



# Ambedkar Times *Weekly*

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## Desh Doaba: Dedicated to an Egalitarian Social Life

Prem Kumar Chumber

Editor-in-Chief: [www.ambedkartimes.com](http://www.ambedkartimes.com)

Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba Weekly Newspapers USA

We are glad to intimate that "Desh Doaba" Weekly Newspaper has successfully completed thirteen years of its uninterrupted publication. This could not have been possible without the active support and encouragement of our esteemed supporters, well-wishers, contributors and readers. "Desh Doaba" has been dedicated to the fond memory of Ghardarite Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia Ji, who was one of the five members of the proud team of the Gadhar Lehar that was assigned with the herculean task of taking ship load of weapons to India for its revolutionary emancipation from the British rule. The mission, however, got sabotaged leading to the arrest of the team and the subsequent unfolding of horrendous happenings leading to death sentence of its members, which was averted miraculously and finally Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia Ji found himself stranded in an island in Philippine for a long time. After returning to his native village in 1925, after spending long 16 years abroad, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia Ji was deeply pained to find that the life conditions of his fellow low-castes did not change at all for the better and they continued to suffer tremendously because of the socially imposed untouchable caste slur on them. He decided to fight this deeply entrenched social evil, as he had tasted the flavors of democratic life in the freedom land of the United States of America. He founded Ad Dharm movement and built a strong social and political movement of the lower castes people of undivided Punjab to fight against caste system and to liberate his people from the shackles of social exclusion.

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia stood with Dr. B.R. Ambedkar while showing great solidarity with him during his London Round Table ties with Mr. M.K. Gandhi on the issue of who is the national leader of the depressed classes in India. Babu Ji sent many telegrams messages to London in the favour of Dr B.R. Ambedkar making him win in the battle. His wise and bold leadership of the Ad Dharm movement win many battles for the emancipation and empowerment of the lowest of the low. He secured for his people a distinct religion, actively participated in Punjab provincial assembly elections winning all the reserved seats in the pre-partition Punjab, and giving his people their long lost cultural heritage epitomized by the sacred Bani of Sri Guru Ravidass Ji. It was Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia and his Ad Dharm movement, which prepared the fertile ground for the spread of the mission of Babasaheb Dr B.R. Ambedkar in Punjab and stood with him like a rock not till his last breath but with his thought even today. Desh Doaba weekly put on records its sincere thanks to all its supporters, contributors, readers and well-wishers and seeks your continuous support in this humble endeavor!

"Ambedkar Times" and "Desh Doaba" forums send you all our BEST WISHES on the 134TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF BODHISATVA BHARAT RATAN BABASAHEB DR B. R. AMBEDKAR, THE CHIEF ARCHITECT OF THE CONSTITUTION OF INDEPENDENT INDIA, THE LEGENDARY STATESMAN, MESSIAH OF DOWNTRODDEN AND THE GREATEST INDIAN EVER BORN! Babasaheb taught us the lesson of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. His legal and constitutional method of resolving conflicts has equipped the world to seek democratic solutions to social, economic and political problems for the establishment of an egalitarian order!

## Floral Tribute to Babasaheb Dr B.R. Ambedkar on his 134th Birth Anniversary

Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar is fondly remembered not only on his anniversaries but also every day in reference to multifarious contributions that he made in different domains of the Indian society during his struggleful life (April 14, 1891-December 2, 1956). He was one of the few highly educated persons of his time in India; not only in his own community but all the communities putting together in whole of the country. It will not be an exaggeration to say that even in our contemporary times; he is over and above all the highly educated persons in our country as far as his higher academic qualifications are concerned. His pursuit of the academic realm remained intact till his last day as was told by his



trusted scribe Mr Nanak Chand Rattu for whom he left his hand written notes ready for typing the same day he left his mortal body. His magnum opus 'The Buddha and His Dhamma' was published posthumously. Trunk loads of his hand written and typed material was collected from varied scattered places/sources by his missionary followers that eventually put together in 21 Volumes published by the Government of Maharashtra. More and more new literature in Marathi language prepared by Babasaheb continues to enrich the existing treasure of his so far published works. His excellent drafting of the manuscript of the constitution of Independent India is a testimony to his command on the subject as well as the language. It was his love for the word that he founded four journals to disseminate information and his ideas among the people of pre and post-Independent India, particularly those who were pushed into the periphery for centuries because of the social imposition of low-caste birth slur on them. These journals - MookNayak, Janta, Bahishkrit Bharat, and Prabudh Bharat - brought the much desired social and political consciousness among the lowest of the low in the absence of any independent educative agency of their own. This was the maiden journalistic attempt in the life of the downtrodden in the caste-ridden society of India. To further sharpen the socio-political transformation of the subaltern life in the country, Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar founded three political parties - Independent Labour Party, Scheduled Castes Federation, and Republican Party of India - for the upliftment of the millions of socially excluded people in pre and post Independent India to aspire them become equal partner in the governance setup of the country. His ace intellect based on

his towering intellectual achievements and scientific approach brought him into the highest positions in the legislative domains of both the British administration and the central government of Independent India. His deep concern for his people and principles made him to say good bye to such offices of highest order as and when the time forced him to choose between his people and these offices.



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The sterling contributions made by Babasaheb Dr B.R. Ambedkar is not only confined, as is often echoed out, to the framing of the constitution of Independent India and the emancipation of the Scheduled Castes. His multifarious contributions cover as many diverse fields as the establishment of Reserve Bank of India, Finance Commission, Damodar Valley Corporation, National Power Grid System, Hiraakund Project, Navigation Commission, Employment Exchange, provisions for medical leave, Labour reforms, minimum wages, equal pay for equal work, Abolition of Land Alienation Act to mention only the most prominent ones from the long proud list. His slogan "Educate, Agitate, Organise" inculcates the value of written word for the awakening of the downtrodden that will create the required social and political consciousness among them what he innovatively labelled as 'Agitate'. Such a socio-political consciousness will help them make concerted efforts towards what the last word of the slogan is i.e. 'Organise'. The intrinsic value of this brilliant and emphatic slogan coined by Babasaheb Dr Ambedkar lies in the fact that any organised body of downtrodden based on sound knowledge of their live conditions will not allow them to sit leisurely until the goal of their emancipation and empowerment is achieved. This very slogan in conjunction with another one "Liberty, Equality Fraternity" will help India, as emphasised by Dr Ambedkar, get rid of not only from the yoke of centuries old rule by foreigners of different races and regions but also from our internal social evils like caste system and Untouchability. Moreover, our long subordination had much to do with the prevalence of such social evils like caste and Untouchability that sharply divided the people of this vast land of Bharat into low and high caste groups, consequently leading to their internal disunity and feebleness. Caste is anti-nation, reiterated Babasaheb. It did not allow fraternity to germinate among the social life of people. Where there is no fraternity that multitude of people will come easily under the command of foreign rulers. Babasaheb exhorted the people of our country to get rid of caste as soon as possible if they want to become an independent nation. He devoted his entire life towards that end - annihilation of caste! If India has to become a proud nation among the community of nations in the world, it has to follow the way as revealed to its people by Bodhisattva Bharat Ratan Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar. The map to that sane way is meticulously preserved in his brilliant treatises available in various languages of the multicultural society of India. The real tribute to this legendary statesman and greatest ever born son of India is to read his books and to think like him to take India towards the establishment of true social democracy by completely annihilating the virus of caste from its social and political body



# The Creation of the Khalsa Panth The Eternal Journey: From Spiritual Awakening to Sovereign Identity

The period from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh marks a remarkable continuity of thought and a unified, purposeful and divine mission. During this era, the foundations of what are now considered as modern ideals—liberty, equality, fraternity, justice, democracy, peaceful coexistence, multiculturalism, and an egalitarian social order—were all developed by the Sikh Gurus both in letter and spirit. These values were not merely preached but lived, upheld, and fiercely defended through unprecedented sacrifices by the Sikh Gurus and their devoted followers, leaving an indelible legacy in the annals of human history. The vision that Guru Nanak cherished was shaped into action by the Guru Gobind Singh. What Guru Nanak preached, Guru Gobind Singh nurtured a spirit and environment to live by. The dreams that Guru Nanak saw, Guru Gobind Singh showed us how they could be realized in the real world.

