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Invited Editorial Article

On the Foundation of the Ad Dharm Movement (June 11-12)

The Ad Dharm movement was founded on June 11-12, 1926 at village Mugowal of Hoshiarpur district in Doaba Punjab. The Ad Dharm movement was parallel but independent of various other similar Adi movements emerged almost at the same time in the South India. Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia (January 14, 1886 – April 22, 1980) was the precursor of this historic movement of the Scheduled Castes (SCs). He himself belonged to a SC family of leather workers of village Mugowal indistrict Hoshiarpur. His father wanted him to educate so that he could assist him in his leather business by reading transactions written in English. Despite his relatively well off family background, Mangu Ram faced social exclusion, for his so-called low birth, at the school in a nearby village Bajwara. He was forced to leave the studies abruptly without completing his matriculation. Thereafter, in search of easy life, like the early emigrants from the Doaba, Mangu Ram too landed in America in 1909 and earned his livelihood while working in lumber industry and agriculture farms. That was the time when Punjabi emigrants in North America were planning to form a radical organisation for the liberation of colonial India. Eventually, Mangu Ram became an active member of the GhadarLehar (movement) founded in 1913. He was one of the five proud members of a Ghadrite group who were assigned the herculean task of ferrying weapons to India for an armed rebellion against the British rule. But *SS Maverick*, the ship that was bought to transport weapons was caught in route and destiny took Mangu Ram into the Philippines, where he spent the next twelve years of his prime life incognito. Finally, hereached his native village in 1925, to the surprise of all, as everyone already knew the news of his alleged hanging.

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia is to the Punjab what Mahatma Jyotirao Phule is to Maharashtra, and just as the Maharashtra Dalit movement owes its origin to Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, the Punjab Dalit movement is similarly indebted to Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia. If Mahatma Jyotirao Phule was influenced by the writings of Thomas Paine, the famous English-born American political activist, theorist, philosopher and revolutionary of the nineteenth century, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia learnt his lessons of equality and freedom from the proclaimed democratic and liberal values of the United States of America wherein he came into contact, during his sojourn, with the revolutionary freedom fighters popularly known as

Ghadari Babas, of the historic Ghadar Lehar. This further cemented his resolve to fight for a dignified life for the masses by liberating India from the clutches of the British Empire, and to establish in its place democratic



Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia

and egalitarian home rule with equality and freedom for all irrespective of caste, class, creed, language, gender and regional differentiations.

On return to his native village, after spending 16 years abroad, Babu Mangu Ram did not find any change in the predominance of untouchability. In his own words: "While living

abroad I had forgotten about the hierarchy of high and low, and untouchability; and under this delusion returned home in December 1925. The same disease from which I had escaped started tormenting me again.

I wrote about all this to my leader Lala Hardyal Ji, saying that until and unless this disease is cured, Hindustan could not be liberated. Hence, in accordance with his orders, a programme was formulated in 1926 for the awakening and upliftment of the Achhut qaum (untouchable community) of India" (*Kaumi Udarian* 1986: 23-24). Consequently, he decided to dedicate rest of his life for the emancipation and empowerment of his fellow so-called low-caste people. He established an elementary school in his native village for the lower caste children of those self-same socially excluded sections of the society that later came to be designated Scheduled Castes (SCs) under the Government of India (Scheduled Castes) order, 1936, which contained a list (or schedule) of castes throughout the British-ad-

ministered provinces. Following into the footsteps of his revolutionary Ghadrite leadership in the United States of America, he aspired to both fight against the caste-based social evil of untouchability and to replace it with an all-encompassing social freedom, as well as to join the fight to free the subjugated India and return to it its political freedom. Like his predecessor in Maharashtra, he faced stiff opposition from the so-called upper castes in his fierce struggle against oppressive structures of domination including untouchability – the most egregious one among them.

The Ad Dharm movement, pioneered by Mangu Ram, soon became a household name among the Dalits of the Punjab like the Satyashodak Samaj movement of Phule in Maharashtra. Seth Kishan Das of Bootan Mandi – a well-known local leather merchant – helped build its headquarter named 'Ad Dharm Mandal' in Jalandhar. Mangu Ram with his untiring efforts literally took the movement to the doorsteps of all the untouchables in the region and soon emerged as a cult figure of the Dalits. Under the flag of Ad Dharm movement, he fought for the long denied land rights of the lower castes who were legally debarred along with other non-agriculture castes from owning agriculture land under the Land Alienation Act of 1900. Moreover, under the local customary law, popularly known as 'rayit-nammās', the lower castes were also deprived of ownership rights on the residential plot of their houses in these segregated neighbourhoods. They were not allowed to build pucca houses in these separate Dalit localities. They were only permitted to build mud/thatched houses and in return were supposed to perform some *begar* (forced labour without wages) in the agriculture farms of the legal owners of their residential plots.

Another important task towards the material empowerment of the lower castes that was undertaken by the Ad Dharm movement was special legal provision of education and government employment reservation



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Congratulations on the Foundation Day of the Ad Dharm Movement (June 11-12, 1926)

"Ambedkar Times" & "Desh Doaba" Weeklies fondly remember the historic occasion (June 11-12, 1926) of the foundation of the Ad Dharm movement led by Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia Ji. The Ad Dharm movement laid the foundation of the social and political struggle for the restoration of long denied civil rights, social respect and dignity of the people belonging to Scheduled Castes communities. On 11th June Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia Ji addressed a large gathering of his fellow community persons and exhorted them to come forward and join hands for a longer struggle to acquire their due share in the society. We feel pride, once again, in celebrating the occasion and remembering great efforts of all the leaders and activists of the movement spearheaded by Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia.

