



Ambedkar Times

Weekly

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Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's 133rd Birth Anniversary: Remembering the Savior of Downtrodden

Prem K. Chumber

Editor-in-Chief: Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba

Let me join our all-esteemed readers, contributors and sympathizers in exchanging Vaisakhi greetings, remembering Mahatma Jyotirao Phule and paying floral tribute to Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on the auspicious day of his 133rd birth anniversary. He devoted his whole life in the service of downtrodden: relentlessly struggling for the annihilation of castes and making efforts towards the creation of egalitarian society. His was a very highly educated personality. He received various degrees of higher education from reputed universities of United States of America and United Kingdom. He adopted legal-constitutional ways to acquire the long-denied rights of the hapless and socially excluded sections of the society and made them aware of their rights by establishing three newspapers (Mook Nayak, Janata and Prabudh Bharat), and organized them by founding three political parties (Independent Labour Party, Scheduled Castes Federation, Republican Party of India). Babasaheb Dr Ambedkar was a true democrat, great organizer, erudite scholar, eloquent speaker, conscientious philosopher, brilliant parliamentarian, audacious administrator and a thoroughly fine human being. He served the nation at various top offices but never compromised with the integrity and cause of poor people and egalitarian principles of social order based of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity! His contribution as the Chief-architect of the constitution of Independent India, advocate of women rights, laborers and the savior of the lowest of the low and staunch defender of social democratic values would be remembered fondly for the times to come.

Ambedkar Times and Desh Doaba forum also fondly remember 13 April; on this day in 1699, Tenth Master Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji baptized the five beloved (PunjPyare) at Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib, Anandpur Sahib. Guru Gobind Singh Ji infused a new spirit in them - the spirit of freedom, equality, and justice - and put to an end for all times the oppressive social system of caste-based binaries of purity and pollution. Manas-KeeJaatSabheAkayPehchanbo - Equality of Mankind. We wish to all Very Very Happy Khalsa Sathapan day, Happy Vaisakhi and birth anniversary of Mahatma Jyotirao Phule (11 April 1827--28 November 1890). Mahatma Phule preceded Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in lifelong struggle to put an end to the entrenched malady of caste and social exclusion.

It is also a matter of great honour and pleasure for us to share with our esteemed readers, contributors and sympathizers that with your continuous support and encouragement, "Ambedkar Times" (English Weekly) has entered its 16th year of uninterrupted publication on March 15, 2024, and "Desh Doaba" (Punjabi Weekly) its 13th year of onward journey in the service of society. "Ambedkar Times", named after Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and dedicated to Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram, reminds us the golden time spent by Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar at the Columbia University (New York) that exposed him to the basic tenets, philosophy and the practice of true democracy. After reaching Bharat, Babasaheb developed a great movement for the restitution of social democracy at the grassroots. "Desh Doaba", named after Doaba Punjab, reminds us of our roots and the great sacrifices made by the sons of the soil for the liberation of our land from the British Raj. The inhabitants of Doaba Punjab played a significant role in the Ghadar Lehar and the subsequent Babbar Akali Lehar. "Desh Doaba" weekly has been dedicated to Great Freedom Fighter Baba Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, who arrived in the United States of America in 1909 and was among the forerunners of the Ghadar movement, and after reaching India in 1925 founded the Ad Dharm movement for the emancipation and empowerment of the Scheduled Castes. His contribution towards the mission of Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar is well known during the London Round Table Conferences.

Once again, the "Ambedkar Times" and "Desh Doaba" forum join with our esteemed readers, contributors and sympathizers in fondly remembering Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on his birth anniversary - April 14, 2024.

Manifesto of Dr. Ambedkar's Party Unique, Unparalleled and Outspoken

In his maiden historical speech delivered at the First Round Table Conference at London on 20 November 1930, Dr. Ambedkar said that the Depressed Classes felt that nobody could remove their grievances as well as they could, and they could not remove them unless they got political power in their own hands. Since the solution of their problems lay in their political empowerment, therefore, it was essentially a political problem and must be treated as such. While making the Constitution it should be noted that the Indian society which was formed with an ascending scale of reverence and a descending scale of contempt and was a gradation of castes, gave no scope for the growth of the sentiment of equality and fraternity, and the intelligentsia which came

of the upper strata and conducted political movements had not shed its narrow particularism of castes. Therefore, it would be just and proper for them to insist that the best guarantee for the settlement of their problem was the adjustment of the political machine itself so as to give them a hold on it¹. Dr. Ambedkar made it a mission of his life to get them liberated from the thralldom and get political power in their hands.

Accordingly he founded a political Party named 'Independent Labor Party' on 15 August 1936. The Party contested elections to the Bombay Legislature in 1937 and won 15 out of 17 contested seats². He formed a new All India level Political Party named 'All India Scheduled Castes Federation' on 19th July 1942. Its aims and objectives were, (i) to organize the Scheduled Castes of India to educate them and to agitate for their social, economic and political freedom and to make them strive for their well being and advancement; (ii) to secure for them equality of opportunity and thereby enable them to achieve equal status with their fellow citizens in all walks of life; (iii) to engage itself in organizing the peasantry, the landless laborers, and the workers in the factories and other wage earners; (iv) to undertake educational activities such as starting of Schools and teaching them arts and crafts; (v) to undertake all the activities for the moral and spiritual elevation of the Scheduled Castes; and (vi) to keep a record of all cases of tyrannies and oppressions practiced upon the Scheduled Castes

in different parts of the country³. Speaking on the occasion, he said that the Depressed Classes must by law have a proper share in the Government of

the country along with the Hindus and the Musalmans. To achieve this, he said, "You must all come together under one flag and have only one organization. If you all unite and work under one Organization, I have no doubt that you will reach the position you are entitled to as per the Constitution⁴."

The Election Manifesto of the Party was decided at the Executive Committee Meeting of the Party held at the residence of Dr. Ambedkar at New Delhi on 6th October 1951. Captioned "To the Men and Women of India who are expected to think before they vote; to the men and women of India who are expected to believe that public good should come before selfish gain", it was released on 7th October 1951. It was welcomed by the Indian and the Western Journals. The leading news paper 'The Times of India' termed it unique, unparalleled and outspoken⁵."

