possible; drink plenty of water, avoid spending time outside, especially during the hottest part of the day, and limit outside activities as much as possible. Cooling down a few hours a day will allow the body to recover and tolerate the heat better for the rest of the day.

Tips for Beating the Heat:

Stay hydrated – Drink plenty of cool water. Avoid alcohol. Avoid hot, heavy meals.

Limit sun exposure – When



possible, stay in air conditioning on hot days. If you don't have air conditioning, take cool showers or freeze a wet cloth to wipe down your head and neck.

Check on loved ones – Be sure to check on less mobile or older friends, family and neighbors who live alone, don't have air conditioning or are hesitant to use their air conditioner.

Clothing - Wear lightweight, light-colored and loose-fitting clothing. Avoid the hottest part of the day – If you have to be outside, try to stick to the cooler morning and evening hours. Wear light, loose clothing and take frequent, shaded or air-conditioned breaks. Do not exercise outside during the hottest part of the day.

Beware of hot cars – Never leave a person or a pet in a parked car, even for a short time. On a mild 80-degree day, the temperature inside a car can reach 100-degrees in fewer than 10 minutes.

Keep your pets cool – Give your pets plenty of fresh, clean water. Don't exercise your pets in high temperatures or when the pavement is hot. Make sure they have a shady place to get out of the sun or bring them indoors.

Sunscreen – Protect your skin against cancer, burns and skin damage by using SPF 30 or higher.

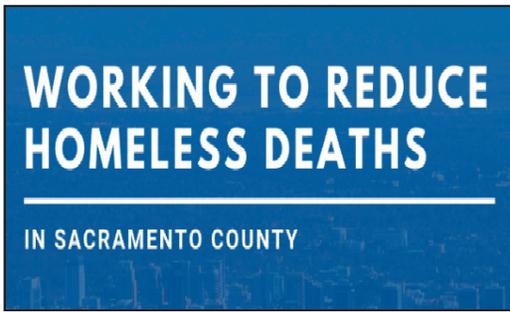
Stay informed – Watch your local weather forecasts so you can plan outdoor activities safely and pay attention to any extreme heat alerts.

Don't get caught unprepared as temperatures climb into the triple digits. Be aware of the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness and learn to respond if you or a loved one are experiencing severe heat-related illness by checking out our Hot Weather Tips news release.

Please remember: Only dial 9-1-1 if you are experiencing an emergency.

Working to Reduce Homeless Deaths in SacCounty

In Sacramento County, 2021 was an unprecedented year for loss of life in this region. The Sacramento County



Coroner had more overall deaths reported to their office than any other year in history – 8,677 deaths reported. Sacramento County similarly saw an increase in the deaths of its unhoused population.

Note: The Coroner's Office does not receive a report of every county resident's death. For example, deaths signed off by a supervising doctor are not reported to the Coroner. Additionally, natural deaths occurring in a hospital or medical facility and/or under a hospice physician's care are not coroner cases which require a coroner death investigation.

The Coroner releases a report every year of the deaths, causes and some demographics for people experiencing homelessness at the time of death. In 2021, 199 deaths were reported to the coroner's office that were investigated and determined to be people who were experiencing homeless. While this is an increase from the years prior, it is not the same incremental increase as the overall increase in the homeless population, based on the most recent point in time count.

The causes of death among the unhoused population vary, but overwhelmingly, the causes are unnatural – death by substance use, vehicular or homicide. Decedents were overwhelmingly male, and there was a disproportionate number of black and Hispanic deaths compared to the overall homeless population demographics.

Substance abuse continues to

be the leader in untimely deaths of the unhoused population at nearly half of all deaths in 2021, as compared to just 3 percent of the overall county population.

Sacramento County continues to invest in existing and new programs to help meet the needs of the homeless population. The County is investing \$181 million annually on current and new programs, and services and to mitigate the impacts of homelessness. Not only does the County fund 1,300 indoor shelter beds on any given night, but continues to fund new and diversified programs such as:

Increasing the offerings in 2022/23 to those experiencing behavioral health, both mental health and substance abuse, crises:

\$10 million to procure an additional 156 beds for Substance Use Disorder residential treatment

\$5 million for behavioral health crisis stabilization units required in

MediCal \$7.5 million in Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funds and federal match for additional Full Service Partnerships

The County has approved two new-concept locations for Safe Stay Communities, adding another 165 indoor beds that provide privacy, dignity and a place for people to receive services to end their homelessness.

The County added 11 new behavioral health staff to the Encampment Service Teams to connect people to mental health and substance abuse services.

Allocated \$1 million in the 2022/23 budget to expand the scattered site sheltering program.

Allocated \$10 million in ARPA funding for a Landlord Engagement and Assistance Program (LEAP), which will fund re-housing of 300+ households from shelters and encampments.

Allocated \$28 million in MHSA funding since 2017 through the MHSA Housing Program and No Place Like Home Program.

The County has 221 housing units funded through MHSA and an additional 234 coming in the next two years.

The solutions to end homelessness are complicated and multi-faceted, and there is no "one size fits all," but through the hard work and dedication of the County, our cities and our partners, we are committed to work with compassion and urgency to decrease deaths in our homeless population.

URGENT CARE CLINIC

DR. TAKHAR'S FAMILY MEDICINE & URGENT CARE CLINIC

8191 Timberlake Way, Suite # 400, Sacramento, CA 95823

Phone: 916-688-8888 Fax: 916-688-8837

Clinic Hours: Monday to Friday 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM, Saturday 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM & Sunday closed

We speak your language: Panjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Farsi, Arabic and Spanish



Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD



Goodie Takhar, PhD

The so-called Indian Godi Media – an Assessment

It is said that in a democracy, Media is the Fourth Estate/Pillar of the State besides; Executive, Legislature and Judiciary. The Article 19 of the constitution of India states that 'All citizens shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression'. Media seeks its legitimacy and authority to be 'free and fair' from these provisions. The chief architect of the constitution Dr. B.R. Ambedkar while explaining the matter in the Constituent Assembly said that no special mention of the freedom of press was necessary at all as the press and an individual or a citizen were the same as far as their right of expression was concerned. The UN Declaration of Human Rights also stipulates that 'Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to

