

janata

Vol. 72 No. 39
October 22, 2017

**India should engage Pakistan
as Trump Flip-Flops**
D. K. Giri

**Socio-Economic Status of
Marginalised Castes in Post –
Independence India**
K. S. Chalam

**Story of A Dalit
Microsoft Engineer**
Prashant Nema

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

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

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com
Website: www.janataweekly.org

Election Commission-Is it Independent ?

Kuldip Nayar

THE Election Commission has never done it before and had developed an independent status since T.N. Seshan. He had given it a stature which was admired by the electorate. But the way in which the EC is dilly-dallying with the poll dates in Gujarat gives room to several conjectures. Some even see the hand of Prime Minister Narendra Modi who hails from Gujarat.

What it means is that the people have come to doubt the independence of the Commission. The Gujarat assembly's term ends on January 22, 2018 while that of the Himachal Pradesh on January 7. Last week, Chief Election Commissioner A.K. Joti announced the election date only for Himachal Pradesh and one doesn't know when the dates for Gujarat polls would be notified.

Understandably, this has created a controversy which could have been avoided with better management. Former CEC S.Y. Qureshi has rightly commented that the move to break from the EC's convention of announcing elections together in states where incumbent

governments are completing their terms within six months had raised "serious questions."

CEC Joti has cited relief and rehabilitation of the flood-affected in Gujarat as one of the reasons for the delay in poll announcement in the state. But nobody is buying this argument because, as former CEC T.S. Krishnamurthy said, "the emergency flood relief work is to be done by bureaucrats, not politicians. The Model Code of Conduct does not stand in the way of any emergency relief work. It does not prevent existing projects from continuing. Only new projects should not be announced during the MCC period."

The MCC is a common code that aims to provide a level-playing field to all contesting candidates during election season by guiding the conduct of the incumbent government, political parties and candidates.

"All this controversy could have been avoided with better management," Krishnamurthy said to a newspaper. "I suppose they

(EC) could have announced both (Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh polls) together, either one week before or one week after. I am not looking at whether the decision was influenced or not. I am concerned with whether, administratively, a solution could have been found. I think I would have found a solution.”

This observation by the former CEC has put a question mark against the EC. Once again, the doubts that have come to the fore are that the Election Commission is run by the bureaucrats under the guidance of the central government. The image and reputation of the Commission has been severely damaged.

Take for instance what the Gujarat government did anticipating the announcement of poll dates in the state. The officials of the Vadodara Municipal Corporation’s standing committee went into a huddle for one and a half hour to push ahead with a string of announcements. Chief Minister Vijay Rupani inaugurated several projects of development work worth Rs 780 crore besides extending free logistical services to Sri Sri Ravishankar’s Diwali event in the city.

Not only that the Ahmedabad Municipal Council which conducted the *Shahri Garib Kalyan Mela*, distributed 3,262 kits including cheques, funds and bonds under the *Manav Garima Yojana* with 4,103 getting the government largesse. The kits distributed included sewing machines, utensils, tri-cycles, dairy products, street-vending carts and other household items. The total sum of the kits and cheques distributed came to Rs. 165 crore. The cheques included a minimum of Rs 2,000 given to school girls as Vidyalakshmi bonds, Rs 5,000 to

parents with two girls and who have undergone sterilization, Rs 10,000 as a revolving fund by the AMC’s Urban Community Development department and the highest Rs 50,000 for inter-caste marriage.

The big-ticket schemes include Rs 165.75-crore project for providing drinking water to the city from Mahi River at a capacity of 150 million litres per day and beautification of the Sursagar Lake at a cost of Rs 38 crore. Incidentally, beautification of the iconic lake was also undertaken before the 2012 Assembly polls. Union ministers and chief ministers of BJP-ruled states made a beeline to Gujarat to extol the government schemes.

The Prime Minister, too, visited the state soon after and kick-started the poll campaign with his usual scathing attacks on the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty. He went on to say that the “family will destroy Gujarat because it dislikes Gujarat and Gujaratis” and called the coming assembly election in the state a fight between “development and dynasty.”

The old question comes to be raised yet again is whether the bureaucrats should at all be made members of the Commission? They are under the discipline of the Central Government and can be influenced. Although Seshan, a bureaucrat, disproved this thesis every bureaucrat cannot be a Sehsan. The government’s influence is inevitable.

We all remember the political storm created by former CEC N. Gopalaswami when he *suo motu* sent a recommendation to the President that Election Commissioner Navin Chawla should be removed from office on the

alleged ground of ‘partisanship.’ Gopalaswami’s action did raise several eyebrows within the government on account of its timing as well as its departure from well-settled readings of the relevant constitutional provisions. Subsequently, Chawla was elevated to CEC’s post on the advice of the government which had rejected Gopalaswami’s plea for his removal, saying there was no merit in the allegations against the Election Commissioner.

The noise raised over the appointment of an Election Commissioner makes little sense because it is a constitutional position. The government should itself be careful and not do anything which would cast a shadow on the independence or integrity of the Commission. The Commission itself should act in such a manner that there is no room for any controversy.

There is still time to retrieve the situation. The Election Commission should straightaway announce the dates of Gujarat poll to avoid any further challenge to its non-partisanship. Prime Minister Narendra Modi can save the situation and see to it that the Commission announces the date immediately. He is unnecessarily getting mixed up with the dates of Gujarat POLL.

Janata

is available at

www.lohiatoday.com

India should engage Pakistan as Trump Flip-Flops

D. K. Giri

The US President Donald Trump's tweet on 14 October had the South Block (India's external affairs headquarters) worried. It got busy in interpreting the message. Donald Trump tweeted as the Pakistan Army rescued a US – Canadian family from the captivity of Haqqani terror group, "We are starting to develop a much better relationship with Pakistan and its leaders. I want to thank them for their cooperation on our fronts".

Donald Trump is known for his flip-flops on many policy issues. But this tweet should not be ignored as one of those. What he says, is in contrast to their Afghan and South Asia policy announced in August this year. Donald Trump had named Pakistan for supporting the terror groups and warned Islamabad of consequences. The policy added, "Pakistan had taken advantage of US support for years and had worked against US interests". India was encouraged and emboldened by US listing Hizbul Mujahidden, and Syed Salaluddin. They had anxiously expected that the US will keep the heat on, especially as Haqqani Group was accused of killing American soldiers in Afghanistan. The same terror group had bombed the Indian Mission in Kabul Killing 58 people.