Guru Nanak was connected deeply with the foundational truths of every religion. He transcended the religious boundaries, emphasizing that true spirituality lies in living by the core principles of one's faith with sincerity and integrity. Rather than advocating religious fanaticism, Guru Nanak promoted the interfaith dialogue, mutual respect, and understanding among people belonging to various cultures and religions. He envisioned a world where individuals remain rooted in their own traditions while recognizing the shared divine essence in all humanity. When he reappeared after three days, he brought with him a revolutionary vision of human equality and oneness of the Divine. His message challenged external identities and emphasized the essence of being truly human, anchored in truth, compassion, and remembrance of the One. There exists a profound symbolic interconnectedness between Guru Nanak's first divine message—"There is no Hindu, there is no Muslim"—uttered upon emerging from the waters of the

Kali Bein, and Guru Gobind Singh's historic creation of the Khalsa. Guru Gobind

Khalsa Panth at Anandpur Sahib, formally introducing the idea of the Five

rule to the realization of a spiritual and just sovereignty through the Khalsa—a community of the pure, guided by divine will. Guru Nanak also challenged the rigid caste system to morally and spiritually uplift the oppressed, laying the foundation of an egalitarian society. Building on this vision, Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa—endowing them with spiritual strength and martial skills to defend not only themselves but the dignity of the entire nation. From Guru Nanak to Guru Tegh Bahadur, the Sikh Gurus sowed the seeds of social and religious transformation but Guru Gobind Singh then accelerated this transformation, shaping a sovereign, conscious community committed



Singh, carrying forward his sacred mission, gave that spiritual awakening a concrete form. Through the creation of the Khalsa, he infused that inner realization with a visible identity and a disciplined way of life. The Amrit ceremony was not just a ritual, but a spiritual rebirth—an embodiment of the same divine essence that Guru Nanak had experienced. Thus, Guru Nanak bathed in the nectar of divine Truth to awaken humanity, and Guru Gobind Singh prescribed a life of commitment, purity, and courage to sustain and protect that Truth. One initiated the journey of spiritual liberation; the other gave it form, strength, and identity. Together, they represent two divine expressions of one eternal mission to guide humanity toward becoming truly divine.

Guru Nanak laid the foundation of a spiritual revolution by rejecting hollow ritualism, exemplified through his refusal to wear the Hindu sacred thread (janeu), asserting that true spirituality lies in inner purity and righteous action. This profound act was not a mere rejection but a call to liberate the human spirit from external formalities. Carrying forward this legacy, On Vaisakhi Day in 1699, Guru Gobind Singh established the

Kakars, or the Five Ks. He envisioned a community of saint-soldiers, who were brave and committed to equality, truth, and morality. These were not rituals, but living symbols — imbued with deep spiritual and ethical meaning — meant to instill discipline, fearlessness, and a constant readiness to stand for justice. In this way, Guru Gobind Singh did not contradict Guru Nanak's message but gave it a new form to meet the needs of the time — transforming the individual quest for truth into a collective force prepared to defend righteousness in both peace and conflict.

Guru Nanak began his divine mission from Sultanpur Lodhi—a city named after the Lodhi Sultans, symbolizing the temporal power of worldly rulers. In contrast, Guru Gobind Singh brought Guru Nanak's vision to its fullest expression at Anandpur Sahib—a city that embodies spiritual bliss and sovereign dignity. This journey reflects a profound symbolic interconnectedness in a way that a movement from rejecting the authority of oppressive worldly regimes to establishing a divine order rooted in truth, justice, and the teachings of the Infinite Reality. It signifies the transformation from submission under temporal

to upholding individual dignity and preserving cultural tradition. He did not deviate from the teachings of the earlier Sikh Gurus; instead, he institutionalized their ideological essence. His contributions should be understood as a seamless continuation and embodiment of their shared thought, values, vision, and mission.

The teachings of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh must not be confined within narrow or parochial interpretations. To truly grasp even a fraction of their grand vision, we need to broaden our mindsets. Their message transcends the boundaries of any single religion or community—they are not merely the Gurus of the Sikhs, but spiritual guides and saviors of humanity. Their lives and teachings offer eternal wisdom and guidance for the entire human race. Guru Nanak, the harbinger of divine wisdom, cautioned humanity against the darkness of ignorance, tyranny, and moral decay. In continuity of that vision, Guru Gobind Singh did not merely avoid that darkness — he boldly stepped into it, carrying the torch of righteousness, fearlessness, and spiritual clarity. Where Guru Nanak pointed to the perils of spiritual ignorance, Guru Gobind Singh confronted those very shadows head-on, illuminating the path for others with the fire of divine courage and sacrifice.



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# Ambedkar-A Global Icon of Social Justice



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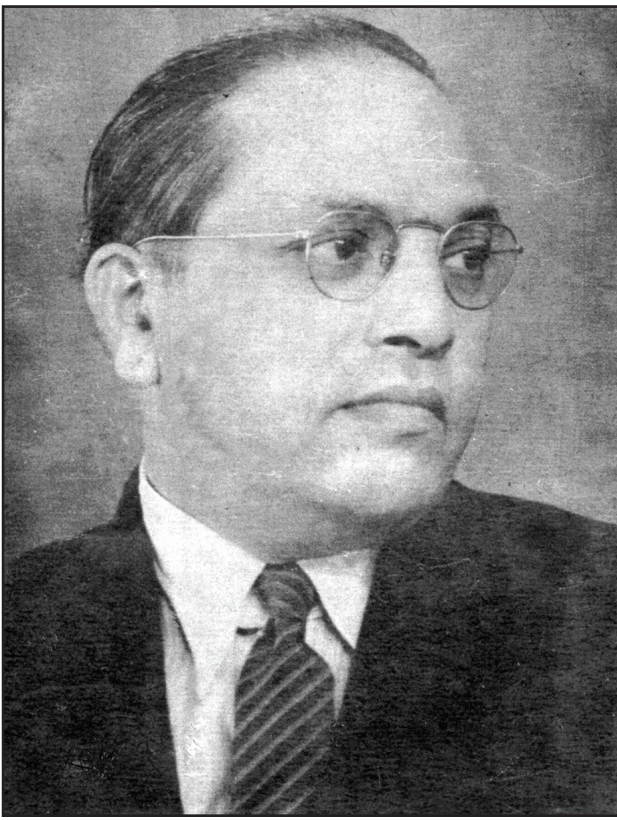
Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar is internationally renowned as the chief architect of India's Constitution, a social reformer, a civil rights movement leader, a lawyer, a politician, an outstanding academic, liberator of women and a revivalist of Buddhism. Dr Ambedkar's status within the United Kingdom (UK) consciousness is demonstrated by him having an entry in the UK's Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, a reference work now over 200 years old. It contains men and women who shaped the British history worldwide. He was and continues to be an inspirational and iconic champion of human rights in many countries around the world. In his lifetime, Dr Ambedkar devoted whole of his life to get basic human rights for his people with his motto 'Educate, Agitate, Organise', and launched a number of campaigns for entry into public places in India. His significant work in the Constitution of India, adopted in 1950 helped, and continues to, help lift many so-called Dalits out of poverty and address caste-based discrimination and the practice of Untouchability.

Dr Ambedkar advocated gender equality and championed the liberation of women and framed the laws that included provisions to give women the

right to inherit share of their father's property and a right to a divorce. Addressing a mammoth women gathering on 18 July, 1927, he declared, "I measure the progress of community by the degree of progress which women have achieved."

