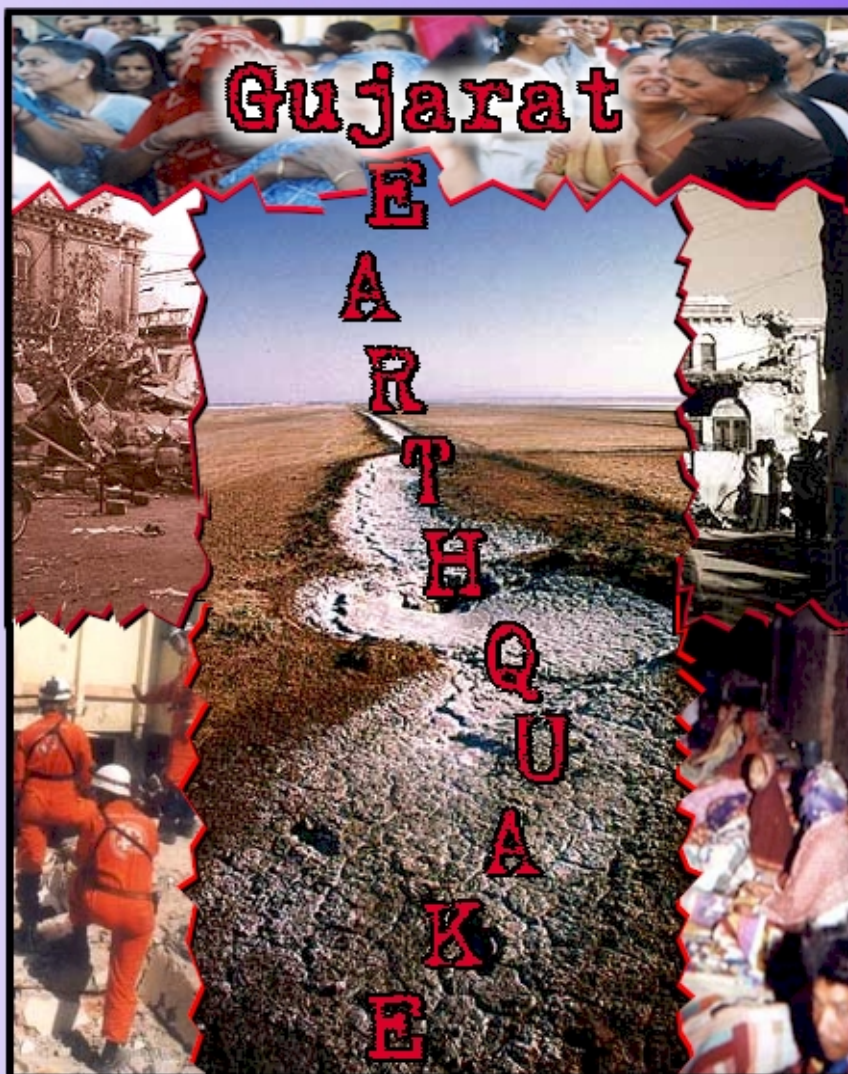


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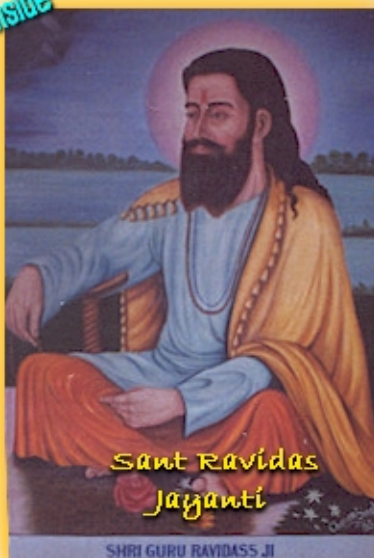
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February 2001

Issue # 0002



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Editorial

Dear Readers.

Our Editorial Collective had the problem of deciding to choose the main theme of the month. Gujarat Earthquake or Sant Ravidas. In the event we chose both.

Natures fury cannot be stopped. But the way the govt of Gujarat went about making sure that the fury's damage was multiplied many times due to their corrupt ways, disregarding building construction codes for the last five decades. The politicians, Builders and Bureaucrats stand exposed as villains leading to one of the worst tragedies India has faced from a natural calamity after independence.

Almost all the buildings in the Old City of Ahmedabad remained firm while buildings of the new city crumbled to dust almost without exception! One notable exception was the factories of private sector. Not a single case of gas leak or any other toxic fumes, liquids was reported. No factory reported any cracks in their buildings.

The criminal politicians, bureaucrats, builders and their supporting Mafia will no doubt go scot free; for, it is naive for the common man to believe that the big fishes of corruption and crime would be caught. In fact, these criminal elements may already be planning for another round of loot and plunder in the coming rebuilding and reconstruction phase. It is at this point that the vox populi must exert pressure to prevent similar tragedy from happening again in the country by filtering out those guilty of making virtual concrete death traps.

Disaster Relief has reached most victims because they are located in urban areas. Caste and communal consideration and the traditional cindarella treatment meted out to rural and sub-urban areas prevented equal treatment of the victims in many places. The fact that poor were not treated as well as the affluent; Dalits and Muslims were also left to fend for themselves came out clearly in interviews of the quake victims in news reports of the media, including the state run Doordarshan's TV news program 'Aj Tak'.

For the first time one found religious organisation like Swaminarayan Temple Trust taking part in relief work in addition to the ubiquitous Christian groups. The surprise presence was of the right wing upper caste Vishwa Hindu Parishad.

Organisations of the weaker sections and Dalits, neither nationally and internationally organised, were seen nor heard of having taken part in relief work. There is a lessons to be learned in the face of this calamity - the powerlessness of Dalits to address their own needs. If the Dalit diaspora had their institutions and networks in place, relief agencies could have used Dalit empowered channels instead of the corrupt ones.

The immediate reaction, though more than 6 hours after the quake, found the powers that be with their hands tied behind their back. The Disaster department existed under agriculture ministry to cater to floods and droughts only. There was no machinery to deal with urban building collapses! Sad to say, faith in the construction companies to build safe multi storey buildings of the rulers, upper and middle class turned out to be misplaced.

