

janata

Vol. 73 No. 25

July 15, 2018

**Globalisation and Employment
Situation in India**

Neeraj Jain

**Communal Harmony and
Popular Music**

Amarendra Dhaneshwar

**Kabir: Love, Mysticism and
an Alternative Vision**

Neha Dabhade

**Targeted Tamil Nadu: Indian
Civil Society Must Intervene**

S.P. Udayakumar

Book Review

Champaran Satyagraha

Editor : **G.G.Parikh**

Associate Editor : **Neeraj Jain**

Managing Editor : **Guddi**

Editorial Board :

**B. Vivekanandan, Qurban Ali
Anil Nauriya, Sonal Shah
Amarendra Dhaneshwar,
Sandeep Pandey**

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

Website: www.janataweekly.org

Why Was Gandhi Killed?

Salil Misra

Why was Gandhi killed? Those who killed him claimed that he was the greatest enemy of the Indian nation and also of Hinduism. They had a particular picture of India and of Hinduism in mind and believed Gandhi to be an obstacle in the implementation of that picture.

To get the facts straight, Gandhi was killed on 30 January 1948, by Nathuram Godse, directly assisted by Gopal Godse, Narayan Apte and Vishnu Karkare, all of them associated with the Hindu Mahasabha. It is possible that more may have been involved in the conspiracy to eliminate him. Killing Gandhi was not a spontaneous, on the spot decision. Considerable preparation had gone into it. A bomb was thrown at his prayer meeting on 20 January. It was suggested that, given the threat to his life, security at his meetings should be increased. But Gandhi refused to allow it on the ground that it would create inconvenience for common people who regularly attended his prayer meetings. He was completely against security arrangements that would separate him from his own people. Given the lack of these restrictions, it is surprising that such meticulous and comprehensive preparations

were needed to eliminate Gandhi. It is quite clear that if somebody really wanted to kill Gandhi, it was not at all difficult to do so.

In retrospect it seems difficult to believe why would anyone want to kill Gandhi. His life was dedicated to serving others. His activities were not against any one in particular. For instance he fought British imperialism but was always friendly to the British people. He was convinced that the system of imperialism was bad above all for the people of England. They needed to be liberated from the evil of imperialism. In a famous appeal, Gandhi called on the British to get off the back of Indian people so that they could all walk together. Even though he maintained total opposition to anti-human ideologies such as racism, fascism, imperialism and—in the Indian context—communalism, he expressed love for the individuals and leaders practising those ideologies. There was not a trace of any personal hatred or animosity in his speeches and writings. Gandhi truly practised and popularised the Biblical maxim: Hate the evil, not the evil doer. Given these traits, it is difficult to believe that someone, anyone, should want

to physically eliminate him.

However, attempts had been made on Gandhi's life even earlier. He was assaulted twice in South Africa, in 1897 and in 1907, but survived miraculously. In India a hand grenade was thrown at his car in Pune in 1934 in a violent reaction against his campaign to open wells, temples and public roads for lower castes. But the determination by some to eliminate him became much more sustained in the 1940s.

National unity of all the Indian people, cutting across religion, caste, language and region was a mission with Gandhi. This mission of achieving national unity received a severe setback with the demand for Pakistan in 1940. Muslim League, under Jinnah's leadership, declared that Indian Muslims were not a religious minority but a nation and therefore entitled to their own separate nation-state. This extraordinary demand, for which there was no proof in history, was based on the famous two-nation-theory, according to which there was no single nation of Indian people. Rather there were two separate nations—Hindu and Muslim. Jinnah also asserted that there was nothing in common between Muslims and Hindus and that the two could not possibly live together in peace and harmony. Therefore, according to Jinnah, the only solution to the Hindu–Muslim problem was a physical and geographical separation of Hindus and Muslims and their constitution into separate nation-states. The British government appeared sympathetic to this demand purely for tactical reasons. Gandhi and other national leaders were quite taken aback by this demand. Gandhi called the demand for Pakistan a “basic untruth”, perhaps

the strongest word in his dictionary.

However, in the 1940s, the demand for Pakistan gathered momentum. It was generally aided by the politics of the British and the activities of Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha. The two organisations were in principle opposed to each other, claiming to represent Muslims and Hindus respectively. But through their activities, they actually ended up helping each other. The leaders of both the organisations—Jinnah and Savarkar—succeeded in creating a deep communal divide between Hindus and Muslims. Never before in Indian history was the divide, mutual contempt and suspicion between the two communities as deep as it was in the 1940s. Gandhi was distraught by these developments and tried to counter it in his own way. He was uncompromisingly opposed to the partition of India. But he also knew that partition could be prevented only by the concerted efforts of Muslims and Hindus. However, intensification of communalism made this difficult. Gandhi spent all his energies against communalism but also witnessed somewhat helplessly the growing tide of communalism.

The events of late 1946–early 1947 shattered all of Gandhi's hopes of finding an amicable settlement of the communal problem. In August 1946, the Muslim League–led government in Bengal gave a call for ‘direct action’. The result of the call was sheer mayhem. Calcutta witnessed massive communal violence for the next four days in which around 5000 people died. Soon communal violence engulfed large parts of India, spreading to Noakhali in East Bengal, Bihar, Bombay and UP, before finally

descending on Punjab with full fury. Muslims were the aggressors in Bengal and Hindus in Bihar. This was the first time in Indian history that the country had experienced communal violence on such scale and intensity. It was also the first time that communal violence had spread like wildfire, forming a chain of barbarity. With the possible exception of 1857, never before and certainly never after, had India come so close to a civil war-like situation. Certainly, incidents of communal violence have been quite frequent in independent India, but nowhere near the scale and intensity reached during 1946–47.

Gandhi understood that these events were inevitably taking India closer to partition, but felt helpless in the face of the deepening communal divide. In his prayer meetings he often gave into a feeling of despair: “As a result of one year of communal riots, the people of India have all become communal. They are tired and frightened. . . . The popular view is contrary to mine. . . . No one listens to me any more. I am a small man. . . . neither the Congress nor the Hindus nor the Muslims listen to me. . . . I am crying in the wilderness. . . . Everybody is eager to garland my photos and statues [but] nobody really wants to follow my advice.”

However, since Gandhi realised that he did not have the support of the people to fight against the partition, he decided to do the next best thing—to try and prevent communal violence, reach out to the victims of communal violence and provide his healing touch to them. He reached Noakhali in November 1946 and stayed there till March 1947, giving solace to Hindu victims and making appeals to Muslims for sanity. From there he went to Bihar to provide a

similar healing touch to Muslims and appealing to Hindus to give up violence and provide all security to Muslims. Hearing of renewed violence in Calcutta, Gandhi again rushed to Calcutta to spend time with Hindus and Muslims. On the eve of independence he refused to come to Delhi and decided to observe India's independence—a day he had eagerly looked forward to—with silent prayers and fasting.