Principles of the Party

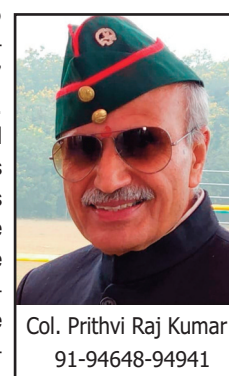
The attitude of the Party in public affairs will be governed by the principles as contained in the aims and objectives of its Constitution *ibid*.

These principles are for the benefit of all the down-trodden humanity in India. They are adopted by the Federation because they are borne out of the social condition of the Scheduled Castes. The Federation cannot exist without adopting these principles and without holding up to those principles and living up to them. They are the life book of the Party. They are the outward register of the inward feeling. Many parties may adopt these principles. But no party can be so true to the principles as the Scheduled Castes Federation⁶.

Policy of the Party

The policy of the Party will be to try to give effect to its above principles. It is not tied to any particular dogma or ideology such as Communism, or Socialism, Gandhism, or any other Ism. The Party will be ready to adopt any plan of social and economic betterment of the people irrespective of its origin provided it is consistent with its principles. Its outlook on life will be purely rational

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and modern, emperistic and not academic⁷.

The Program of the Party

A. Raising the Backward Classes

The Party will fight on top priority for the raising of the Backward Classes, the Untouchables and the Tribal people both in the matter of Education and Services, and this will be treated as fundamental. The Party has in its mind the advanced education of such high order, both in this country and outside, which will enable these classes to fit themselves for taking hold of administration. In the matter of services, the Federation will insist on reservation so long as these classes are not able to find their place in the Civil and Military services of the country. Today the services have become the monopoly of a few communities which has created gulf and enmity between the higher and the lower classes in this country. The Party is firmly of opinion that to remove the cause of this gulf and enmity is to give the lower classes the higher education and to open to them the door of services. This is the only solution of this problem. The artificial distinction between higher classes and lower classes based on birth must come to an end soon⁸.

B. Poverty alleviation

The Problem of poverty from one point of view is a problem of more production both in Agriculture and in Industry, and from another point of view it is a problem of controlling the excessive growth of population. The remedy against poverty is more production population control. For increase in production the Federation will support national undertaking of industry where it is possible. Where private enterprise is possible and national undertaking not essential, private enterprise will be allowed. As agriculture is bound to remain the foundation of India's economy, therefore, there must be increase in agriculture production by introducing mechanized farming, replacing small holdings by large co-operative or collective farms and providing adequate manuring and supply of healthy seeds by the State. It should supply all the mechanized equipment to the farmer on hire and at a rental to be recovered along with the land revenue. Any scheme of production must remain subject to one overriding consideration that there should be no exploitation of the working classes. There has been an increase of about 52 percent in the population of the Indian Union over the half century, but very little change in the occupational structure despite considerable development of industries. About 68.2 percent working population was engaged in agriculture which affords employment for only a part of the year. There is thus a great deal chronic underemployment in the country. The Federation would advocate an intensive propaganda in favor of birthcontrol among the people, and the

opening of birth control clinics in different parts of the country. It would not hesitate to advocate more drastic methods of controlling it in view of gravity of the situation.

Although India is an agricultural country, there are vast number of people who are just landless laborers, majority of whom are Untouchables and other backward classes who are eking out a miserable living and who are exploited by cultivators. There are 93 million acres of cultivable waste land which can be reclaimed and brought under cultivation. The Federation will reserve land out of uncultivated or reclaimed land for the benefit of landless laborers and will also introduce for them the principle of minimum wages. It will urge for more and more afforestation of the uncultivable waste land for proper degree of rainfall and prosperity of the agriculturists.

To make agriculture profitable, it must be supplemented by subsidiary industries i.e. cottage industries, which will not be possible without an adequate supply of electricity. Generation of electricity in the opinion of the Federation is the foundation of economic prosperity of India. The Federation will strive for the realization of the river valley projects, the purpose of which is to provide irrigation, produce electricity and stop floods⁹.

C. Improvement in Internal Administration

Among the problems of Internal Administration the glaring ones are the Problem of Linguistic Provinces; restoring purity of Administration; Control and Black-marketeers; Inflation and the distress due to rising cost of living. The quarrels within linguistic units such as the States of Madras, Madhya Pradesh and Bombay have made it impossible for democracy to work. There must be social peace among various linguistic units if our constitution is to work on purely political considerations. For that purpose Linguistic States is the only remedy. The Party will press for the creation of Linguistic States.

The Party believes that corruption in administration is wholly the creation of the Congress. Charges have been made by members of the Congress itself against its ministers of corruption and graft in many states. Instead of making inquiries into these charges and punishing the guilty the Congress High Command has suppressed those who have made such charges. When Ministers at the top are corrupt how could officers below fail to be corrupt? The Federation will urge stern action against ministers or officers who are corrupt and raise the standard of administration which has fallen so low during and owing to the Congress regime.

The problem of control and black-marketeers is also the result of the close association between the Congress and Big Business. The Congress

throughout its life has been financed by and reared upon the support of Big Business. It is prepared to sell Big Business power in exchange for election fund and Big Business is ready to buy power by giving money to Congress to run its election. If the voter realizes that he must not support a candidate who is backed by Big Business he will greatly help to solve the problem. The Federation which is miles away from Big Business will see to it that the Big Business does not run the Government of country.

The problem of inflation seems to have come to stay. It is allowed to despoil the life of the people. The Federation will press for its immediate solution¹⁰.