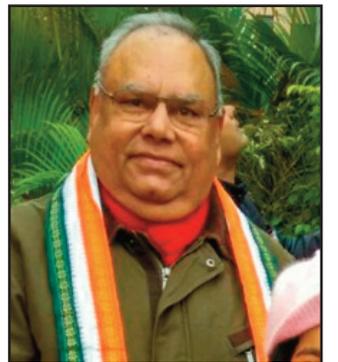
In fact, as far as I understand, media was never free and fair in India both under the colonial rule and even after independence. Bal Gangadhar Tilak's mouthpieces, The Kesri and The Maharatta stood with the Manuwadi mindset and opposed Joytirao Phule and Savitri Phule's progressive and reformist agenda of help to the under privileged. I read that the Kesri refused to carry a paid advertisement of the Mooknayak of Babasaheb Ambedkar as Tilak did not agree with Ambedkar on his views on Hinduism and dalit rights. The mouthpieces of Mahatma Gandhi like; The Harijan, The Young India and the Navjivan always opposed and maligned the spokesmen of the oppressed led by Babasaheb Ambedkar on the same account. We ushered ourselves into a democratic system with the new constitution. Unfortun-

on assessment. My understanding of the scenario is definitely worrisome. Someone has rightly commented, "Press is supposed to be the voice of the public to the government, but in modern times, a contrast to this can be observed, where some of the major mainstream media houses are marketing the political parties while criticizing the opposition parties and not discussing the relevant issues like public welfare, corruption, analysis of government schemes, etc. Though it is also true that forums like WhatsApp, YouTube, and Facebook which are totally independent are have become prone to fake news leading to mob lynching, fear-mongering, hate speech, propaganda spreading and indecency promoting, which highlights the need of some reasonable restrictions of the press." The self-professed free and

the dubious role of CBI, ED, Income Tax against the opposition leaders and others not siding with the ruling outfit) and social issues of discrimination and neglect

pertaining to the weaker sections of society. The supposed to be the Fourth Pillar of the State has failed the country. Let us not ignore this ground reality before it gets too late.

The situation is getting pre-



Ramesh Chander
Ambassador - I.F.S. (Retired)
91-99885-10940



seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.' The purpose of a free press is to ensure that the people are free to receive and impart information that is not manipulated or serving a particular person, entity or interest. Freedom of press is critical to a democracy in which the government is accountable to the people. A free media functions as a watchdog that can investigate and report on government wrongdoing. But do the Indian media qualify itself in terms of the above mentioned general stipulations for the media in a democratic country and a free society? The answer would be in the negative, unfortunately. Here comes the new nomenclature of the Indian Media – The Godi Media. I have ventured to undertake this difficult job to say something on the 'Godi Modi', a dangerous job as a layman and a concerned citizen, lest I am declared a traitor- a Gadhar. Let us see what experts say on the subject, "Today's media, under either threat, luring or manipulations, is not only crawling but is happily licking the 'boots' of the present regime and wagging their tails to appease their 'masters' by overzealous publicizing government's narratives." said Apurva Trivedi, a journalist in India who has been working in the field for over 19 years. "Not only owners but most of the journalists have towed the line, either as a survival instinct or willingly. And that is the beginning of the end of journalism which used to be in India and which ought to be in India," he added. It sets the position in perspective."

nately, media remained in the hands of big industrial houses and sectarian vested interests of the mainstream of the society to carry their own agenda without caring for the civic or public issues of interest and concern. Most of the majors in the media joined hands on the declaration of national emergency in 1975 by PM Indira Gandhi. This unity, to my mind, was not to stand for free and fair media but to oppose Indira Gandhi and the emergency. As of today, there is hardly any newspaper which is dedicated to the issues of the poor and marginalized segments of the society. The captive media does not engage and encourage dalit journalists and as such deprived sections of the society do not have any say in the media. Of late, some of the dalit journalists have resorted to the social media and have become vocal. It is a good omen and right step in the right direction. The main stream of the media, both print and electronic, is blissfully ignorant and silent on the 'public centric' issues.

Any sane person watching the prime time so called debate shows in the evening on the TV channels in India could see and make ones



fair journalists and anchors – pretty faces like; Chitras, Rubikas, Aditis, Anjnas, Swetas, Himanis among others and laud-mouthing like; Arnabs, Sudhirs, Amishs, Amans, Deepaks, inter alia, get busy with their agenda to corner the 'Nehru Gandhi' family and the opposition to support the Government and praise the worthies in power. Most of these TV channels come up with almost identical topics and issues as if these have been dictated by someone sitting in the big offices outside and the corridors of power in the South and North Blocks of the Lutyen's Delhi. Their focus always remains on – Hindu-Muslim divide, projecting the ruling elite, propaganda to malign and downgrade Nehru-Indira-Sonia – Rahul and other opposition leaders. Even the names of the programs like; Halla Bol, Prahar, Taal Thok Ke, Hunkar and so on, sound like 'war cries' in the battle fields. The usual topics pertain to – Talak, Jihad, Hizab, Madrasa, Mandir-Masjid – nationalism rather than discrimination against women, untouchability, caste system to clean and transform the society. They have no time to undertake issues of unemployment, price-rise, bad health services, education, corruption (except underlining

carious with the each passing day. Where do we stand in the realm of free and fair media? In 2017, the country was ranked 136 out of 180 nations, and later it declined to 138 in 2018 in the world index report. The 2022 edition of the World Press Freedom Index, which assesses the state of journalism in 180 countries and territories, reveals that India's ranking fell from 133 in 2016 to 150 in 2021. Scandinavian countries, Finland, Denmark and Sweden top the list of countries having a free and fair media. We must, as the largest democracy of the world, learn something from these countries. Our Media Bigwigs should have self introspection without delay. The statutory outfits like the Press Council of India have become only cosmetic make up to cover the wrinkles on the face of the Media. They should wake up and do their job. I conclude here with a poetic assertion of Allama Iqbal: Nahin Minnatkash-e-Taab-e-Shaneedan Dastan Meri Khamoshi Guftugu Hai, Be-Zubani Hai Zuban Meri