It is to be seen if history is not going to be repeated in Gujarat. Though the earthquake destroyed mostly the private property of people of Gujarat, the whole country is going to suffer the consequences of raising taxes to ostensibly pay for the reconstruction of Gujarat. The calamitous results caused to the economy by bowing to the pressures of WTO and Globalisation is to be made up by further hike in taxes.

Wait for the budget 2001 and see how the agrarian labour, industrial workers and those at the lower end of the economic spectrum get squeezed!

But the budget will have ample hike in internal security component to meet any contingency of civil unrest by those affected.

SANT RAVIDAS

Too many details of this brilliant Dalit philosopher- mystic- poet Sant Ravidas' life remain unknown. Those who write and read holy books, the brahmins, made sure that only what could be passed down the ages through word of mouth (easily corruptible) could be retained. His Forty of his hymns have been incorporated in the Sikh scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib.His verses left his mark on Braj Bhasha literature

In his spiritual quest, he discarded images and idols and turned to the worship of the one supreme being. He had many disciples, one of them being Mirabai, the rajput princess.

Ravidas acknowledged the unity and omnipresence and omnipotence of God. According to him human soul is only a particle of the Divine; the different between the two is like the difference between Gold and the ornament, the water and the wave (GG,, 93).

He rejects distinctions between man and man on the basis of caste or creed, for, as he says: "In the world beyond no such differentiations will be acknowledged" (GG, 345). To realize God, which is the ultimate end of human life, man should concentrate on His/Her name, giving up mere forms and ritualism (GG, 658, 1106).

His vaishnavite devotion reminds one of Bhakti cult / Sufis. Sant Ravidas stand on soul and God doesnot dovetail with Buddhist atheism and its concept of soul. Yet Ravidasis, essentially Dalits, remain an important and vibrant part of Ambedkarite movements the world over.

Thank You note.

Dear Colleagues,

Thanks for the feedback about the New Mag...the D-Mag's first issue.

The first issue of D-Mag, coinciding with the anniversary of the country's first step as a republic, was also to celebrate the magnum opus of Dr Ambedkar - The Constitution of India in action.

The issue was collated meticulously, though hurriedly, to keep the deadline by Sashikanth. He also designed its beautiful cover. And I had the privilege of choosing, editing and putting the articles in order after consultation through email.

Raju Kamble wrote the piece on Dr. Ambedkar and about the significance of his contribution to the movements of world's under privileged. He also added A 'riddle of Hinduism ' and a chapter of Dhamma. From this issue onwards, the riddles and Dhamma become links from the editor's page as they are on-line-books on 'ambedkar.org' where D-Mag is located.

Thenmozhi was there in the background as a great help and morale booster with her valuable opinion about the articles on women's issues.

Opeh.

Links to this months

[Buddha And His Dhamma](#)

[Riddle in Hinduism](#)

Gujarat Earthquake

A severe earthquake rolled across the entire Indian subcontinent on Friday, killing scores of people and injuring thousands as it rocked buildings in Pakistan, India and Nepal.

The 7.8-magnitude quake killed 25,000 just in India's arid western state of Gujarat, "We are tackling the situation on a war footing," Pandya told a news channel, adding that 100 buildings had collapsed. There were also reports of mine cave-ins, train derailments, broken water pipes, and downed power and phone lines.

The quake -- which the U.S. Geological Survey reported on its Web site as having a preliminary magnitude of 7.9 -- struck at 8:46 a.m. (0316 GMT) on 26th January 2001, just as India was preparing to celebrate its Republic Day parade.

The Meteorological Department in New Delhi said the earthquake was India's biggest since 1956.

The epicenter was the Rann of Kutch, a desert plateau along the border between Pakistan and India, according to the Indian Meteorological Institute, about 190 miles southeast of the Pakistani capital of Karachi.

Rescuers pulled hundreds of bodies from the rubble of buildings in the Indian city of Surat, 580 miles west of New Delhi. And in Rajasthan's Morbi township.

The quake was also felt in Bombay, India's financial and entertainment capital, where residents fled tall buildings as pictures and cupboards shook.

In Hyderabad in Pakistan's Sindh region, emergency crews sifting through the wreckage of a fallen two-story house found the bodies of a child and an adult, and were searching for more victims. The identities of the victims were not given.

It was the same in Madras, on the eastern coast of India, and in Pondicherry, further to the south, where officials with loudspeakers urged panicked residents to be calm.

The last major earthquake to hit India was in March 1999. Measuring 6.8 on the Richter scale, the quake and its aftershocks killed 100 people and injured 300 in the Himalayan foothills and was felt across many parts of northern India, western Nepal and southern China.

Appeal by the Editor.

Its very unfortunate to have a tragedy like the one we had in Gujarat,
Now its time us Dalits to show our brothers in Gujarat that we are with them.

Its my personal request, that you send at least \$100 to "Dalit E-Forum Earthquake Relief Fund"

We hope to collect \$10000 for the earthquake victims.
Let us consider this as a pay-back for all the reservation and special privileges we used until now.

Please make your check payable to "**Rama Krishna Bhupathi**" send your contribution to

Rama Krishna Bhupathi
(Treasurer Dalit E-Forum)
1347 Aberford Drive
San Jose CA 95131
USA
Ph 1-408-937-0690

If you are in India, Please send your money to
JANVIKAS 105-106 C, ROYAL CHINMAY,
BESIDES SIMANDHAR TOWERS,
OFF JUDGES BUNGALOWS ROAD,

BODAKDEV, VASTRAPUR,
AHMEDABAD - 380015
CONTACT NO.: [079] 6854248, 6856685, 6857745
FAX: [079] 6857443
EMAIL: socjust@icenet.net

Note: Cheques and drafts could be drawn either in the name of JANVIKAS or JANPATH In case of cheques drawn in the name of JANVIKAS:- 80G registration is available and copies of the certificate can be provided. 80G registration no. is HQIII/33(151)/98-99 valid from 1.4.98 to 31.3.2001

Regards,
Sashikanth Chandrasekharan
editor www.ambedkar.org

Links to the News

Caste In India: <http://www.npr.org/ramfiles/wesun/20010218.wesun.05.ram>
Discriminating the distressed
<http://www.ambedkar.org/research/Discriminatingthe.htm>

Caste tension in Gujarat over distribution of relief aid
<http://www.ndtv.com/frames/default.asp?framepage=../msn/showtopstory.asp?id=5497>

Quake can't shake caste system
<http://www.expressindia.com/news/daily/20010208/00803701.htm>

Caste marks survive India's killer quake
<http://asia.cnn.com/2001/WORLD/asiapcf/south/02/07/india.quake.02/index.html>

Upper castes hog all the food and relief supplies
<http://www.tehelka.com/currentaffairs/jan2001/ca013101food.htm>

Sant Ravidas Jayanti



Sikhs and Sikh religious scripture, have been receptive to the teachings of saints belonging to various faiths. Among these saints was Ravidas. The confession about his humble origin..