Prem K. Chumber

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(Contd. on next page)

On the Foundation of the Ad Dharm Movement (June 11-12)

(Continue from page 1)

for the lower castes under the state affirmative action. Like the *Satyashodak Samaj* movement in Maharashtra, the Ad Dharm movement soon became a household name among the Dalits of Punjab. It was for the first time in the forgotten history of the lower castes in the state that a golden opportunity knocked at their doors to get them united on a common and distinct platform under the leadership of their fellow-travellers to fight for the most sought after goal of dignified life and to collectively press their long-pending claim for a share in the local structures of power.

In the wake of the limited democratic political process in 1919 sprung from the British Government for the institutionalization of the electoral system, every community was busy in organizing its respective members into well-organized socio-political forces (political parties/organizations); and as a young man freshly-returned from the US, and meticulously chiselled in the superb companionship of the proud Ghardarite Babas, Babu Mangu Ram able bring together many of his fellow community members to build a separate social and political organization at par with that of the upper caste communities like the Hindu Mahasabha of the Hindus, Muslim League of the Muslims and Singh Sabhas of the Sikhs. This limited election-based legislature-forming-process also led to the formation of similar Adi-movements in other parts of the country like Adi-Andhras, Adi-Dravidas, Adi-Karnataka in the South India, and Adi-Hindus in the Uttar Pradesh province of the North India. Though these different Adi-movements emerged almost at the same time in different regions of the country, there is no evidence to prove that they were instrumental in the rise of one and another. Each Adi-movement was influenced by the then prevailing situations in its own specific context in the given state.

In the posterannouncing the first annual meeting of the Ad Dharm movement, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, along with Swami Shudranand and Babu Thakur Chand, devoted the entire space to the hardships faced by the Moolnivasis at the hands of the caste Hindus. He also made an appeal to the Moolnivasis to come together to chalk out a programme for their liberation and upliftment. Addressing them as brothers, he said:

We are the real inhabitants of this country and our religion is Ad Dharm. Hindu Qaum came from outside to deprive us of our country and enslave

us. At one time we reigned over 'Hind'. We are the progeny of kings, Hindus came down from Iran to Hind and destroyed our Qaum. They deprived us of our property and rendered us nomadic. They razed our forts and houses, and destroyed our history. We are seven crores in numbers and are registered as Hindus in this country. Liberate the Adi race by separating these seven crores. ... Our seven crore number enjoy no share at all. We reposed faith in Hindus and thus suffered a lot. Hindus turned out to be callous. Centuries ago, Hindus suppressed us; sever all ties with them. What justice can we expect from those who are the butchers of the Adi race. The time has come; be cautious, now the Government listens to appeals. With the support of a sympathetic Government, come together to save the race. Send members to the Councils so that our Qaum is strengthened again. British rule should remain forever. Make prayer before God. Except for this Government, no one is sympathetic towards us. Never consider ourselves as Hindus at all; remember that our religion is Ad Dharm (Kaumi Udarian: 1986: 21-22).

Keen readers of Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia have observed that he was conflicted on the issue of the British Raj – on the one hand he feared even greater oppression under Hindu majoritarian rule than under the British – whom he also viewed as possible partners in facilitating a more equal Indian society – but on the other hand he aspired for the dignity of national independence, which necessitated the removal of the British. This remained a recurring paradox in his political approach till the achievement of Indian independence in 1947. In the meantime, he along with other leaders of Ad Dharm movement chose to restore the lost dignity and freedom of the untouchables by detaching them completely from Hinduism and re-consolidating them into their own ancient religion (Ad Dharm). The long domination by the Aryans, they alleged, made them oblivious of their native religion.

Thus, what made the Ad Dharm movement the most politically noticeable and popular of its time was the farsightedness of its visionary leaders in setting the goal of bringing divergent lower caste communities under a single flag and to transform them into a distinct single community at par with other separate communities of Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Christians etc and to become an appropriate part of the Punjabi qaum. This was the most crucial political move on the part of Babu Mangu Ram, the master strategist,

who intervened at a vital moment when limited direct elections were scheduled to be held in the state. He pressed for a separate religion for the lower castes of Punjab to be recorded in the 1931 Census, who in his opinion were neither Hindus, Sikhs, Muhammadans nor Christians. The lower castes, reiterated Babu Mangu Ram, were the original inhabitants – *Moolnivasis* (aboriginal people) of this nation. The alien Aryan invaders, he continued further, deprived them of their kingdom, looted them, and finally enslaved them. In his brilliant article entitled *Achhut da Swaal* (The Question of Untouchability) published in the *Kirtimonthly* of the *KirtiKisan* party in 1929, penned under the pseudonym of Vidrohi, Shaheed Bhagat Singh supported the Ad Dharm leadership in its tirade against the caste system and for a separate religion, but at the same time also cautioned them to keep their distance from the British.

The Ad Dharm movement, under the leadership of Babu Mangu Ram, aimed at restoring the lost dignity and freedom of the untouchables by detaching them completely from Hinduism and re-consolidating into their own ancient religion (Ad Dharm). However, the task of reviving their ancient religion, in fact, was not an easy one. To revive Ad Dharm was tantamount to developing a new religion for the native people. *Moolnivasis*, the natives of this region, had forgotten their Gurus and other religious symbols during their long period of persecution under the rule of the outsiders. They had been condemned as impure and declared unfit to have their own theology. In order to establish their hegemony and legitimacy over the enslaved *Moolnivasis* of Bharat, the Aryan invaders successfully metamorphosed themselves into upper castes of the first three Varnas (Brahmans, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas) – the fourfold Hindu social order based on *Chatur-Varnavyavastha*. The natives of the conquered land were allegedly pushed into the fourth Varna of Shudras – consisting of artisan castes and still other further reduced into lowest of the low castes, contemptuously dubbed as Untouchable peoples.