My story is not indebted to the patience of being heard
My silence is my talk, my speechlessness is my speech

Ye Dastoor-e-Zuban Bandi Hai Kaisa Teri Mehfil Mein
Yahan To Baat Karne Ko Tarasti Hai Zuban Meri

Why does this custom of silencing exist in your assembly?
My tongue is tantalized to talk in this assembly

JUDICIAL MESS OF RESERVATION POLICY

Certainty and consistency are two basic essentials of law. At the same time the prime task of the judicial function is not to unsettle the settled issues and thereby multiply litigations. Yet, recently the Supreme Court of India by its one more judicial pronouncement on the subject of promotions to the Scheduled Castes, Tribes and OBC employees in state services in case of U.P. Power Corporation Ltd has further complicated the issue of implementation of reservation policy which will definitely open a new Pandora box for further litigations in near future. On the issue of reservation policy, from 1962, barring few decisions, judgments after judgments, the Supreme Court of India has adopted a zigzag approach and case after case has unfortunately narrowed down the scope of reservation policy by evolving new tests and parameters making the constitutional task difficult. This has also lead to passing of several constitution amendments by the Parliament to accord effectiveness to the constitutional programme of affirmative action. Shockingly, this all has happened despite the fact that the Supreme Court itself has pronounced in 1997 that "the duty to implement the rule of reservation is a constitutional duty", naturally binding on the judiciary also.

The whole issue of reservation in state employment-education to SCs, STs and OBCs has travelled with wide range of issues compounded with multiple interpretative approaches from the first judicial pronouncement of the Supreme Court in Champakam Doorairajan's case in 1951 to the recent decision in 2012 as well as from the First Constitution Amendment Act, 1951 to the Constitution Ninety-Third Amendment Act, 2005-the last concerned amendment. During these six decades, on most of the occasions although reservation policy is an integral part of the principle of equality, instead of devising the full proof strategy to realise constitutional goal of equality along with empowerment of marginalised based on the spirit of the Constitution, the policy of reservation has been subject to judicial scrutiny from several sociological to legal tests and sometimes of the principles and doctrines which have never been a part of our constitutional edifice. As a consequence sometimes the policy has faced the judicial resilience on one or other pretexts.

This is self-evident from the Supreme Court's latest verdict in U.P. Power Corporation Ltd. setting aside the Uttar Pradesh government's decision to provide reservations in promotions to SC, ST and OBC employees in State services by subjecting it to multiple tests laid down in its earlier decisions in the case of M. Nagraj in 2006, Suraj Bhan Meena's case in 2011 and i.e., quantifiable data to support, the parameters of backwardness, inadequacy of representation in respect of the posts in a particular cadre and maintenance of efficiency in administration as engrafted in Article 335 of the Constitution. By such claver verdict, on one hand the Court has upheld

the legality of all challenged 77th, 81st, 82nd and 85th constitutional amendments relating to reservation in promotions and on the other side perse the Supreme Court has not struck down the policy of reservation in promotion but has made it non-operative by following the multiple yardsticks which are difficult to comply with by State.

Actually the whole constitutional law relating to reservation in employment is outlined in Articles 16 (1) (2) (3) (4), 16(4-A), 16 (4-B) and 335 along with the preambler promise of equality and justice to all. By several constitution amendments the Parliament has tried to give an effect to the policy of reservations including in promotions, but since the Mandal case decision in 1992 the entire gamut of reservations in state services has been totally hijacked by the judiciary guided by the leading lights of the supreme court bar who are unknown for their pro-reservationist approaches, leaving executives to the position of helplessness. This entire exercise is being done in the name of several judicial innovative tests such as, "width test", "test of identity", "Article 16 (4- A and B) are "enabling provisions", "theory of guided power", "catch-up rule", etc. which the common man does not understand.

Although provisions of Article 16 (4), (4-A) and (4-B) are the part of scheme of Part III of the Constitution and are fundamental rights, but according to several judicial pronouncements of the Supreme Court they are not fundamental rights but merely are "enabling provisions" and hence do not impose any constitutional duty on State, according to the Supreme Court's judicial invention in the case of Ajit Singh V. State of Punjab (1999). In fact in the case of Ashok Kumar Gupta V. State of U.P (1997) Justice Ramaswamy has ruled that social justice as well as the right of socio-economic empowerment were fundamental rights and this was reiterated by the Supreme Court in its observation in the case of Badrinath V. Government of Tamil Nadu (2000) declaring that the right to be considered for promotion is a fundamental right. But now it is an established principle of the Supreme Court that Article 16 (4-A) and (4-B) do not confer any fundamental rights because they are merely "enabling provisions". It is strange that besides these provisions not a single provision of the Constitution either in Part III or in the entire Constitution is not termed as an "enabling provision". What an injudicious approach of judicial wing of governance which was considered by the framers of the Constitution as an arm of social revolution in India.

In India, the policy of reservation in promotion is in existence since 1955. In 1962, thirty years before Mandal decision (1992), the Supreme Court in its milestone decision in Rangachari case, after considering the issue of reservations in promotions,

systematically laid down a principle that, "...the appointment includes promotion, hence reservation in appointment means accelerated promotion". In Mandal decision the Supreme Court departed from this settled position for more than 30 years and ruled adversely, which contributed for the Constitution 77th Amendment Act, 1995 to overcome the Mandal effect by addition of 16(4-A). After Mandal decision, the Supreme Court in Virpal Singh Chauhan case (1995) deprived the backward class employees of the seniority on promotion. In R. K. Sabharwal (1995) the court forced the new post based roster without clarifying for filling backlog vacancies. In Vinodkumar case (1996) it cancelled the relaxations, concessions and lowering standard for promotions of SCs and STs, laid down 50% limit to current as well as backlog vacancies. Unfortunately, apart from further litigations, this reverse activism of the court created manifold problems of constitutional, administrative and political nature as well as an environment of social unrest and tension in the country.