D. Foreign Policy

It is a fact that on the date of India's Independence all nations were its friends and wished her well. Today all nations are her adversaries, if not actual enemies as a result of the Foreign Policy of the Congress Government. This change of front by foreign nations towards India within the last three years is due to India's policy regarding Kashmir, regarding the admission of Communist China in the United Nations Organization and in regard to the Korean War. If the Kashmir policy adopted by the Congress Government continued, it will lead to a perpetual enmity between India and Pakistan, and the possibility of war between the two countries. The Federation believes that it is essential for the good of both countries that they maintain good neighborly relations. For this purpose the proper policy to adopt towards Pakistan should be based upon the considerations that partition should be accepted as a settled fact, and the two countries should continue as two separate sovereign States. Secondly, the Kashmir should be partitioned - the Muslim area to go to Pakistan (subject to the wishes of the Kashmiris living in the Valley) and the non-Muslim area consisting of Jammu and Ladhak to come to India. The Party will press for its acceptance.

The other centre of our foreign policy which has made other nations our enemies is China. India is made to fight China's battle for entry in the United Nations Organization as a permanent member thereof. This championing of the cause of Communist China by India has been responsible for the prevailing antagonism between India and America with the result that it has become impossible for India to obtain financial and technical aid from America. Why should India fight the battle of China when China is quite capable of fighting her own battle?

In our foreign policy we have not been able to make a distinction between Capitalism and Parliamentary Democracy. The dislike of Capitalism is understandable. But we take care that we do not weaken Parliamentary Democracy and help Dictatorship to

grow. It would be like throwing the baby out of the bath in emptying it of dirty water.

India's first duty should be to herself. Instead of fighting for the cause of Communist China, India should fight for getting herself recognized as the permanent member of the U. N. O. Instead of doing this, India is spending herself in fighting the battle of Mao as against Chiangkai Shek. This quixotic policy of saving the world is going to bring about the ruination of India. The sooner this suicidal foreign policy is reversed the better for India. Before championing the cause of Asiatic countries, India must seek every aid to make herself strong. Then only will her voice be effective. This is the line of Foreign Policy that the Federation will pursue¹¹.

Financial Resources

Although the amount required for execution of the Party program set out by the Federation is by no means small, yet the financial problem is not unmanageable. The Federation suggests: (i) Reduction of Expenditure over the Army; (ii) Re-levy of the Salt tax; (iii) Abolition of prohibition and the saving of Excise Revenue; (iv) Nationalization of Insurance as the ways of raising finances for the development of the country.

The total revenues of the Government of India are about Rs. 350 crores out of this the Army is eating up more than 50 per cent of the revenues or nearly Rs. 180 crores per annum. This is a colossal expenditure on defense in a country where people are dying of starvation. On the basis of the settlement of the Kashmir issue in the way suggested in the Manifesto and the change in the foreign policy and creation of friendly relations with other foreign nations, there should be no risk in reducing the defense expenditure by Rs. 50 crores per year. The giving up of the levy of the Salt tax was a concession to mere sentiment. It has not made Salt cheap. Instead salt has become very dear and the State has lost a valuable source of revenue which used to produce Rs. 11 crores of revenue per year. The incident of the tax on the people will be nothing even if it is levied at a rate which will produce Rs. 30 crores per year.

The Prohibition has produced more evils than good. Now beside men, women and children also drink because liquor is manufactured in every home in their presence. It has produced more crime and worst sort of demoralization of the lower classes. The loss of revenue on account of prohibition in part 'A' States only is of the order of Rs. 25 crores a year. This does not contain any data of the expenditure on enforcement of the policy of prohibition. This also does not take into account the possible rise in excise revenue that might have taken place in the absence of prohibition. From the point of equity, there is

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no justification for prohibition. Why should the general public be made to pay the cost of reforming a lakh or two of habitual drunkards who could never be reformed, and when the other wants of the public such as education, housing and health are crying for remedy? The Federation will support the reversal of prohibition policy for advancing general welfare.

The nationalization of Insurance is the most profitable source of money to the State. The money in hands of the Insurance Companies by way of receipt of annual premium was 37 crores in 1949. The Companies invested 9 crores out of 37 crores in Government Securities on which the Government has to pay interest which is a needless tax on the tax-payers. The Insurance Companies ate up 29 per cent of the premium income. This could be stopped by nationalization. The Federation will make insurance compulsory for all State and private employees. It will give security to the individual and funds to the Government for development purpose 12.

Co-operation between the Federation and other Parties

The Federation will not ally itself with a Political Party which has not laid down its principles and whose principles are antagonistic with those of the Federation. It will not support independent candidates except in exceptional cases because the victory of the ideals

can be ensured only by organized Parties and not by individuals. The Party would like to work in co-operation with the Backward Classes and the Scheduled Tribes, for they are more or less in the same position as the Scheduled Castes are. The Constitution of Free India has made these classes and the Scheduled Castes virtually the masters of the country. Hitherto the minority of Caste Hindus have made themselves the rulers of the country. The fear of the Federation is that these classes by reason of their want of consciousness may fall a prey to the minority of Caste Hindus and continue to be their slaves instead of becoming masters of their own. The Federation's first concern is to help these Classes to get on their feet. If they so wish, the Scheduled Castes Federation would be prepared to change the name and call itself the Backward Classes Federation. If this is not possible, the Federation would be ready and willing to forge a working alliance with such organizations.

The Federation will not have any alliance with any reactionary Party such as the Hindu Mahasabha or the R. S. S. It will not have any alliance with Communist Party also the objects of which are to destroy individual freedom and Parliamentary Democracy and substitute in its place a dictatorship. It does not believe in totalitarianism and, therefore, will not join a Political Party which is already totalitarian and which will not

permit an opposition Party to grow.

The Federation is equally opposed to the growth of multiplicity of Political Parties. It will strive to bring about a two party system in this country as its ideal that alone can give stability to the State and freedom to the individual. For the moment an All India Federal Party consisting of different political parties as units all having a common basis in political principles and bound by its common internal organization is possible to be formed. The Federation is prepared on certain conditions to be a unit of such a Federal Party of Parties such as the Socialist Party, the Justice Party and where no such Parties exist other Parties. The Party seeking alliance must pledge its support for the social and economic uplift of the Scheduled Castes, and it must agree to permit the Federation to function as an autonomous unit within the Federal Organization in the matter of its internal affairs. With regard to individuals who seek the aid of the Scheduled Castes Federation in Election they would be required to become Associate Members of the Federation and sign a pledge to the effect that they accept the principles, the policy, the program and the discipline of the Federation 13.