After partition in August 1947, communal violence increased further and was particularly severe in the provinces that were partitioned, Punjab and Bengal. The fury was much greater in Punjab than in Bengal. One simple reason was Gandhi's presence in Bengal. His appeal to people worked like magic and helped subside communal passions considerably. Gandhi went on a fast against violence, drawing very positive response from the people, both Hindus and Muslims, who laid down arms and promised to Gandhi not to indulge in violence and arson. But unfortunately there was no Gandhi in Punjab (and no Gandhi-like figure in Pakistan) which experienced the worst form of violence. The power of Gandhi's magic was recognised even by the last British Viceroy, Mountbatten, who called Gandhi a "one man boundary force" and wrote in a letter: "My dear Gandhiji, In the Punjab we have 55 thousand soldiers and large scale rioting on our hands. In Bengal our forces consist of one man, and there is no rioting." This was an open recognition of Gandhi's miracle and his remarkable influence on the people of India.

It was this success of Gandhi which actually cost him his life. His activities really offended the communal leaders who saw in him

the biggest obstacle to their agenda of creating a communal divide. They renewed their efforts against him. The partition of India had been opposed by nationalists like Gandhi but also by Hindu communalists. They were opposed to partition for entirely different reasons. Gandhi saw it as a violation of national unity but the Hindu communalists saw it as a concession to Muslims and were opposed to it. The truth was that both Hindu and Muslim communalists had contributed to partition by preventing Hindu-Muslim unity. However, once Gandhi accepted partition, he continued to work for Hindu-Muslim unity. Now his efforts for communal unity acquired a new dimension. He also became active in promoting India-Pakistan fraternity. Gandhi understood better than anyone else that if the two countries did not develop and maintain friendly relations, this would lead to disaster, taking its toll on both. Neighbouring countries like India and Pakistan simply could not afford to remain antagonistic to each other. It was clear that in promoting Indo-Pak friendship, Gandhi was thinking not only of present but also of future. In a statement, remarkable for its prophetic value, made in July 1947, Gandhi said: "The Pakistanis will say that they must increase their armed forces to defend themselves against India. India will repeat the argument. The result will be war. . . . [Shall] we spend our resources on the education of our children or on gunpowder and guns?"

Such statements and efforts of Gandhi really offended the members of Hindu Rashtra Dal, an organization set up in 1942 by Savarkar, whose members were to act like storm troopers of Hindu Mahasabha. They accused Gandhi of placating

Muslims and of being an enemy of Hindus. In reality Gandhi was only working for Hindu-Muslim unity and India-Pak friendship. He sent a message to Jinnah, the Governor General of Pakistan, expressing a desire to visit Pakistan to speak to the people. It was agreed that he would visit Pakistan in February 1948.

It was always an integral part of Gandhi's politics that he did not simply preach or talk; he backed it up with concrete action. When he found that the Muslims of Delhi had become unsafe and vulnerable to violence at the hands of Hindu and Sikh refugees from Pakistan, themselves victims of communal fury in Pakistan, Gandhi promptly went on what became his last fast on 12 January 1948, making an appeal for peace and sanity. And as always, his appeal found a positive response from the people of Delhi, including refugees. The violence on Muslims of Delhi came to a dramatic end in a week's time, leading Gandhi to break his fast on 18 January. Gandhi had once again been successful in bringing to an end large-scale violence through his personal efforts.

It was this success of Gandhi with his people which made him the object of deep visceral hatred by the communalists and they became determined to eliminate him. Nathuram Godse later declared that Gandhi with his "pro-Muslim fast" had acted "treacherously to the nation" and had proved to be a "father of Pakistan" instead. Godse was therefore determined that Gandhi's life "had to be brought to an end immediately" so that the "Indian nation could be saved". On 30 January, Godse implemented his resolution by pumping three bullets into the frail 78 year-old body of the

apostle of peace and love.

Godse killed Gandhi. But was he able to eliminate Gandhi? Gandhi's efforts towards the end of his life were geared towards ensuring that India would not become the Hindu equivalent of a Muslim Pakistan. Gandhi wanted India to develop as a secular, democratic republic. Those who wanted India to be a Hindu mirror image of Pakistan, also knew that Gandhi was the biggest obstacle to their plans. And so they killed him. But in the end it was Gandhi who won. The people of India backed him rather than the Hindu communalists, by choosing a secular and democratic polity for independent India. Gandhi's magic worked even after his death.

There was another arena of contest between Gandhi and those

who killed him. This pertained to the nature of Hinduism and the direction in which it should grow. Both Gandhi and Godse had contrasting images of Hinduism they wanted to build. For Godse, it was a militant, aggressive, violent and intolerant Hinduism, suspicious of Islam and Muslims, driven towards a physical conquest over adversaries. The Hinduism Gandhi practised was just the opposite— inclusive, compassionate, harmonious, and at peace with itself and with others. Godse understood, quite correctly, that Gandhi was the real obstacle to his brand of Hinduism. And so in order to save "his" Hinduism, he decided to kill the "greatest Hindu". As Gandhi himself said in his prayer meeting of 21 January 1948 referring to the bomb attack a day earlier:

"Those [behind the attack] should know that this sort of thing will not save Hinduism. If Hinduism is to be saved, it will be saved through such work as I am doing. I have been imbibing Hindu Dharma from my childhood . . . Do you want to annihilate Hindu Dharma by killing a devout Hindu like me?"

This debate on Hinduism has its reverberations even today. Both the possibilities—the Gandhian and the Godse-ite—are present within Hinduism today. Which one will eventually prevail? The fate of Hindus, and indeed of India, will be eventually decided by the course taken by Hinduism—Gandhi's or Godse's.

Email: salil@aud.ac.in

Globalisation and Employment Situation in India

Neeraj Jain

India began the globalisation of its economy in 1991, when the Indian Government, in exchange for a huge foreign loan to tide over the foreign exchange crisis, agreed to implement a Structural Adjustment Programme as demanded by its foreign creditors. One of the conditionalities of these economic reforms imposed on the country was removal of all restrictions on foreign investment, thereby allowing giant foreign multinational corporations to enter and invest in all sectors of the economy.

Ask any college student about the benefits of globalisation for the Indian economy, and he / she will immediately answer that the entry of foreign corporations is leading to

the creation of jobs in the economy. All economics text books in the country teach this; all academicians and intellectuals also assert this.

Before we examine the impact of entry of foreign corporations on employment, it is important to understand the nature of these corporations whom we have given an unfettered entry into the Indian economy.

Origin of Multinational Corporations

By the early 20th century, a profound change took place in the capitalist economies of Western Europe and the United States: the typical small firm came to be replaced by the giant corporation.