It is paradox that, in Mandals case in 1992, the Supreme Court needlessly, in the name of finality, which never exists in judicial process, and forgetting the basic principle of interpretation of constitutional law that constitutional issues cannot be adjudicated on hypothetical basis, ruled that Article 16(4) is confined to the initial appointment and cannot extend to reservation in the matter of promotion and also confined total reservation to 50%. The 9 judges bench's judicial logic did not stop there but went on fixing the five years time limit to continue reservation in promotion and then stop it permanently even without bothering to leave the issue for parliamentary consideration. Therefore the Supreme Court's injudicious and unwarranted decision in Mandal's case on several issues is the genesis of all subsequent complexities, multiplicity of conflicting decisions as well as a number of constitution amendments.

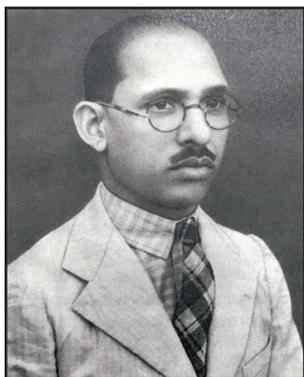
Before Mandal too, the zigzag approach of the Supreme Court sans consistency and certainty is also primarily responsible for this entire mess of reservation policy. The decision in R. K. Sabarwal case gave another blow to the reservation policy by declaring that, while reserved candidates are entitled to accelerated promotion but not to the consequential seniority, whereas in Jagdishlal case (1997), a three-Judge Bench ruled that on promotion the reserve candidates get both- accelerated seniority as well as consequential seniority. Faced with such diverse judicial trends the Supreme Court in Ajit Singh case (II) (1999) re-considered three decisions together- Vir Pal Singh Chauhan, Jagdish Lal, and Ajit Singh (I) - and pronounced that Article 16(1) deals with the fundamental right and the clauses of the same article (4) and (4-A) are the enabling provisions,

negating the decisions in Jagdish Lal as well as Ashok Kumar Gupta. In response to that in a damage control exercise the Parliament introduced Articles 16 (4-A and B) by constitutional amendments restoring reservation in promotion with consequential seniority to any class or class of posts in the services under the State, in favour of SCs and STs who are not adequately represented. The legality of these amendments was tested in M. Nagraj case (2006).

Reservation is a temporary measure. The founding fathers of the Constitution aimed it with speedy empowerment of weaker sections to secure equality of status and opportunity to make Indian democracy meaningful. The recent decision in U.P. Power Corporation Ltd. has a political background too since the effect in reservation to promotions was given in 2007 by Miss. Mayawati's BSP government and the present government in Uttar Pradesh of Samajwadi Party has seized the opportunity to roll-back the policy decision of earlier BSP Government. The decision has also exposed the judicial indiscipline of Lucknow and Allahabad Benches of High Court of Uttar Pradesh over the issue of determination of legality of reservations in promotions as well as the applicability of the ratio of Nagraj case. Now such judicial impropriety and indiscipline suggest the attitudes adopted by the judiciary in course of administration of justice, of which rightly the cognizance has been taken by the Supreme Court in its Paragraphs 3 to 15 of the decision in U.P. Power Corporation case. While deciding the matter, the Report of the Uttar Pradesh "Social Justice Committee" of 28-06-2001 categorically emphasised on the need for implementation of reservation in promotions in public service in U.P. was also not considered by the court. The judgment has also exposed the absolute misconceived understanding of backwardness of SCs and STs because their inclusion and exclusion in the Presidential list is by virtue of Articles 341 and 342 of the Constitution. In such a case any kind of collection of data regarding backwardness is practically impossible. Does it mean that 'no data-no promotion rule'? The concepts of efficiency, backwardness and inadequacy of representation are required to be measured and identified hereafter to protect reservations in promotions with consequential seniority. This exercise is rather difficult, multi-faced and hence subject to challenge once again before the court of law and thus the purpose of whole exercise may not settle the conflicting claims. As a result, already there has been a hue and cry in the Parliament for another constitutional amendment and very soon it will be there sowing further seeds for the new constitutional battles in the Supreme Court.

**The author is a former Prof. & Head of Dept. Of Law, University of Mumbai and National Gen. Secretary of BSP. (drsureshlaw@yahoo.com)*

**Adv. (Dr.)
Suresh Mane**



Ishwar Das Pawar
District and Sessions Judge (Retd.)

My Struggle in Life

The Subordinate Services Selection Board

The Subordinate Services Selection Board was constituted by the Punjab government in the beginning of the last week of September 1953. I was on my job as a member of the board on 1 October. The chairman, Rao Bhim Singh, IP, who was SSP (Senior Superintendent of Police) at Amritsar, and Dr. Atma Singh, who was a medical practitioner at Tarn Taran, had already taken over. As the board was a new institution, we engaged ourselves in the preliminary task of chalking out the programs in connection with the recruitment of staff for different offices of the state. The sphere of the board's work and its jurisdiction had been specified by the rules. Still it always demands special efforts and hard work to put a new institution on the rails. Calling for requisitions from various departments and offices for recruitment to different posts, setting up of the office and the distribution of work, formulating a suitable postal and telegraphic address, and similar other matters engaged our immediate attention. With a will and determination to make it a success, we started the working of the board well and without avoidable loss of time.

Spontaneous and willing cooperation of various departments and offices of the government was, however, not readily forthcoming. They had been divested of their patronage and the privilege of recruiting their staff, and this naturally hurt them. They had been taking various objections in this matter every now and then. It took them quite some time to reconcile themselves to the new system of recruitment. Fortunately, we had a chief minister of high caliber and purity of mind in the person of Bhim Sen Sachar. This fact inspired more confidence in us to work without fear or favor and little caring for the difficulties that occasionally arose.

For some time, we also felt the burden of the new task especially on account of the fact that, very often, we had to be away from our homes on tour for as long as three weeks a month. But slowly and slowly, these difficulties melted away, and we got acclimatized to the changed way of life and working.