However, the moot point is, should India be too wary of America's utterances and policy on Pakistan? Should India rely heavily and solely on America to deal with Pakistan, which is aiding and abetting cross-border terrorism that bleeds Kashmir? Why cannot India take

independent actions on Pakistan, seven times smaller demographically and eight times lesser in GDP than India?

In fact, India is all-talks and no-action on Pakistan. It does not back its rhetorics with action, to the detriment of its national interest. Axiomatically, a promise carried out is costly, and a threat, not carried out, is costly. Our posturing on Pakistan without action is proving costly for us. No action undermines India's deterrent position. Admittedly, it is in India's national interest that India deals with Pakistan directly, on its own. There are four ways of engaging with Pakistan. First, the hawkish approach; to cow down, Pakistan as it will not restrain otherwise. It can be diplomatically pegged with the 'carrot and stick' approach, but more stick than the carrot. To start with, India should begin to downsize the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi, which is infested with ISI elements. India should withdraw the MFN status to Pakistan, that was unilaterally given. It should leverage the Indus Water Treaty (IWT). Did not Prime Minister Modi say "Blood and Water cannot flow together?" Instead, India has backslided, renewed the IWT, and gave World Bank a mediating role. India should stop the barter trade across LoC. In PoK, India has made no claim, except objecting to OBOR on the question of sovereignty. In the 2016 speech, on the Independence day, Modi raised the issue of Baluchistan, the mayhem and murder committed by Pakistani Army, but since then, India has not followed it up. To counter terrorism, India is

fighting a proxy war in Kashmir. It carried out surgical strikes in retaliation of the cross-border fires following Modi's surprise visit to Lahore. But, to be sure, such one-off strike will not tame Pakistan. India has to maintain the momentum of heavy retaliation in order to frustrate Pakistan's strategy of "seeking to inflict death by thousand cuts".

India is yet to declare ISS, as a terrorist organisation. It has imposed no sanctions against Pakistan. How does India expect others like USA to take action on Pakistan, while she, herself is dithering to do so? Some hawkish experts would recommend that India should declare that "not an inch of Kashmir, either for independence, or to join Pakistan, will be ceded, in any event". Such clear stance will dissuade recruitment or support to terrorism in Kashmir.

The second approach to Pakistan is to treat Pakistan as a potential friend. We have missed more than one opportunity to solve Kashmir problem amicably. Yet, if we make a hard assessment, Pakistan could be India's friend, and be treated as such. Despite the nuclearisation in both countries, and China's meddling in Indo-Pak affairs, it is unwise to consider Pakistan an enemy. It may be recalled that during Indo-China war in 1962, Pakistan took a helpful stand. As Prof. Vivekanandan, author of India's Security Concerns, argued, India and Pakistan should 'pool their destinies together' to lend substance to their symbiotic existence. One has experienced the warmth and affection when the

people of India and Pakistan meet each other across their respective borders or in a third country. People-to-people bond is too strong to set aside in bilateralism.

From my own experience, I would like to share two heart-warming episodes. One, when I was studying in the United Kingdom, I ran into one Wasif Hussain who had come to my University for his post-doctoral research in Chemistry. I was there for my Ph.D. We began to discuss our homelands. That is usually the case when you meet another visitor in a foreign country, He told me he was born in Rohtak, Haryana, and when he was nine year old, migrated to Pakistan during the partition. So he had vivid memories of India. To my surprise, he revealed that his family still believed that they were Indians living in Pakistan. He invited me home and introduced me to his wife Maimuna as his brother from India. He had twin daughters of 7 years of age. From that day onwards, as long as we were in the university, I became a maternal uncle to the twins, and Maimunna tied *rakhi* on me every year. I cannot forget the love and warmth they showered on me.

Second incident was when I visited Islamabad on a project with other South Asians. Out of all the countries (about 80) I have visited, this was my best visit. One day, the security was restraining me to go outside the hotel. I wore the *pathani* suit presented by Maimunna in UK and wore a cap. I walked out of the hotel in everyone's notice, and no one including the security staff stopped me. I went out into the urban villages nearby and roamed around freely. I would greet the passersby in Urdu that I had learnt from my teaching days in Jamia Milia Islamia

University in Delhi, they would return the greetings and soon I became one of them.

As a part of our study, we were taken to a village (*pind*) some 70 kms away from Islamabad. We were having some tea in a courtyard of the village chief. I was lying on a cot on the ground to enjoy the weather and the gentle sun; I was perhaps sun-bathing. I was woken up by drops of water on my right palm. When I opened my eyes, I saw an old lady in Haryanvi attire holding my hand as tears fell from her eyes. I was stunned to see her like that. Our host saw my surprise as well as curiosity. He smilingly explained, "The lady was born in India and was looking for the Indian among the South Asians. When we pointed you to her, she came to you and became emotional." The clarification relaxed me. The lady asked me where I was from in India. When I said, I live in Gurgaon but worked in New Delhi, she became overjoyed as she was born in Gurgaon too. But she was too sad not to be able to revisit her birthplace. There are many such encounters by other Indians with second and even third generation Pakistanis.

Therefore, the inimical posturing by both countries notwithstanding, there is no serious long-term security threat to each other. It is China that India and Pakistan should worry about which has an unsatiated territorial appetite. It uses India's neighbours including Pakistan as pawns against India. It has grabbed thousands of kilometres from India and is plotting to have more.

The third approach is; India should follow the 'Gujral doctrine' to deal with its neighbours and keep China at bay. What is Gujral Doctrine? I.K.Gujral, as a Minister for External

Affairs articulated his policy towards our neighbours in September 1996. This policy was called Gujral Doctrine. I.K.Gujral then went on to become the 12th Prime Minister of India. The doctrine had five principles. One, India should show a big heart without reciprocity from smaller neighbours except Pakistan, as the latter was capable of reciprocating. Two, no South Asian country, would allow its territory to be used against the interest of another South Asian country. Three, no country should interfere in the internal affairs of others. Four, South Asian countries should respect each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Five, South Asian countries should settle their disputes through bilateral peaceful negotiations. Reviving and adhering to Gujral doctrine would ensure peace and security in South Asian region, and restore Indo-Pak normalcy.