The economies of the capitalist countries now came to be dominated by giant monopolies, which not only had an enormous capacity to expand production, but also were in a position to earn super-profits by forming cartels and manipulating prices upwards. Since these corporations were huge, and had an enormous capacity to expand production, and since such a huge quantity of production obviously required huge raw material resources and enormous markets, these giant firms now entered into intense competition with each other for controlling raw material sources and markets of other countries. One consequence of this was that their international operations began to

expand, as they began investing heavily in other countries. By the late 1970s, the international operations of the monopoly corporations of the developed capitalist countries had expanded to such an extent that they came to be known as multinational corporations (or MNCs).

By the late 1970s–early 1980s, another important change took place in the world economy. The economies of most of the developing countries, who had become free from colonial rule during the post-Second World War years and had attempted to implement economic policies aimed at the indigenous capitalist development of their economies—one of whose important components was limiting the penetration of foreign capital in their economies—began to fail, and they became deeply mired in foreign debt (discussing the reasons for this is beyond the scope of this essay). The developed countries now arm-twisted these countries into opening up their markets for inflow of foreign goods and capital (this is precisely what happened with India also in 1991). Thus began what has come to be known as the globalisation of the world economy. It has enabled the corporations of the developed countries to enter into these economies and once again acquire control over their raw material sources and markets.

The onset of globalisation in the 1980s has enabled the MNCs into becoming truly giant behemoths with operations straddled across the globe.

MNCs in the Twenty-first Century

The world economy today is dominated by a relatively few giant MNCs. A MNC is a giant corporation, which, though it has

its management headquarters in one country, operates in several countries. The majority of the world's MNCs are headquartered in the rich nations—the United States, European Union and Japan.

Globalisation has enabled these MNCs to spread their tentacles into each and every country throughout the globe. They have become so big that they are now bigger than entire countries! A study made by the anti-poverty charity Global Justice Now found that in 2015, of the 100 biggest economic entities in the world, 69 were corporations (measured by their corporate turnover) and only 31 were countries (measured by their government revenues). The combined revenue of the 10 biggest corporations was more than the combined taxes raised by the bottom 180 countries.

Since they are so big, competition with them is simply not possible. Therefore, when MNCs enter a country, they quickly gobble up the local corporations (or the latter become their junior partners). Consequently, only a few MNCs today dominate each and every economic activity at the global level, be it manufacture of automobiles or semiconductors or medicines, or be it retail or transportation or information technology, or be it banking and finance, or be it the various sectors of agriculture, from seed and pesticide manufacture to wheat and rice production. Note that here we are not talking of a few firms dominating a particular economic activity in a particular country but their dominating that economic activity at a global level. The same MNC operates in twenty or fifty or more countries, and along with a handful of other such MNCs, dominates global production in

that particular sector. To take an example, today five multinational firms produce nearly half the world's motor vehicles, and the ten largest firms produce 70 percent of the world's motor vehicles.

Some more examples:

- The world's top 10 semiconductor makers account for more than half of the global market.
- Ninety percent of the global music market is accounted for by just 5 corporations.
- Fifteen companies dominate the world's pharmaceutical industry and account for 50 percent of the global sales revenues (in 2016).
- Just 2 companies, Coca-Cola and Pepsico, account for 60 percent of the global non-alcoholic beverage market.
- Just 2 corporations supply most of the world's large commercial jets: Boeing Co. and Airbus Industrie.
- The world's top 10 seed companies control 75 percent of the global commercial seed market (2011); the top 10 pesticide firms control 95 percent of the \$44 billion global pesticide market (2011); and 10 corporations control 55 percent of the global fertiliser market.
- In the animal pharmaceutical industry, the top 10 companies control 76 percent of the world veterinary pharmaceutical market.

The power wielded by these giant corporations over the global economy is best illustrated by a single statistic: the combined revenue of the top 500 corporations in the world is of the order of 35–40 percent of world GDP!

MNCs and Employment Generation

The MNCs are so huge, they have so much capital at their disposal, that they are able to employ the latest labour-saving technologies to produce an enormous amount of goods with very few workers. And so MNCs create very few jobs. In 2015, the world's 500 biggest corporations (the Fortune Global 500) generated \$27.6 trillion in revenues, which equalled roughly 38 percent of the world's GDP. Yet, they employed a mere 67 million people worldwide, which is just 1.7 percent of the global labour force. [The global labour force totalled nearly 4 billion people in 2015.]

Globalisation and Employment Generation in India

i) Private Sector

This is precisely what is happening in India too. As mentioned earlier, India began globalisation in 1991. While globalisation has led to an increase in the country's GDP growth rate, it has not led to an increase in employment generation. The foreign corporations entering the Indian economy are creating very few jobs. But at the same time, they are destroying many more jobs than they are creating, as their entry is forcing many companies, especially the small companies, to close down, while the big Indian private business houses are being forced to restructure their operations, reduce their workforce and replace permanent workers with contract workers.

That big corporations are not creating large number of jobs in India is admitted even by Arvind Panagariya, the Vice Chairman of India's Niti Aayog (he has since resigned) and a staunch supporter of globalisation. According to statistics given by him, two decades

after India began globalisation, in 2009 only 10.5 percent of India's manufacturing workforce was employed in large firms having more than 200 workers, while 84 percent was employed in firms with less than 50 workers.

Additionally, the neoliberal economic reforms have also pushed India's agriculture into deep crisis, so much so that employment generation in this important sector that accounts for half of India's employment has slowed down to near zero (we discuss this in greater detail below)!

ii) Globalisation and Public Sector Employment

The WB-dictated SAP imposed on India demands that the Indian Government privatise public sector enterprises and also reduce investment in welfare services such as education, health and agricultural extension and privatise these services. This has led to a drastic fall in public sector recruitment. Public sector employment in the country continuously increased in the decades after independence, from 70.5 lakh in 1961 to 190.6 lakh in 1991. But with the beginning of globalisation, this has got reversed. Public sector employment [including every form of government—Central, state, local government as well as quasi-government (public sector enterprises, electricity boards, road transport corporations, etc.)] over the period 1991–2012 has fallen in absolute terms, from 190 lakh to 176 lakh. This decline has taken place in every sphere of economic activity, from manufacturing, construction and transport to community, social and personal services.

iii) Globalisation: Net Impact on Employment in India

With very little job generation taking place in the private sector, and jobs declining in absolute terms in the public sector, the net result of the neoliberal economic reforms has been a slowdown in employment growth rate in the country.

This is borne out by employment growth rate figures for India. NSSO survey data show that employment growth rate (even with the government's fudged figures which consider all underemployed people in 'involuntary employment' as employed) has been decelerating ever since the economic reforms began. The compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of employment in the country fell from 2.44 percent during the period 1972–73 to 1983, to 2.04 percent during the period 1983 to 1993–94, 1.84 percent over the period 1993–94 to 2004–05, to an abysmal 0.12 percent during the period 2004–05 to 2009–10. This slowdown has taken place despite globalisation having led a sharp acceleration in the country's GDP growth rate (see Table 1).