Today Dr Ambedkar is accepted worldwide as one of the greatest champions of equality and social justice. His contribution in the matters of equality is recognised around the globe as equality matters to everyone. It helps in creating inclusive societies where everyone is able to make contributions and advance interests of humanity. His contribution to social equality is as significant as that of Dr Martin Luther King Jr and Dr Nelson Mandela.

He has been honoured with statues, schools and rooms in institutions and library's named after him. Columbia University in the US, London School of Economics in the UK, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, York University, Toronto, Canada, Koyasan University, Japan, New Zealand, Australia, and Hungary are some of the many places where his statues have been installed. In Hungary there is a school named after him. In Jamaica, a road 'Dr Ambedkar Avenue' was inaugurated by the former President of India. There is a street 'Ambedkar Way'



in Auckland, New Zealand. A road is named 'Dr Ambedkar Way' in New York, USA. In London Gray's Inn, his Alma mater has honoured him by naming a room 'Ambedkar Room' and installing his portrait donated by the Federation of Ambedkarite and Buddhist Organisations, UK (FABO UK). Ambedkar Museum London has become pride for all marginalised for having only museum in the world named after any Indian.

It is also a matter of great satisfaction to observe when a number

of organisations, institutions and local authorities in India, and around the world are honouring Dr Ambedkar by declaring 14 April, a day of equality. First City of Burnaby in Canada proclaimed this in April 2020, followed by a declaration that 14 April is 'Dr B.R. Ambedkar Day of Equality'. This was followed by the Province of British Columbia, Canada in April 2021 that reaffirmed it again in April, 2022 and 2023. Vancouver also followed this and recognised 14 April as a day of equality. In the US, the state of Colorado has also declared it as a 'Day of Equity.'

In the United Kingdom, City of Coventry made a declaration "Coventry City Council hereby declares 14th April as Equality Day in honour of the work of Bhim Rao Ambedkar for equality, liberty, fraternity and justice for all humans." Bedford became the second town in the UK to recognise Dr Ambedkar's legacy and declared 14 April as Equality Day.

In the multicultural, multi-religious, multi-racial, multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic societies, Ambedkar's pioneering work is an inspiration to the aspiring downtrodden people. In this diverse society, equality and human rights are defining values that aim to reduce inequality, eliminate discrimination, promote equal opportunity and strengthen good relations between different people. His legacy transcends beyond borders. His ideas of equality, equal opportunity, dignity and fairness are needed to be implemented. That would be the true tribute to him on his birthday



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# Punjabi Dalit Periodicals as Expression of Self-Assertion in the past Hundred Years



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As a frontier society in the North-west of the Indian subcontinent, Punjabis faced constant challenges and changes through historical times. Although, the region remained relatively free from religious dogmas, it was gripped by

casteism and untouchability in the nineteenth century; that paradoxically by the Sikh religion. Dalits, who had enjoyed better treatment and tremendously contributed to the formation and consolidation of the emancipatory Sikh religion, became the worst victims and sufferers. Despite this setback, Dalits had produced very enlightened poets and minds. Meanwhile, the revivalist movements like Singh Sabha and Arya Samaj started working to attract them. But gradually the Punjabi Dalits awakened against great discrimination and injustice done to them. They formed Khalsa Biradari in 1907 to struggle against victimization within the Sikh tradition and successfully entered the Golden Temple complex in October 1920 which in turn gave birth to the SGPC, Akali Party and Gurdwara Reform movement.

In the mid-1920s, the Punjabi Dalits autonomously united themselves in the Ad Dharm Mandal and gained an independent recognition in the 1931 Census. In the late 1920s, the movement started its first periodical *Adi Danka* that continued till early 1950s. Besides short-lived magazines like *Dalit Bandhu*, they launched a weekly *Ujala* in 1948. Lahori Ram Balley started *Bhim Patrika* in 1958, the longest Dalit periodical in the country that has continued till date. Several periodicals like *Ravidas Patrika*, *Ravidas Jaikara*, *Qaumi Udarian*, *Beghumpura Shehar*, *Jantak Lehar*, *Vigyanak Soch*, *Dalit Duniyadari*, *Hashiya*, *Ambedkari Deep*, and quite a few others, have deeply spread the knowledge and awareness about Dalits' issues, concerns, Ambedkarite ideology and hence sharpened the Dalit consciousness. These continuous efforts have produced eminent leaders of national importance like Lahori Ram Balley and Babu Kanshi Ram besides several others.

1. The question of Dalit vernacular periodicals is related to the print age that ushered in the nineteenth century India. But most of the Dalit magazines/papers/periodicals started appearing during the period of Dalit consciousness, i.e. post-1925.

2. There are a few major constraints which need to be kept in mind while appreciating the importance of Dalit periodicals.

a) The Dalit communities were socially at the lowest level, segregated, subjugated, hated and exploited; economically they were very poor, without any means and dependent on others; politically marginalized and oppressed; educationally most backward; and psychologically demeaned.

b) Even if a few got educated, they faced hostilities from the upper castes; they lacked financial and organizational resources to manage the printing materials. Many such efforts were short lived.

c) The British rulers had started the policy of public instruction, opening schools and colleges in the nineteenth century. But generally, they were not open to all sections, especially Dalits and Adivasis were kept away from education. In the Punjab, they had to fight for their entry into schools in the early twentieth century.

3. The first renowned Punjabi

journalist Giani Ditt Singh (1850-1901) was a Dalit. He was an erudite scholar, professor, polemicist, missionary who edited *Khalsa Akhbar* till his death for the Lahore Singh Sabha and left behind over 55 books.

4. Precursors to the Dalit periodicals were the writings of Sant Ram BA (1887-1988), a radical Arya Samajist who was deadly against varna and caste system. He came from the Kumhar (potter) family. To eradicate this virus, he established the Jat-Pat Todak Mandalin 1922. He edited various periodicals: *Usha* (Lahore 1914), *Bharti* (Jalandhar, 1920), *Kranti* (Lahore 1928), *Yugantar* (Lahore 1932, and *Vishav Jyoti* (Hoshiarpur). He is considered a major contributor to the development of Hindi literature.

5. Mangu Ram Mugowalia (1886-1980) and *Ad Dharm* Movement. He was a Gadharite, one of the five revolutionaries bringing a boat load of armaments to create revolution in India. Having been caught by the British officials a couple of times for their 'treason', Mugowalia escaped to Philippines from where he returned to Punjab in 1925. He formed the Ad Dharm Mandal in 1926. Launched *Adi Danka* periodical in 1927, which became a major vehicle of communication among Ad Dharmis. Babu Ram Chand Khara was appointed as Editor and Sant Ram Azad as sub-editor in 1928. Several tracts were published along with *Adi Danka*. *Achhuton ki Pukar* (Urdu 4000), *Adi Paigam* (Urdu 4000), *Adi Dukhde* (Gurmukhi 2000), *Sacha Patakka*, *Koumi Dukhde*, *Vihar Sudhar*, *Azadi di Doundi* 4000, *Bharam Tod* 2000 (all Gurmukhi), *Qaumi Allan* (Hindi 1000). The movement fizzled out in the late 1940s, and the *Adi Danka* was also closed.

6. Babu Mangu Ram Jaspal (1928-2011) had moved to UK but got obsessed with revising Ad Dharm movement. After living for 20 years abroad, he came back to Punjab and launched *Ravidass Patrika* in 1970 from Jalandhar and also established *Guru Ravidas Printing Press*. In the same year they organized Ad Dharm (Scheduled Caste) Federation and motivated Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia to be its President. The efforts enthused the Dalits with new spirit that *Guru Ravidass Temple*, *Wolverhampton* (UK) also became active.