The assertion by Babu Mangu Ram that Dalits were the real inhabitants of this land made an enormous psychological impact on them. It provided a theological podium to them to sustain and reinforce the new Dalit identity. The British Government granted them, as demanded, distinct status of a separate religion – Ad Dharm. The Ad Dharm was based on the teachings and inspiration from

the saints of the North India Bhakti movement, particularly Guru Ravidass, Bhagwan Valmik, Sant Kabir and Sant Namdev. In fact, the leaders of the Ad Dharm movement placed the spiritual figure of Guru Ravidass in the centre of their discourse around which the entire socio-political and spiritual paraphernalia of the movement and the separate Dalit religion was woven. In this way, Babu Mangu Ram played a dominant role in chiseling the distinct markers of separate Dalit identity and restoring the natives their lost heroes, Gurus, and rich cultural heritage. He imbued them with the yearning to become rulers themselves.

During the Census of 1931, around half a million Scheduled Castes in Punjab returned themselves as followers of their newly recognized religion – Ad Dharm. Thenceforth, the followers of Ad Dharm took pride in being addressed as Ad Dharmis. Another equally great achievement of the Ad Dharm movement was that it swept the reserved Provincial assembly elections in Punjab in 1937 & 1946, which made it an important stake-holder in the Punjab legislature, perhaps for the first time in the history of the lower castes in the colonial India. Moreover, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia and the Ad Dharm movement provided a fertile ground for sowing the seeds of the mission of Babasaheb Dr B.R. Ambedkar in Punjab. During Dr. Ambedkar's struggle for the separate electoral status for the Depressed Classes at the London Round Table conferences, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia supported him by sending many telegrams in his favour in a tie with Mahatma Gandhi over the question of the leadership of the Depressed Classes in India. An eminent American social scientist, Mark Juergensmeyer, documented in his classic 'Religious Rebels in the Punjab: *The Ad Dharm Challenge to Caste*,' the incredible contribution made by Ad Dharm movement in generating social and political consciousness among the lowest of the low to help them rise against the centuries old discriminatory caste system and to establish an egalitarian socio-political order in the image of 'Beghampura' of Guru Ravidass.

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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

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,

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 downtrodden from the clutches of the Hindu social slavery.

Encouraged by the response to his

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: "Qaumiya (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

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



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



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

Why do Upper Castes oppose SB 403 ?

Some Critical Reflections based on my Personal Experience

I would like to give some introduction to the SB 403 based on the language listed on the LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST of the State of California website. Most of us know that this Senate Bill 403 was authored by a daring and courageous Afghani woman, Senator Aisha Wahab and later coauthored by the brave Sikh assembly woman Dr. Jasmeet Bains (AD35). The introduction of this bill by these two women would also reflect the braveness, and fortitude of real South Asian women who have been depicted in the American media as meek and living under servitude of men dominated South Asian culture. It is a well-known fact that South Asian women have been known to be Durga and Chandi who can destroy the strong demons with their physical strength and emotional fortitude.

Let's first see the language written in the bill, "This bill would also prohibit discrimination based upon caste, as defined. Existing law, the California Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA), establishes the Civil Rights Department to enforce civil rights laws with respect to housing and employment, as prescribed. The FEHA declares the public policy of the state that it is necessary to protect and safeguard the right of all persons to seek, obtain, and hold employment without discrimination on account of race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, reproductive health decision making, or military and veteran status. The FEHA recognizes and declares to be a civil right the opportunity to seek, obtain, and hold employment without discrimination because of a specified characteristic. The FEHA makes certain discriminatory employment practices based on those characteristics unlawful.

This bill would revise FEHA to prohibit prescribed discriminatory employment practices on account of caste.

The FEHA further declares the practice of discrimination because of race, caste, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, ancestry, familial status, source of income, disability, veteran or military status, or genetic information in housing accommodations to be against public policy. The FEHA recognizes and declares to be a civil right the opportunity to seek, obtain, and hold housing without discrimination because of a specified characteristic. The FEHA makes certain discriminatory housing practices based on those characteristics unlawful, including discriminating through public or private land use practices, decisions, and authorizations because of a specified characteristic, including the existence of a restrictive covenant, regardless of whether accompanied by a statement that the restrictive covenant is repealed or void. The FEHA authorizes a person who holds an ownership interest of record in property that they believe is the subject of an unlawfully restrictive covenant, as specified, to record a Restrictive Covenant Modification, which is required to include a copy of the original document with the illegal

language stricken."

Being in the mental health field for almost 40 years and served 10 years as a commissioner in the city of Concord, California and now running for US Senate in California, I have endured caste discrimination, since I was student in the Panjab University, Chandigarh, India. I was also the first scheduled caste candidate to sue the Panjab University, Chandigarh, India in 1987 for caste discrimination. Before I applied for a job, I never knew that there is caste discrimination existed in our state of Punjab since our Sikh religion was founded by Guru Nanak Dev Ji to eradicate the caste system and to create mechanisms to treat everyone equal irrespective of the caste s/he belongs to. The Langar (Pratha) practice is one of those mechanisms. When I was not given my job



Picture credit: Prem Kumar Chumber
Ambedkar Times

based on the advertisement (7/86 dated May 5, 1986) of 22 vacancies for lectures in Panjab University, Chandigarh, India and out of which 7 were reserved for candidates from SC category. I was the only candidate from this category in the whole pool of candidates who applied in my subject. I was found duly qualified based on my interview by the selection committee but was put on the waiting list (as per the proceedings of the selection committee dated October 20 1986). When I sued the university in Punjab and Haryana High Court, my writ (G. W 620 of 1987) was admitted by the double judge bench based on the merit of the case. Both judges ruled that my writ will be heard within a year but until today June 2023, I did not receive any justice. No immediate relief was given to me, even though I topped in the subject of Psychology with 71% marks in Govt. College Chandigarh, my marks in my viva were reduced by an upper caste professor so that I do not become topper in my class of M.Phil. in psychology. I also stood third in the whole Panjab University in my diploma in advanced labor laws from the department of Laws, Panjab University, Chandigarh. This professor also made it very difficult for me to complete my doctorate from Panjab University. I had to leave university and got a job in the World Health Organization Collaborative Mental Health Center in Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, (PGIMER), Chandigarh, India based on my merit and I had to hide my caste. It was during my work, when I approached Prof. V. K. Kak, Head Department of Neurosurgery, PGIMER,