Employment growth during 1999–2000 to 2009–10 was 1.49 percent per annum, lower than any previous ten-year period. And employment growth for the entire post-reform period, that is, for the 16-year period 1993–94 to 2009–10, was only 1.3 percent per annum. So the reforms, in spite of high GDP growth, have completely failed to deliver on the employment front.

It is estimated that in India, the total number of new people who enter the job market every year in search of jobs is around 13 million. That means that during the 16 years from 1993–94 to 2009–10, a total of 208 million people entered the job market. The NSSO data given in Table 1 indicate that of these, only

86 million or 41.3 percent got any kind of jobs.

And of these, only a very few got factory jobs! According to the Annual Survey of Industries, the principal source of industrial statistics in India, total employment (workers plus sales and supervisory and managerial staff) in all of India's registered factories (both small and large scale industries combined) increased by only 3.01 million during this 16-year period (Table 2). This means only 1.5 percent of the total people who entered the job market during these 16 years got any kind of factory jobs. In other words, despite the massive entry of foreign corporations into the country since the beginning of globalisation

in 1991, very few factory jobs have been created. The total number of people working in factories two decades after globalisation, in 2010, was only 11.72 million, or 2.5 percent of the total official workforce in the country of 460 million (see Table 2).

To conclude, globalisation is not leading to the creation of jobs in the country; rather, it is the main reason for the terrible employment crisis gripping the country. The acceleration of economic reforms under the Modi Government has led to a further worsening of this crisis. We shall discuss that in a subsequent essay.

Email : neerajj61@gmail.com

Table 1: Total Employment, Employment Growth Rate and GDP Growth Rate 1983 to 2009–10¹⁶

	<i>Total Employment (in million)</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>CAGR</i>	<i>GDP Growth Rate (at constant 1999–00 prices)</i>
1983	302.76	1972–73 to 1983	2.44%	4.7%
1993–94	374.45	1983 to 1993–94	2.04%	5.0%
2004–05	457.46	1993–94 to 2004–05	1.84%	6.3%
2009–10	460.22	2004–05 to 2009–10	0.12%	9.1%
		1999–2000 to 2009–10	1.49%	
		1993–94 to 2009–10	1.30%	

Table 2: Total Number of Employees in Registered Factories, 1993–94 to 2009–10 (in million)¹⁸

	<i>Total Factory Employment</i>	<i>% of Total Workforce</i>
1993–94	8.71	
2009–10	11.72	2.5%

1. Duncan Green, “The World’s Top 100 Economies: 31 Countries; 69 Corporations”, September 20, 2016, <https://blogs.worldbank.org>; “Study: Big Corporations Dominate List of World’s Top Economic Entities”, September 12, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com>.
2. John Bellamy Foster et al., “Monopoly and Competition in Twenty-First Century Capitalism”, *Monthly Review*, April 2011, <http://monthlyreview.org>.
3. “Worldwide Semiconductor Revenue Grew 2.6 Percent in 2016, According to Final Results by Gartner”, May 15, 2017, <http://www.gartner.com>.
4. “The Global Music Machine”, <http://www.bbc.co.uk>.
5. “Top 10 Pharmaceutical Companies 2017”, March 14, 2017, <https://igeahub.com>.
6. J.B. Maverick, “How Much of the Global Beverage Industry is Controlled by Coca Cola and Pepsi?” June 4, 2015, <http://www.investopedia.com>.
7. “What Companies are the Major Players in the Airline Supply Business?” May 4, 2015, <http://www.investopedia.com>.
8. “Agropoly – A Handful of Corporations Control World Food Production”, 2013, <http://www.econexus.info>.
9. Ibid.
10. “Who Will Control the Green Economy?” November 1, 2011, <http://www.etcgroup.org>.
11. John Bellamy Foster et al., “Monopoly and Competition in Twenty-First Century Capitalism”, op. cit.
12. Christopher Tkaczyk, Stacy Jones, Grace Donnelly, “Everything You Need to Know

Communal Harmony and Popular Music

Amarendra Dhaneshwar

- About the Global 500 in 6 Charts”, July 22, 2016, <http://fortune.com>.
13. R. Jamil Jonna and John Bellamy Foster, “Marx’s Theory of Working-Class Precariousness: Its Relevance Today”, *Monthly Review*, April 2016, <http://monthlyreview.org>.
 14. Arvind Panagariya, “Jobs, Growth and Coastal Economic Zones”, <http://niti.gov.in>.
 15. R. Nagaraj, “Public Sector Employment: What has Changed?” op. cit.; T.S. Papola, Partha Pratim Sahu, “Growth and Structure of Employment in India”, March 2012, <http://isidev.nic.in>.
 16. GDP growth rate figures taken from: T.S. Papola, Partha Pratim Sahu, *ibid.*; CAGR for 1972–73 to 1983 taken from: S. Mahendra Dev, “Employment and Growth in India”, <http://www.aigga.mp.gov.in>; employment figures for 1983 and 1993–94 taken from: *Economic Survey, 2001–02: Social Sectors – Labour and Employment*, <http://indiabudget.nic.in>; employment figures for 1999–2000, 2004–05 and 2009–10 taken from: Twelfth Five Year Plan: Volume 3 – Social Sectors, op. cit., p. 160; CAGR calculations done by us.
 17. T.S. Papola, Partha Pratim Sahu, *ibid.*
 18. *Annual Survey of Industries 2010–2011 (Factory Sector)*, mail.mospi.gov.in/index.php.

“There is an enduring empathic connection with the world of Indian popular cinema. Today, this cinema, which draws upon images and symbols from the traditional regional cultures and combines them with more modern Western themes, is the major shaper of an emerging, pan Indian, popular culture. The cinema has striking parallels with traditional folk theatre. The popular culture as represented by cinema goes beyond both classical and folk elements even while it incorporates them. The appeal of the film is directed to an audience so diverse that it transcends social and spatial categories,” writes the eminent psychoanalyst Sudhir Kakar in his book *Indian Identity*.

Cinema has an enviable grip on popular imagination. The moving image on the screen continues to fascinate the viewer even though it is no longer restricted to the cinema hall or the television set. It has invaded the cell phone and is most easily accessible through networks like *You Tube*. It is necessary to harness the popular medium of cinema in order to spread the message of communal harmony and religious tolerance.

This writer can cite his personal experience to prove the point. On June 23 this year, 'Lokayat', a group of activists from Poona, had invited me to perform songs stressing communal harmony at the S. M. Joshi Foundation Auditorium. I went there well prepared, though a little apprehensive about the impact. From the very start till the end, the audience which comprised

of many youngsters who were in their teens were not only engrossed but they participated in the music making process with claps and also by tapping their feet and lending their vocals wherever they could. For me, it was not only a satisfying experience but also reaffirmation of dearly embraced humanitarian values and principles.