Obviously, the interests of the scheduled castes and backward classes were my special responsibility. But this did not prove a burden to me as all the three of us worked as a team, reposing confidence in one another, and all of us shared the views and anxiety about the weaker sections of society. Rao Bhim Singh, with his vast experience of men and matters, is a sharp and shrewd judge of people, and to crown all this, he is a friend of the poor. Another outstanding feature of his life has been that in spite of his lifelong service in the police department, he is known for his honesty, a rare quality. It was therefore an honor and privilege to work in the company of a person who possessed ennobling qualities in its head and heart. Dr. Atma Singh was a man devoted to the Gandhian way of life and had an impressive personality. It was also a privilege for us both to have a saintly person as our colleague. In such congenial environments, the heavy work becomes a sport and its sharp edge gets blunted. But I had a peculiar difficulty. Scheduled caste candidates were not forthcoming in sufficient numbers. Therefore, I had an additional duty of searching for them by contacting friends and sometimes going to their bastis (colonies). Whatever candidates were available, they were generally found to be deficient in one respect or the other. I nostalgically recalled how Rao Bhim Singh used to remark about such candidates, lightly and humorously, of course. "This candidate, though of poor personality will be perfectly all right when he gets into the chair and have sufficient to eat and wear with the pay he would be getting from the government." My bother would disappear.

This is not to say that no real difficulty ever arose with regard to the recruitment of scheduled caste candidates. Once we had to recruit forty excise sub-inspectors, and out of them, eight posts were reserved for the scheduled castes. The minimum academic qualification was graduation. As the number of applicants was quite large, a written test had to be conducted. The result showed that only one scheduled caste candidate had qualified. The chairman congratulated me on this by way of a joke. I replied that it would not pose any insurmountable difficulty. But it did create serious differences of opinion—the other two on one side and I on the other. They were not in favor of considering and selecting any candidate other than those who had qualified in the test. Their sole argument was that no failed candidate could be considered, otherwise, the test would be meaningless. They further asserted that any other course, if adopted, would not be countenanced by the government either. Technically, they were right. On the other hand, my argument was that all those who possessed the minimum qualifications prescribed for the post were eligible for appointment, that the test was held only for the purpose of elimination, which meant culling the unnecessary element and bringing down the number of candidates to reasonable proportions; and that if the same rule was applied in the case of scheduled caste applicants, it would evidently mean their elimination altogether while, in the case of others, this rule did not adversely affect them as they were not only in large but in unduly disproportionate numbers. Therefore, the eight candidates who were at the top of the scheduled caste candidates in the test should be selected for appointment irrespective of whether they had passed the test or not.

I further maintained that the government would not take unkindly to the procedure, and at the same time if scheduled caste candidates were eliminated that way, my being on the board would be entirely meaningless. The reservation made for these people would thus be nullified. I made it clear that I would have no answer if reservation was not implemented for any reason. But my colleagues did not seem to relent. After prolonged discussions, I took the courage to suggest that I would own the responsibility if any objection came from the government. I did not make this commitment because I was so strong but because I thought in my mind that no such occasion would ever arise. It goes to the credit of my colleagues that they ultimately accepted my view. Eight scheduled caste candidates were consequently selected and recommended along with others. I heaved a sigh of relief as social justice had been done.

Then something unexpected and strange happened. One day, I went to the old secretariat at Chandigarh to see Chaudhri Sunder Singh. As I entered the room, I saw five or six Valmiki (low caste person, janitor) MLAs, and other important figures including Bhagat Gurandas, Master Sohan Singh, S. Khem Singh, and Professor Yashwant Rai already sitting there. Just as I took my seat, the minister, casting a look at them, smiled and said to me that the Valmiki brothers present there were complaining against me. I thought it was said just in a fun. Valmikis had great regard for me as I had always been pleading their cause. In the same strain, I replied that none of those brothers could have any grouse against me. After a short while they left. Then the minister told me that actually they had complained against me to the chief minister who had discussed the matter with him also. The disquieting part of it was that, on their complaint, the chief minister proposed to write a demi-official letter to the chairman. Their complaint was that out of the eight excise sub-inspectors recruited, seven were failed candidates and none was a Valmiki in spite of the fact that one Valmiki candidate was very high in the merit securing marks as high as 76 out of a total of 100 marks. This at once brought to my mind the bold, but actually sham, assurance I had given to my colleagues that in case there was any objection from the government, I would own the responsibility. Now the time had come for me to honor the assurance. The objection, a serious one, had come from our own people. I explained to the minister the whole position and stressed the point that, in case the chief minister wrote a demi-official letter to the chairman, my path would be beset with difficulties in rendering necessary help to our people in the future. I therefore suggested that he should immediately go to the chief minister and try to persuade him not to write the proposed letter. If anything seemed wrong in the said selection first, I should be asked to make the matter clear. Chaudhri Sahib went to the chief minister as suggested by me and successfully dissuaded him from writing the proposed letter. This relieved me of the anxiety. Now I had to find out how a Valmiki candidate

with high marks was not selected. On examining the case, it was found that the candidate had actually secured only 36 marks and not 76 as asserted by the said MLAs. The tens digit 3 of 36 was not very artistically written by the office on the intimation letter, and it could mistakenly be read as 7. The position became clear. Thus the peculiar situation created by our own men due to a misunderstanding was saved. My colleagues never knew about this episode, and they need not have been apprised. In this case, ignorance was bliss.

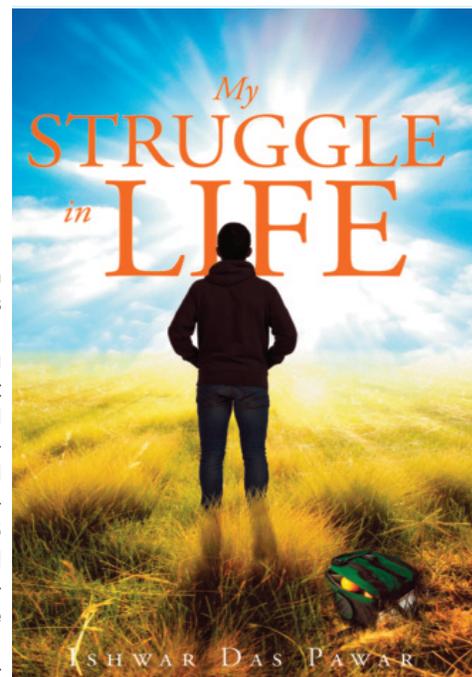
Another case which also posed some difficulty: three posts of sub-inspector in the rehabilitation department were reserved for the scheduled castes. The minimum academic qualification was graduation. There was no written test as the number of candidates was not much. Only interviews were held. Of the scheduled caste candidates, only one was considered suitable. Lack of good personality stood in the way. As the sub-inspectors were to deal with the public, they were expected to be important figures. My colleagues therefore were prepared to select only one candidate. The remaining two reserved posts were thus to be thrown open to the candidates of the general category. For reasons of my own, I did not share their view. The candidates fulfilled the minimum qualifications prescribed for the job and were therefore eligible for selection. Their haggard faces, their poor physiques, and rustic dresses only pointed to their stark poverty.