7. *Bheem Patrika* and Lahori Ram Balley (b1930): *Bheem Patrika* began its journey in May 1958, and it is the only longest surviving Ambedkarite periodical in the country. Balley had a government job in Delhi and as a young man used to meet Babasaheb Ambedkar. When Dr Ambedkar died on 6th December 1956, he sobbingly cried for over an hour and pledged to work for Babasaheb's mission. He resigned the same day and after a few days came back to Punjab in Jalandhar. He was part of the Republican Party of India since 30th September 1956 when Dr. Ambedkar announced it replacing the Scheduled Castes Federation. Later on, he was made the Secretary of RPI. He led RPI agitation for land reforms and distribution of land among Dalits in December 1964. He was jailed, 14 Ambedkarites were martyred while more than 2 lacs were imprisoned. Balley succeeded in building a large Ambedkar Bhavan in Jalandhar in 1964. *Bheem Patrika* was launched from Jalandhar in Urdu language but in 1965 it also started its Gurmukhi/Punjabi edition. English edition was also added. Now it is published in Hindi. It focuses on social, religious, constitution and various topics that are related to Ambedkarite Buddhist movement. Since its inception, *Bheem Patrika* has been playing a greater role in educating those who have been discriminated against, through various social and political issues. *Bheem Patrika* is a pioneer paper, which raises the voice of millions of dalits, who are

victimized by the so-called upper castes. The articles carry messages to the government against wrong policies. Respective governments have been so upset with bold opinions of the editor that several false cases continued to be lodged against Mr. Balley and he was put behind bars several times. Therefore, *Bheem Patrika* is an institution and a renowned fortnightly paper throughout the world.

8. Kartara Ram Madhas launched *Ujala* in 1948. It was edited by K. C. Sulekh and was published in Urdu language. Though later many editions were published in Punjabi as well. Lahori Ram Balley used to publish his writings in *Ujala* under Amar Navshehari. Similarly, K. C. Ahir who was working in the central government used to appear as Diwan Chand Dardi. Sulekh after joining the government service in 1952 used to contribute under pseudonyms of Chand Amritsari, Baljit Patialwi and Parkash.

9. A fortnightly *Jantak Lehar* was launched by Jarnail Singh on the birthday of Babasaheb, 14th April 1973 from Jalandhar. It became weekly in April 1975 and daily in August 1986. Its managing editor was Sohan Sehjal. *Jantak Lehar* was bold and radical and became very popular. It earned the wrath of Punjab Government which registered 3 cases against the periodical.

10. *Kaumi Udarian* was started by C. L. Chumber in 1985. Before that Chumber had launched *Bahujan Bulletin* in 1976 which was released by Babu Kanshi Ram. *Kaumi Udarian* was a bold attack on casteist forces as it also used to republish old issues of *ad Dharm* and *Adi Danka*.

11. Besides major periodicals published in Urdu and Punjabi, several other Dalit magazines appeared in Punjab. *Ravidas Jaikara*, *Beghumpura Shehar*, *Beghumpure de Vaasi*, *Vigyanak Soch*, *Adara Adabi Mehak*, *Kalam di Akhh*, *Dalit Duniyadari*, *Ambedkar Aadarsh*, *Dalit Peedan*, *Bahujan Hungara*, *Lahu di Laat*, *Mook Vakta*, *Bahujan Jagrati*, *Jan Sangharash*, *Dalit Mulajam Awaz*, *Aatam Parkash*, *Missionary Lehar*, *Pursharthi*, *Daler Sahit*, *Ambedkari Diip*, *Hashia* and a few others have played their role in awakening and sharpening the Dalit consciousness in Punjab.

12. Punjabi Dalit diaspora is a hundred fifty years old in East Africa, South-East Asia, Europe and America. The story of Mangu Ram Mugowalia of Ad Dharm mandal and *Adi Danka* has already been briefly mentioned. In England there was a short-lived Dalit periodical published in the last decade of the twentieth century. But there is an fascinating story of two periodicals from California. Prem Chumber started an English website *Journal Ambedkar Times*, [www.ambedkartimes.com](http://www.ambedkartimes.com) dedicated to Sahib Kanshi Ram on August 4, 2006. On March 15, 2009, it was brought out every week in print form. But during the covid it was converted to the digital format, and it is published till date as volume 16. Another periodical in Punjabi language *Desh Doaba* was started in the print format by Prem Chumber on April 13, 2012, dedicated to Mangu Ram Muggowalia. Since Covid time it is also widely circulated in social media. Prem Kumar Chumber is a powerful journalist, energetically continuing his periodicals single handedly.

13. Covid 2019 globally affected every facet of life, and the print media was no exception. Hardip Singh Chumber, former Divisional Engineer of BSNL at Patiala launched a daily online Punjabi newspaper *Equality and Justice* on 15 August 2022. Though the title of the paper sounds English, but it is written in Punjabi.

It has been successfully running till date with wide circulation. It covers relevant international, national and regional news,

especially regional issues.

It carries long articles on Dalit personalities, especially on Dr B. R. Ambedkar with a focus on Dalit issues.

**Concluding Remarks:** A few observations that appear from the survey of Punjabi periodicals:

a) The large number of Dalit periodicals reflects the large number of Dalits in the Punjabi population.

b) It is also a continuity of rich tradition of Dalit literary creativity, going back to the late seventeenth century.

c) The question of Dalit liberation, its articulation and expression are closely associated religion, caste and politics.

d) Punjabi periodicals subtly reflect the inter-caste divisions and tensions among Dalit communities.

e) While there are 39 Scheduled Castes enumerated in Punjab, there are two major caste segments: Mazhabis/Balmikis, earlier known as Chuhars, and Ad Dharmis/Ravidassias/Ramdassias/Buddhists, formerly known as Chamars. While Chamars adopted and followed Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar very early, the Mazhabis and Balmiki lagged and are very late to follow Babasaheb. This is reflected in the difference in their overall progress and development. Curiously, Punjabi Christians who were mainly converts from Mazhabis and Balmikis are kept out from the list of SCs.

f) The periodicals also reflect inner ideological contradiction among Chamars of various denominations.

g) Earlier periodicals and papers were issued in Urdu language as the result of official language imposed by the British rulers. But slowly most of the papers were published in Punjabi language and Gurmukhi script.

h) There had been slow rise of Dalit periodicals and papers from America.

i) The Covid situation gave rise to online publication of Dalit periodicals.

j) Continuous production of periodicals and papers have created a solidarity among Dalit caste communities despite differences remaining intact.

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D. C. Ahir

# The Ad Dharm Movement and Dr. Ambedkar

When in 1915 Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was giving final touches to his Ph.D. thesis at Columbia University in New York, a Punjabi youth, who

had gone to America a few years earlier, was involved in a dangerous mission of smuggling guns from California to the Punjab for inciting mutiny in India. This Punjabi youth later became famous as Babu Mangu Ram, the founder of the Ad Dharm Movement. Mangu Ram was born in a small village Mugowal in district Hoshiarpur, Punjab on 14 January, 1886 in an untouchable family; his father was a leather merchant. As by then the doors of education had been opened to all by the British rulers, Mangu Ram was sent to the school in the nearby village, Mahilpur, but the treatment meted out to him by the Hindu teacher was far from human. Like Bhim Rao in Satara, Mangu Ram too was made to sit outside the classroom. Not only that, even the teacher would not teach him directly; he was invariably given lesson through a Muslim student. Somehow, Mangu Ram passed his middle examination and joined high school at Bajwara, a nearby town. Here too. He was subjected to the same humiliation, and was made to sit outside the classroom. One day, it rained so heavily that in spite of taking shelter under a tree, Mangu Ram was completely drenched. And when the snow-balls, accompanied by high velocity winds, fell like missiles on him, he was unable to bear it any longer. So, he ran to take shelter inside the classroom. As soon as he had entered the room, the teacher saw him, and instead of showing any sympathy, he started beating him with a stick for having come inside. Weeping and crying, Mangoo Ram went out, and somehow reached his home.

Unmindful of the insult and beating, Mangu Ram again went to the school next day. As soon as he reached there, he was surprised to see the teacher in the process of purifying the classroom by sprinkling water on the wooden table, chair and the tats on which the students used to sit. On seeing him, Brahmin teacher cried out, "Oh Chandal, you have come again". Fearing another beating, Mangoo Ram hastened back, never to go again to the school. And that was the end of his education.