Chandigarh to complete my doctorate in Clinical Neuropsychology. He was very happy with my research work and gave me a fellowship to complete my doctorate under his mentorship, which I completed within two and half years where most of the Ph.D. candidates take four to five years to complete. I was also appointed the Associate Editor of Indian Journal of Clinical Psychology during that time by Prof. A.C Moudgil and published many research papers in the journal. However, even after my doctorate I could not get the job because the established system told me that I would become head of Neuropsychology Department which did not exist before my doctorate degree. Even my younger brother was discriminated and was not given his promotion for 26 years and was emotionally tortured by the caste system promoting

criminate d against me. There is also a fear mongering narrative being promoted by some politically motivated individuals that some people from my community would like to stop Diwali celebrations or we are



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Khalistanis, which is far from the truth. Also, when it comes to institutional caste discrimination, they all say that there is no caste discrimination and this bill SA403 is a mistake which I do feel is due to the implicit bias which is beautifully described by the work of Dr. Jennifer Eberhardt, a professor at Stanford University and her book titled "Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice that Shapes What We See, Think and Do." Whenever I meet with my upper castes' friends, nobody asked me what caste I belong to, neither I ever mentioned anything about my caste. Sometimes the conversations were very uncomfortable when some people in those groups said very derogatory, demeaning and disrespectful remarks against my fellow caste members including Miss Mayawati when she became the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. Therefore, sometimes I can understand the need to hide and repress the past or my caste which is very emotionally painful and draining. The pain, anger, guilt, shame, and remorse will come back at every opportunity when I think about those moments. I know as a very conscientious human being and as a psychologist, most of us ordinary people know when we have wronged someone, especially someone we care or love or our own people we feel guilty, ashamed and emotionally devastated. However, knowing and acknowledging are two different things in the real world.

I know that it is not easy to face one's guilt, and shame. However, being a psychologist, I know that the only way to restore dignity, we have to face our guilt, shame and acknowledge the impact of centuries of emotional, social and economic discrimination for lower castes in India and other South Asian countries including Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Nepal, Burma, Bangladesh and many other countries. It will create anger, fear and resentment. Sometimes political leaders would try to hijack us by creating fear in us. Sometimes, a lack of empathy I feel from the upper caste community members leads to intense discrimination. A distorted sense of guilty can lead to emotional traumas, can give rise to violence, abuse of power and can create social unrest.

We all Indians in America. We are already divided in this country based on language, regions, religions and caste. Let's convert an unhealthy guilt with the healthy one and support SB 403. I would also suggest to my own caste brothers and sisters to forgive those who created those conditions for our communities for centuries and respect the kids who are born in this country and as they never knew the caste system as we knew it in India or other South Asian countries. Its time to heal by supporting SB 403 in California!

his students as professors and kept him as a tutor. His research was recognized in Canada, Italy and other European countries but not in India. My parents and I gave lot of representations to political leaders and other agencies representing SC/ST communities but no avail. I got frustrated and decided to leave India in 1990 and came to United States to pursue further studies. This is where I did my hard work and with grace of God, I feel blessed to reach this level of success. There is no doubt in my mind that I am successful here because I was given full access to those opportunities without any discrimination and barriers created in India by the caste system.

Now coming to why my upper castes brothers and sisters are against this bill due to the fear that they will be sued. Most of them I know personally and ate with them, attended their children's weddings and other social functions with them. I contributed hundred and thousands of dollars to various organizations in the Bay Area and all over the world from my own earnings. I created and served on many non-profit organizations with in the San Francisco Bay Area and in India to serve the underserved. I became president of Federation of Indo-American Associations and also was one of the founding members with Dr. RomeshJapra to start the Festival of India, who is still my dear friend. Now, I serve on the Board of Directors of Indo-American Community Federation, which was founded my dear friend and like my elder brother a Kashmir Pandit himself, Mr. Jeevan Zutshi and he and many other upper castes people I know never dis-

The New Parliament House of India – a Temple of Democracy

India is on the move with the changing times and rightly so. The old historical structures like the Parliament House, Central Secretariat (comprising of North and South Blocks- the seat of power) and several buildings including the Vice President's Residence, PM's Office, PM's Residence among others are being rebuilt or renovated as the Central Vista to meet the current and future requirements of the country that is Bharat. What is Central Vista site? - The Central Vista project aims to strengthen governance infrastructure by building new facilities for India's Parliament, an efficient and sustainable Central Secretariat to house all the ministries of the Government of India, as explained by the authorities. PM Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the building on December 10, 2020, and its construction began in January 2021 which is

would have three main gates – Gyan Dwar, Shakti Dwar and Karma Dwar.