The unique, progressive, practical and visionary manifesto of Dr. Ambedkar's Party is more relevant and important even today when the problems of poverty, condition of the mar-

ginalized sections, condition of farmers and landless laborers, education, unemployment, health, corruption, population growth, gnawing gulf between the higher and lower classes, inflation, nexus between Big Business Houses and the Political and Ruling Dispensations, social discrimination, monopoly of few communities/high castes in the services and administration, et al continue to haunt the people and the country. Elaborating its principles, policy, program the manifesto spells out ways and means to generate financial resources to achieve its programs and objectives. It is not a document carrying enticing and vote-catching day dreams for the gullible people. It is time that the political dispensations and the people take a cue from this manifest and make the country a vibrant and developed nation of one people as an ideal of the Constitution.

Reference: 1. BAWS, Vol.2, pp.505-507; 2. Keer, p. 284, 292; 3. BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt.2, pp. 455-457; 4. BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt.3, p.271; 5. BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt. 1, p.385; 6. BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt.1, p. 387; 7. BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt. 1, p.388; 8. BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt. 1, pp.389,390; 9. BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt. 1, pp.390-394; 10. BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt. 1, pp. 394,395; 11. BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt. 1, pp.395-397; 12. BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt. 1, 397-401; 13. BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt. 1, pp. 401,403.



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Historicity of Chamar Women's Contribution in the Ambedkarite Movement: Part -2

Savitribai Borade

Savitribai Borade was born in the Dhor community in 1901. In Maharashtra Dhor Community has a different profession regarding animal row skin. They are expert in tanning animal's skin to make lather for shows. It's chamar but like caste within the caste. In the early stages of the reform movement, we can see Dhor-Chamar conferences in collaboration. Savitribai Borade is always seen at every Dhor-Chamar conference.

She dedicated her life to social reform. She was the first woman from the Dhor community who worked for social reform and education. Savitribai also worked in the Ambedkarite Movement. She was a widow. She was a student of SevaSadan Pune. She was with Gunabai Gadekar in various contemporary social reform Activities. By nature, Savitribai Borade was a very courageous woman. While doing her study in SevaSadan she was with Gunabai Gadekar (the first chamar social reformer woman from Maharashtra) when Gunabai visited to meet her mother, Savitribai Borade also visited to meet Gunabai's mother. When both were walking on the street some people asked them to stitch their shoes. Because both belong to the shoe-maker community, Savitribai strongly replied to them she never hesitated to face such people.

In the All Maharashtra Chambhar-Dhor Conference held at Pune on 29-30 May 1926, Savitribai Borade had proposed a resolution that, the conference demanded candidates from the untouchables should be given more government jobs in all departments. It is seen that Savitribai Borade played an important role in the meetings & programs of the Dhor-Chamar community.

After completion of Savitribai's training, she joined Mumbai. Savitribai herself had decided to take a job in Mumbai. She was a teacher in BMC's school at Bhoiwada, after which she came in contact with the social movement in Mumbai.

It can be seen that Savitribai Borade came into contact with the Ambedkarite movement because she was in Mumbai. She used to attend various social events. On October 25, 1931, a public meeting of untouchable women was held in the open ground of the Improvement Trust Chawl. The meeting was held under the chairmanship of Savitribai Borade. Ramabai Ambedkar was also present at this meeting. In this meeting, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's role in the Round Table Conference was supported by untouchable women. Also Samaj Mahila Mandal was established. Nashik's Kalam Mandir Satyagraha was supported by the women. In the 22nd April 1933 issue of Janata newspaper, the news was about Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's birthday. Paral, Mumbai On



the night of 14th, April Ambedkar's birthday was celebrated by Mahila Mandal under the chairmanship of Smt. Savitribai Borade at Poy Bawadi Cement Chawl. On this occasion, Mrs. Savitribai Borade gave a brief biographical introduction of Babasaheb and then she said that even though our Babasaheb is going back abroad for a round table conference, I think it would be better if we offer a bag of money to him on behalf of the untouchable women for social reform activities.

This shows how important the position of Savitribai Borade was in the Ambedkarite movement. Also, Savitribai Borade gave a speech at a meeting of men and women teachers in Mumbai about the promotion of Sitaram Namdev Shivtarkar Guruji as a supervisor. Savitribai Borade is seen to be constantly active in social movements.

Along with this, two women are included as the board members of Janata Patra run by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. It was done by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. One of them was Savitribai Borade. The inclusion of Savitribai Borade among the editorial board members of Janata newspaper shows the social importance of Savitribai Borade during that time. Very important news was reported by The Bombay Chronicle of Bombay on 15th June 1939 with a photograph of Savitribai Borade. 'Shrimati Savitribai Borade a well-known social reformer from the Dhor community presided over the first Veer Shiva kakaiya conference at the Bombay presidency recently held at Solapur.

If you read the content of this newspaper carefully, you will realize that they use the term 'social reformer' for Savitribai Borade. Based on this word, a review of the work of Savitribai Borade and its importance can be seen. There is a need for more in-depth research about Savitribai Borade.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision was that all women among the untouchables should be able to lead the social movement. Therefore, Savitribai Borade got the chairmanship of the said council. Babasaheb Ambedkar's thought is taken forward. Also, it is very important that the meeting related to important matters like the round table conference, Kalam temple satyagraha, and establishment of women's circles was held under the chairmanship of Savitribai Borade. From this, it can be seen that Savitribai Borade must be a very smart and strong woman among the untouchables of Mumbai.

In 1942 instalment of Swaraj got. Some taxes were introduced. Businessmen took advantage of this. Goods in the market became expensive. There was a lot of confusion among the leather workers. A meeting was held in Mumbai on the issue related to the leather industry as the leather industry is a laborious occupation of most of the backward people like Dhor, Chamar, Mahar, Mang, etc. There were many eminent persons of the Dhor community in it.