With his education coming to an abrupt end, Mangu Ram became unemployed, and bit frustrated too. In 1909, he, along with some other young men from the village, went to California, U.S.A. in order to earn some money by working in the Peach Orchards of Fresno and elsewhere in the San Joaquin valley of central California. Instead of earning money, he, however, became involved in the activities of the Ghadar Party, an international network of militant Punjabi



nationalists led by Lala Hardayal. By his sheer devotion and sincerity to the cause of India's freedom, he came to be regarded as the most dependable and reliable member of the organization. In 1915, Mangu Ram volunteered to be one of the five Ghadarites accompanying a shipload of guns and propaganda material headed for India. This ship was unfortunately intercepted by the British as Batavia, and was sealed. It remained sealed for nearly a year, with the five Ghadarites as prisoners inside. In the meanwhile, they were prosecuted in absentia, and sentenced to death for taking out the weapons illegally on the ship. On hearing the capital punishment, some patriot Indians in Germany decided to help the imprisoned Ghadarites. Somehow, they managed to smuggle the prisoners out from the sealed ship, and sent them in different directions. Mangu Ram was put in a ship going to Manila. By mistake,

however, the ship reached Singapore. Unfortunately for Mangu Ram, here he was recognized by some traitor Indians who had earlier worked for the Ghadar Party. They informed the Police. By now, for running away from Batavia, death warrants had been issued by the British Government to be executed wherever any one of them was found. Accordingly, the Singapore Police began preparing for his execution. Then a miracle happened. Just half an hour before his execution, a gentleman named Barde, whom Mangu Ram had never seen or met, came, caught him by the arm, took him out of the Thana, and putting him on the same ship in which Mangu Ram had come, he asked the Captain of the ship to sail for Manila. By the time the Police swung into action, the ship had crossed the Singapore Port Limits. Having failed to intercept the ship, the police caught hold of some drunkard; executed him to cover up their lapse, and announced that Mangu Ram had been executed. This news was later published in the Indian Newspapers.

For the next 7-8 years, Mangu Ram hid in the Philippines, and during this period he had no contact with his family as no letters could be written

for fear of being intercepted. Taking him, therefore, as dead, his wife married Mangu Ram's elder brother, who was a widower. The validity of the death warrant issued by the British Government lapsed in 1924. Then Mangu Ram thought of returning to India. Accordingly, he came back to Punjab in 1925. Soon thereafter, Mangoo Ram became involved in another kind of freedom struggle, the liberation of the untouchables, the people among whom he was born, and the people who were meekly suffering the atrocities of the Hindus. Babu Mangu Ram's association with the Ghadar Party had broadened his outlook, and sharpened his skills as an organizer. Soon he found a band of like-minded young men involved in the social work, and began organizing them in order to liberate the down-trodden from the clutches of the Hindu social slavery.

Encouraged by the response to his



ideas, Babu Mangu Ram convened a Conference at his village Mugowal in district Hoshiarpur on 11-12 June, 1926. Addressing the largely attended Conference, Babu Mangu Ram proclaimed that the Untouchables constituted a separate Qaum, a religious community like the Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus, and those they were the original inhabitants of this country. Hence, the movement was named as Ad Dharm; and its leaders devised distinctive costume, bright red turbans and shashes; coined a new sacred mantra or symbol, "So-hang" and exhorted the people to call themselves as Ad Dharmis.

The primary object of the Ad Dharm was to give the untouchables an alternative religion. Its another object was to reform the society from within. As social movement, the Ad Dharm exhorted the people to abstain from immoral practices; to lead a life of purity and piety; to discard the use of alcohol, drugs, give education to boys and girls, and to treat all men and women equal in the society. On the whole, the movement was aimed at giving the untouchables a sense of pride and dignity as members of the Ad Dharm.

The headquarters of Ad

Dharm Mandal were established in Jalandhar city from where the movement was organized in a systematic manner, and the devoted missionaries spread the message far and wide in the Punjab, and even beyond. Since the Mandal had accepted Sahib Shri Guru Ravidass Ji as its spiritual leader, the movement became primarily popular amongst the Chamars, and they readily adopted the nomenclature of Ad Dharmi.

At the time, Babu Mangu Ram was organizing the untouchables of the Punjab under the banner of Ad Dharm; Dr. Ambedkar was fighting a similar battle in another part of the country. Though they were thousands of miles apart, yet their ideas and methods of struggle were almost identical. Both believed that the present day Scheduled Castes are not Hindus, and that their salvation lies only in being independent of the Hindu religion. Both believed in self-help and advocated peaceful means to achieve their goal. Both laid the greatest emphasis on 'education'. Babasaheb considered "education" the key to all progress, and Mangu Ram says that only "education can lead us to Sachkhand (the realm of truth)." Again, Babasaheb exhorted the people to follow the Three Commandments of 'Education, Agitation and Organization' to gain power. According to Mangu Ram, the poor have three kinds of power: "Qaumiat (collective solidarity), Mazhab (spirituality) and Majlis (organization)".

Within a year of its founding, the Ad Dharm movement created quite a stir in the Punjab by constant rallies and conferences, if forced the Government of the day to take notice of the problems of the untouchables. One of the reasons of the poverty and exploitation of the untouchables was the pernicious system of beggar, the system under which they were forced to live at the beck and call of others and were obliged to do a great deal of work without any remuneration whatsoever. The Ad Dharm Mandal agitated against the system of beggar, and demanded its abolition. The Mandal also agitated for repealing the Punjab Land Alienation Act which prohibited the untouchables from buying even a small piece of land. The Ad Dharm movement reached its peak at the time of 1931 Census. As a result of their sustained propaganda, more than half a million untouchables declared themselves as Ad Dharmis. This showed the organizational skill of its leaders. "The massive support", as says Mark Juergensmeyer, "created political capital, and Mangu Ram used that capital in political ways. Ad Dharmi candidates stood for public offices and an alliance was created with the Unionist Party. In both instances, scheduled caste leaders supported by the Ad Dharm organization achieved public positions".

Courtesy: Dr. Ambedkar and Punjab by D. C. Ahir



# UNPUBLISHED PREFACE THE BUDDHA AND HIS DHAMMA

Source Courtesy: Columbia University  
www.columbia.edu

April 6, 1956

[Text provided by Eleanor Zelliot,  
as prepared by Vasant Moon]

A question is always asked to me: how I happen[ed] to take such [a] high degree of education. Another question is being asked: why I am inclined towards Buddhism. These questions are asked because I was born in a community known in India as the "Untouchables." This preface is not the place for answering the first question. But this preface may be the place for answering the second question.

The direct answer to this question is that I regard the Buddha's Dhamma to be the best. No religion can be compared to it. If a modern man who knows science must have a religion, the only religion he can have is the Religion of the Buddha. This conviction has grown in me after thirty-five years of close study of all religions.

How I was led to study Buddhism is another story. It may be interesting for the reader to know. This is how it happened.

My father was a military officer, but at the same time a very religious person. He brought me up under a strict discipline. From my early age I found certain contradictions in my father's religious way of life. He was a Kabirpanthi, though his father was Ramanandi. As such, he did not believe in Murti Puja (Idol Worship), and yet he performed Ganapati Puja--of course for our sake, but I did not like it. He read the books of his Panth. At the same time, he compelled me and my elder brother to read every day before going to bed a portion of [the] Mahabharata and Ramayana to my sisters and other persons who assembled at my father's house to hear the Katha. This went on for a long number of years.