The fourth is a long-term visionary approach which calls for high statesmanship to be initiated. If Berlin wall can be demolished, if European Union can be constituted on the ashes of two-world wars, and many small wars fought in Europe, a new South Asia can be created to stop the rivalries and bloodshed. I am suggesting the creation of a United Nations of South Asia (UNSA). Looking back, the religious basis of creating Pakistan did not hold. Culture became a stronger unit than religion. That is why Bangladesh separated from Pakistan although the former too is a Muslim country. So, the Indian sub-continent comprising three countries, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh should be reorganised into nation-states; Punjab will be reunited into one, Kashmir will be one consisting of Indian Kashmir and PoK, Bengal would be one again with

(Continued on Page 6)

Satyagraha for 0% GST on hand made sector seeks to realise a promise made in the Indian Constitution

With the assurance of the Chief Minister of Karnataka Shri Siddaramaiah that the Karnataka Government will support the Satyagraha's demand for 0% GST on hand made products, Shri Prasanna broke his indefinite fast in the presence of various elders and supporters by accepting coconut water from Shri Veerabhadra Chennamalla Swamiji of Nidumaamidi Mata. The Chief Minister in his 19th October letter to Indian Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said that "imposition of GST on (handmade) products has had an adverse effect on the livelihood of such artisans engaged in producing such products". He also said that the demands of the Satyagraha "require serious and urgent consideration and a positive resolution. This would not only benefit a large segment of our rural population but would also give a boost to rural employment and sustainability. I, therefore, urge you to take this issue on a priority basis in the next GST Council and decide favourably benefiting a large segment of rural artisans. I assure you of the Government of Karnataka's full support in this regard."

Noted theatre and social activist Prasanna of Gram Seva Sangh was on an indefinite fast – since 14th October 2017 demanding "Zero Tax" on handmade products. He took the decision of an indefinite fast as several nation-wide actions as part of the Satyagraha demanding "zero tax" were not responded to by the GST Council of India. There is a growing demand to ensure India's

governance keeps the promises made in the Constitution of India and the Freedom Movement that there is active and willing support to sustain crafts people and such others who depend on their hands and skills in building the nation.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar spoke extensively about the need for positive discrimination favouring handcrafting artisans and communities who are essentially rural, fisher folk, pastoral, artisanal, tribal and such other natural resource dependent communities. This was also in acknowledgment of the State's role in correcting a major historical wrong committed against craftspeople who had been violently suppressed during British regime.

Gandhiji promoted the Charkha as the praxis of producing one's own essentials as the most profound act of sovereign existence, and that without damaging the earth or causing injustices to others in one's life. The idea was to build a just economic system that was both ecologically sustainable and ethical. As a part of this movement for fundamental reform, the State was called upon to enable and empower communities who provided us with our daily needs with a wide range of hand made products. Positive discrimination favouring handmade products by not taxing them would be the most fundamental support the State can extend to provide these highly marginalised communities with a chance to secure a dignified existence.

In introducing GST on handmade products, the GST Council of India, which is a negotiated process of all States and the Union Government, has comprehensively ignored the critical importance of such positive discrimination favouring the handicraft sector. Instead, handmade products have been heavily taxed, ranging between 5% and 28% (the highest tax bracket). The result of this will be mass impoverishment of the rural and informal sectors that support millions of livelihoods by making handmade products. Further, it will result in hand made products having no chance whatsoever of competing with mass-produced consumer goods, which are supported with a whole range of sops: such as easy credit supply, handsome tax breaks, easy and cheap access to natural resources, infrastructure, and also cheap labour. This discrimination favouring the industrialised class is producing an economy that is highly divisive, where a miniscule percentage are hoarding all profits, while the costs are borne by the rest of us. Besides, the impacts are being passed on to future generations as well. Such an economy is unsustainable.

Shri Prasanna's Satyagraha is a reminder to the State and the public at large, that we must stop hurting the handcrafting sector any further. His indefinite fast is a protest against such deliberate negligence and injustice, a movement in civil disobedience against our own elected Government that has become insensitive to the very people that placed them in power. This is also a

call to refuse to pay unjust GST when buying handmade products and demand that the GST Council introduces 'zero tax' on all handmade products in keeping with our Constitutional promise, especially that which is enshrined in Article 39:

- “(a) that the citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means to livelihood;
- (b) that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good;
- (c) that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment;”

The Satyagraha has been endorsed by several mass organisations, federations, cooperatives, political movements, etc. They include Janapada Seva Trust, Karnataka, Komu Sovharda Vedhike, Karnataka Rajya Devanga Naukara Sangha, Lancha Mukta Karnataka, Dalit Student Federation, Karnataka Janashakthi, Karnataka Vidhyarthi Sangatane, National Hawkers Federation, National Fishworkers Federation, National Alliance of Peoples Movement, Grameena Cooli Karmikara sangatane, Samudaya, Janata Dal (U), Janata Dal (S), Samajvaadi Party, Communist Party of India, Communist Party of India (Marxist), Congress (I), Rashtriya Swabhimani Andolan, Karnataka Gandhi Smaraka Nidhi, Karnataka Jyana vijyana samiti, SUCI, Sampoorana Kranti, Corruption-free Karnataka, Gandhi Bhavan, Jana Vadhi Mahila Sangha, All India Trade Union Congress, National

Federation of Indian Women, Karnataka Rajya Devanga Naukarara Sangha, All Indian Bank Officers Confederation, Lancha

(Continued from Page 4)

West Bengal and Bangladesh joining. This will coincide with the 'Akhand Bharat' approach, albeit with a difference. What is more, Tamil Nadu and Sri Lankan Tamils could be one nation. So, the culture based on language, the biggest connector, would constitute the rationale of nationhood (states). South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) would be replaced by the United Nations of South Asia. UNSA will end the internecine conflict of Kashmir and other such problems of nation-building.

Arguably, UNSA is a long-term Vision, but not a Utopia. Moving in

Mukta Karnataka, Praja Science Vedhike, Ekta Parishad, Rashtriya Cheneta Jana Samakya, and several several more.

that direction will lessen a lot of tension in South Asia, Indo-Pak relations in particular. Such a vision, communicated and shared well, should encourage the countries in South Asia to work in unity and harmony.

To conclude, undoubtedly, a South Asian approach towards integration is much better than inviting other countries like USA or China to interfere or mediate. Their association may maintain a 'balance of terror' but will not ensure peace, security and prosperity, and certainly, it is the latter we must seek.

Acharya Javadekar
A Satyagrahi Socialist



G. P. Pradhan

Price: Rs. 20/-

Janata Trust

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

**Books by
Surendra Mohan**

- 1. Vikas Ka Rasta: Nai Arthik Neetiyon ka vishleshan..** Price 600 rupees.
- 2. Samajwad, Dharma Nirapekshata aur Samajik Nyaya** Reissued as second edition; Price 500 rupees
Published by Rajkamal Prakashan, 2a Netaji Subhash Road, New Delhi 11002
- 3. Vartaman Rajneeti ki Jwalant Chunauiyan.** Price 400 rupees.
- 4. Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia ki Neetiyon:** (This booklet was published late last year.) Price 25 rupees.