'KAHE RAVIDAS CHAMARA'...
finds a pride of place in Guru Granth Sahib...

Ravidas the poet and mystic, was born to Raghu and Ghurbinia, near Varanasi (Benares). Not much biographical information is available about him. From his own compositions one perceives that he followed the family profession of tanning and making footwear.

Early in life he showed inclination towards things spiritual. He built himself a thatched hut wherein he received wandering ascetics. His simplicity and piety drew people to him. In his lifetime, he had thousands of followers, including Mirabai, a Rajput princess.

He became famous in the tradition of Ramanand. At one stage he discarded images and idols and turned to the worship of the one supreme being. He wrote deeply impassioned devotional verses and left his mark on Braj Bhasha literature for the fusion of religious sentiment with the vernacular medium.

Forty of his hymns have been incorporated in the Sikh scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib.

The hymns Ravidas included in the Guru Granth Sahib fall under Raga -Siri(1), Gauri (5), Asa(6), Gujari(1), Sorathi(7), Dhanasari(3), Jaitsari(1),Suhi(3),Bilval(2),Gaund(2),Ramkali(1),Maru(2),Kedara(1), Bhairavi(1),Basant(1), and Malhar. One of the hymns in raga Maru is the same (with a few minor changes) as included in raga Sorathi.

He rejects distinctions between man and man on the basis of caste or creed.
He says "In the world beyond no such differentiations will be acknowledged"(GG, 345).

To realize God, which is the ultimate end of human life, man should concentrate on His/Her name, giving up mere forms and ritualism (GG, 658, 1106). Birth in a low caste is no hindrance in the way to spiritual development. The only condition required is freedom from duality; all else including pilgrimage to and bathing in the sixty - eight centres is in vain (GG, 875).**

He travelled fairly widely and visited Rajasthan, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra besides a number of places in the northern India such as Prayag, Mathura, Vrindavan Haridvar, Gurgaon and Multan. At most of these places , there are monuments honouring his memory.

President of Guru Ravidas Sabha, Ontario, Canada adds:

" Guru Ravidass Ji was a prime exponent of the religious movement for reforming society and bringing about equality to humankind who preached of Devotion to God, and to make "God is accessible to all" through devotion.

Against all odds, Guru Ravidas ji struggled for justice equality and social freedom, and, fought relentless struggle to this end.

His philosophy and religious teachings which inspired equal rights and freedom are embodied in Guru Granth Sahib - The Holy book of Sikhs.

(**) GG, 354, etc in brackets are quotes from Guru Granthsahib)

Tibetan Buddhism - Lamaism.

By Dr Vasant Mhaske.

Recently there was some furore about Dalai Lama's statement regarding conversions. Ambedkarites were wondering as to why Dalai Lama was speaking against the crystal clear views of Dr. Ambedkar on Buddhism. The answer is self revealing when one goes through the fundamentals of Tibetan Buddhism, popularly known as LAMAISM.

1. HISTORY.

In the seventh & eighth century AD Buddhism in India was in its last stages of elimination, due to external as well as internal assaults. Internally every possible attempt was being made to distort it, thus giving rise to Tantrism.

Buddhist monks escaped to where ever they could with whatever literature they managed to salvage. A renowned adherent to Tantrism is said to have entered Tibet at the head of a band of companions. They undertook to disseminate his Doctrines under the patronage of the king.

He was called Padma-Sambhava (The lotus born) but known to Tibetans as Guru Rimpo Che (the glorious teacher). Tradition states he built the first monastery in the year AD 749. The Indian teacher found a primitive form of religion which was known as Bon. The Bon faith recognised nature spirits which were worshiped by all sorts of powerful & terrible offerings. The faithful paid reverence to spirits of the dead.

The religious functions were performed by Priests and there were elements of a magic cult, the knowledge of which was a secret confined to the Bon priests. Sacrifices especially human sacrifices were obligatory (Tibet means a land of Magic).

This religion opposed Tantric Buddhism initially, but was subsequently completely absorbed by it. The Bon religion did not die, but remained an undercurrent which in turn tinged Buddhism.

The Tibetan monks are called 'lamas'. The word (In Tibetan it is spelt Blama) means Superior or Better. Originally it was only applied to the Abbot of a monastery. Thus Tibetan Buddhism is called Lamaism.

An important period in the spread of Lamaism was during the reign of the Mongol dynasty in China (From the middle of thirteenth to middle of fourteenth century). The Mongols had conquered as far as Tibet.

Emperor Kublai Khan the well known patron of the traveller Marco Polo showed himself particularly interested in religious tradition of his subjects. Lamaism appealed to him a very useful religion from the political standpoint, he therefore encouraged it and under his rule it took possession of the widespread territory of Mongolia.

The most important change experienced by Lamaism was the reformation undertaken by the Lama tsong Kapa in the fifteenth century. The efforts of Tsong Kapa's new teaching were specially directed to a more detailed ritual and a stricter organisation. The influential position of leader possessed by Kapa himself was to be bequeathed to his successor through his own reincarnation. The fifth of these successors attained the supreme goal in the middle of seventeenth century. The regency of Tibet was handed over to him by China with the title of Dalai Lama. (Dalai, dale, is a Mongolian word which means ocean. (the title is Mongolo-Tibetan origin.)

Meanwhile he ruled under Chinese suzerainty. From this time the conception of reincarnation became somewhat different. It was established from this time onwards that one of the most popular Bodhisattvas of Lamaism, the Avalokiteswara (also called Padmapani) who was a sort of tutelary deity of the country, was incarnate in Dalai Lama of the Day. Avalokiteswara is the Indian name for the well known Chinese and Japanese Buddhist Deity Kwan Yin (Kwannon), the most conspicuous figure in the mythology of Northern Buddhism.