The said meeting was held on January 5, 1944, and a draft of the demands to be made to the government was prepared. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was the Labour Minister of Delhi at that time. His advice had already been taken. A delegation of nine people had already applied for a visit to Delhi. Accordingly, a nine-member delegation was formed on 14 January 1944, including Savitribai Borade. 'Smt. Savitribai Borade Vice President Leather Merchant Society Ahmednagar'. It is mentioned.

In this way, Savitribai Borade played an important role in requesting the government to present the demands of the society and trying to do so and also in the national level performance. It is very important that Savitribai Borade made a lot of efforts for the overall development of Dhor society and also actively participated in the Ambedkarite movement.



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Goodie Takhar, PhD

My forthcoming book – Bootan Mandi: Nerve Centre of Dalit Chetna

It is a sort of 'curtain raiser' for my forthcoming book – Bootan Mandi: Nerve Centre of Dalit Chetna. The book, in commemoration of the centenary year of Bootan Mandi, my native place, is likely to be launched in the second half of April, 2024 in Jalandhar. The Foreword of the book has been written by Dr. Gian Chand Kaul, an eminent academician and ardent community activists. It has been dedicated to the Fore-fathers of BootanMandi: “Respectfully dedicated to the mem-

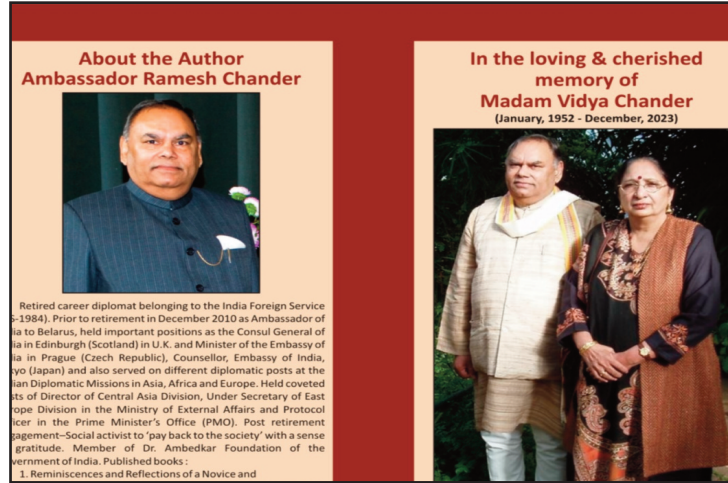
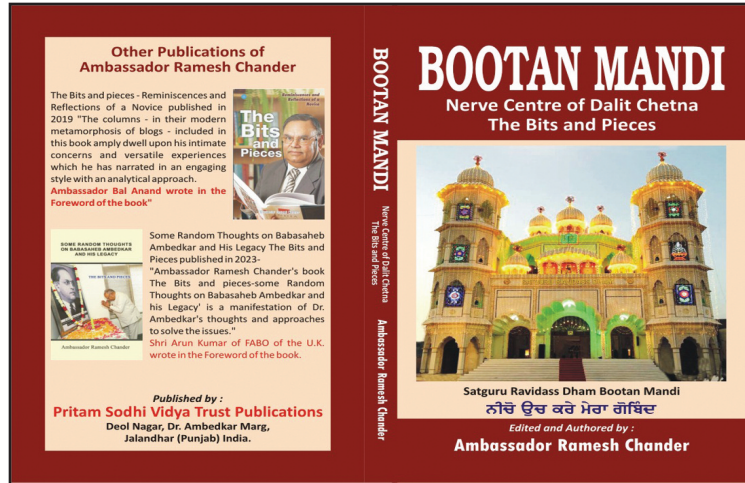
Bootan Mandians like Paramjit Mahey, Harmesh Jassal, Mahesh Chander, Madan Bolina and Khuswinder Billa under the banner: From the Pens of the Sons of the Soil. Part 2 hosts the

and poems of Jai Ram Parwana, a native unsung talent. It also carries an article by Dr. Sarvpriya on the poem of Gurdas Ram Alam 'Acchoot Da lilaz' and also the speech of Babasaheb

pursue my intellectual and community interests. I thank BaldevBhard-



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



ory of Bootan Mandian front runners, Seth KishanDass, Seth Khushi Ram, Seth Munshi Ram, Swami Lalji Dass. Bibi Malavi among others who led the 'Caravan' and made Bootan Mandi the "Nerve Center of Dalit Consciousness" in Punjab and beyond. Naman to the fore-fathers of my Native Place – BootanMandi.” The book has beendivided into three parts – Part 1 contains articles/poems of some of my fellow

author's 51 blogs written over the recent years on varied subjects and themes concerning Bootan Mandi and related events/matters under the heading; The Bits and pieces. Part 3 under the caption: Editor's Pick consists of poems on Bootan Mandi like 'BootanMandi the Ameertihias' by Parshotam Saroya, poems od Pritam Ramdasspuri and Gurdas Ram Alam which they recited in October, 1951 on the visit of Babasaheb Ambedkar to Bootan Mandi

Ambedkar which he delivered at Bootan Mandi on October 27, 1951. This curtain raiser for the formal launch of the Bootan Mandi: Nerve Centre of Dalit Chetna will not be complete if I don't mention about the support of my friends and well support of – Prem-Chumber of the Ambedkar Times and the DeshDoaba as media partners and my some of my fellow Bootan Mandians namely; Sheela Bhatia, Gurdial Mahey and Ram Murti who encouraged me to

waj of Ambedkar Bhawan Trust who helped in picking up the printer of the book' Neha Computers and Printers who did a good job,I understand. As it is written in the Prologue of the book, “The proof of pudding, it is said, lies in its eating. I hope my fellow Bootan Mandians would appreciate my humble contribution to the said centenary celebrations. As a student of contemporary history, I would love to listen from the readers of the book with a view to further educate myself.” “leave it here for the readers to decide. ਮਾਲੀ ਦਾ ਕਮ ਪਾਣੀ ਲਾਉਣਾ ਤੇ ਉਹ ਭਰ ਭਰ ਮਸ਼ਕਾਂ ਲਾਏ; ਮਾਲਿਕ ਦਾ ਕਮ ਫਲ ਫੁਲ ਲਾਉਣਾ ਤੇ ਲਾਏ ਯਾਂ ਨਾ ਲਾਏ।

Assembly Education Committee Unanimously Passes Bipartisan Bill to Limit Smartphone Use in Schools

SACRAMENTO - On Wednesday evening the Assembly Education Committee unanimously passed landmark legislation authored by Assemblymembers

Josh Hoover (R-Folsom) and Al Muratsuchi (D-Torrance) to limit the use of smartphones in schools. AB 3216 would require school districts in California to adopt a policy no later than July 1, 2026 that limits or prohibits the use of smartphones by students during the school day. It was approved on a unanimous 7-0 vote.