Cinema is a popular art and it has always reflected the aspirations of the society and nation in general. There is an innate tolerance in our society which has accommodated various religious groups and followed the 'Live and let live' policy, not just as a slogan, but as a deeply ingrained precept. This finds reflection in works of art as well as in popular cinema. In the pre-independence times, films like *Padosi* ('Shejari' in Marathi) were made and ran for weeks together amidst the tense communal atmosphere triggered by the pre-partition animosities generated by the hateful campaign run by Jinnah and the Muslim League. In a chartbuster titled *Kismet* starring Ashok Kumar and Mumtaz Shanti, there was a song which became an all time hit—*Door Hato E Duniyawalo Hindustan Hamara Hai*. The first line of the *antara* in the song is “Yahan Hamara Tajmahal Hai Aur Kutubminara Hai, Yahan Hamare Mandir Masjid Sikkhonka Gurudwara Hain”, which proclaims multiplicity of faiths in our country and equal tolerance for them.

A comedian like Kishore Kumar was a hero of the film *Hum Sab*

Janata

is available at

www.lohiatoday.com

Ustad Hai. The hero exhorts the people around to share love with everyone irrespective of the religion. “Kya Hindu Kya Musalman Hum Sab Hain Bhai Bhai”, he says. In a fascinating simile, the song compares human beings belonging to different denominations to a musical instrument which produces good music when all the strings are well tuned.

We have been witnessing communal riots which lead to loss of precious human life and damage to property for all these years. These riots are triggered by mutual hatred and suspicion. *Baiju Bawara*, one of the most successful feature films of the early 1950s, has the legendary singer Baiju as the lead character. In one of the scenes in which the land is devastated by marauding troops who go on rampage, Baiju makes a sudden appearance and exhorts the troops to shun violence and become good humans. He sings *Insan Bano Karlo Bhalai Ka Koi Kaam*, a moving song sung by Mohammed Rafi and set in the raga Todi by the composer Naushad. This song is as relevant today in order to persuade the aggressive rioters.

The film *Dhool Ka Phool* by B.R. Chopra was about an unwed mother. It deals with a serious topic in a sensitive way. The pregnant heroine who has been unceremoniously forsaken by the hero becomes an outcast and she unwillingly abandons the child born out of wedlock on a street. The child noticed by a kindly Muslim elder is brought up in a truly secular fashion. In a moving song sequence, “Accha Hai Abhitak Tera Kuchh Naam Nahi Hai; Tujhko Kisi Mazhabse Koi Kaam Nahi Hai” (Good that you have no name which would indicate your faith and you are not concerned

with any religion as such). The lyrics penned by none other than Sahir Ludhyanvi proclaim humanitarian values which are beyond religion or denomination: “Malik Ne Har Insan ko Insan Banaya, Hamne Ise Hindu Ya Musalman Banaya; Kudarat ne to Bakshi Thi Hame Ekhi Dharati, Hamne Kahi Bharat Kahi Iran Banaya” (God made us human beings, and we made ourselves Hindus and Muslims; Nature has gifted us with one land and one Universe, we humans divided it into India and Iran). Such lyrics when

sung tunefully and with conviction are bound to tug at the heartstrings of the listener who is otherwise not exposed to such song content.

Gandhiji used to say that he could better understand the poetic content of poetry by saints when it came to him through the medium of music. This also applies to the songs which project the message of communal harmony and peaceful co-existence.

Email: amardhan@gmail.com

Kabir: Love, Mysticism and an Alternative Vision

Neha Dabhade

While many wise persons through the centuries the world over have spoken about love and its transformative value, in India, the message of love has been passed down from generation to generation by different saints. One saint-poet who particularly stands out is Kabir. Kabir, through his teachings, poetry and life became the most influential proponent of the value of love. And his message has left a deep imprint on culture and philosophy in India. 28 June 2018 marked the 500th death anniversary of the mystic poet, reformer and saint. Kabir's ideas are as relevant and revolutionary today as they were during his times. Through this article, the author attempts to revisit the message of Kabir in the present context and the complex challenges it poses.

Kabir has a huge following in northern India across communities. He is quoted by scholars and

laypersons alike. The Prime Minister of India is no exception. On the occasion of Kabir Jayanti, PM Modi quoted a famous doha from Kabir to emphasise his government's promise of sabka saath, sabka vikas (development for all), “Kabir khada bazaar mein, maange sabki khair; na kahoo se dosti, na kahoo se bair.” [Standing in the marketplace (the world), Kabir asks for prosperity for all. Neither special friendship, nor enmity for anyone.] It is rather interesting to see that the ruling dispensation is invoking Kabir, an iconic thinker and prime example of communal harmony in India, when the General Elections 2019 are nearing. Let us take this opportunity to examine the tall claims made by the government while incorporating the message of Kabir in its policies, against Kabir's own philosophy and teachings.

Kabir's ideas

Kabir, a saint-poet, was one of the tallest figures of the Bhakti movement in India. Though his birth year is contested, he is believed to be the contemporary of Sikandar Lodhi. It is believed that he was born in a Hindu family but raised by a Muslim weaver family. He grew up to be a mystic poet in Varanasi. He sharply critiqued not only the inequality and social hierarchy in the Hindu philosophy but also the orthodoxy in Islam. Through his life and dohas, he encouraged others to think critically about social hierarchies and embrace love, compassion and honest introspection of self and the world. Kabir's fundamental message is love. One of his most famous dohas which encapsulates this message beautifully is:

Poti padh padh jag mua, Pandit bhayo na koye

Dhai akshar prem ke, jo padhe so Pandit hoye

(Reading books everyone died, none became wise; one who understands love is greater than any learned scholar)

Though the message of love seems to be simplistic, yet it is revolutionary for the times torn by conflicts, identity politics and inequalities. The time he was living in was marked by the dominance of Brahmins, rigid religious traditions, rituals and customs, feudal laws and orthodoxy. These hierarchies and rigidity were an anathema to love and humanism which Kabir sought to underline. Kabir sought to provide a broad overarching framework of love, compassion and mysticism which was extraordinary and rebellious, in that it defied tradition. He urged the people to re-imagine a world order based on

honest introspection and beyond materialism. He had an alternative socio-political vision characterised by transcendence, humility and spirituality which comes across clearly through his dohas:

Kabira Garv Na Keejiye, Uncha Dekh Aavaas

Kaal Pairon Punyah Letna, Ooper Jamsi Ghaas.