The Chinese court has always maintained a nominal supremacy over the dominion of Dalai Lama, and had a paramount influence in determining the choice of the child in whom after the death of a Dalai lama- the pretended Reincarnation of Avalokiteswara is to take place. The rule of Lamaism has extended in the course of centuries far beyond the limits of Tibet. Even today there is a Tibetan admixture in the otherwise constituted Chinese Buddhism. In the same way the Himalayan states such as Nepal, Bhootan, Sikkim, etc. Succumbed completely to the influence of Lamaism.

2. CONTENTS.

An entirely new atmosphere surrounds us in Lamaism. Starting from the sacred buildings, monasteries the different character is evident. Many of the Lamaseries are huge places designed to accommodate several thousand monks. While southern Buddhism only admits images of the Goutama Buddha himself and some accompanying figures no greater contrast can be afforded than that of Lamaism which exhibits quite a bewildering crowd of deities, including Hindu Gods which have crept in.

Next to the class of highest Buddhas comes that of the Bodhisattvas, amongst which the most celebrated is Avalokiteswara. Avalokita is the divinity who is regularly incarnate in the Dalai Lama of Lhasa. A feminine counterpart of the Bodhisattvas is the so called Tara (Star). There exists many Taras, but they seem to be only different representations of that one which is a female transformation of the Bodhisattva Avalokita & looked upon as his consort (de ja vu--Hinduism).

Another very large class of supernatural beings is that of the dangerous spirits. Finally there are saints who are worshiped. To these belong the most illustrious disciples of the Buddha, Maudgalyan, Sariputra, also Kasyapa, Ananda and Upali and Arahats like Asvaghosa, Nagarjun, Atisa etc.

3. THE MONKHOOD.

Almost without exception, those who intend to become monks enter the monastery as children. Usually the first born child is handed over to the monastery when the child is 8 or 9 years old. He must be healthy and without deformity. He goes through various stages of rigorous training.

The term Lama which the Europeans use to designate all Tibetan monks is limited to ecclesiastics of very high standing heads of a monastery or monks in a specially honourable position. Lama means the 'superior one'. Women are allowed to embrace the monastic life, though their position is some what inferior.

Lamaism has regular united duties of worship. The duty of daily begging walk has been given up. Meat is not forbidden. Only Lamas who are ambitious of a reputation for special sanctity give up meat entirely. Besides the usual acts of worship, the sacred word is considered so efficacious that the mere recital of texts averts dangers and banishes demons. Hence the monks are often summoned by the laymen for this purpose and naturally it is done for money.

All the larger monasteries are rich. They possess much land, part of it They let out and part of it is given to laymen to cultivate. Ample wealth flows into monastery also by free will offerings, by the gifts of visitors, by the sale of countless charms, pictures and horoscopes made by the monks. The revenue of the monastery is not the personal property of the monks.

There is no doubt as to the fact that Buddhism raised the people of Tibet from a condition of savagery and barbarity to a somewhat higher level. Even their moral consciousness was changed by the contact with the moral ideals of the Buddha. The metaphysical subtleties peculiar to original Buddhism (That there is no soul) are as little understood in popular Lamaism as in the popular Buddhism of any other country.

Buddhism is a religion which in its original form seems less than any other to require priestly intervention and which puts every man on his own responsibility; yet it has become here the most striking example of priestly domination and patronage. A well known phrase is "without a lama in front there is no admission to the deity."

But, Buddhism permeated the daily lives of the Tibetan People and formed a social fabric which gives equal status to all the Tibetans unlike what Hinduism gave India..

References:

1. Buddhism as a religion by Heckmann.
2. Revival of Buddhism by L. Kenadi. (Role of lamaism.)
3. Revolution & counterrevolution By. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar/ (Works, Writings & Speeches)

DNA can not tell lies.

-from Times. fwd by Santanagopalan 15 Feb.

The map of life unfolded by the genome explorers virtually abolishes all boundaries of racial differences in the realm of a common humankind. Perhaps the most crucial revelation of the genomic project is that 99.9 per cent of all humans have the same DNA, the deoxyribonucleic acid which is the main constituent of the 23 pairs of chromosomes that carry genetic information.

This effectively explodes 'superior race' theories and myths. The centuries-old 'nature versus nurture' debate looks set to be tilted in favour of the latter. Indeed, as the researchers say, there are no inherently 'bad' or 'good' genes. Similarly, it's a very slim line that divides the so-called 'superior' of the species and those lower down on the evolution table. The human genome totals up just a little over 30,000 genes - a huge departure from initial estimates of up to a 100,000 - just twice as much as the number of genes that make up a fruit fly or a round worm. The crucial difference lies in better genetic organisation; in biogovernance, as in corporate administration, style matters more than mere size. There are also vast areas in our genome that are deemed to be terra incognita, a genomic wasteland that forms the outback of the biomolecular world within us. These genetic 'deserts' appear to be of no immediate utility. However, we could eventually glean valuable information, say geneticists, from the numerous 'junk' genes that dot our genome. One scientific hypothesis states that this 'junk' holds the key to stress. In addition, we have 'squatter' rogue genes that have somehow found their way into our genome during the complicated process of human evolution: The template of the primordial amoeba, our long lost distant ancestor, apparently lives on in us.

We are a product of the unique orchestration of our genes, proteins, prehistoric bacteria and environment. Again, this debunks the belief that individual 'bad' genes exclusively are the cause of most hereditary diseases and behaviour patterns and that by hunting them down, one by one, we can effectively uproot these afflictions

from our lives. "We simply do not have enough genes for this idea of biological determinism to be right" says Craig Venter, head of the private-funded genome research consortium. The unravelling of the human genome holds great promise for medicine and the future of humankind. The rush is already on to get ahead with applications in diagnostic techniques, new drugs that will be custom-made to cater to individual genetic make-ups and gene therapies that will focus on cleaning-up or replacing disease-bearing genes. The benefits are not restricted to medicine: Bioinformatics has come of age with medical discoveries being made more through computer-enabled networks and silicon simulations rather than in conventional laboratories. Pharmas are poised for a genetic 'gold rush' and there is no dearth of prospectors. The metaphysical implications are even more challenging. As we chart the internal universe of the genome, will we evolve a closer affinity with the workings of the cosmos of which we are a microcosm? Is the human endeavour of deciphering the genetic code a radical rescripting of a larger master plan of predestination in which we were thought to be - nothing more, and nothing less, than the genes of God?