Published by Anamika Publishers and Distributors. Ansari Road, New Delhi 110002

Socio-Economic Status of Marginalised Castes in Post – Independence India

K. S. Chalam

The marginalisation of Castes that are traditionally excluded from mainstream social and economic benefits are considered as SC, ST, OBC and minorities, the socio-economic status of these castes can be assessed in terms of the following concepts.

Marginalization has been defined as a complex process of relegating specific group of people to the lower edge of society. It effectively pushes these groups of people to the margin of society economically, politically, culturally and socially following the paradigm of exclusion.

Economic Deprivation is defined as the lack of sufficient income for people to play roles, participate in the relationships, and is a state of income inequality wherein income generated by one individual is not enough to cover his basic needs. It includes as per UK 6 parameters like income, education, employment, health, housing and crime

Social Exclusion is a complex and multi-dimensional process. It involves the lack of or denial of resources rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in a society.

After independence the government has planned growth with justice and used strategies like SCP/ TSP and several subsidised schemes for the marginalised. Yet the situation has not improved as expected. The

Table on plan outlays show how little is given to them. It is estimated that around Rs 53 lakh crores were allocated during plan period 1951-2017 and supposed to have spent Rs 8.4 lakh crores on SC and half of the same on ST as per their population in terms of the so called Special Component Plan by the end of 2017. It seems the money spent on SCs is about Rs 1 lakh crores and may be half of it for STs so far. This rough estimate (guesstimate) is made to show how the nation owes to these communities just in terms of the public spending. In fact much of the resources of the state were available for development and other projects because the people belonging to these communities remained poor, illiterate, malnourished, suffered ill health etc without getting sufficient legitimate attention of the state and the resources thus saved diverted to others. Therefore, the first charge of the budgets should have been on the welfare of these communities. But, the situation has worsened after P.M Narasimha Rao and his team introduced privatisation as a panacea for development of the nation, perhaps the nation consisting of the creamy layer of India, the Varna castes must have been benefitted.

There is some improvement in SC literacy rates from less than 1.9 per cent in 1931 to 55 percent, enrolment in to higher education improved with state support. Yet, the per cent of graduates from SC constitute 2.7 and ST 2.2 and BC 4.2 of their respective populations in 2010. However, the enrolment in to higher education is

somehow managed to show the UNO that it has crossed 20 percent is a misnomer. Health care provided through public health establishments is very poor. Inequalities after 1991 have widened and 1 per cent of the population own 58 per cent of wealth and 8 persons own \$ 80 billion dollars property. As per Oxfam, over the next 20 years, 500 people will hand over \$2.1 trillion to their heirs — a sum larger than the GDP of India, a country of 1.3 billion people.

The present status of poverty among SC ST OBC and minorities is estimated by Saxena to be around 50 percent and official figures place it around 30-35 per cent. The landlessness among these communities has increased and Land reforms, Urban Ceiling etc have been put to rest. The state has emerged as the biggest land dealer or real estate broker in recent times. Schemes like PPP and Infrastructure projects are being used as conduits to transfer poor people's land properties in the name of infrastructure projects first acquired by the state and later transferred. The recent land scam in Visakhapatnam to the extent of one lakh acres of government and D form pattas worth more than a lakh of crores is the biggest scam of the era is being investigated by SIT. The role of the judiciary is well known in the case of BALCO where it has clearly said that Judiciary has no role to interfere with state policy despite Art 39. Interestingly, the same apex court gives orders now and then on the basis of petitions made by upper castes on reservations despite of Art 15 and 16

of the Constitution. We cannot question them as they are svayambhus and are above Brahma. The so called implementation of Right to Education and Right to Food under Art 21 is the common knowledge of every one and the corporate media never bothers about such infringements.

Dalits and Artisan castes are displaced – they are not replaced and rehabilitated in the MSME. In the MSME sector SC enterprises constitutes 7.5 percent, ST 2.8%, BC 38% of the total units under Micro and under Medium category all the three put together constitute less than 0.1 percent. The corporate sector is totally under the grip of the private companies that constitutes 94 per cent of the total registered companies. Data shows that privatisation has increased- public sector jobs declined- privatisation of public sector initiated through PPP mode, casualisation, contracting etc have destroyed the family silver and they are for grabs by the powerful families who get the political bosses elected by investing in them wisely. Therefore, privatisation of public properties including enterprises is being done through the following methods.

1. Trade sale – selling an enterprise to the existing active firm in the industry

2. Public Offering - IPO, selling shares in the open to create diverse ownership

3. Management buyout- managers of the enterprise form a company and buy the unit

4. IPO plus scheme-pvt interests create funds to buy shares in the open and own it - BALCO

5. The debt for equity - creditors of the enterprise accept equity for debt and takeover it

6. PPP - some parts of the enterprise divert it for PPP mix and finally appropriate it

7. Management Contract, mostly in Saudi ports govt own, let on contract for management

8. Equalisation: Mixed ownership as in China no time limit fixed but pvt. allowed. India has innovative schemes like suit case companies and transfer properties as benami etc

The ONGC-HPCL buy out or takeover by putting a holding company to the shares seem to be dangerous- instead Govt. can own HPCL and give it to ONGC for managing to create behemoth may be alright- interest on Rs 25000 crores shares becomes a burden that make both ONGC and HPCL vulnerable for takeover by a giant like Reliance. The same is true in the case of Air India and other public sector enterprises. What has happened to the recent demonetisation episode and how - Paytm and other scams - share market scams taken place are little known to common man is process of transferring public properties to private individuals. It is strange to believe how such units are made efficient by Individuals with the same skills and markets is a great Brahmanda that needs a sage to explain and elucidate.

Slowly and steadily the public wealth and common properties are converted as private assets, help augment private wealth and not public. It has a social dimension in India as concentration of wealth is held in the hands of few varna castes-

crony capitalism. It is noted by Harish Damodaran - Chalam – Ravi Saxena and others that caste has played an important role in corporate governance as 46% vaisya, 45% Brahmin, 3% SC 3.8 BC are the board of directors in the Indian companies. The FDI story of using Singapore, Mauritius routes show that they are conduits of black money shifted from Swiss Banks and most of the investors are from upper castes.