(Kabir, don't be so proud and vain, living in your high mansion. Tomorrow, you'll be lying under the feet, with grass growing on top)

One aspect of Kabir that can't be ignored is that he was not just a saint-poet but also a reformer. His contribution in this area needs more elaboration. As mentioned above, he was against social hierarchies and injustice and therefore has a large following amongst the Dalits even today. He critiqued the dogmas and superstitions in the Hindu philosophy. One example of where he took on the orthodoxy and defied tradition was his decision to move to Maghar from Kashi (Benaras). While Kashi is a holy city for the Hindus who believe that it is the gateway to heaven, it is believed that Maghar is a gateway to hell. In order to explain his move he says,

Kya Kaasi, Kya Oosar Maghar, Ram hriday basu mora

(What's the difference between Kashi and a barren Maghar, when divinity resides within?)

Similarly, Kabir tore into the orthodoxy of Islam too. He bitterly criticised the rituals and rigidity in Islam. Criticising the clergy, he says, "Mullah, why do you go up the minaret to call so loudly? Is your lord deaf? For whose sake do you make a loud prayer-call, He is in your heart."

He advocated the oneness of God.

This God can be realised through devotion to God without the need of any pandit or mullahs (priests). He rejected organised religion and emphasised a humanistic approach towards religion.

Kabir against social hierarchies

Similarly, Kabir was also strongly against caste divide in society. At a time when identities based on religion and caste are fracturing social cohesion and social justice, when the State which is duty bound to promote equality, fraternity and liberty of all citizens has failed to do so, it is important to recall the teachings of Kabir.

A direct criticism of the caste system by Kabir can be found in these couplets:

"If you say you're a Brahmin,
Born of a mother who is a
Brahmin,

Was there a special canal,
through which you were born?"
"Were the Creator concerned
about caste,

We'd arrive in the world, with
a caste mark on the forehead."

The Dalits in India are still violently denied equal opportunities and rights despite constitutional provisions which call for equality. The dominant Hindutva politics which also shapes the policies of the ruling dispensation upholds the caste system and its inherent hierarchy. Atrocities against Dalits are common news in the media almost every day. Ghastly violence is perpetrated against Dalits on account of reasons like marrying persons from upper castes, using wells or roads used by the upper castes, wearing new clothes or showing any signs of wealth or even sporting a mustache—all these actions are considered as prerogatives and

privileges of the upper castes.

One is compelled to then think whether the ruling dispensation really adheres to Kabir's teachings? The violence against Dalits are not merely physical assaults by isolated individuals. These assaults are manifestations of the deep-rooted hatred against Dalits, and mindset of a society which still believes in the notion of inferiority based on pollution. To add to this dehumanising idea is the concoction of nationalism promoted by the right-wing extremists which makes the cow holy while justifying and normalising violence against Dalits. Dalits and others are severely punished on the suspicion of cow slaughter. Cow becomes a religious symbol to be revered and protected over human beings. This symbolism and ritualism is precisely what Kabir sought to counter. He wonderfully captures the need to self-introspect and not project hatred towards others in the following couplets:

*Bura jo dekhain main chala, bura
naa miliya koe,
Jo dil khoja aapna, toh mujhse
bura naa koe.*

(I set out to find the crooked ones, but couldn't find anyone; when I looked into my own heart, I found there was nobody more crooked than me!)

Kabir: A Bridge between Cultures

The iconoclastic saint Kabir is a symbol of India's syncretic culture. Kabir didn't identify himself as a Hindu or a Muslim. He renounced the orthodoxy in both religions:

*Chahe Geeta baanchiye, ya
padhiye Quran,
Mera tera pyaar hi har pustak
ka gyaan!*

(Whether one reads the Geeta or the Quran, all holy texts

essentially speak of love)

“My one God is devoid of all attributes; He is neither Hindu nor Muslim;

I perform no puja nor namaz.”

“Brother, where have these Gods come from; who has misled you;

Allah, Ram, Karim, Keshav Hari, Hazrat, they are all the names of The One.”

For Kabir, love and compassion for all was more important. However, one can't say that this legacy of love is carried out untainted in India today. The social fabric of India is under immense strain due to communal violence, distrust, hatred and overwhelming stigmatisation of communities based on religious identities. The boundaries of religious identities are hardening, creating political binaries. The dominant discourse being promoted is that of homogeneity. The Hindutva ideology which proclaims that Hindus are the original and rightful citizens of India has set its own standards and litmus test for nationalism. Its idea of nationalism is based on upper caste Hindu traditions and negates the pluralism present both in Hinduism itself as well as in the culture of India, which has borrowed from different religions and traditions.

As opposed to this, Kabir's teachings provide space for inclusion of multiple narratives because he recognised multiple truths. The Hindutva supremacists attempt to shrink this inclusive space and uphold a single narrative of homogenisation. This is being manifested in the constant attack on Muslims, by attacking or discrediting the contribution of the Muslim community to Indian culture. For example, the history of India is sought to be rewritten, or roads and

monuments named after Muslim rulers are being renamed.

This hatred has spread to such an extent that there have been 60 incidents of mob lynching from 2010 to 2017, according to the *India Spend report*. Most of these incidents have taken place in BJP ruled states. The most recent incident took place in Hapur in Uttar Pradesh in June 2018. Two Muslim men, Qasim and Samayuddin, were attacked by a mob, allegedly over rumours of cow slaughter. In a photo of the incident that has gone viral over the social media shows Qasim being dragged by the mob in the presence of the UP police; he later succumbed to his injuries. In another video, a panting Samayuddin bleeding profusely from his head can be seen pleading with the mob. This case unfortunately is not unique in its brutality. Such cases of mob lynching, starting from Mohammad Akhlaq in Dadri to Afrazul in Rajsamand, have been a heart wrenching tale of inhumanity and pure hatred. In Dadri, the call to attack Mohammad Akhlaq was given from the temple!

If the government was indeed keen on spreading the message of Kabir in Indian society, it would have worked on multiple levels to arrest this trend. On one level, there would be an honest quest for justice. However, instead, the State is leveling charges against the victims instead of the perpetrators. On another level, it would work for social harmony and cohesion by treating all religions equally. *Hindu Rashtra*, which is directly antithetical to the slogan of “Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas”, would not be the stated objective of the ruling dispensation.

It is unfortunate if not surprising that BJP seeks to appropriate Kabir,

given his colossal legacy and following amongst the marginalised. A similar attempt is being made to appropriate Ambedkar and other tall leaders by the party for electoral gains. However, one hopes that Kabir's ideas are remembered in earnest and not for political gains. His idea of love has the power to work as an antidote to the violence that is sought to be normalised and polarisation that is prevailing in the society. Kabir's deep spirituality, which rests on love and self-introspection, offers an alternative to bigotry and hatred being spread in the name of religion and caste. He defied traditions to imagine and construct a vision of society based on love, devotion and humility. This also demands courage to see the truth and accept multiple truths—based on inclusion and loving others. This humanist approach towards society will help us to remould our society and make it more humane and harmonious.