Dalit School Teachers in Bengal Schools.

-Chandrabhan Prasad.

Societies produce institutions. Institutions, in turn, mirror their character, social dynamics and the nature of changes under way. Institutions, under state or in private hands, demonstrate collective conscience of the society. Public conscience produced by traditional societies come face to face with the new conscience of industrial societies and modern notions of democracy, liberty and egalitarianism.

Dalits' exclusion in the traditional Chatur-Varna society has been one of the undamental characteristics of India's public institutions. But with evolution of India into a modern democratic Republic, Dalits' participation became legally possible; thanks to Dalit struggles in various stages of evolution in different parts of the country. Dalits' participation in legislatures was realised long back(Ayyankali was made member of the Raja Sabha in the late 1870s- Ed);but in the executive the process is still under way.

At lower levels Dalits have a substantial presence, but at higher level the situation is yet improve. The data relating to West Bengal Dalits' position in the executive are not available with the present analyst. None the less, in Dalit circles, it is believed that the Left Front Government's attitude in implementing provision of reservation for Dalits is far from being satisfactory.

The knowledge system remains pathetically authoritarian and undemocratic. This hostility against Dalits in the arena of knowledge has a pan-India character. The institutions, where the state's control is less, or non-existent, are black spots. Such institutions, education-related in particular, have shown acute hostility in sharing educational opportunities with Dalits.

The area of higher and quality education is still the exclusive preserve of the Varnas. Let us proceed to examine position of Dalits as school teachers (figures for college/university teachers not available) in West Bengal. School teachers play a decisive role in the expansion of education. And the school teachers make great impact on society, by intervening in social / cultural movements. They greatly contribute to consciousness building, and considerably influence polity at grassroots levels. Thus, it is not for nothing that the employment question in schools, colleges and universities occupies a very high place in Dalit movements in the country.

Class character of West Bengal and society shows its true colours: Dalits are unfit to teach - isn't this a national anthem West Bengal society seems to be singing? West Bengal Dalits are far behind their all-India averages in terms of appointment to teaching positions. While at India level the picture is bad, it is worst in Bengal, where the short-fall in the SC/ST share is 17.26 per cent, 7.43 percentage points more than the short-fall at all India level!(Table 1) It also shows that West Bengal society is more hostile to Dalits than the society at all-India level. West Bengal Dalits' share in private schools, where state control is non-existent, is 5.16 percentage points less than the all India average for them in the same category of schools.

This clearly proves that the social context created by the Left Front rule in West Bengal is more reactionary in content than elsewhere in India. The reactionary character of the Left Front rule in West Bengal for more than two decades becomes more pronounced when compared with some other states, known for backwardness and indifference towards people.

Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and UP states and West Bengal: The Four states of the north, are called "Bimaru" (sick in Hindi) states of India. These four states, forms hub of the Hindi heartland - the nerve center of obscurantism. With the exception of Bihar, all the four states in question were traditionally ruled by the Congress,

and was a reference point of right-wing politics till 1989. Thus, to compare West Bengal's position with "Bimaru" states', to see how well or badly West Bengal under Left Front rule has fared, is in order.

Table 2 shows that the pro poor party ruled West Bengal lags behind all the four "Bimaru" states, including Bihar, in implementing reservations in teaching positions in schools! Table 2 clearly establishes that, while all the 'Bimaroo' states appear to be hostile to the constitutional provision of due representation to Dalits in teaching positions, the hostility of the Left Front Government is without any parallel. Assuming that the Dalits' position may not have been good enough even in 1977, as we do not have relevant data of that period.

17 years in power is long enough to right the wrong. But Jyoti Basu Government failed to do so.. SC / ST Teachers in Schools

Table -1.

	Primary	Upper Primary	Secondary	Higher Secondary	All India	West Bengal
Govt/LB	2888535	501620 (17.36)	24.56 (07.20)	174793	23590 (13.49)	29.27 (15.78)
PA	0848438	084074 (09.90)	24.56 (14.66)	105250	10333 (09.81)	29.27 (19.46)
PUA	0460582	032569 (07.07)	24.56 (17.49)	03036	00058 (1.91)	29.27 (27.89)
Total	4197555	618263 (14.73)	24.56 (09.83)	283097	33981 (12.00)	29.27 (17.26)

(Source : The Sixth All India Educational Survey (National Tables; Volume III); April 1998; NCERT, New Delhi)

Govt : Schools ; LB: schools run by local bodies; under State control.

PA : Private Aided; funded by State; so under semi-govt, control.

PUA : Private Un-Aided schools run by private bodies,

* The SC/ST quota in Central services is fixed at 22.50%, which is yet to be raised to 24.56%, as the SC/ST population has crossed 24%.

** The SC/ST quota in states is determined by the percentage share of their population in states' total population. Thus, in consonance with SC/ST population in West Bengal, the SC/ST quota is expected to be above or at 29%. In UP, during Ms. Mayawati's rule, SC/ST quota was raised from 20% to 21%.

SC / ST Teachers in Schools (X)

SC/ST Population SC/ST Teachers Short -Fall (Y)

Share in percentage (%) (percentage points) (Z)

Table. 2.

	X	Y	Z
Rajasthan :	29.73	13.33	16.40
Madhya Pradesh :	37.82	22.70	15.12
Uttar Pradesh :	21.34	09.71	11.63
Bihar :	22.21	14.77	07.44
West Bengal :	29.21	12.01	17.20
All India :	24.56	14.73	09.83

NB : The NCERT's Sixth All India Educational Survey; Vol. III; was published in 1998 but the information collected dates back to October 1994. By 1994, the Left Front had completed 17 years of uninterrupted rule in W. Bengal.

Courtesy - The Pioneer, New Delhi.

News in Brief

Gold Medal Award for Dr KP Singh.

A "Gold medal" award along with "Saropa" was awarded to Dr. KP Singh for attaining the degree of Doctorate in Philosophy (Ph.D.) from the Department of Sociology and Asian Languages and Literature of the prestigious Univ of Wisconsin, Madison. The hall reverberated with "Jo Bole So Nihal, Sat Sree Akaal" as Dr. Singh received the award.