"This is an incredible first step toward protecting and improving the mental health and academic outcomes of students across California," said Assemblyman Josh Hoover. "Research continues to demonstrate the potential harms of smartphone use among children. The growing use of these devices in a child's everyday life can contribute to lower test scores, anxiety, depression, and even suicide. Our state must take action to limit the use of smartphones during the school day and protect kids from these potential harms."

Under current law, school districts are authorized to limit or prohibit smartphone use by students during the school day and many have done so with

resounding success. Administrators have reported increased social interaction among peers, decreased instances of bullying on campus, and improvements in academic outcomes. A 2016 study found that when smartphones were removed from classrooms standardized test scores increased by an average of six percent, with even greater improvements among low achieving students. AB 3216 would continue to build on this success by expanding limitations on smartphones statewide.

"I am pleased to join Assemblymember Hoover in this bipartisan effort to require California school districts to place limits on student smartphone use on campus during school hours, unless approved by teachers or administrators for academic, emergency, or other purposes," said Assemblyman Al Muratsuchi, joint author of the bill and Chair of the Assembly Education Committee. "In 2019, I authored Assembly Bill 272, which was signed into law to encourage school districts to consider such limits. Since then, growing research shows excessive smartphone use not only interfering with learning but also contributing to teenage anxiety, depression, and cyberbullying. This bill will require all districts to develop their own appropriate policy to balance appropriate student use of smartphones at school with curbing the impact of excessive smartphone use on a student's

educational, social, and emotional well-being."

A recent piece published in The Atlantic by NYU social psychologist Jonathan Haidt described a number of



the potential harms that smartphone use is contributing to in children:

- Grades suffer when learning is disrupted as a result of smartphone distractions in the classroom
- Up to 15% of teenagers engage in "problematic social media use,"

which includes symptoms such as pre-occupation, withdrawal symptoms, neglect of other areas of life, and lying to parents and friends about time spent on social media

- The latest Gallup data found that American teenagers spend around 5 hours per day on social media platforms alone
- As smartphones have become ubiquitous since 2010 we have seen a 70% increase in the number of high school seniors expressing that "life often feels meaningless (now more than 1 in 5 seniors express this)
- Rates of anxiety, depression, and suicide are on the rise among young people
- Poor mental health outcomes and smartphone use are most strongly correlated in kids under the age of 14

AB 3216 is critical legislation that prioritizes the needs of California students by limiting these potential harms during the school day, increasing social interaction among peers, reducing bullying, and improving academic outcomes

Josh Hoover represents Assembly District 7, which includes the cities of Citrus Heights, Folsom, and Rancho Cordova and the unincorporated communities of Carmichael, Fair Oaks, Foothill Farms, Gold River, Mather, McClellan Park, North Highlands, Oranvale, and Rosemont.

April- Dalit History Month launched in Canada

Chetna Association of Canada launched the Dalit History Month today (April 3) at Simon Fraser University and paid tributes to Dr. Ambedkar.

Special guest for the occasion was Dr. Bishamber Dass (B.D.) Toora, Professor & HOD, Department of Biochemistry,

Army College of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, India. Dr. Toora was in Vancouver on a short, personal trip.

Dr. Toora was recognized for his accomplishments and services to humanity.

Members of the Chetna Association of Canada who arranged the ceremony were Jai Birdi, Surjit Bains, Manjit Bains, Jai Ram Bains, Narinder Ardhawa, Deepak Toora, and Raj Toora.



Other visiting guests who participated were Manjit Toora (Delhi) and Santokh Lal Toora (United Kingdom).

Plans for celebrating the Dr. Ambedkar Equality Day and the Jayanti are being developed. Recently, the Province of British Columbia proclaimed April 2024 as the Dalit History Month. For information, please email at jbirdi@chetna.ca

Photo Credit: Deepak Toora

In this photo are: Santokh Lal Toora (UK), Dr. Bishambar Dass Toora (India), Manjit Bains (Chair, Women's Empowerment Committee of Chetna), Surjit Bains (Treasurer, Chetna), Jai Birdi (Executive Director, Chetna), and Manjit Toora (Guru Ravidass Temple, New Delhi, India).

Assemblyman Hoover's Representative Report

Smartphone Use in Schools

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improvements among low achieving students. AB 3216 would continue to build on this success by expanding limitations on smartphones statewide.

Prosecuting Unemployment Insurance Fraud

On Wednesday, the Assembly Insurance Committee unanimously passed a bill I authored, AB 2227, that would make it easier to prosecute unemployment insurance fraud in California. Since 2020, California's Unemployment Insurance program has suffered staggering amounts of fraud, with EDD estimating that improper pay-



outs could top \$31 billion. Much of this largesse likely lined the pockets of non-residents and international fraud rings who reportedly exploited California's lax security measures during the pandemic.

Existing law limits the place for trial for criminal violations of the Unemployment Insurance Code to the County of Sacramento, if the defendant has no residence or principal place of business in California. Thus, a nonresident fraudster who travels to California to commit unemployment insurance fraud can only be prosecuted in Sacramento. This can pose a logistical nightmare for local law enforcement, who ought to be able to present a case in any county where the transactions took place or where any money or property from the crime was obtained.