The year I passed the English Fourth Standard Examination, my community people wanted to celebrate the occasion by holding a public meeting to congratulate me. Compared to the state of education in other communities, this was hardly an occasion for celebration. But it was felt by the organisers that I was the first boy in my community to reach this stage; they thought that I had reached a great height. They went to my father to ask for his permission. My father flatly refused, saying that such a thing would inflate the boy's head; after all, he has only passed an examination and done nothing more. Those who wanted to celebrate the event were greatly disappointed. They, however, did not give way. They went to Dada Keluskar, a personal friend of my father, and asked him to intervene. He agreed. After a little argumentation, my father yielded, and the meeting was held. Dada Keluskar presided. He was a literary person of his time. At the end of his address he gave me as a gift a copy of his book on the life of the Buddha, which he had written for the Baroda Sayajirao Oriental Series. I read the book with great interest, and was greatly impressed and moved by it.

I began to ask why my father did not introduce us to the Buddhist lit-

erature. After this, I was determined to ask my father this question. One day I did. I asked my father why he insisted upon our reading the Mahabharata and Ramayana, which recounted the greatness of the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas and repeated the stories of the degradation of the Shudras and the Untouchables. My father did not like the question. He merely said, "You must not ask such silly questions. You are only boys; you must do as you are told." My father was a Roman Patri-

ask you to read the Mahabharata and Ramayana."

I could see that there was some force in my father's argument. But I was not satisfied. I told my father that I did not like any of the figures in [the] Mahabharata. I said, "I do not like Bhishma and Drona, nor Krishna. Bhishma and Drona were hypocrites. They said one thing and did quite the opposite. Krishna believed in fraud. His life is nothing but a series of frauds. Equal dislike I have for Rama. Examine



arch, and exercised most extensive Patria Pretestas over his children. I alone could take a little liberty with him, and that was because my mother had died in my childhood, leaving me to the care of my auntie.

So after some time, I asked again the same question. This time my father had evidently prepared himself for a reply. He said, "The reason why I ask you to read the Mahabharata and Ramayana is this: we belong to the Untouchables, and you are likely to develop an inferiority complex, which is natural. The value of [the] Mahabharata and Ramayana lies in removing this inferiority complex. See Drona and Karna--they were small men, but to what heights they rose! Look at Valmiki--he was a Koli, but he became the author of [the] Ramayana. It is for removing this inferiority complex that I

his conduct in the Sarupnakha [= Shurpanakha] episode [and] in the Vali Sugriva episode, and his beastly behaviour towards Sita." My father was silent, and made no reply. He knew that there was a revolt.

This is how I turned to the Buddha, with the help of the book given to me by Dada Keluskar. It was not with an empty mind that I went to the Buddha at that early age.

I had a background, and in reading the Buddhist Lore I could always compare and contrast. This is the origin of my interest in the Buddha and His Dhamma.

The urge to write this book has a different origin. In 1951 the Editor of the Mahabodhi Society's Journal of Calcutta asked me to write an article for the Vaishak Number. In that article I argued that the Buddha's Religion

was the only religion which a society awakened by science could accept, and without which it would perish. I also pointed out that for the modern world Buddhism was the only religion which it must have to save itself. That Buddhism makes [a] slow advance is due to the fact that its literature is so vast that no one can read the whole of it. That it has no such thing as a bible, as the Christians have, is its greatest handicap. On the publication of this article, I received many calls, written and oral, to write such a book. It is in response to these calls that I have undertaken the task.

To disarm all criticism I would like to make it clear that I claim no originality for the book. It is a compilation and assembly plant. The material has been gathered from various books. I would particularly like to mention Ashvaghosha's Buddhavita [= Buddhacharita], whose poetry no one can excel. In the narrative of certain events I have even borrowed his language.

The only originality that I can claim in [= is] the order of presentation of the topics, in which I have tried to introduce simplicity and clarity. There are certain matters which give headache[s] to the student of Buddhism. I have dealt with them in the Introduction.

It remains for me to express my gratitude to those who have been helpful to me. I am very grateful to Mr. Nanak Chand Rattua of Village Sakrulli and Mr. Parkash Chand of Village Nangal Khurd in the district of Hoshiarpur (Punjab) for the burden they have taken upon themselves to type out the manuscript. They have done it several times. Shri Nanak Chand Rattu took special pains and put in very hard labour in accomplishing this great task. He did the whole work of typing etc. very willingly and without caring for his health and [= or] any sort of remuneration. Both Mr. Nanak Chand Rattu and Mr. Parkash Chand did their job as a token of their greatest love and affection towards me. Their labours can hardly be repaid. I am very much grateful to them.

When I took up the task of composing the book I was ill, and [I] am still ill. During these five years there were many ups and downs in my health. At some stages my condition had become so critical that doctors talked of me as a dying flame. The successful rekindling of this dying flame is due to the medical skill of my wife and Dr. Malvankar.

They alone have helped me to complete the work. I am also thankful to Mr. M. B. Chitnis, who took [a] special interest in correcting [the] proof and to go [= in going] through the whole book.

I may mention that this is one of the three books which will form a set for the proper understanding of Buddhism. The other books are: (i) Buddha and Karl Marx; and (ii) Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Ancient India. They are written out in parts. I hope to publish them soon.

**B. R. Ambedkar**  
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6-4-56



# Dalit Commander: Lok Sabha Member Chandrasekhar Azad

Chandra Shekhar Azad was born on December 5, 1987, in Chhutmalpur town of Saharanpur district. His father, (Late) Master Gordhan Das Ji, was a primary school headmaster as well as a hard-working farmer. His mother, Smt. Kamlesh Devi, is a housewife. He was married to Vandana Kumari on April 22, 2020. They have one son.

Master Gordhan Das Ji was a struggling and ideological figure. He taught Chandra Shekhar to raise his voice against injustice and oppression. From childhood, he introduced Chandra Shekhar to the struggles and teachings of great people. His father's dream was that Chandra Shekhar would go abroad for higher education and give a new direction to the Bahujan society like Jyotiba Phule, Baba Saheb Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar and respected Kanshiram Ji.

Mr. Azad has done his B.A. (Hons.) degree from DAV PG College Dehradun. After completing his graduation, he got his M.A. and L.L.B. (Law) degrees from Hemwati Nandan-Bahuguna University, Srinagar (Uttarakhand). Right from his school and college days, he fought against injustice, oppression and tyranny like a wise leader. He inspired Bahujan students and youth for education, progress, equality and self-respect.

Inspired by the ideas of Bahujan heroes, Chandrasekhar Azad, along with his revolutionary comrades Satish Kumar and Vinay Ratan Singh, founded a social organization called 'Bhim Army' (Bharat Ekta Mission) from Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh in the year 2014. Today, this organization is contributing to the social, economic, educational and political upliftment of Bahujan society across the country. Bhim Army runs "Bhim Pathshalas" and branches to spread education against untouchability, discrimination and inequality within the ambit of the Constitution and to raise its voice for justice.

In 2016, Dalits put up a board at the entrance of his village, Gharkauli, which read: "The Great Chamar, Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar Village." Earlier, Azad was known by his last name, Ravana, but dropped it before the 2019 elections, saying he did not want the elections to be polarized between Ram and Ravana supporters.

In addition, Azad has been imprisoned several times, including for participating in anti-CAA protests. Amidst all this, his victory marks the emergence of a new leader among the marginalized sections of society after Mayawati. The challenge before him will be how he carves out a niche for himself in a state with a large Dalit population, and what kind of new equations he creates for wider acceptance in the future.

He came to the limelight in 2017 when he was charged under the National Security Act (NSA) for inciting caste-based violence in Saharanpur, resulting in a year in prison. After his release, he continued to speak out against violence against Dalits and participated in several

demonstrations, including the anti-CAA protests and the protest against the demolition of the Shri Guru Ravidass temple in Delhi. These events have increased his popularity and following, especially among the youth, which has contributed significantly to his political rise. His influence among the youth is evident from the fact that many people have his photo as their mobile wallpaper. Chandra Shekhar Azad, born and brought in Saharanpur, made Nagina his Karmabhumi. Seeing the need for social and political change in India, Chandra Shekhar Azad founded the "Azad Samaj Party (Kanshi Ram)" on 15 March 2020, on the occasion of the 86th birth anniversary of the revered Kanshi Ram Ji, and has created a new kind of symbolic politics. He was unanimously elected the national president of the party.