Even before Dr. Singh was officially awarded the degree, he received the offer of Assistant Professor from Univ of Washington, Seattle, another notable university in the USA. Dr. Singh's Ph.D. Thesis was "Antecedent conditions for collective violence against Dalits in India." Dr. Singh came to the USA in 1995 as an Ambedkar Fellow awarded by the Govt of India. He was the only Dalit out of eight Ambedkar Fellowship awardees. The gold medal awarded to Dr. Singh was in recognition of his academic achievements and the services he rendered to Dalit community in India and USA.

Guru Ravidas Jayanti celebrated.

Celebration of Guru Ravidas's birth anniversary took place from January 30 to February 11, 2001. More than 3,000 people came for the celebration on February 11, 2001 at Shri Guru Ravidas Sabha, 61-02 Broadway, Woodside, New York, USA 11277.

BSP claims casteist bias against SC/STs in Census

NEW DELHI: The BSP has termed the enumerating procedures in the ongoing Census as "biased against the SC/STs" and decided to raise the issue in Parliament during the budget session.

"The enumeration method is discriminating against the SC/ST people by insisting on their religious affiliation, and is a reflection of the ruling establishment's casteist mentality," BSP parliamentary party leader Mayawati told this newspaper here on Monday.

She said the only reason for adopting the tactics was to deprive the converted Dalits and tribals of their special status and deny them the benefits of reservations. She felt that the ploy employed by

Ambedkarites asked to list as Buddhists

The Buddhism Census Movement (BCM) has urged the followers of Buddha and Dr B R Ambedkar to list their religion as Buddhists in the Census-2001.

Speaking to the press here today, BCM District President Shivram Mogha and Working President Vittal Dodamani stated that Dr Ambedkar embraced Buddhism in 1956 at Nagpur along with nearly five lakh followers. And even now those who embraced Buddhism had not been enlisted as Buddhists, they said.

Mr Mogha stated that the Maharashtra government had already enlisted Neo-Buddhists in the Scheduled Castes list, but it had not been done so in Karnataka. "When I discussed the issue with Home Minister Mallikarjun Kharge recently, he welcomed the BCM creating awareness among the followers of Buddha and Dr Ambedkar to get their religion enlisted as Buddhists during the census," he added.

Plea to distribute gomala land for Dalits

The Raichur unit of Dalit Sangarsha Samithi (DSS), in a memorandum to the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Welfare Committee, have urged it to consider the plea for proper distribution of gomala land, ban on sale of liquor and prevent atrocities against Dalits among other things.

Raichur is one of the most backward districts and even today, caste system, slavery and atrocities against Dalits continue.

Our Indian Sub-Continent Heritage

"Our Indian Sub-Continent Heritage", by GS Thind of Burnaby, BC was officially released on Sunday, February 18, 2001 at 3:30 PM at Shri Guru Ravidass Community Center, 7271 Gilley Avenue, Burnaby, BC.

In this book, Thind provides a survey of significant aspects of Indian history, culture and contributions, and develops a linkage between current and past practices of South Asians living in India and abroad.

Through 648 pages of pictures and text, Thind articulates in English the ancient history of the Indian Sub-Continent from aborigines that were Dravidian and Nagas of the Moenjondro era to the Aryan epoch, Vedic, Brahaminical, Buddhist, Muslim and British periods. While the source and period of

the enumerators was reflective of the ruling BJP's "concern to keep the underprivileged people within their own fold".

Aryan migration to Indian sub-continent may be controversial, Thind's deduction is as follows: the Aryans poured into India about 3200 BC, whereas the Aborigines' civilization such as that at Mohenjodaro and Harrapa must have come into existence two or three thousand years before the Aryan migration into India.

Mr. KR Narayanan's Republic Day Speech.



My Fellow Citizens,

On the eve of the 52nd Republic Day of India, I have great pleasure to extend to all my brothers and sisters living in India or abroad my greetings and good wishes. To the millions of kisans and mazdoors, teachers, doctors, scientists and technologists, who have laboured hard to build up New India, I offer my gratitude and greetings. And I salute the valiant personnel of our armed and para-military forces who have sacrificed so much and who stand ready to safeguard the territorial integrity and the honour of the motherland.

Friends, we are concluding today the Golden Jubilee celebrations of our Republic and entering the 52nd year of the Republic. The emergence of India as an independent nation and as a sovereign democratic Republic was a major event in the history of Asia and the world. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru articulated a new vision of India when he stated that the word Republic meant not only political freedom but social and economic democracy for India. Today India has been acknowledged as a great democracy - indeed the largest democracy in the world and the Indian Constitution as the embodiment of the political, social and economic rights of the people.

At the heart of our democracy is the right of the universal adult suffrage. It was an audacious and revolutionary act by the founding fathers, to have introduced in one go, the right of the vote to every adult citizen, a right for which the countries of the West had to struggle for almost a hundred years. And that too when the country was in a state of abject mass poverty and mass illiteracy.

This act of faith by the founding fathers meant that the governance of this vast country was not to be left in the hands of an elite class but the people as a whole. It also meant, logically, that the voice of the people will be heard in the affairs of the State and their representatives will be elected directly to the legislatures and Parliament. The system of universal adult franchise also facilitated a dialectical process on the political scene out of which could emerge a consensus in the midst of all our differences and diversities.

The founding fathers had the wisdom and foresight not to over emphasise the importance of stability and uniformity in the political system. As Dr Ambedkar explained in the Constituent Assembly, they preferred more responsibility to stability. That is why they consciously rejected the system of restricted franchise and indirect elections embodied in the 1935 Government of India Act. It required a profound faith in the wisdom of the common man and woman in India.

Today, it is necessary to look back to this faith when we hear voices pleading for a system of indirect elections. We may recall that in Pakistan, Field Marshal Ayub Khan had introduced an indirect system of elections and experimented with what he called basic democracy or guided democracy. It would be an irony of history if we invoke today in the name of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, the shades of the political ideas of Field Marshal Ayub Khan, the father of military rule in Pakistan.

Let us remember, it is under the flexible and spacious provisions of our Constitution that democracy has flourished during the last 50 years and that India has achieved an unprecedented unity and cohesion as a nation and made remarkable progress in the social and economic fields. India today is adjusted as one of the fastest growing economies of the world.

We have managed to accommodate the globalisation process without losing our distinctiveness as a culture and a civilisation and without compromising the independence we secured after a long and heroic struggle. Through our Green Revolution we have achieved self-sufficiency in food grains for our one billion people. And our White Revolution has made us the largest milk producing nation in the world, underlining our food sufficiency with an important element of the nutritional revolution that we are seeking to bring about.