There was nothing wrong with them basically. Therefore, I pleaded their cause. As we could not agree on the point, the interview papers were handed over to me to be kept in the confidential box without finalizing the list. I quietly put the papers in the box and kept mum. A couple of days after that I was asked whether recommendations had been done. I said that the list was awaiting finalization by the board.

Some days had passed, and the papers were still gathering dust. Amusingly enough, another requisition was received from the department for another two posts reserved for the scheduled castes. The requirement of the department now stood at five instead of three. We could not agree on the point of recommending three candidates. How to recommend five? I apprised my colleagues of the additional demand for two more reserved posts. It was a knotty situation! We sat in a meeting to sort out the problem. It was really a very pleasant surprise for me and a load lifted off my mind as we decided to recommend five scheduled caste candidates out of the list of candidates already interviewed. Patience paid dividends. But more important was the consideration and understanding of the cause of the scheduled castes shown by my generous and sympathetic colleagues. I could succeed only with their helpful cooperation. They always extended such cooperation and that too ungrudgingly. The same atmosphere of cooperation and team work prevailed when Jathedar Mohan Singh replaced Dr. Atma Singh on his retirement as member of the board. The Jathedar had been the head priest of the highest religious seat at Harmandir Sahib, popularly known as the Golden Temple in Amritsar. This fact alone spoke of his towering personality. Besides, he was a worldly wise man with vast experience of public affairs. These facts contributed greatly to the success of my efforts to work for the sacred cause of the deprived and neglected people.

Difficulties in the working of the board came from government quarters also. In a case, the scheduled caste selectees formed 35 percent of the total number of candidates selected and recommended. This was due to the reason that scheduled caste candidates captured more posts by merit than they were entitled to on the basis of the 20 percent of reservation. At

(Contd. on next page)



My Struggle in Life

(Continue from page 6)

once came a letter from the concerned department that the board was not competent to recommend scheduled caste candidates in excess of the 20 percent reserved quota. Our office got jittery and noted that the board had really committed an error in recommending candidates in excess of the permissible limit.

There was a flutter of a sort in the office. The concerned assistant came to me in rather an excited mood with the letter to apprise of the "blunder" that had occurred. I directed him to examine the point raised in the letter and put up a note. His note was on the expected lines. I could not accept the view of the office. The real point involved in the case had been missed by them. The correct position was that under the reservation instructions, the scheduled castes were to get their 20 percent share of services even though they might not get any post by merit in competition with others. This was the minimum that was bound to go to them provided eligible candidates were available. The reservation formula did not and does not prescribe the upper limit, it only earmarks the minimum of the posts they should get in case they failed to obtain the same in an open competition with others. They could get even hundred per cent of the posts if they could do so by competing with others. This was perfectly legal and permissible under the rules.

At present, the position was a bit better. According to the present instructions, the posts, - whether in direct recruitment or in promotion cases, obtained by the scheduled castes by merit or on their turn are not to be counted while computing the number of the reserved vacancies or posts. As a reinforcing example, take the case of reservation in the country's legislatures. Against the reserved seats in delimited constituencies, only the scheduled caste candidates can contest the election. But they can contest an election from any of the general constituencies as well. It is an agreed and admitted proposition of the law embodied in the Representation of People Act. Again, in some posts, notably those of patwaris (village level revenue officials) and police constables, 50 percent posts were reserved for the scheduled castes.

Thus the 20 percent reservation formula provided only a broad guideline in this matter and did not prescribe the maximum. This limit was not to exceed only if the scheduled caste candidates were not in a position to catch up in the competition with others. I put up a note on the above lines for the consideration of the board. The board agreed with me, and a reply was sent accordingly. This clinched the matter, and there was no such further move from anywhere. Then there came another bombshell, this time from the secretariat. We used to prepare the list of the selected candidates by allotting the scheduled caste candidates their positions in accordance with the block system as prescribed by the government. The objection taken was that the scheduled caste candidates, though entitled to appointments against the reserved vacancies, were not entitled to be shown against the block system points in the merit list to be recommended so as to assign to them seniority also in that order. Therefore, it was desired that a separate list of the selected scheduled caste candidates be sent, and then it would be for the department concerned to make appointments, keeping in view the block system. It was correct that the merit list prepared by the board also assigned the scheduled caste selectees' seniority according to the reserved points, but in the view of the government seniority, it would be fixed according to the positions obtained by the scheduled caste candidates in the test or in the interview or in both as the case might be.

The case was examined carefully and meticulously, and the board came to the ultimate conclusion that the procedure and the method of making recommendations hitherto followed was correct and should be continued. A reply to the objecting department embodying the views of the board on the disputed point was sent. Nothing further was heard from the department so long as I remained on the board. I was there for a long period of full eight years. Sometimes the candidates and their parents also created unnecessary hurdles in our proper functioning. A first divisioner matriculate and a graduate were eligible for appointment to clerical posts in the secretariat offices. My effort had generally been to send as many scheduled caste candidates for appointment in the secretariat as possible.

This was as it should have been. The secretariat is the seat of the ruling elite. It is a privileged office. So some of the scheduled caste people also should be there. Then candidates and their guardians would approach me with the request that the boy should be recommended for appointment in the office of the tehsildar or the naib tehsildar of their tehsil (county) where, according to them, a post was lying vacant. This they

wanted in order to keep the boy as near their home as possible. Sometimes, I would be hard put to convince them of the advantages they would have in being in the premier office of the state government. And in a good many cases, I would stick to the orders already passed in spite of the stout resistance they would put up and the displeasure they exhibited.