AB 2227 would fix this by allowing Unemployment Insurance fraud to be prosecuted in the county where the crime occurs or where the benefits

of the crime are obtained, consistent with other criminal offenses.

School District Reorganizations

This week the Assembly Education Committee unanimously passed AB 3140, a bill I authored that requires the State Board of Education to make a decision regarding a school district reorganization proposal within 24 months. This will streamline the process should the City of Rancho pursue a proposal to



create its own school district, which could provide Rancho students with more representation and additional education dollars from the state. Joining me was Rancho Cordova City Councilmember Garrett Gatewood and FCUSD Trustee Jen Laret.

New Podcast Episode

In this week's episode of the Point of Order Podcast I was joined by

Senator Roger Niello to discuss the Senator's bill to enact Permanent Standard Time, how to remove partisanship from initiative ballot titles and summaries, limiting cell phone use in schools, the state's budget predicament, California's nation-leading unemployment rate, a federal



Assemblyman Hoover



judge's order to audit LA homelessness programs, and the new minimum wage law taking effect this month.

Ribbon Cutting in Folsom

My staff was on hand this past week to join in the ribbon cutting of Dave and Busters in Folsom, located at the Folsom Palladio, 430 Palladio Pkwy #1817. They are open From 11:00am-12:00am, and serve as a combination of arcade, sports bar, and restaurant.



116th BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF BABU JAGJIVAN RAM

On the auspicious occasion of 116th Birth Anniversary of Babu Jagjivan Ram, former Deputy Prime Minister of India, we, on behalf of Supreme Council Shri Guru Ravidass Sabhas USA, share our hearty congratulations and pay our homage to this dynamic leader. Babu Jagjivan Ram dedicated his entire life for the upliftment of the socially suppressed and exploited segments of society. Some of the glimpses of his struggle and achievements are shared as under.

Babu Jagjivan Ram was born in Chandwa, near Arrah in Bihar State, on April 5th, 1908 in a untouchable (Now Dalit) family. Babu Jagjivan Ram, being a very bright student attained his BSc degree from Banaras Hindu University. He, himself, being a Dalit, grew up in the midst of harsh and severe social disabilities of untouchables at that time. He stood like a rock against social discriminations and segregation. In 1935 he contributed to the establishment of All India Depressed classes' league.

Because of his intellect, wisdom and patriotism, Netaji Subhash Chander Bose, was attracted to him and drew him into the field of politics at a very young age. He became an active participant in the freedom struggle led by Mahatma Gandhi including the Quit India Movement in 1942.

He remained as a distinguished and uninterrupted parliamentarian for fifty years from 1936 to 1986. He was also a member of the Constituent As-

sembly and advocated impassionately for the rights of the exploited and the voiceless sections of society.

He joined the interim cabinet of Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru in 1946 as the youngest



member of his cabinet and held many key portfolios in his long political career.

Due to his astute political acumen and administrative skills he was dear to stalwarts like Jawahar Lal Nehru and Indira Gandhi.

As Food and Agriculture Minister, he is best remembered to have successfully led the "Green Revolution in India.

It was during his tenure as Defence Minister that Bangladesh was liberated and estab-

lished as an independent country with the help of India. In deference of his adorable accomplishments his birth Anniversary is celebrated as "SAMTA DIWAS" (Equality Day) in India and his cremation place has been made into 'SAMTA STHAL'. The states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana observe regional holidays on his birth Anniversary day.

His illustrious daughter, Shrimati Mira Kumar, a five-time member of parliament, is accredited to be the first woman speaker of Indian parliament during the tenure of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

Though Babu Jagjivan Ram was an iconic figure in the entire political spectrum of India with all the deserving qualifications, he, because of in-built caste distinctions and political maneuvers, he was obstructed twice from becoming the Prime Minister of India.

Babu Jagjivan Ram is overwhelmingly remembered as an ardent freedom fighter, an undaunted champion of human rights and crusader for social justice.

Read more: www.ambedkartimes.com



O.P. Balley
(General Secretary)
Supreme Council,
Shri Guru Ravidass Sabhas, USA

3rd Annual Equality Day at City Hall, Jersey City, NJ

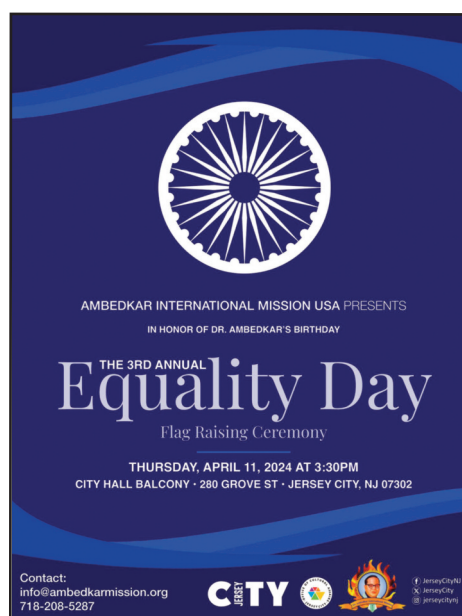
Dr. Ambedkar International Mission USA is pleased to announce the celebration of 3rd Annual Equality Day at Jersey City City Hall, NJ. The festivities will kick off with a Blue Flag Raising Ceremony on Thursday, April 11, 2024, at 3:30 PM, on the City Hall Balcony situated at 280 Grove Street, Jersey City, NJ 07302. This event marks the birth anniversary of Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, a prominent advocate for equality and social justice, honoring his enduring legacy.

Jersey City, located in the state of New Jersey plays a vital role in promoting diversity, equality, and inclusion. The upcoming Equality Day flag hoisting ceremony reaffirms the city's deep commitment to these values. Its diverse population, spanning various ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, creates an atmosphere of acceptance and understanding, reflecting a rich tapestry of cultures and perspectives. The city's history as an immigrant sanctuary enhances its inclusivity, with newcomers enriching its cultural fabric. Through proactive initiatives, Jersey City champions equality and inclusivity by supporting marginalized communities and combating discrimination. Political leaders passionately advocate for diversity, working to implement fair policies for all residents. Designating April 14 as Equality Day in 2022 was a significant milestone, emphasizing the city's unwavering dedication to these principles. The hoisting of a blue flag of equality alongside the US flag on the City Hall building for Equality Day signifies the importance of the occasion. It also demonstrates the reach and influence of the Dr. Ambedkar International Mission, the oldest Ambedkarite organization in the overseas diaspora and how far it has come.