Now Dropout rates at I-X for SC 68% ST 77%, higher education is less than 8% and no skill training in traditional occupations. The Average Value of Assets for SC is Rs 5.1 lakh ST Rs 5.5 lakh, others 16.6 lakhs urban 35 lakhs. Among all indebted households, SC households reported to be the highest “debt to asset ratio” (12.2% in rural and 18.5% in urban) followed by OBC (8.9% in rural and 15% in urban).

Displacement of Adivasis and Dalits in the project areas had affected the lives of around 4 crores in India. The situation in the subcontinent is the same. It has disturbed the equilibrium and peace in South Asia. The Chittgong Hill Track CHT – Kaptai Dam displaced in 1960s- Chakma Buddhists, Hajong Hindu-Tibeto-Burmese – The story of Bangladesh refugees- Silguri dalits- Cooch Bihar- Bengal Rohingya- mostly untouchables in the past got converted to Buddhism, Islam from animism is the greatest human tragedy worse than that of Jews, Palestine etc that are not documented and the Ex-untouchables of the sub continent remained outside public glare of civil society activism. They are Adi Hindus and we have problems on the border states including Pakistan, Bangla, Nepal, Sri Lanka etc untouchables who had contact

with mainland India – No problems with those who permanently migrated and remained as in South Africa, Myanmar, Mauritius, Caribbean and other places. Social identity of people of India is in crisis as none of the border countries in SAARC are in friendly terms- past history might throw light that they refused to accept the social division based on varna, descent or belief left Hindusthan- Now What do you do?

First strengthen your unity and

shock the nation as did Kanshiram in UP and ask for representative democracy by reducing the over representation of the Varna castes in all spheres of life in India. Find out an appropriate procedure to unite all Ex-untouchables-not just 20 dominant out of 1025 scheduled castes and 1200 backward castes to formulate a CMP-to demand representation in private sector or ask for shares in it as our ancestors and after independence our kith and kin have invested in Public sector

and in common property by remaining poor, ignorant and deprived by foregoing the minimum needs while they made Rs 91 lakh crores corrupt money as per social media postings before 2014 elections. Think it over and you need not rely on my words, search your hearts and be proactive.

(Summary of Speech delivered at ONGC SC ST OBC Officers annual conference held in Visakhapatnam, Sept 25-26, 2017)

Plan period	Plan outlay(Rs. in crores) SCP/TSP				
	Total	ST	Percentage	SC	Percentage
First Plan	1960	1993	1.00	6.13	0.35
Second Plan	4672	42.92	0.90	28.56	0.16
Third Plan	8577	50.53	0.60	40.82	0.48
Fourth Plan	1579	79.85	0.50	72.19	0.46
Fifth Plan	39426	1157.67	3.00	204.90	0.52
Sixth Plan	109292	3640.25	3.33	3722.97	3.14
Seventh Plan	180000	6744.85	3.75	7283.32	4.02
Eight Plan	181735	14873.43	8.18	22380.80	12.32
Eleventh Plan	118700	8141.00	3.7	96071.00	8.1

Growing Importance of Non-Government Companies

End March	No. of Companies			Paid-up Capital (Rs. in Cr.)			Share of Non-Govt. Cos. In PUC
	Govt.	Non-Govt.	Total	Govt.	Non-Govt.	Total	
1989-90	1,160	2,00,968	2,02,128	47,451	17,193	64,643	26.60
1994-95	1,199	3,52,093	3,53,292	73,300	62,719	1,36,019	46.11
1999-00	1,245	5,41,189	5,42,434	1,02,850	2,15,960	3,18,810	67.74
2004-05	1,328	6,78,321	6,79,649	1,55,814	4,98,208	6,54,022	76.18
2009-10	1,642	8,34,218	8,35,860	2,52,040	7,74,563	10,26,603	75.45
2015-16	65245	1023535	1088780	3287833	1674692	4962525	94.00

Story of A Dalit Microsoft Engineer

Prashant Nema*

One seldom hears any of the persons...saying, "Let us do something to change the Touchable Hindu."

—Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

Tanmay commented, "Frankly Prashant, if I weren't an exceptional student, I would have committed suicide long ago." His statement chilled my bones; having known him for years, I knew he was not given to exaggeration or needless drama. He was serious. As I shivered, I realised two things - that I myself was unexceptional and that even in that state, I played a role in his immiseration. I had to know more.

Tanmay and I had been chatting over lunch and the words were flowing. I had asked him to tell me about his background; he obliged me with elegance and passion. No books, lectures, or documentaries could have prepared me to understand Tanmay and what he represented. For others, we were just two Indian immigrants chatting over lunch but our chat was a statistical and moral improbability – the differences in our background were deep, wide, and invidious. After all I am an upper caste Hindu and Tanmay is a Dalit. How we got to this point of convergence - as "successful" employees of Microsoft – is a tale of deep deprivation and extraordinary strength on Tanmay's side and privilege and mediocrity on mine, an object lesson in the inequality of

endowments and circumstances wrought by the Caste System.

How I got to be interested in Tanmay's story is a lesson in itself. The recent discourse in my adopted home about Race had me thinking of an analogy to my own upbringing in India. As I came to understand White Privilege, it became increasingly difficult to comment or act on issues of racial justice without first confessing my own version of privilege.

The privilege I was born into and facilitated who I am today came from the same system that hampered Tanmay at every stage from becoming who he is today. People have of course heard of the "Caste System"- a complex system of hereditary and occupation-based segregation that has been an organising principle of much of Indian society for millennia. While most people know of it, few understand both its persistence and its cruelty for the hundreds of millions of people it designates as undesirable. To understand this is to enter the Heart of Darkness.

A Personal Journey

I was lucky enough to be born into

a family in which almost all members graduated University. Though still beset with traditional gender-roles, our family had done well - the adult males found stable jobs that afforded us middle-class luxuries. In a country recovering from colonial destitution and characterised by great inequality, this achievement was rare and important. Though my ancestors were largely small businessmen and traders, both of my grandfathers found their path in education and assumed professional roles in the growing and newly independent country. By the time my generation came, the basic existential needs of life were taken care of; in that sense my childhood and adolescence were easy and filled with the joys of privilege.

Tanmay was not so fortunate. Caught in the punishing cycle of Caste, his birthright was not education and privilege but difficulty. While the working adults in my family were professionals, in his they were involved in the skinning of dead animals. For literally thousands of years, generations of his family were locked into this thankless, dangerous and "God-ordained" profession. Those who attempted to break out of this vicious cycle were dealt with harshly. By the time of Independence

(*Prashant Nema, a Savarna engineer with Microsoft at Seattle has written this touching article about his friend and Dalit colleague, Tanmay Waghmare, that appeared on COUNTERCURRENTS.ORG on October 4, 2017 under the caption [Upper Caste Privilege: From Catharsis To Change](#). It is hoped that this article will make the upper castes more sensitive towards their not-so-privileged colleagues and convince them to stop opposing the policy of reservation.)