Once we had gone to Jalandhar for holding interviews for the posts of signaler for the irrigation department. After the day's work in the evening, I went to see a friend of mine in the city. There were two young men, Darshan Ram and Chiranjit Lal, who were introduced to me. Both of them were matriculate. They told me that they could not apply for the posts of signaler as the advertisement published in the newspapers in that behalf had escaped their notice. As there was no scheduled caste candidate with us for these posts, I asked them to come the next day to the place of interviews and see the chairman after the day's work was over. I pointedly told them not to mention me as having tendered them that advice. The two chaps came the next day as advised, and after the interviews for the day were over, they sent in a chit to the board as they wanted to make a request.

They were called in, and they said that they had missed the advertisement and therefore failed to apply for the posts. "But how have you come to know about it now?" asked the shrewd chairman. "We were told about the interviews by Pawar Sahib, and he advised us to see the chairman in this connection. So we have come," came a prompt reply. The cat was out of the bag. They should not have mentioned my name as pointedly told. Even if they did it, it was all right. There was nothing secret or important about it. But it did show their simplemindedness. I told the members of the board that as there was no scheduled caste applicant with us, the two boys were advised by me to come there and try their luck. The board considered their request, allowed them to apply there and then, were interviewed and selected. What happened after their appointment is a story better to be told by them and them alone.

Sometimes curious situations do arise, but such things should be taken in stride. One day the chairman received a communication on behalf of Governor N. V. Gadgil inviting the members of the board for tea. There was no function at the Raj Bhawan (governor's mansion). It was an invitation extended to the members of the board only. We had never received such an invitation before. So it set us guessing as to the purpose of the invitation. The governor might have thought it proper to meet the members of the board. What else could be there? We went to the Raj Bhawan and reached there at the appointed time. The secretary of the governor was there to receive us. After we had had our tea, the governor came up. For some time we had a chat of a general nature. Then the governor expressed his desire to talk to the chairman alone. Both of them were together for a few minutes and then they came back. The meeting was over, and we begged leave of the governor and returned to our office. On reaching the office, the chairman told us that the governor had spoken about the case of a girl candidate for the post of teacher. The selection for those posts had already taken place and recommendations done. The governor had gone to Sonapat on tour. A deputation of the local citizens waited on him and brought to his notice the case of a girl of the town who had appeared in an interview before us for the post of teacher. They said that justice had not been done to her as, according to them, she possessed high qualifications and merit but was not selected while other girl candidates of much lower merit were selected. They therefore requested the governor to look into the matter so that justice was done. The allegation was apparently vague, but in view of the representation, the governor invited us to tea so that he could bring the case to our notice.

Opinion was divided. I held the view that we must go into the facts of the case to find out if somehow or the other any act of omission or commission had crept into the selection causing prejudice to the assessment of the merits of the girl. If any mistake were detected, which caused prejudice to her, we should unhesitatingly admit the same and help her by restoring to her rightful position with an apology. But in case nothing wrong was found in the selection, we should hold our hands off. If we went out of the way to help the girl, it would obviously amount to pleading guilty for no reason whatsoever. It would also inevitably arouse suspicions in the mind of the governor that originally justice was not done, and that therefore, the selection was not fair. Conversely, he might think that the board was pliable to recommendations. But the matter was not confined to the governor alone. A large number of people of the town of Sonapat knew about the case. They were bound to think that justice in the case was possible only on the intervention of the governor. Therefore, by doing

a wrong thing in a case decided rightly and correctly, we would be inviting bad name on ourselves without rhyme or reason.

We should be cautious against unnecessarily casting clouds on our own honesty and integrity. After giving a careful thought to the matter, I was asked by the board to examine the case to find out the correct position. Accordingly, I went through all the aspects of the case very carefully and minutely and found that there was no mistake whatsoever, and that the selection was perfectly in order. We had recommended the required number of candidates against the existing vacancies and had kept the names of six candidates on the waiting list. The name of the girl in question stood at the bottom of the waiting list. I therefore suggested that we might apprise the governor of the correct position, adding that the name of the girl would also be recommended provided the department intimated to the board an additional demand for at least six vacancies. With this note, the case went back to the board; and after reviewing the whole position, it was decided that the governor be informed on the suggested lines. A suitable demi-official letter was accordingly drafted and sent to the governor. The matter ended there. We had done what the governor really desired, i.e., justice.

The formation of the board was of great advantage, rather a boon, to the weaker sections of society, especially the scheduled castes. Prior to the constitution of the board, recruitment used to be made by the departmental heads or departmental selection committees. People who were not well connected or who lived in remote and inaccessible places seldom came to know about the vacancies. The board started advertising the vacancies in different newspapers and sometimes sent separate intimation of the vacancies to the institutions or organizations who could help and who would in turn inform the people and thus enable them to apply for the posts for which they were eligible. The board was particularly concerned about the hitherto neglected, deprived people, especially the scheduled castes. Among those people, the Valmiki attracted our special attention. Certain ilaqas (areas) such as the Kangra district—including Lahul and Spiti, Una tehsil; Guhla tehsil of Karnal district; and Mohindergarh district—were declared by the government as backward areas and were, on that score, entitled to specified concessions in the matter of recruitment to the state services. Poor candidates, such as the children of widowed mothers who earned their livelihood by working in others' houses as cooks and similar other categories, were taken due note of. Such considerations were necessary so that social justice could be done. These were general principles which caused no prejudice to anybody. This way, a new orientation based on just considerations was given to the selections for service.

All the members of the board, and in particular the chairman, felt kindly to the common man. The chairman was, at times, rather extra considerate and generous. As an instance: we were holding interviews at Ambala. A poor boy appeared before us. We could not help him as he was found to be not eligible for the post. His mother, who had accompanied him, came in with eyes brimming with tears. We told her we were not in a position to help her son. She said she had come with her son, and for the journey, she had borrowed money from a neighbor. She was really poor, but we too were helpless. On hearing her pitiable story, the chairman took out from his pocket a ten-rupee currency note and gave it to her to enable them to defray the expenses of the journey back home. This is just one instance. As I look back to take stock of the work done as a member of the board, I feel amply satisfied. We were able to help quite a number of those who, in the absence of the board, would not have the remotest chance to get service. I feel highly gratified to see scheduled caste people virtually in all departments of the government where, before the board came into existence, these people were found only by way of variety.