We have emerged as one of the scientifically and technologically important nations of the world. In the field of information technology and biotechnology we have made spectacular strides. In human development we have achieved significant successes.

It is a measure of our human development success that the average expectation of life of an Indian is today 61 years raised from 27 years at the time of Independence. Of course, we have yet to abolish illiteracy and poverty from the land, but we are confident that with new tools of science and technology we have developed and the determined efforts of the government and the people of India we would be able to conquer these problems also. We have to do this by keeping ourselves in step with world developments.

It seems for every stage of economic and technological development there are policies and programmes that are appropriate to that state. In the 1960's there was a demand in the United States of America for a change in India's basic economic policies as a pre-condition for aid. A group of Harvard economists advised President Kennedy on aid to India. They wrote in their report, "There are situations in which development must already be established, before it is reasonable to expect private enterprise to take primary initiative for pushing it forward. In such situations insisting that investment must be wholly or largely privately administered from the start, may prevent preconditions for private investment being established." Indeed it is the growth of the public sector in India that made it possible for private sector to expand and flourish later. What we have done is to keep pace with world developments. While making necessary changes in our policies it is important to recognise the contributions made by India in its earlier stage of development and that it is standing upon the shoulders of our earlier policies and their results that we are today liberalising and globalising our economy.

Friends, India in this 21st century will be predominantly a young country. According to the 1981 census, people in the age-group of 15 to 35 years constituted one-third of the population and in 1991 nearly 34 per cent of the population. By 2000 almost two-thirds of the population belonged to this young age group. Youth power is manifesting itself in various fields of human activity. The spectacular growth of Information Technology is largely the achievement of the youth of India. Today it is youth organisations that are launching movements for preservation of the environment, of literacy, etc in the country. The National Cadet Corps, the Bharat Scouts and Guides, the National Service Scheme represent the active youth of the country engaged in promoting national development. In the field of sports, Indian youth are making their mark.

The world championship in chess gained by Vishwanathan Anand is an inspiration to all young people in India. Our young women have also come to the fore in international sports and beauty contests, projecting a new image of Indian womanhood of beauty as well as personality and intelligence. Our children caught in hazardous situation have shown dauntless courage, winning bravery awards of the nation. The story of Sunil Singh and Mukesh Kumar of Kashmir, who picked up the gun from his murdered father and kept firing at militants until they fled, is a heart-warming story. I had the pleasure of receiving these brave children and other award-winning children at Rashtrapati Bhavan yesterday. Youth power is breaching the old barriers and expressing itself to the admiration of the whole country. It was Swami Vivekananda who said that by playing football you will be nearer to God and that you will understand the Upanishads better by playing football. We should applaud and encourage the new spirit of Indian youth, for, they are our pride and our future. We, the older generation, owe it to the youth that we set an example to them.

My fellow citizens, we have declared the year 2001 as the year of women's empowerment. The pages of history unfold the fact that all social and political movements and even great revolutions, had bypassed women. Gandhiji was the first leader in the world who brought women to the centre stage of a national movement. Today women power is a hidden treasure that we are discovering and utilising for the benefit of the nation. Once when Smt Sarojini Naidu submitted to the British rulers a petition for granting political rights to Indian woman, she was asked a poignant question:

"Will Indian men support your demands?" Today the men of India are supporting the movement for women's empowerment. We have already empowered women at the panchayat, block and district levels. Already there are nearly one million women in local level democratic institutions. They have made an impact on the working of our democracy at the grassroots and have made a stir in the society. It is only logical to carry forward this process of empowerment of women to the state legislatures and to this matter is clear and unavoidable. The

empowerment of women in politics might well be a decisive factor that will purify and save the democratic politics of India from the deterioration of standards and values it is experiencing today.

The awakening of the women and the youth of India is something that gives us hope. But the march of development is having different kinds of impact on different sections of our people. It tends to widen the existing inequalities and create new inequalities. The already marginalised sections, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, are the greatest sufferers in this process. Referring to the tribals, Dr Ambedkar had said: "Civilising the aborigines means adopting them as our own, living in their midst and cultivating fellow feeling, in short loving them." But the developmental path we have adopted is hurting them and threatening their very existence. It is well known how the large river valley projects are uprooting the tribals and causing them untold misery. The mining that is taking place in the forest areas are threatening the livelihood and the survival of many tribes. It is through enlightened developmental policies that we can resolve such dilemmas of development. One pre-condition for the success of developmental projects in our extensive tribal areas is that we should take into confidence the tribals and their representatives, explain the benefits of the projects to them, and consult them in regard to the protection of their livelihood and their unique cultures. When they have to be displaced the resettlement schemes should be discussed with them and implemented with sincerity. This could avoid many critical situations, and we will be able to carry the tribals with us. We have laws that are enlightened and which prohibit the transfer of the tribal lands to non-tribals, private bodies and corporations. The Supreme Court has upheld these provisions through its judgements. We cannot ignore the social commitments enshrined in our Constitution. In eastern India, the exploitation of minerals like bauxite and iron ore are causing destruction of forests and sources of water.

While the nation must benefit from the exploitation of these mineral resources, we will have also to take into consideration questions of environmental protection and the rights of tribals. Let it not be said by future generations that the Indian Republic has been built on the destruction of the green earth and the innocent tribals who have been living there for centuries. A great socialist leader has once said that a great man in a hurry to change the world who knocks down a child commits a crime. Let it not be said of India that this great Republic in a hurry to develop itself is devastating the green mother earth and uprooting our tribal populations. We can show the world that there is room for everybody to live in this country of tolerance and compassion.

Friends, India has always thought of the world and the happiness of others, especially our neighbours. It is in this spirit that sometime ago our prime minister declared a unilateral cease-fire in Kashmir. It was a bold and imaginative measure that has attracted the attention of the world and gladdened the hearts of the people of Kashmir suffering from the acts of violence by militants and terrorists. On this Republic Day, let us think of peace and work for it sincerely and tenaciously so that we can get rid of the scourge of terrorism from this land. Let us persist in the belief that the people at the other end will realise the futility of their hostility and respond to our gestures of peace and friendship. I have no doubt that through the firmness of our determination and through the exercise of our traditional tolerance, India will triumph in the end.