– 1947 - both his grandfathers were skinning these animals in largely rural India; They were part of a large group – numbering **200 million** today- called Dalits (or “Untouchables” in the common English translation.)

This extreme lack of occupational diversity and related deprivation in his community was not simply a matter of happenstance - it was the determined product of a carefully planned and enforced system of slavery. Not only was this a synthetic or man-made system but it was “sold” to the Indian population as part and parcel of their religion.

I recall hearing first about Caste when I was eight. My mother told me in passing that our last name meant we were “Baniyas,” or members of a particular caste. Though I understood very little, I later learnt from Indian mythology that Baniyas were a sub-caste of “Vaishyas” which implied that we were tradesman by profession. I learned about the other “upper” castes at that time too - Brahmins and Kshatriyas. Taken as a group, these members of upper castes are called “Savarnas.”

For most of my childhood, I didn't think much of Caste; in some sense I was lucky - I grew up in a cosmopolitan neighborhood defined by diversity and what we thought at that time to be a “modern” outlook. As I grew up, I remember specifically thinking that we had transcended “isms” and had achieved a universal outlook. As I reflect now, I realise how wrong I was - I cannot recall a single Dalit friend or family associate from my childhood. While we felt that we had achieved universality, we lived in the

heart of segregation. But at that time, I reveled in our “modernity.”

With my idealistic naiveté, I thought that despite its power in history, the caste system had lost its strength. Sure, people married within their caste and faced social opprobrium if they sought a partner from outside, but for the most part, as I thought, the more damning parts of the caste system had dissipated. I thought of my own family in which my own father was no longer a petty trader but was, instead, a scientist working on innovative and new things. India was a modernizing country with a progressive constitution and a well-developed idea of citizenship, so even if there were remnants of the caste system, they were benign. Sure, there was the notion of “untouchability,” but that was an excrescence, not a persistent feature of society. Interestingly, many learned people shared this position. The past was the past; the present and the future were bright.

Tanmay's childhood perception was the polar opposite of mine; his own caste position – as a Dalit and not a Savarna - gave him a rude shock from the beginning. First, it was evident to him that everyone around him were engaged in professions that viscerally repulsed him. Second, he was victim to scores of incidents in which he was singled out due to his caste, including by a teacher who, when Tanmay was only eight years old, declared to the class that the child was “not even touchable not to mention teachable.”

A system I thought had largely disappeared was simultaneously destroying Tanmay's aspirations. For me, it was a theoretical construct, part of our past; for him, it was real,

present, and inescapable. As I learned later on– after decades of life – 75 per cent of Dalit students drop out before completing high school, unable to manage either economically or survive the harassment leveled by teachers, students, and public figures alike, this childhood was very different than mine, which was filled with clear encouragement from my teachers, peers and others in my social graph. In addition to this, if social networking is a thing (and it is a billion dollar industry) I had success written all over my forehead.

For Tanmay, the deprivations and insults continued. Not only his direct relations but also all the people who lived in his vicinity shared the fate of having filthy, menial jobs, scraping the very bottom of the economic barrel, and being treated by others as untouchable. Amongst them were manual scavengers, janitors, animal rearers, and corpse handlers. The perception of these jobs is best described by the fact that the titles of these occupations are actually slur words in the common lexicon. Not only did Tanmay have to bear such insults, he was not only bereft of any amenities but also was intimidated by the powerful castes around him. He grew up feeling dejected, helpless and looked down upon.

Book Knowledge Versus Reality

It's not that notions of untouchability were unknown to me growing up, just that they seemed to be things of the past. We knew that for thousands of years, Tanmay's ancestors were not even allowed in public spaces, in some places they were not only “untouchable” but also “unseeable.” If they tried to educate themselves even by listening, religious texts called for molten lead

to be poured into their eyes. In every corner of the country, Dalits were assaulted and subjugated. With unrelenting harshness and unrelenting predictability, these life-killing practices became part of culture and tradition, accepted by the Savarnas.

Though there were countless uprisings through history, when colonial India entered the 20th century, untouchability was alive and well. With the ferment of the Independence struggle and the leadership of Dr BR Ambedkar – Tanmay’s hero and prime architect of Free India’s constitution, Dalits did gain Civil Rights including the benefits of the world’s largest affirmative action programme - called Reservations. But as with so many such situations, these rights were de jure and less commonly de facto.

For a Savarna like me, busy with my own studies and obligations, I had little idea of the difference between my idealistic picture and Tanmay’s lived reality. For me, Dalits were abstractions, metaphors for India’s progress. Untouchability, in my experience, was only invoked in history exams or through people who did all the menial work that makes my life possible but who are “invisible” by the rest of society.

To illustrate how “legitimate” reasons are propounded in order to justify the divisions of society into “touchables” and “untouchables.” Take for instance the fact that the professions often occupied by Dalits are considered “unclean” (like those who deal with human excrement, corpses, slaughtered animals, etc.) People in my echelon of society were told not to play with their kids for reasons of hygiene. The label of

“impurity” given by religious sanction was converted into a “modern” and “scientific” epithet having to do with hygiene. Forget of course, the provision of proper sanitary services – rich society had other priorities.

My bookish and idealistic view of Caste belied the painful reality on the ground. This “blindness” stems from privilege, just as theoretical notions of Race and Racism in the US belie the lived reality of the minorities who suffer.

There is of course more to the system than “personal contempt,” which of course exists. Sure, Dalits are questioned all the time - for their intelligence, integrity, and even humanity. But there are also the structural impediments - having to do with economics and social currency – that hobble their lives at every turn.

I had the privilege of not knowing; Tanmay had the opposite - the burden of being oppressed at worst and condescended to at best. That he fought his way through is a testament to his strength of personality.

University

The particular situation with regard to higher studies further divides Savarnas and Dalits. I succumbed to the mainstream propaganda, but not for reasons of contempt or religious fundamentalism. No, the highly competitive nature of Indian University admissions - coupled with the unremitting narrative of the powerful classes and castes - create a propagandistic environment in which the systems of Affirmative Action create even more hatred and divisiveness. While this is true in the US University and even in the

workplace (via Affirmative Action and Diversity programmes), the scale in India dwarfs what is seen in the US.