This is no mean achievement. Social justice was thrown open to all. For this, credit must go to the late Bhim Sen Sachar, a pious politician who, as chief minister, had the vision and courage to establish the board for making recruitment to the state services. We made all efforts humanly possible to make the purpose of the board a success. We used to write fictitious roll numbers on the answer books and in the relevant book and compile the results ourselves so that there was no chance of any unfair means. For us, this involved a lot of labor, but it was worth its while. Sometimes we had to forego our holidays. But we considered it a duty and a mission to put every ounce of our energy into the job. To us, work had always been ennobling.

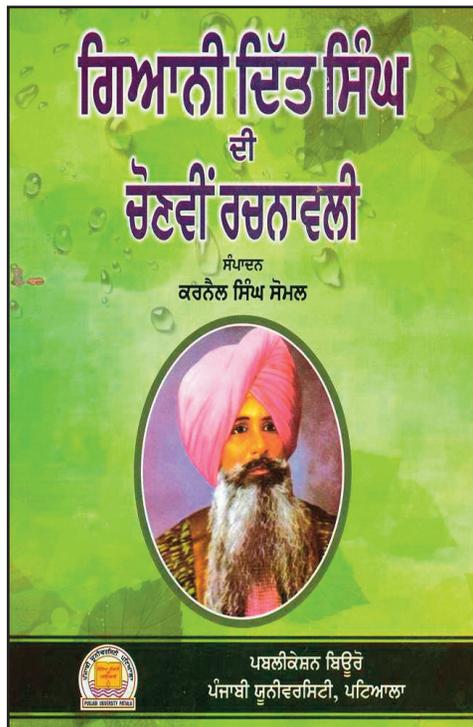
After working on the board for full eight years, I left the job at the end of September 1961 on my appointment as Additional District and Sessions Judge.

A SOCIAL REFORMER AND A SCHOLAR

Giani Ditt Singh, a doyen of Punjabi letters in the second half of the 19th century, was born at Kalaurh, a village near Fatehgarh Sahib, in a weaver's family around 1850. He died at Lahore on September 6, 1901. At the age of nine he was sent to Tiwar village near Kharar to study at a Gulabdasia Dera where he learnt Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu and Sanskrit. Later on he learnt English as well. The followers of Gulabdasia sect believe in epicurean way of life and they do not believe in any ritualism.

As he grew up, Giani Ditt Singh (Ram Dittawas his original name) became a social reformer of sorts exhorting people to give up all kinds of superstitions. He moved from one centre of learning to another in search of knowledge and ultimately reached Lahore where he passed the Giani examination and acquired other qualifications before being appointed a professor of Punjabi at Oriental College, Lahore. Giani Ditt Singh came in contact with many scholars of the day at Lahore and acquired a good debating skill in their company.

He remained under the influence of Arya Samaj for some time. But after learning about Swami Dayanand-Saraswati's disparaging comments about Guru Nanak, he engaged the great Swami in debates on spiritualism and other philosophical matters. Three such debates took place in Lahore after Swami's arrival there in 1877. By 1888 when the 11th anniversary of Lahore



Arya Samaj was being celebrated, Gianiji snapped all ties with the Samaj. Henceforth, he became a staunch supporter of the Singh Sabha Movement and played a very important role in the Organisation of its Lahore unit. Being an excellent speaker, he became a roving savant delivering lectures on Sikh doctrine at various Gurdwaras, schools and other centres of learning. At some places he was even subjected to humiliation because of his Dalit background. Giani Ditt Singh is the first modern prose writer and journalist of Punjabi. He remained the editor of the Khalsa Akhbar Lahore

for many years in the last quarter of the 19th century.

The publication bureau of Punjabi University, Patiala, has published a mammoth volume of his selected writings titled Giani Ditt Singh Di ChonviRachnavali edited by Karnail Singh Somal as a tribute to the great 19th century Sikh scholar who hailed from Somal's own village. This imposing collection has been divided into four sections. The first carries those writings which Gianiji penned before joining the Singh Sabha Movement. These are Qissa of SirinFarhad, AblaNindParbhodh and Man Sambodan Granth. The second section has three parts, the first comprises biography of six Sikh G

urus — Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Arjan Dev, Guru Hari Rai, Guru Teg Bahadur and the Jiwan Charat of Guru Gobind Singh (part one). The second part of this section carries the detail of martyrdom of brave Sikh women for their faith. The third part comprises interpretations and exegeses of the holy verses of Guru Nanak and Guru Arjun Dev. The third section consists of writings pertaining to social reforms, ethical matters and the debates with the people of other faiths, including those with Swami DayanandSaraswati. The fourth section includes Giani Ditt Singh's selected essays and articles from the Khalsa Akhbar Lahore.

Whatever he wrote was targeted towards the common man, though he en-

Jaspal Singh

gaged the well-known contemporary scholars and preachers in dialogical debates to emphasise the logical pre-eminence of the Sikh doctrine and praxis as enunciated by the great gurus. He was able to express his ideas in a simple language with appropriate figures of speech and illustrations.

No doubt the leaders of the Singh Sabha Movement remained on the right side of the state power, yet their craving for freedom was strikingly conspicuous in their writings and speeches. In fact, the people of Punjab at that time were mentally reorganising their perceptions in that existential situation when not only Punjab but the entire country had been subdued by the English and made an integral part of the sprawling British Empire. National consciousness was at the nascent stage and the ultimate objective was not clear even to the national leaders.

This collection does not carry everything that Giani Ditt Singh wrote. A lot is yet to be published. Karnail Singh Somal has done a stupendous service to the cause of Punjabi studies by collecting and editing this rare material for Punjabi University, Patiala. With 10 collections of very readable literary essays and 37 books of children literature to his credit, Somal is held in high esteem in the Punjabi literary circles.

Courtesy: The Tribune (Chandigarh)



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