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

In the compound, as stated in the media, there would granite statues of Mahatma Gandhi, Chanakya, Sar-

cilities. The new parliament building is a step in that direction, prime facie. But, unfortunately, it has generated an avoidable controversy between the government and the opposition parties; basically on the inauguration of the new building by PM Narendra Modi scheduled for May 28, 2023 and not by Mahamahim Rashtrapati Droupadi Murmu, the first citizen and Head of State of Bharat. Most of the

opposition is all set to boycott the function amidst acrimonious debate which is not only frivolous and un-

up like the installation of 'Sengol' - It is a sceptre/ staff/wand with a royal or imperial insignia signifying sovereign authority, justice, power and good governance, etc. Sengol is the Tamil word for scepter and the date, May 28, itself as it happened to be the birth anniversary of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, an RSS ideologue. The opposition parties particularly the Congress Party, obviously, do not like and endorse the 'Hindu-



complete now. It has been stated "The new building symbolizes the spirit of self-reliant India (Atmanirbhar Bharat)". The new Parliament, constructed on the lines of the Central Vista buildings, is a triangular structure. It houses the Lok Sabha, the Rajya Sabha, the Central Lounge and offices of constitutional authorities. The new Lok Sabha Chamber is designed in the likeness of India's National Bird, the Peacock. The new complex will have 888 seats in the Lok Sabha chamber and 384 seats in the Rajya Sabha chamber. Unlike the present parliament building, it will not have a central hall. The new building, designed by Bimal Patel of HCP Designs, built with an expenditure of Rs.1200 crores will have 'state of the art facilities' in commensuration with the current and forthcoming needs of the system and the country. The old building, designed by Edward Lutyens, was built from 1921-26 at the cost of Rs. 83 lakh in the British colonial times. The old building would be converted into 'Museum of Democracy', a thoughtful decision. Some of the details and salient features of the 'Temple of Democracy' are coming out slowly which would be inaugurated by PM Narendra Modi on May 28, 2023. It

dar Vallabhbhai Patel and Babasaheb Ambedkar. Though these symbolic gestures, of course, have great emotional and inspirational values and we should take it seriously but there is another dimension of it too. Let me quote Babasaheb Ambedkar, to make my point, on the need of sending men of integrity to the august house, the parliament which I think is all the more relevant in the prevailing situation, "The educational qualifications can hardly be the sole qualification for membership of parliament. If I may use the words of Buddha, he said that man requires two things; one is 'Gyan' and the other is 'Sheel'. Gyan without Sheel is very dangerous. It must be accompanied by Sheel by which we mean; character, moral courage, ability to be independent of any kind of temptations, truthful to ones ideals. I am very keen to see that no member enters this august assembly who does not possess 'Sheel' in an adequate degree."

There cannot two opinions that with changing profile of India not only demographically but also its growing stature as a democratic country not only within the country but also in the world at large, we need to upgrade our institutional fa-

called for but also un-becoming of the largest democracy of the world. GOI also should have also shown due consideration in involving the Opposition, an essential part in a parliamentary democracy, while deciding the redoing or building new structures of national importance. It is not in order to resort to a 'majoritarian' approach in these matters. India is a parliamentary democracy and as such leader of the majority party that is the PM is the effective head of the Government in spite of the fact that the country is run and governed in the name of the President of India that is Mahamahim Rashtrapati in terms of the relevant provisions of the constitution particularly Articles 52, 79, 124 among others. PM is supposed to enjoy the trust and mandate of 'We the people of India' through the parliament. If the GOI has decided to offer the honours to inaugurate the new building of parliament – Temple of Democracy to the PM of India, we shall accept it rather than creating a controversy. Yes, the opposition has the right to say their mind and register their point of view in a due procedural manner. But it has not happened, unfortunately. More and more controversial issues have come-

tava Agenda' of the ruling dispensation of BJP. There is no simple and straight answer to all these controversial issues but to invoke 'constitutional morality' in governing the country of 140 crores with multi-racial, multi-linguistic and multicultural society as visualized by the chief architect of the constitution, Babasaheb Ambedkar who said, 'Constitutional morality would mean effective coordination between conflicting interests of different people and the administrative cooperation to resolve them amicably without any confrontation amongst the various groups working for the realization of their ends at any cost'.

Let us enjoy the fruits of independence and resultant prosperity in an environment of Sab Ka Vikas – Sab a Bishvas. India is on rails. We should ward off the dangers of 'Grammar of Anarchy' as warned by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in his last speech in the Constituent Assembly on November 25, 1949 before finally giving the Constitution to ourselves.

आ, नैरयित के परदे एक बार फरि उठा दें
बछिड़ों को फरि मलिया दें, नक़्श ए दोई मलिया दें
सूनी पड़ी हुई है, मुददत से दलि की बस्ती
आ, एक नया शवाला इस देस में बना दें



Sue Frost

Sacramento County Supervisor. District 4



Sue Frost

I have always worked hard to listen to the community – and then be a strong voice for my constituents. That's why I do extensive public outreach, including a district-wide poll like the one we did last month.

For the past few years reducing the impact of homelessness has been the top priority for people in the



4th district – and county-wide. Homelessness is still an issue, but the rising impact of crime on our families and business is now. Almost one-third of the public now cites crime as their top issue.

Even more alarming, nearly 1/4 of residents in District 4 report having been the victims of a crime in the last three years. It's no wonder that 2/3 of voters feel that we need MORE police patrols, not less.

I have always believed that keeping the public safe is government's highest and most fundamental responsibility. That is why public safety has always been my top priority with policy as well as in the County Budget. I will continue to give the Sacramento Sheriff and Sacramento County Probation my strongest support and stand by those who keep us safe.

I believe deeply in justice – and redemption. But my deepest commitment is to the people I represent, the Constitution I swore to uphold, and to the innocent victims of crime.

Sacramento County Sheriff's Department has a tough beat – covering one of the largest and most populated jurisdictions in the state while keeping more than 600,000 residents safe. Our Probation Department supervises over 22,000 adults on probation – ensuring that they fulfill their sentences, stay out of trouble, and become productive members of the community.

I will continue to stand by our First Responders – but our job is made harder and our residents are made less safe by radical policies and crazy laws being passed by the State Legislature.

Instead of dealing with the growing concern with crime, the Legislature is busy passing bills like AB 418 to ban Skittles and AB 2098 to strip licenses from doctors who share information about COVID treatments

or information that bureaucrats haven't approved.