Jai Hind

Migration and Women

By Garimella Subramaniam

What is surprising about population migration is not that it happens at all, but that it takes place on such a large and continuous scale.

Demographers view migration under four broad streams: (A) within rural areas, (B) within urban areas, (C) from rural to urban areas and (D) from urban to rural areas.

These categories, of course, encompass inter-State, intra-State and international migration. The 1991 census analysed the reasons for migration under the categories of employment, education, business, marriage, family-relocation, natural calamities and others.

Over and above all the other reasons, women find themselves having to migrate more than the menfolk on account of marriage and relocation of their families. Thus, it is hardly surprising that migration of women under any category is much higher than men nationally, and, also across different States.

Nearly 80-90 per cent of migration is intra- State and also rural-to-rural. Rural-to-urban migration is the next in order, followed by urban-to-urban and urban-to-rural migration. This should give some idea of the factors that force people to migrate.

With these general observations in the background, it is fascinating to look at some of the statistics which, with all the limitations that go with any kind of data, do reveal the many facets of the phenomenon of migration.

The total migrant population as per the census of 1991 was 82,107,175; roughly 9 per cent of the country's population. Nearly two-thirds of these (54,851,873) were women and only half that number (27,255,302) were men. Of the total migrants, 85.1 per cent (69,859,268) had spent between 0-9 years in the place of residence of the last enumeration. Of these, 21,442,906 were men - that is, 78.7 percent of the total male migrants - and 48,416,362 women - 88.3% of total female migrants. Of the total migration across the country, 13.5 percent (11,089,136) took place between States.

Among these, men accounted for 5,238,817 and women 5,850,319. In terms of the percentages of the respective migrant populations, this is 19.2 for men and 10.7 for women.

The breakup for different States presents interesting variations. Maharashtra received the largest number of migrants (1,651,328) followed by Delhi (1,587,661), West Bengal (1,096,152), Madhya Pradesh (978,478) and Uttar Pradesh 807,459. The largest migration out of any State is from Uttar Pradesh: 2,457,996, followed by Bihar with nearly half that number. Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Punjab represent more or less equal figures for migration into and outside the State. Kerala took in 264,140 migrants while 439,285 left it.

Gujarat and Bihar provide an interesting comparison in terms of migration into and outside the State. While Bihar's in- coming population was 364,337, the outgoing was 1,226,839. By contrast, the in-coming for Gujarat was double that of Bihar at 716,190 and the out-going population of 305,738 stood roughly at a quarter of the population leaving Bihar.

Indeed, migration into and out of different States could be attributed to their performance on various development indicators such as industrialisation, education and availability of employment.

While Bihar and Gujarat provide critical variations, one would also have to factor in the area and population of a State in assessing migration patterns. For example, large migrations into Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh may have to be viewed against the large population in these States.

Although international migrants form only 1.3 per cent of the total migrant population, in terms of absolute numbers, they were 1,079,945; men 546,649 and women 533,296.

Courtesy - The Hindu, 18, New Delhi Edn.

Women Win Strike For Equal Wages.

By Balasundaram.

Women agricultural labour went on strike in 45 villages of Tanjavur - Nagapattinam districts. Throughout the strike period, the Local Administration Minister, a kulak rep of the area, did not come openly into the scene but made behind the scene moves. He could not come out openly against the workers since it would have cost him dearly in the next election. So they kept a diplomatic distance from the 'mirasdars'.

When one group took the matter to him, he refused to intercede, implying that the matter should be settled at local level. At the same time, he was constantly in touch with the concerned officials.

The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (Dravida Party) in power made noises about the Minister refusing to support the mirasdars. But it sounded strange that the DMK govt that issued the minimum wages Govt Order

did not send one of their Ministers to implement the order in its own fields. But DMK noises were well received by the labourers since all other parties were silent or actively conniving with mirasdars.

In the contiguous Kuttalam block the workers got Rs 10 more than the previous year. In the Pandanallur area, they raised the issue under Pudiya Thamizhagam and got a wage rise to Rs 45. In some villages of Kumbakonam block and villages of Tiruvidaimarudur block, the wages were raised by Rs 5 by the mirasdars themselves. Workders of Manikudi village offered voluntary support to the strike an joined. They were discouraged by an NGO named KISAT in the name of being a peaceful organisation. KISAT had to wind up its activities there. Subsequently, in most areas of the taluk, the wages rose to 35 after the struggle.

"All these years, mirasdars decided the wage rate. This year we decided it!" Murugamma declared joyfully at the end of strike.

Likewise, as a sequalae to their strike, wages were raised in Sirkazhi block of Nagapattinam. As a routine the wages were raised every year by Rs 2 to Rs 5.

At Perunthottam with an agricultural labour population of 5000, the strike lasted for a week and wage settlement was arried at for Rs 43 in a meeting organised by the Tehsildar.

In Punganoor panchayat the strike ended in a negotiated settlement of wage of Rs 40. in Manippallam and Sethur panchayaths of Nagapattinam district, women withstood all sorts of patriarchal pressures and provocations, came out in large numbers for 8 days. One of the women labourer was beaten by her husband. She threatened to walk out on him and complain to the authorities. One Shanti told her DMK supporter husband, "I can't support your party and you shouldn't come in my way".

During the strike, upper caste Pillai landowners had to do sweeping, cleaning of houses and cattle sheds etc on their own. After nine days of labour by the mirasdars, they agreed a wage rise to Rs 35 from Rs 25.

These successes had a cascading effect on the other villages. Rs 25 was called Kanniyakudi coolie (wage of kanniyakudi). Now the neighbouring villages were demanding 'Manippallam Coolie' or Rs 35.

Though the women succeeded in a few villages, the impact of their achievement was felt much wider. Their tactical move to redirect their energies directed towards Dalit nattamais and petty landowners to big mirasdars was stood them in good stead. Pressurising the administration instead of depending on it had a positive effect on their strike. They saw through the sophisticated system of mirasdar-local official- police- mainstream political parties-politicians nexus that operates normally.

Many had to fight the patriarchal value system and traditional values which stood as stumbling blocks before the women's struggle. But they decided not to press for the statutory wage of Rs 45 and working hours of 5 hours. It was left for the future The women agricultural workers have won the battle, but the long term struggle goes on.

Courtesy- Liberation Jan & Feb 2001.

Visit: <http://www.ambedkar.org>