Perhaps this last couplet will better convey his message of courage, transcendence and love:

Bhala Hua Meri Matki Phoot Gayee

Mein to Paneeyan Bharan se Chhoot Gayee.

(Thank God, that this pitcher of mine is broken; I no longer need to keep filling it with water.)

Email: csss2work@gmail.com

Spectre of Fascism

Contribution Rs. 20/-

Published by

Janata Trust & Lokayat

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Grant Road (W), Mumbai 400 007

Press Release

US Pressure on Modi's Foreign Policy

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's so-called aggressive foreign policy is once again ready to surrender the political sovereignty of the country to American imperialism. After breaking the nuclear treaty with Iran, the American President Donald Trump has told all countries of the world that they should completely stop importing oil from Iran until November 4. Nikki Haley, the visiting representative of the United States to the United Nations, has given the same message to the Prime Minister of India in stern words. She has said that India should rethink its relations with Iran, because America considers Iran a threat to world peace. Haley said that Iran is going to prove the next North Korea. However, in reality, the US has recently made an agreement with North Korea with great fanfare. Due to the engagement of the US representative in connection with the same deal, the India-US dialogue on July 7 has been cancelled.

The explanation of Ravish Kumar, spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs, did not have any special effect on Nikki. Ravish has said that relations between India and Iran are very old. India is the largest importer country of hydrocarbons from Iran. Indian Oil wanted to buy 7 million tons of crude oil from Iran by March next. In May, India imported 771,000 barrels of oil per day from Iran. The biggest difficulty after the US pressure would be the cash payment. It is not clear how India will pay for the import of crude oil of \$10 billion. India's oil companies have prepared a flexible plan for the payment along with making payment to Iran in certain items. These items include things like wheat and medicines.

Here, the real question arises: Is India's tilt under American pressure not a challenge to its political and economic sovereignty? The ruling class of India and the advocates of capitalism the world over do not tire of declaring India to be a fast emerging superpower. The Socialist Party wants to ask if superpower India has no right to decide who to befriend and whom to do business with? It seems that pomposity of 'aggressive' foreign policy of Modi is only to mislead the people of the country.

Earlier, when India had prepared to build a gas pipeline from Iran, the then Bush administration had pressurised India to break the gas agreement with Iran. Today, when India is dependent on Iran for meeting its energy needs, it is being forced to rely on Saudi Arabia and other countries. Meanwhile, under the pressure of the US, India has continued to vote against Iran in the International Atomic Energy Agency. Yet Iran has continued its friendship with India. The reason for this is that India has had a stable Iran policy for a long time. Till recently, it appeared that Prime Minister Modi's friendship with Iran was growing. But now it seems that under American pressure, he is ready to overturn India's established Iran policy.

The Socialist Party would like to caution the citizens—if this happens, India's image as a sovereign nation will be weakened in the world and its interests will be damaged. Therefore, the Socialist Party demands that the Modi Government should not sacrifice India's long-tested Iran policy under American pressure.

- **Abhijit Vaidya**
Spokesperson, SP(I)

Letter to Editor: Seminar on:

Targeted Tamil Nadu: Indian Civil Society Must Intervene

S.P. Udayakumar

We, the people of Tamil Nadu, are being targeted and taunted by right-wing political forces and a few wings of the Indian State machinery. Resenting our principled stand against caste oppression, communalism and hate politics, and rebuffing our informed position on the neo-liberal economic scheme and destructive ‘development’ projects, the above-mentioned forces despise us vehemently.

Ever since the massive, nonviolent struggle against the Koodankulam nuclear power project at Idinthakarai during 2011–2014, people all over Tamil Nadu have been waging massive struggles against anti-People, anti-Nature and anti-Future projects such as the hydrocarbon extraction and petrochemical projects in the Cauvery river basin in central Tamil Nadu, Neutrino project in Theni district, GAIL pipeline laying project in the agricultural fields of western districts, Sterlite copper smelter project in Thoothukudi, 8-lane greenfield highway between Salem and Chennai to transport the mountainous minerals, and so forth. There has been rampant sand mining in all our rivers and in our sea coasts, blatant encroachment of our water bodies, and a multitude of stone and granite quarries on our hills and mountains. The once green and lush Tamil Nadu is fast becoming a semi-arid zone with little or no rainfall, persistent drought and severe water scarcity.

The deeply disturbed and concerned people of Tamil Nadu

oppose the contemporary fascist development paradigm and the destructive projects that destroy our ecology, damage our health and wellbeing, and denude our futures. We are opposed to the Liberalization-Privatization-Globalization (LPG) policies and projects of the Central and State governments, and their mindless acceptance and execution of structural adjustment policies and stabilisation programs dictated by the international financial institutions (IFIs) and the multinational corporations (MNCs).

Instead of informing us about the so-called ‘development’ projects with all the relevant reports and documents, organizing public hearings and taking a final call with transparency, accountability and popular participation (TAPs), the authorities impose the projects unilaterally, undemocratically and in an authoritarian manner. Rather than accepting the simple facts that the ‘ordinary people’ of Tamil Nadu can think for themselves, that they can take a stand on issues that affect their lives, resources and livelihoods and that they are capable of safeguarding their rights and entitlements, the above-mentioned forces go berserk with all kinds of ludicrous claims and accusations.

They call us Maoists, Naxalites, Jihadis, Tamil Tigers, anti-Indians, foreign stooges, secessionists, anti-developmentalists, and so on. An article in the *Organiser* magazine (dated June 24, 2018), mouthpiece of the RSS, sums it all up succinctly: “It is proved time and again, that the

influence of Left Wing Extremist (LWE) organisations, Muslim fundamentalists organisations and Tamil secessionists (TS) organisations are prevalent in the genesis, conduct and guidance of all these movements assisted by the Churches of all denominations” (p.17).

The above article goes on to compare the Tamils with the Kashmiris. It says: “[P]olicemen were attacked and these attacks were videographed and made viral by these groups to make the perpetrators of those offences as heroes in the eyes of young people as was done by Kashmir extremists in the valley. The practice of exposing the family details of police/military personnel involved in operations and inciting people to take revenge on them has become a regular affair like Kashmir” (p.16). In other words, Tamil Nadu is seen as another Kashmir in the making and the Tamils are being looked down upon, just as the Kashmiris are. In this perspective, the Thoothukudi massacre of May 22, 2018 becomes a legitimate security action carried out to keep a bunch of anti-national Kashmiri-like elements at bay.

To make matters worse, the weak and discredited Tamil Nadu government has been toeing the line of the BJP government at the Centre in order to ensure its own longevity and to reap rich dividends from different sources. They arrest dissident leaders and activists all over the state under draconian laws such as the goondas act, NSA, UAPA

and so forth. The state police arrest 'ordinary people' quite arbitrarily, detain them illegally, treat them poorly, and literally run a 'police raj' in the state. They do not grant permission to organise protests or public meetings, curtail people's freedom of speech and freedom of assembly severely, and behave in a very high-handed manner.