Even worse than wasting time, money, and energy on senseless or reckless legislation, some legislators continue to push "decarceration" and pro-criminal policies that will make it harder for our brave Deputies to keep us safe.

Assembly Bill 742 will drastically ban the use of K9 units for arresting dangerous criminals – putting officers' lives in jeopardy. SB 1007 requires the state to provide free telephones for convicted criminals in our jails and prisons – making

it easier for them to continue coordinating illegal activities or smuggling drugs into jails. Their wrong-headed bills even SB 809 would actually prohibit businesses from asking about or considering criminal history in hiring decisions – allowing criminals to hide past behavior like robbery or theft from potential employers.

Over the next months, the Board of Supervisors will begin the budget process to set priorities and fund programs – including the budgets for Sheriff & Probation, as well as funds for jails, the DA, and the courts. Some activists are still pushing the "defund police" agenda – and during the budget talks, they are sure to be loud voices during Budget discussions. I will be sharing details about those hearings in my next newsletter as well as on my social media.

I hope you will take the time to make your voice heard – I need your support to help ensure that keeping our citizens safe remains the top priority for the County of Sacramento (despite the reckless laws the Legislature keeps pushing.)

Thank you for reading – and as always, if you want to contact me, call me at 916-874-5491, or e-mail me at SupervisorFrost@sacounty.net.

Sacramento County Supervisor Sue Frost represents the 4th District, which includes the communities of Citrus Heights, Folsom, Orangevale, Antelope, North Highlands, Rio Linda, Elverta, and Rancho Murieta.

For a complete list of all my past newsletters, which each contain a commentary like this one, [click here](#).

Sac County's Budget Released, Hearings Set

The Sacramento County Recommended Budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-24 has been released. The Board of Supervisors will begin hear-

ings on the Recommended Budget at 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, June 7, in Board Chambers at the Sacramento County Administration building, located at 700 H Street in Sacramento.

The public is invited to attend the hearings and be heard on any items in the budget, either publicly, over the phone or through written comments. Budget hearings will also



5 Over 50 Award Recipients Honored

Eighteen people were nominated for Sacramento County's 5 Over 50 Award, which recognizes volunteers in the County who are over the age of 50.

be telecast live on Metro Cable 14 and on the County's website.

The hearings will continue beginning at 9:30 a.m. through June 8 and 9, if necessary.

This year's \$8.4 billion spending plan is a 6.4% increase compared to the FY 2022-23 Adopted Budget. Of the total \$8.4 billion budgeted:

\$3.2 billion is in Enterprise and Special Revenue Fund appropriations (utility rates, fees and other dedicated revenue)

\$3.9 billion is in General Fund appropriations (funded with \$979 million in discretionary resources, \$1.3 billion in reimbursements from restricted funds, and the remaining \$1.7 billion in Federal, State and fee revenue dedicated to specific purposes)

\$1.3 billion in Restricted Funds

The Board's budget priorities, based on the budget priority survey results of adult residents in Sacramento County, for the uses of General Fund discretionary resources are:

Complying with the County's legal, financial, regulatory and policy obligations

Maintaining existing service

programs that focus on the most critical and urgent needs, with the priority focus areas being 1) addressing homelessness and its impacts and 2) improving the condition of streets and roads in the unincorporated County

For more information about the County's budget process visit Office of Budget and Debt Management website.

During today's Board of Supervisors meeting, Sacramento County's Adult and Aging Commission honored all of them.

Some of the award recipients wanted to share why they volunteer. They also wanted to highlight what they do to help others in Sacramento County.

One of the volunteers who was honored is John Seigal. He is a member of the Kiwanis Club of Rancho Murieta. He also volunteers at the Elk Grove Food Bank and the California State Railroad Museum. John has volunteered over 28,000 hours at the State Railroad Museum since 1999. John says he enjoys staying busy. "I'm enjoying my life. I get up every morning and I have something to do," he explained.

John says being retired doesn't mean you have to lose your sense of purpose. He encourages older adults to get out and find ways to stay involved in their community.

"When you get to retirement age, what's the purpose in life? To sit around the house all day? No. Choose to volunteer, do what you want to do, and bloom where you're planted. Find



levels budgeted for County programs, improving effectiveness and efficiency where possible and limiting the extent to which reductions in categorical revenue are backfilled with discretionary resources

Funding new or enhanced

out about all of the new things happening. Share your wisdom now that you are older," said John.

Howard Hatch is another award recipient who loves history. He volunteers at the Sacramento History **(Contd. on next page)**

(Continue from page 6) Museum. During the pandemic, he became a TikTok celebrity. Videos of Howard running the old printing press went viral.

Now, he uses the videos to teach people around the world about his volunteer work and Sacramento's history. His fellow volunteer at the museum, Jared Jones, makes the videos. People love watching Howard so much, viewers have donated thousands of dollars to the museum. But Howard says he doesn't volunteer or star in the videos for the fame. He loves running the printing press and teaching younger generations about history.

"I always figure, if

neighborhood. She's helped coordinate the community watch efforts for



volunteers wanted to recognize Ed not just for his work but also for his



ing initiative that aims to celebrate and honor the achievements of our neighbors within District 4.

I want to shine a spotlight on the following exceptional individuals:

- New Businesses
- Eagle Scouts
- Volunteers
- Veterans
- Students

And this is just the beginning! The District 4 Community Achievement Initiative will continue to expand and include other deserving individuals and groups who contribute significantly to the fabric of our community.

I invite you to be a part of this initiative by:

Nominating deserving individuals or businesses who meet the criteria for recognition.



you want to know something about what you're doing right now, you need to see where it came from and how it developed," said Howard.