This party is based on the democratic system and is most dedicated to building the India of the dreams of the respected Babasaheb Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar and the respected Kanshi Ram Ji. Its aim is to ensure social and economic equality. He lost to Yogi Adityanath from Gorakhpur in the 2022 assembly elections. But this time the equations that Azad has created at the grassroots level reflect his political acumen.

Bhim Sena chief and Azad Samaj Party co-founder Chandrasekhar Azad's door-to-door campaigning, focusing on the Constitution as an issue, and mobilizing Dalits/Muslims have led him to a landslide victory in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections from Nagina Lok Sabha constituency (Uttar Pradesh). Dalit commander Chandra Shekhar says he will work for upliftment and wellbeing of Dalits, Tribals, Muslims, youth and women, and he will always raise his voice against injustice.

Chandra Shekhar is easily approachable, a quality that has made him popular among the youth. He is known as a street-leader.

He always keeps his focus on Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Hon'ble Kanshi Ram Ji, the Constitution and the rights and dignity of the people of the Dalit community.

Chandra Shekhar Azad's rise to prominence has put other parties like the Bahujan Samaj Party in trouble. Along with this, unrest has increased in the Mayawati camp. These results indicate a clear shift in Dalit voters' preference for their future leader. For decades, Mayawati held that seat, but her party's vote share in both the assembly and Lok

Sabha elections has declined.

Chandrasekhar never targets Mayawati in his rally speeches or media interviews. He is not seen as a serious challenge to Mayawati, but his entry into the Lok Sabha, which coincides with the BSP's absence, seems to be leading him towards the Supremo position. Mayawati distanced herself from the masses, giving the Dalit community an opportunity to turn to a new face. Azad not only took advantage of this but also worked hard at the grass root level for many years, fighting for the rights of the backward classes and Dalits.

Azad's politics are different from other leaders in many ways. He engages in vigorous politics and leaves a wide impact on the masses with his tone and eloquence. For many years, it was said that there was a vacuum in Dalit politics



in Uttar Pradesh. Azad's victory can be seen as a step towards filling that vacuum. However, his influence has been limited to specific parts of western Uttar Pradesh, being unable to expand his base.

As a Lok Sabha member, he is a member of the Home Affairs Committee and the Committee on Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. His special interests include advocating for policies and initiatives that promote social justice, equality and empowerment of marginalized communities. He is also engaged in economic development and financial inclusion of marginalized communities through targeted policies.

He has raised several important issues related to the backward sections of society in the Lok Sabha: Atrocities against Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes; increasing job opportunities for them; Housing needs of Dalit and tribal communities; Implementation of poverty alleviation schemes; Protection of minority rights; AIIMS in Nagina; Discrimination of marginalized social groups etc. Azad, inspired by the teachings of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, contributes for promoting art that advocates for the rights and empowerment of marginalized communities.

Azad Ji promotes constitutional ethics, education and skill development to ensure empowerment and upward mobility. His interests and hobbies include engaging in artistic pursuits like music, reading books and travelling, especially exploring historical places. His favorite sports include cricket, kabaddi and chess.

As far as his social and cultural activities are concerned, Azad

propagates the ideals of Lord Buddha, Satguru Ravidass Ji Maharaj, Guru Kabir Das, Guru Nanak Dev, Mata Savitri Bai Phule, Jyotiba Phule, Bhagwan Birsa Munda, Ramasamy Periyar, Narayana Guru, Sant Gadge, Guru Ghasi Dass, Dr. Bhim Rao, Karam-

pur Swaraj, Dr. Chhoturam, Manyawar Din Bhana Valmiki and Manyawar Kanshi Ram. Promoting Bahujan art and culture through organizing events are his literary, artistic and scientific pursuits.

Azad Samaj Party leader Chan-

drashekhar, while addressing the audience at the party's national meeting held at the Indira Gandhi Stadium in New Delhi, stressed the party's commitment to social justice, equality and the upliftment of marginalized communities. His speech focused on the need for political reform and unity among oppressed groups to challenge the roots of discrimination.

Considering his struggle and impact, the world-renowned "Time" magazine included him in the

list of 100 emerging leaders of the world in its special issue of the year 2021. He was the only leader from India to receive this honor from the magazine.

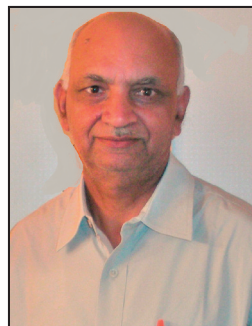
Chandra Shekhar Azad considers the issues of social change, economic equality, employment, education, health, women's dignity and security as the most important. He is struggling for the progress of Bahujans, Tribals, Women, Farmers and youth in a democratic and constitutional way. His mission is to strengthen the concept of "Bahujan Hit, Bahujan Sukhaya" and bestow the Bahujan society with their constitutional rights.

According to information given by Shri Prem Kumar Chumber, Editor-in-Chief (Desh Doaba and Ambedkar Times), California, Chandra Shekhar Azad Ji will visit USA from April 12 to April 20, 2025. Shri Chumber had missed the opportunity to meet Shri Azad during his Punjab visit in 2018 but now he is eagerly waiting to meet Hon'ble Chandra Shekhar Azad Ji.

Program organizers Shri Jessie Banga, Rohit Bhatia and Vinod Chumber have informed that Hon'ble MP Shri Azad will visit Shri Guru Ravidass Temples Pittsburg and Union City California on Saturday, April 12, 2025, and Sri Guru Ravidass Temples Yuba City and Rio Linda in California on April 13, 2025 and he will address two Ambedkar birthdays celebrations evening programs on April 12-13, 2025 respectively in Union City and Sacramento in California.

Then he will proceed to New York on April 20, 2025. The detailed itinerary is attached.

Jai Bhim! Jai Bharat!!  
Jai Jauhar! Jai Mandal! Jai Samvidhan!



**Bhim Raj Garg**  
91 + 98765-45157



# Granite Jubilee (Nonagintennial) of Punjabi Cinema

"Cinema", the miracle of 20th century incidentally happened to India on 7 July 1896 with the screening of six short movies by Lumiere Brothers at Watson Hotel, Bombay. Dhundiraj Govind Phalke produced India's first silent feature film "Raja Harishchandra" (1913). Lahore's first two-reel short film "Fake Currency" (1920) was made by Panna Lal Ghosh. Film historians differ whether "Hamari Anarkali" or "Daughters of Today" be termed as Punjab's first silent movie. "Radhey Shyam" produced by R.L. Shorey was the first talkie from Lahore. The first Punjabi language feature film "Ishq-e-Punjab" alias "Mirza Sahiban" (1935), produced under the banner of 'Hindmata Cinetone', Bombay was released on March 29, 1935.

Punjabi cinema, originating from Lahore, has traversed a remarkable journey starting from its early adaptations of folk tales to its contemporary explorations of global themes. The distinct phases of its growth and evolution have ornated the cultural landscape of Punjab. Despite numerous challenges, Punjabi cinema has continued to thrive, driven by its passionate filmmakers, talented artistes/technicians and dedicated audience base. Punjabi Cinema now ranks amongst the top ten regional cinemas of India.

In 1924, G.K. Mehta, a Railway Officer, started production of "Daughters of Today", which took long four years to hit the screen in 1928. In the meantime, Himanshu Roy collaborated with Justice Moti Sagar, a retired Lahore High Court Judge for production of "The Light of Asia" alias "Prem Sanyas" (1925), the first Indian film to be released internationally. In 1929-30, A. R. Kardar produced seven silent movies Husn Ka Daku, Aawara Raqqasa and Qatil Katar etc.