Admissions, especially to the few prestigious institutions in India, are highly competitive. With the system of Reservations, the “scores” required for Dalit students to get in are less than for Savarnas. This is exactly how Affirmative Action should work- it factors in the variety of obstacles that Dalits and others face along the way and attempts to counter this with slightly loosened standards for admission. Even with these programmes, the Dalit representation in these institutions is tiny; after all with economic deprivation, unrelenting humiliation, and other societal obstacles, very few Dalits make it this far in the first place.

But for a hard-working young person like myself, with only a bookish understanding of Caste, the idea of reservations seemed to be a blow against equality. If we want equality, shouldn’t all standards be equal? This narrative of conservatism afflicted me - it seemed fair and logical. It’s an indication of great privilege to invoke equality only when it serves oneself and to be blind to struggles for fairness and justice - equality itself - and to maintain silence when it serves others.

With these perceptions of unfairness and with the social baggage we grew up with, University life was characterised by a clear boundary between Savarnas and Dalits. I remember with great regret referring to Dalit students with derogatory terms because of the perceived injustice that my own friends were unable to get into the

university while less qualified Dalits were given “an easy route in. “No doubt there were Dalits from well-to-do families who were able to avail of the Reservation system to get in, but what large social system doesn’t have such cases? The rich and privileged use “the system” to their advantage every day but when someone else uses the very system in the very same way, we blanch and invoke morality! In a curious inversion, we declared ourselves victims!

The bias and animus against Dalits was not limited to fellow students but also characterised those with power—the faculty and administration. When these people spread ideas of Dalits being like Reagan’s “Welfare Queen,” they unleashed a terrible reality on Dalits - segregation, unfair insults, unfair grading, harassment, and a variety of other tortures.

Dalit students, who have fought tooth and nail, to get a glimpse of the decent life via education, often are broken; many commit suicide. The media often relate these suicides to the lack of ability to cope with the academic pressure, but all data suggests that the vast majority of these suicides are connected to mistreatment and harassment. In fact, this is a known phenomenon called “Death of Merit”. The more talented ones, the ones who dreamt of being able to breakthrough, cannot bear with the harassments and constant pressure and turn to suicide.

Tanmay

After understanding this, Tanmay’s invocation of suicide made sense to me; that he marched through all the difficulties and is now a celebrated Engineer in Seattle

is amazing and rare. He credits his mother a great deal. She was adamant about educating herself and her children. He found his courage through her and through the fact that he was an exceptional student. The system of Reservation gave him the confidence that if he excelled, he would be able to get into a good institution.

Despite his success, his struggle did not end there. Even in studies beyond his Bachelor’s Degree, he faced enormous discrimination. Via the serendipity of a benefactor, he was able to afford a Master’s Degree and to find the inner strength to endure the continued humiliations.

He finally made it to the US and to a fantastic job at a dynamic company. He points out that for many, these great jobs are a ticket to riches but to him they were a path out of a shackled life.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that I too worked hard and faced some challenges to get where I got but for the most part, my life has been one of privilege. Talking to Tanmay made me understand just how true this is and how many others suffer to enjoy even basic privileges. There are of course many Savarnas who have to overcome obstacles to succeed but for Dalits, the effects of multiple oppressions are that much harder to overcome.

The analogy in my adopted home is clear, especially in an era of open Racism. The Caste division in India is like the Race division in the US, even without adding in the effects of misogyny, bias against people’s sexual choices, and other prejudices. In fact, I was able to

learn about myself - and Savarna privilege - by understanding White Privilege.

In the end, the difficulty of life as a Dalit is palpable and real. Humiliations are common. Lives are destroyed. And most of us are either ignorant or callous. Even a cursory search for information yields a vast reservoir of knowledge and documentation indicating just how bad it is for Dalits; ignorance is therefore a privilege.

Tanmay taught me about myself and about the society I thought I understood. He and I are now connected; I wish I had recognized a Tanmay in my life when I was younger. I hope this story helps more Prashants and more Tanmays to find each other and through empathy, listening, and action reduce Caste oppression to a thing of the Past. It is my hope that listening will turn to acknowledgment, which then will turn into partnership and eventually a solution!

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,
Mumbai 400 007

Story of Struggle of An Anthropologist Born as A Brahman for Justice to Dalits and Tribals

Chandra Bhal Tripathi

Prashant Nema's matter of fact article captioned STORY OF A DALIT MICROSOFT ENGINEER published elsewhere in this issue of the Janata has once again highlighted the irrational anti-reservation attitude of pro-Hindutva elements in India and abroad. It has also prompted me to narrate the story of my own struggle for securing justice to Dalits and tribals of my country. I beg to be pardoned for writing this personal narrative on the subject, having been a part of the Constitutional organisation for SC&ST for 37 years (1959-95).

When I was about five (1935-36) I did not understand why my childhood friend Puddan, son of Ayodhya Chamar, the *harwaah* of my family in the village in Basti District, did not come to Basti town in July 1936 to study with me in the Primary School. As I grew up I started understanding the realities. My revered mother, Smt. Durgawati Tripathi, the eldest daughter of the socially conservative great Hindi litterateur Acharya Ram Chandra Shukla, proved to be my first mentor in shaping my social and political ideas. **She was a devotee of Buddha and Gandhi.** She was not like fashionable social workers of later years, specially of post-Independence era. I wish to narrate an incident that happened around 1943 when our family Mehtar (Bhangi) Gokul, without a family and living alone in Basti town two miles away from our home on Minson Road (renamed Madan Mohan Malviya Road due to the effort of my revered

father) fell seriously sick. My mother used to carry some cooked food and medicines for Gokul from our home to his *jhopri* daily on foot until he recovered. I used to accompany her in this mission. Gokul was said to be a religious man and even built a small temple at Ayodhya (obviously used by the Bhangi community, not even other Dalit castes, as inter-caste untouchability amongst various Scheduled Castes was and is still prevalent widely). This incident and an earlier incident in which my mother nursed a very sick Maulavi Sahab of village Nandaaur close to our ancestral village, at our home in Basti town to the extent of serving him food in the same utensils used by our family and even removing his excreta left an everlasting impression on my young mind. These were revolutionary actions in the social milieu of backward eastern UP eight decades ago. In 1948, when I was barely 18, I took a delegation of landless Chamar labourers of my village, to the District Magistrate, Shri SG Bose-Mullick, for allotment of land to them.