Howard started volunteering at the Sacramento History Museum more than 20 years ago. Right now, he has no intention of slowing down. He plans on creating more videos to continue educating people. Those who have volunteered with Howard say they are thankful for his dedication to the museum and want to recognize Howard for bringing so much attention to the museum.

Award recipient Marilyn Lewis was recognized for her dedication to keeping her community safe. She serves as Neighborhood Watch Coordinator in her Old Foothill Farms

more than 11 years. She also goes out of her way to make new neighbors feel welcome by sending them letters

"Marilyn is reliable, trustworthy, honest, and extremely loyal to our neighborhood. Our safe community is a testament to her dedication," said Susan Holtgrave, who nominated Marilyn for the 5 Over 50 Award.

Award recipient Ed Stone was a math teacher before he retired. Now, he uses some of those skills to build handrails to help older adults and people with mobility issues. Ed Stone has volunteered at Rebuilding Together Sacramento for 20 years. Rebuilding Together helps vulnerable residents live in safe, healthy, efficient homes and neighborhoods. Fellow



personality. He is known for being a jokester and cheering up those around him.

Other award recipients include:

Daniel Aderholt, Mark Baker, Mark Harrington, Dr. Ali Tucker Lichtenstein, Jayasri Mechineni, Nancy Woo, Sharon Ruffner, Carol Stirnman, Maggie Roehm, Jeanmarie Willbee, Corecia Davis, Wayne Harmer, David Ishikawa, and Teresa Kahl.

Sacramento County's Adult and Aging Commission thanks all of the 5 Over 50 Award recipients for their dedication to making Sacramento County a great place to live.

District 4 Community Accomplishment Initiative!

We are thrilled to re-launch an inspir-

Spreading the word about this initiative through your networks, encouraging participation and support.

Together, we can build a stronger, more vibrant community by acknowledging and celebrating the accomplishments of those who make a difference.

To learn more about the District 4 Community Accomplishment Initiative, and how you can get involved, please contact my office at 916-874-5491 or

e-mail me at Supervisor-Frost@sacounty.net.

Thank you for joining us in this important endeavor. Let's celebrate and honor those who make our community truly extraordinary!

URGENT CARE CLINIC

DR. TAKHAR'S FAMILY MEDICINE & URGENT CARE CLINIC

8191 Timberlake Way, Suite # 400, Sacramento, CA 95823

Phone: 916-688-8888 Fax: 916-688-8837

Clinic Hours: Monday to Friday 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM, Saturday 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM & Sunday closed

We speak your language: Panjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Farsi, Arabic and Spanish



Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD



Goodie Takhar, PhD



V.B. Soni
Ambassador (Retd.)

Allahabad University-The Campus Experience

With easy transition in the settling down process in Holland Hall Hostel by July 1963, stage was set for getting started with my plans for organising a schedule of studies for the post-graduation degree course in History. In the M.A. (Previous), the topics to be covered were History of America, Europe, England, overview of Indian history through the ages. In the final year one had to choose between Medieval and Modern Indian History to specialise in. But that decision could wait.

Our Hostel building was located across the road from the periphery wall of the University's sprawling compound. History Department building was barely 10 minutes' walk away from my Cambridge Block room. The campus was surrounded by green cover provided by shady trees, a badly needed relief during the long summer months. In the History Department building there was a big lecture theatre, besides a few halls/seminar rooms to host a whole lot of academic classes. Most of the sessions used to be held in the forenoon session.

Head of the History Department Prof O.P. Bhatnagar was a suave and pleasant, easily accessible person. He delivered general lectures and taught English History. His style was to refer the relevant source material/books and introduce us to the leading authors/academics in their specialised fields. Often he would read out review of their works. Prof. D.N. Shukla taught us the pre-independence colonial rule in India. His lectures were well attended, as he passed on scholarly knowledge in an easy comprehensible way. Prof E.L. Chowfin, who taught European History, was probably one of the most popular among the students. His lectures were interesting, full of humour, keeping our interest alive. Prof C.B. Tripathi introduced us to the History of the U.S. He was always well dressed in white summer suit, even at the height of summer. He would come to the Department, riding his bicycle. Recent appointee teaching staff, included Dr. C.P. Jha and Dr. Rekha Mishra. Prof M.A. Ansari taught Medieval Indian History, which I did not have a chance to attend. To add to my background information and general knowledge, in preparation for the All India competitive examination, I voluntarily attended selected classes in Political Science (Prof. A.D. Pant) and Ancient Indian History (Prof. B.N.S. Yadav). I immensely benefitted from the knowledge imparted by the two reputed distinguished academics.

To acquire knowledge of a for-

eign language I joined a two year course in French language. That turned out to be a wise decision, proving helpful while at Oxford University and during my posting to the French speaking African country, Senegal.

By joining Urdu classes, a whole new world of its poetry/ghazals was opened up for me by Baijal Sahib., the teacher. His style of introducing the subject was conversational and fascinating. We ended up memorising a whole lot of popular Urdu couplets from the legends like Ghalib, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, and



Allahabad University Senate Building

Rumi, not to mention the local genius-Firaq Gorakhpuri. It was like realisation of a dream to have attended a private session with Firaq at my hostel when he shared his life's experiences. I cherish his personalised autograph, signed for me on the occasion.

The introduction to Urdu proved helpful during my diplomatic posting to the Indian Embassy, Egypt



R.K. and Rajen Nehru standing with P.M. J. L. Nehru

(1971-74). Even with that rudimentary knowledge of Urdu and its script I picked up a smattering of the Arabic language. I was able to reach out to the Indian Muslim students at Al Azhar University, bringing them to the mainstream by socialising and making them realise that the Embassy cared for them. I organised some Urdu mushaira at my home, encouraging them to manage the proceedings themselves, reciting shaayiri in their own way. I credit my alma mater for

helping me to connect with them through the lingo, picked up in the campus.