In commemoration of the 133rd Birth Anniversary of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Jersey City will host a grand celebration of Equality Day at City Hall Chambers on April 14th, 2024, from 11:00 AM to 3:30 PM, located at 280 Grove Street, 2nd floor, Jersey City, NJ 07302. Dr. Ambedkar dedicated his life to

challenging the existing social order and advocating for the rights of laborers and for women's emancipation. This year's ceremony reflects his enduring legacy, symbolizing a convergence of struggles. It encompasses the narratives of the African American and Nepali immigrant communities, as well as the ongoing journey towards women's empowerment. The presence of figures such as Joyce E. Watterman, Council President and the first African American woman in her position, alongside Dr. Bishnu Maya Pariyar, Founding President of the Association of Dalit Women's Advancement of Nepal (ADWAN), underscores the profound significance of this occasion.

"We are honored to commemorate Equality



Day and pay tribute to the legacy of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar," stated organizers from the Dr. Ambedkar International Mission, USA. "This event serves as a reminder of the ongoing struggle for equality and underscores the importance of continuing Dr. Ambedkar's work towards a more just and inclusive world."

Registration is required for the April 14th event. Interested participants are encouraged to visit AmbedkarMission.org for registration details and further information. Join us on April 11th for the Flag Raising Ceremony and April 14th for the Equality Day celebration as we unite to celebrate equality, diversity, and the enduring legacy of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

For media inquiries, please contact: Info@ambedkarmission.org

About Dr. Ambedkar International Mission, USA: Dedicated to promoting the teachings and ideals of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, advancing social justice, and empowering marginalized communities, the organization fosters equality, inclusivity, and dignity for all through various initiatives and events. For more information, visit AmbedkarMission.org.

Event Details:

- Flag Raising Ceremony Date: Thursday, April 11, 2024
- Flag Raising Ceremony Time: 3:30 PM
- Flag Raising Ceremony Location: City Hall Balcony, 280 Grove Street, Jersey City, NJ 07302
- Equality Day Celebration Date: April 14th, 2024
- Equality Day Celebration Time: 11:00 AM - 3:30 PM

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SRI GURU RAVIDASS SABHA

2150 Crestview Drive, Pittsburg CA 94565
Tel : (925) 439-2355

ਜਉ ਤੁਮ ਗਿਰਿਵਰ ਤਉ ਹਮ ਮੋਰਾ ॥ ਜਉ ਤੁਮ ਚੰਦ ਤਉ ਹਮ ਭਏ ਹੈਂ ਚਕੋਰਾ ॥1॥
ਮਾਧਵੇ ਤੁਮ ਨ ਤੋਰਹੁ ਤਉ ਹਮ ਨਹੀ ਤੋਰਹਿ ॥ ਤੁਮ ਸਿਉ ਤੋਰਿ ਕਵਨ ਸਿਉ ਜੋਰਹਿ ॥1॥ਰਹਾਉ॥



Guru Piari Sadh Sangat Ji,

Devoted families are requesting
entire Sangat to attend the fol-
lowing functions:



April 12-13-14, 2024 Vaisakhi Festival by Bhai Varinder Singh

Vaisakhi is the harvest celebration in India and is an occasion of dancing, singing, music, sharing sweets and religious praise. In 1699, Guru Gobind Singh ji established the Khalsa Panth on this day. Akhand Path will start on Friday April 12, 2024 at 10:00 AM and will conclude with Bhog ceremony on Sunday April 14, 2024. Ragi Jatha of Giani Balwinder Singh ji and Bhai Suveg Singh ji will adorn the occasion with Shabad Kirtan.

April 21, 2024

133rd Birth Anniversary of Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar

Sukhmani Sahib Path and Langar Sewa will be hosted by Gurughar on the occasion of 133rd Birth Anniversary of Dr. B R Ambedkar. Baba Saheb was a leader, politician and a scholar. As independent India's first law minister, he was the principal architect of the Constitution of India. There are numerous contributions of Baba Sahib to India.

April 26-27-28, 2024

Baba Sheikh Farid Birth Anniversary

ਫਰੀਦਾ ਜੋ ਤੁ ਅਕਲਿ ਲਤੀਫੁ ਕਾਲੇ ਲਿਖੁ ਨ ਲੇਖ ॥
ਆਪਨੜੇ ਗਿਰੀਵਾਨ ਮਹਿ ਸਿਰੁ ਨੀਵਾਂ ਕਰ ਦੇਖੁ ॥6॥

Devoted families will be celebrating birth anniversary of Baba Sheikh Farid by hosting Akhand Path and Langar Sewa. . Ak-

hand Path will start on Friday April 26, 2024 at 10:00 AM and will conclude with Bhog ceremony on Sunday April 28. Baba Farid's teachings are enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib. May Waheguru bless dedicated sewadars.

June 28-29-30, 2024

Pittsburg Gurughar's 39th Anniversary

Sri Guru Ravidass Temple Pittsburg's 39th anniversary will be celebrated on June 30, 2024. Akhand Path will start on Friday 06/28/2024 at 10:00 am and will be concluded with Bhog ceremony on Sunday 06/30/2024. Path and Langar Sewa will be hosted by Gurughar with the help and cooperation of entire Sangat. Ragi Jatha of Giani Balwinder Singh ji will adorn the occasion.

"NANAK NAM CHARDI KALA TERE BHANE SARBAT DA BHALA"

www.srigururavidasstemple.com

Sangat Sewadars

Chairman
Ramesh Suman

President
Vinod Kumar

Secretary
Dilbag Singh

Treasurer
Sunita K. Singh