To put it tersely, the Tamils are being targeted and taunted by both the pro-corporate BJP government at the Centre and by their cronies in the State. We are not able to take it anymore. We do not want to feel that we are being abandoned by the rest of India and the larger world. And we want the Indian civil society to know more about our plight and come to our rescue.

So we are organising a consultation between some of the Indian civil society leaders and local leaders of Tamil Nadu, and a public hall meeting afterwards on July 15, 2018, Sunday, at the Chennai Reporters' Guild, Chennai.

Email: drspudayakumar@yahoo.com

Janata Subscription

Annual Rs. : 260/-

Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft /

Cheque on

Mumbai Bank

in favour of

JANATA TRUST

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Grant Road (W),
Mumbai 400 007.

Book Review

Champan Satyagraha

(Second Edition: December 2017)

**Editor: Ravela Somayya; Published by :
Lohia Vijnana Samithi, Hyderabad**

This is the second edition of the book published to commemorate the centenary of Champan movement led by Gandhi. It is gratifying to note that the book needed a second edition within a short period of four months.

This second edition comes with addition of various reviews and comments on the first edition and also some new writings on the movement. The size of the book is literally doubled. The new articles are from eminent writers like Ramachandra Guha, S.N. Sahu, Anil Nauriya and Vadrevu China Veerabhadru. They are really enlightening.

Ramachandra Guha asserts that the roots of Gandhi's leadership lie in the Champan movement. It established his credibility as a leader with conviction when he dared the colonial authorities to arrest him for defying the unlawful laws. He has exposed the different vested interests that were opposing him.

It is true that there were resistance movements by the indigo farmers even before the Champan movement. But they could not succeed against the brutal suppression by the colonial authorities. Those movements were sporadic and there was no unifying force for them. It cannot be gainsaid that the Champan movement succeeded because of the unifying force provided by Gandhi. He also served as an enlightened leader of

the movement, mixing freely with the peasants.

The Marxist historian Irfan Habib has paid glorious tributes to Gandhi in the first edition of the book. He appreciated the way in which Gandhi managed to earn confidence of the peasants in spite of being a stranger to them. He moved as one among them. Gandhi also impressed them as an ethical person when he preached non-violence and stood upright against the threat of imprisonment for defying the administration.

In his article, Tushar Gandhi, the great grandson of Gandhi, has rightly stated that the Champan movement has to be understood as a powerful lesson to fight for the rights of the oppressed and exploited, not confined merely to the indigo farmers. He regretted that the condition of farmers is still the same as it was a century ago. We refuse to learn from history. Moreover he conceded that a similar movement may not be possible now since the various associations of farmers are divided and represent different political parties. It is a matter of shame that exploitation of farmers has become so intense that it is driving them to suicides.

Anil Nauriya gives the background to Gandhi's involvement in the movement. At that time, Gandhi was seeking to understand India as it was different from South Africa in many respects. Gandhi

was aware of the problems of indigo cultivators in India as the journal Indian Opinion published by him in South Africa had reported on it earlier. But having involved himself into the movement at the invitation of the suffering peasants, he gave it his heart and soul. Instead of assuming leadership directly, he started to understand the people and their actual problems. He mixed freely with the peasants to gain their confidence. He had to educate them and infuse confidence that they can get their problems solved. He earned their respect by defying the authorities, inviting imprisonment.

Nauriya also writes about what was happening all over the world at the same time as the Champaran struggle was taking place in India. When Gandhi entered Champaran, Lenin entered Russia from Switzerland to lead the Bolshevik revolution. In June 1917 Annie Besant was interned for starting the Home Rule League. There were public agitations all over the country in her support. Gandhi advised them to adopt the method of “passive resistance”. He told them “it may be illegal but not unlawful”. He believed in it deeply. As a result Annie Besant was released in September itself.

People followed Gandhi with confidence not just because he infused confidence in them about their capacity to struggle, but also because of the righteousness of his method of non-violence, which gave them the moral courage for their fight. While Lenin was appealing to industrial workers and soldiers, Gandhi in India was looking to organise the poor peasants spread over tens of thousands of villages. He had to unite them and set a common goal before them.

S.N. Sahu writes that Gandhi studied the conditions of farmers in such detail and truthfully that the report submitted by him to the colonial government formed the basis for the Champaran Agrarian Act, 1918 that stopped the forcible cultivation of indigo by the farmers. Sahu also explains the ramifications of the agricultural movement led by Gandhi in various fields like education, gender equality, public hygiene and communal harmony. It transformed the agrarian movement into a social movement, on which the entire independence movement was moulded.

The genuine agony felt by Vadrevu China Veerabhadru, while commenting on the first edition of the book, has to be noted. He laments that the most important incidents of history—like the Champaran movement—are the least mentioned in writings on history. Even intellectual members of society do not give due importance to such movements that determine the real course of history. The trend is to highlight capitalist and elite aspects ignoring rural and poverty problems. He described the Champaran movement as an ethical rather than political movement. It was an attempt on the part of Gandhi to express his indignation at the injustice being perpetrated on the innocent and helpless farmers. The subsequent movements like non-cooperation and Quit India were taken up for purely political purposes. Gandhi’s willingness to get imprisoned for defying an unjust law was the way to infuse confidence among the people to stand by their own convictions. He felt it necessary to liberate the people from mental slavery before making them ready for political freedom. The independence

movement was successful because of the groundwork done by him.

One hundred years back, the Champaran movement taught us that political and social freedom is possible through non-violence and truth. But the Naxal movement of fifty years back insists that political freedom is possible only through agitation and violence. The riddle is that the common people are indifferent to both the movements. They while away their time enjoying cheap entertainments. That is the heartfelt agony of Vadrevu China Veerabhadru and it reflects the feelings of intellectuals in the society now. His reflections are given in a Telugu version. It would have been worthwhile to give an English version of the same.

The additions made in the second edition of the book really add weight to the book. The significance of Champaran movement is analysed from different angles and from different points of view helping the reader get a wholesome idea of its place in history.

Ravela Somayya and the Lohia Vignana Samiti are to be congratulated for bringing out this volume.

Email: jjasthi@yahoo.com

The Unemployment Crisis: Reasons and Solutions

Contribution Rs. 25/-

Published by
Janata Trust & Lokayat
D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Grant Road (W),
Mumbai 400 007



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

An infrastructure company established since 1924

REGD. OFFICE

*New Excelsior Building, (3rd Floor),
A.K. Nayak Marg, Fort, Mumbai 400001.*

Tel. : 022 2205 1231

Fax : 022-2205 1232

Office :

Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai & New Delhi