With reference to the above mentioned story of my mother nursing Gokul Bhangi I can recall only one parallel of the unique story of Pandit Kripasindhu Hota, one of the Panchsakhas of the grand old man of Orissa's national movement, Gopabhandhu Das. He brought up a Bhangi boy, Mohan Nayak, who joined Arya Samaj, became a disciple of Swami Sivananda at Rishikesh, back in Orissa became an MLA and MP and established the Thakkar Bapa Ashram at Nimkhandi on the

outskirts of Berhampur city. As Director for SC&ST, Bhubaneswar, under the Commission for SC&ST I visited this institution run by the Harijan Sewak Sangh many a time in early 1980s. There the inmates of the residential school offer prayers every morning before a statue (bust) of Pandit Kripasindhu Hota who had adopted Mohan Nayak as his son and declared that this former Bhangi son of his would give him *mukhaagni* (perform the last rites as son). By the way Pandit Kripasindhu Hota's grandson is Shri Purna Chandra Hota, IAS (1962: Orissa), former Chairman, UPSC.

One of my first assignments in the Office of Commissioner for SC&ST in 1959 was a survey of practices of untouchability in 13 districts of the erstwhile Uttar Pradesh selected in different cultural-cum-dialectal regions of the State. The findings of the survey were an eye-opener for me. The Commissioner, Shri LM Shrikant, was a bit reluctant to present that 300-page report to the then Home Minister, Pt. GB Pant, who had been the Chief Minister of the State. I politely said that if he wished he might not present the report to the Home Minister, but as an anthropological field researcher I was not prepared to fudge a single line of my report presenting a dismal picture of the State. That survey incidentally exposed me for the first time to the unfortunate fact of the acute practice of untouchability by one 'higher' Scheduled Caste against another 'lower' Scheduled Caste. Susequently during my postings

almost all over India I found that it was a universal phenomenon. In Andhra Pradesh it was more marked between Malas and Madigas.

My posting at Jaipur as Asstt. Commissioner for SC&ST for Rajasthan (October 1960- February 1963) was a boon as it gave me an opportunity to fight against the atrocities committed on SC and Denotified Communities in the erstwhile feudal society. I came in conflict with several Collectors and Superintendents of Police in the districts in this context and with a veteran MP from Udaipur known as the king-maker of Rajasthan who was responsible for corruption in implementation of tribal development schemes. The then Chief Secretary, Padmashri B. Mehta, sent for me and said to me: "Do you think you are the only person in the State who feels for SC&ST? You have been harassing my Collectors and SPs. It is my job to protect them and let the Government of India protect you." It transpired that the Collector of Sikar, with whom I had a tiff over the issue of a poor SC person having been blinded with a 'Jelly' (trishul like instrument) by his Jat neighbour for the 'crime' of stepping on the latter's land that was unavoidable in the given situation, had complained against me to the Chief Secretary to whom he was said to be related. The Chief Secretary complained against me to the Union Special Home Secretary, LP Singh, ICS, belonging to an aristocratic family of Bihar. Very soon I received orders transferring me to Chandigarh office which looked after the work of SC&ST in Punjab (it included Haryana then), J&K and the UT of Himachal Pradesh. There were protests by NGOs and SC/ST social workers from all over the State demanding that I should be kept in Rajasthan to look after the interests

of poor and exploited SC&ST. I went to pay a courtesy call on the Governor, Dr. Sampurnanand, whom I had known rather well in UP. He told me: "I can speak to Sukhadia ji (Chief Minister) and get your transfer cancelled. But your continuing in this State will no more help the SC&ST as the State officers will not cooperate with you. But I am quite happy with the way you have been working here and I wish you continue to work with the same spirit and enthusiasm elsewhere". These words from a senior and intellectual leader were enough of blessings for a youngman of 32. It was a coincidence that fifteen years later the Ministry of Home Affairs entrusted me with the job of setting up a new All India office of Commission for SC&ST in 1978 and I was initially looking after the administrative as well as technical aspects of the new set-up. All the files including personal files were handed over to me by the Ministry. During that period I happened to see my own personal file and it gave me ample satisfaction that the Deputy Home Minister, Smt. M. Chandrasekhar, and the Home Minister Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri had recorded their appreciation of my performance in Rajasthan but honoured the recommendation of the Special Home Secretary to transfer me from Jaipur to Chandigarh. The kinship of bureaucrats!

A few months before his demise Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru was in tears at a public meeting of manual scavengers of Delhi at Ramlila Maidan and lamented that in the whirlwind of national and international issues he did not find time to know about the living and working conditions of scavengers. This was one of the points I made at a national seminar in 1989 at Shillong

to celebrate the birth centenary of Panditji. I presented a paper on the subject of Pandit Nehru and the SC & ST. I did not mind ruffling some feathers.

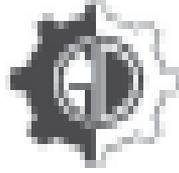
I am grateful for an opportunity given to me in 1965-66 as Secretary to the Committee on Customary Rights to Scavenging headed by Prof. NR Malkani and comprising seven Members of Parliament. This Committee was set up by the then Union Department of Social Welfare. In the company of the great social worker Prof. Malkani, who had first met Gandhiji in 1917 at Muzaffarpur before he proceeded to Champaran (both he and Acharya JB Kripalani were teachers in the Govt. College there) and who later devoted his whole life for the amelioration of the conditions of scavengers, I could see the inhuman conditions of scavengers in all those States where scavenging had not been municipalised and scavengers were working under the Jajmani system. I do not wish to write more about this issue here but I would urge upon compatriots including the SC friends belonging to other castes to spare some thoughts for this most deprived and disadvantaged section of the whole Indian population.

I thought of recording some of my personal administrative experiences, never done before, to tell my friend Tanmay Waghmare of Seattle that I can empathise with him and remind him that innumerable generations of the deprived and the disadvantaged have suffered and sacrificed, that we all should pay tribute to them and honour the sacred memory of Mahatma Gandhi, Thakkar Bapa and Babasaheb Dr. BR Ambedkar and that we all have to fight for their rights and human dignity unitedly, non-violently and democratically.

Postal Registration No. MCW/275/2015-2017.

License to Post without prepayment WPP License No. MR/Tech/WPP-210/West/2017

Published on Sunday, October 22, 2017 & Posted on Wednesday October 25, 2017 at Mumbai Patrika Channel, Mumbai GPO-



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

An infrastructure company established since 1924

REGD. OFFICE :

*New Excelsior Building, (3rd Floor),
A. K. Nayak Marg, Fort, Mumbai 400 001.
Tel.: 022 2205 1231 Fax : 022-2205 1232*

Office : Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai & New Delhi