R.L. Shorey (ਭੋਈ) made Punjab's first talkie "Radhey Shyam", which was released on 2 September, 1932. A week later, A.R. Kardar's folklore narrative "Heer Ranjha" was released. The production activities in Lahore accelerated with the establishment of new studios like Punjab Art Studios, Elephanta Movietone and Ravi Talkies. The first talkie in Punjabi language Ishq-e-Punjab alias Mirza Sahiban (1935) directed by G.R. Sethi was released on March 29, 1935 at Niranjan Talkies Lahore. The star cast included Punjab's famous singers Bhai Chhaila, Bhai Desa and Miss Khurshid.

K.D. Mehra's blockbuster "Shiela" alias "Pind Di Kudi" (1936) was premiered at Corinthian Cinema, Calcutta with Punjab Premier Sikandar Hayat Khan as the chief guest. Baby Noorjehan was introduced as child artist and she rendered the hit melody 'Langh Aaja Pattan Jhanaa Da' (ਲੰਘ ਆਜਾ ਪਤਨ ਜ਼ਨਾਨਾ). It became a huge success, up beating the demand for Punjabi movies. Then, a series of box-office bonanzas like Heer Sayal, Gul Bakavli, Sassi Punnu, Sohni Mahiwal, Dulla Bhatti (ਦੁਲਾ ਭਟੀ) and Yamla Jatt etc. hit the silver screen.

These films predominantly focused on themes of love, honor, and sac-

rifice deeply rooted in Punjabi folklore and literature. Roop K. Shorey's Mangti(1942), celebrated Platinum Jubilee (75-week run) and this record is still unbroken. Through their entrepreneurial initiatives and creative endeavors, the trinity of 'Mehra-Shorey-Pancholi' laid a strong foundation for growth and evolution of Punjabi Cinema. The ill-founded partition of India had catastrophic impact on Punjabi film industry. The migration of studio owners, directors, technicians, artistes turned Lahore into a ghost film-city. Independent India's first Punjabi movie "Chaman", first released in Pakistan, became a colossal hit. The displaced filmmakers/artists played a pivotal role in rebuilding the industry by making romantic comedies like Lachhi, Chhai, Madari, Posti, Jugni, Koday Shah (ਕੋਡੇ ਸ਼ਾਹ), Vanjara etc.



1950-60s dominated by Bhakhri are often regarded as the golden era of Punjabi cinema. Bhangra (1959), set a new trend of bhangra songs in Punjabi films. Chaudhary Karnail Singh, Jagga (ਜਗਾ), Satluj De Kande and Sassi Punnu (1965) introduced new narratives and styles to Punjabi cinema. Nanak Nam Jahaz Hai (1969), set the stage for subsequent religious movies like Nanak Dukhiya Sab Sansar, Dukh Bhanjan Tera Naam and Sawa Lakh Se Ek Ladaun (ਸਵਾਲਾ ਖਸੇ ਏਕ ਲੜਾਊ) etc. by depicting the life and teachings of Sikh Gurus.

Religious movies continued to reinforce cultural pride and spiritual values, while comedies gained popularity for their wit, humor, and quirky characters. Kankan De Ohle (ਕਣਕ ਦੇ ਓਹਲੇ), Teri Meri Ik Jindri, Daaj, Jindri Yaar Di, Sarpanch and Putt Jattan De held sway over young hearts. Veerendra reigned supreme in Punjabi Cinema until his unfortunate assassination during the shooting of Jatt Tey Zameen (1988).

In the next decade, Udeekan (ਊਡੀਕਾ), Mughlani Begum, Chan Pardesi (ਚਨ ਪਰਦੇਸੀ) and Marhi Da Deeva (ਮਰੀ ਦਾ ਦੀਵਾ) epitomized the emergence of Parallel cinema in Bollywood. The singer-actor trend initiated by Gurdas Maan with Mamla Garbar Hai (1983), has been fortified by Harbhajan Mann, Gippy Grewal, Diljit Dosanjh, Roshan Prince and many more.

In the 1980s, glorification of Jatt culture in movies like Jatt Jeona Morh (ਜਟ ਜਥੇ ਨਾਮੋਡ), Jatt Soormay, Anakh Jattan Di (ਅਨਖ ਜਟਾਂਦੀ), Jatt Da Gandasa and Jatt Punjab Da etc. dominated the scene with rustic violence, vendetta and vulgarity. In this era of blood-thirsty/vengeful heroes, Yograj Singh and Guggu Gill emerged as the biggest stars. This storm of violence was con-

tained by a fresh breeze of meaningful movies like "Shaheed-E-Mohabbat Boota Singh" (1999) and "Mahaul Theek Hai", bringing the audience back to the cinema halls.

Punjabi film industry's renaissance celebrity Manmohan Singh, ushered in a fresh wave of romanticism and melodrama with hits like Jee Aaya Nu (2002) and Asa Nu Maan Watna Da (2004). These cinematic masterpieces showcased a Punjab with opulent farmhouses and modern luxury, promoting Punjabi cultural heritage while appealing to contemporary sensibilities, thereby expanding the audience base beyond traditional demographics.

Challenging the Jatt Sikh domination, Punjabi indie filmmakers have gained international critical acclaim with their neo-realism productions. Punjabi cinema, reinvented itself with gravity and

vals, reflecting the industry's growth and evolving narrative sophistication. Chaudhary Karnail Singh (1962) ਚੌਧਰੀ ਕਰਨੈਲ ਸਿੰਘ was the first Punjabi movie to be honoured at the National level followed by Jagga (ਜਗਾ), Satluj De Kande, Nanak

Nam Jahaz Hai, Chann Pardesi, Marhi Da Deeva, Shaheed-e-Mohabbat Boota Singh, Harjeeta etc. and this winning spree continues till date. Imperceptibly "Waris Shah- Ishq Da Waris made it to the Oscars (general category).

Anhe Ghore Da Daan (ਅਨ੍ਹੇਘੋਡੇ ਦਾਦਾਨ) directed by Gurvinder Singh, won the Golden Peacock Award and Black Pearl Trophy in 2011. Chamm (2017) had screening at CANNES. "Meel Patthar" (2020) was screened at international film festivals in Venice, China and South Korea.

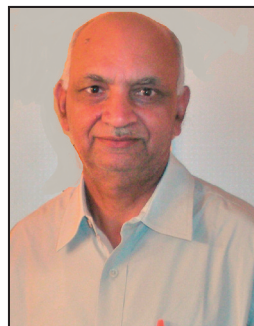
The venturing of big production houses like Humble Motion Pictures, White Hill Studios, Rhythm Boyz Entertainment, Ohri Productions, Vehli Janta into this very boisterous industry, substantiates that investment is pouring in and returns are breaking records. The flourishing Punjabi music-industry has propelled it to a new zenith. The gritty realism of hit OTT films/shows have also given fillip to Punjabi Cinema.

Chandigarh, Mohali, Amritsar, Patiala and Nabha have come up as shooting hubs with State-of-the-art technology, exotic locales and techno-savvy professionals. Establishment of Censor Board and IMPAA offices in Chandigarh will provide much needed supportive environment.

Several young directors with their 'visionary perspective' have played significant role in shaping the trajectory of Punjabi cinema and elevating its stature on the global canvass. However, Punjab government should also incentivize the industry by formulating a progressive film policy, be it developing a film city or establishing apex film institute and constituting State film Awards. Punjabi Cinema, with pan-India releases, have spread its wings beyond the traditional overseas territories and newer frontiers like Australia, Singapore, Belgium, France, Italy, Netherlands and Malaysia have emerged on its radar.

Punjabi cinema continues to carve a niche for itself, contributing to the rich tapestry of Indian and global cinema. The caterpillar has turned into a butterfly, this Ninety-years young vibrant entity Punjabi Cinema no more belongs only to Indian Punjab instead it has come up as the "Cinema of Global Punjab".

Punjabi Cinema will be a '90-years vibrant entity' on 29 March, 2025. I wish the connoisseurs of Punjabi cinema celebrate its Granite Jubilee in a most befitting manner.



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