Taking the lectures for the main course seriously, my practice was to take down copious notes in the class. Our mixed class comprised of fellow girl students but I was too shy to socialise with any of them. Then one day, out of the blue, a girl approached me for my class notes, on the plea that she had missed last few sessions and wanted to catch up through my notes! With prying eyes around, I nervously handed over my notebook, with suppressed smirk all

around. To add grist to the mill, the borrowing of notes became a regular feature, with a few other girls coming forward with identical request! Surprisingly that included a local pretty Muslim girl! Was I dreaming? In a conservative atmosphere around that was unusual. Like many others, she would come to the University in a burqa, take it off, and keep it in a friend's room in Women's Hostel, be-

Sharma (SSL) was a classmate, who joined IPS, rising to become Delhi's Commissioner of Police, and eventually Director General B.S.F. My roommate Virendra Mittal's cousin Anuradha Gupta was a serious minded person, later becoming a lecturer. The other classmate I caught up later, during my posting as Consul General of India, Sydney (1986-89) was Vijay Lakshmi Goswami (became known as Rekha Bhatta) from Assam. Deepak Chopra (Jeweller) and Pancholi (Cinema Hall owner), from the group belonged to leading business families of Allahabad. The top achievers from the University during my time were Pradeep Kumar Singh (PCB), who captained the University College cricket team and became my IFS colleague. Binu Banerjee/Sen, M.A. (English) was to become my IAS 1967 batch mate.

R.K. Nehru, I.C.S. a cousin of P.M. Jawahar Lal Nehru, on retirement as Foreign Secretary in 1963, took over as Vice Chancellor of Allahabad University. He had a charming wife Rajen Nehru, who frequently interacted with the students, empathising with their issues and advised them suitably. I remember meeting her at a cultural function on the lawns of the Campus one evening, mingling around freely with the students, taking lead in encouraging girl students to sing along. That evening her choice was the famous Punjabi folk song 'Lathe di chadar'! The girls were too shy to join in, so she ended up singing it by herself! Wife of the former Head of English Department Mrs Mehrotra, a Scottish lady, used to hold sessions to help out interested students in correct pronunciation of the English words. I give her credit for helping with my own diction and dialogue delivery from those tips.

On the studies front, I started well with preparing my notes on selected subjects, keeping in view my preparations for the Civil Service Examination. This involved painstaking research, pouring over authoritative books/material on topics of importance and prepare a comprehensive reference material. It was a slow moving cumbersome process, but I had planned to do it in stages, spread over a period of time. The idea was to underline/highlight key points, which while revising just before the examination, would hopefully light up my brain cells to remind me of the wired information.

Bulk of the work was done on my study table in Room 83, Cambridge Block, Holland Hall. In the previous year my roommate Mittal was considerate, seldom disturbing me, following his own routine. It never clashed with mine.

This labour of love was to prove crucial for my post-graduation
(Contd. on next page)

Allahabad University-The Campus Experience

(Continue from page 8)

examinations, as also for the All India services optional subjects chosen. I learnt subsequently from my nephew, who joined Sir Sunder Lal Hostel a decade later, that he had got hold of those exhaustive notes, making full use, sharing these with the others! That pleased me no end.

Allahabad University has been famous for its brand of student politics. Leading national political parties, have due representation among various segments on the campus. The election for top posts to the University Student Union are fiercely fought. There was scarcely a year when the Union did not call for strike. In the hotbed of intense politicking, it was always possible to find an excuse to stir up trouble. This would force the authorities to temporarily close down the University for varying period of time, to control unruly situation, asking the resident students to return home, till the situation improved. It happened during my stay too, when Shyam Krishna Pandey was the Union President (1963-64). An incident that needs recounting happened when, as member of Allahabad University Basketball team, we were on way to Lucknow to play in a tournament. While in a train compartment at the Allahabad Railway station, on the night of November 23, 1963, there was a breaking news about the assassination of the U.S. President John F. Kennedy. During the rest of the train journey, in the absence of precise details, we kept on speculating about identity of the perpetrator of the dastardly act, and the motive. Till date, Warren Commission's conclusion, that Jack Ruby acted alone, when he killed Oswald two days later, proved to be controversial and challenged by later studies. But during that trip, all attention was focused on the 'cause celebre'. As the end of the academic year was approaching for M.A.(Prev) examination, one had to bear in mind that performance at half way stage will determine how well the preparations had been till then and what course correction was needed, if any. In the event, as per my own assessment, I felt satisfied with the output.

It is always a pleasure to go back to the comfort of the home, mother's affection, her cooking, and reunion with siblings and friends. This time though, in the latter half of April 1964, I did so with a heavy heart. In January my grandmother, with whom I was close, had passed away. She was appreciative that I used to take care and tidy up her room, without being asked to. Her departure from the scene saddened me deeply.

Another tragedy struck the nation on May 27, 1964, when India's Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru passed away. He was a popular leader. So a huge multitude of people surged to his residence at Teen Murti Marg to pay last respects. I joined the crowd to do my bit by filing past his body lying in state. The crowd was so huge, the queue so long that I had to give up my quest, and returned

disappointed.

The next two months flew by without realising it. My mother spoiled me, preparing my favourite dishes. My father was equally kind and indulged by making available all that I asked for. I caught up with my siblings, cousins and friends, doing rounds of restaurants in Connaught Place, watching movies and playing sports.

Amidst all the fun I was having, came the delightful news from Allahabad, the result of M.A.(Prev) examinations. My joy knew no bound when I learnt that my name figured in the Merit List! I felt vindicated by living up to the expectation of my father. I became anxious to get back to the scene of action and celebrate with my classmates and friends there. And indeed to get back to action for the remaining part of the journey.



More good news greeted me on return to my hostel Holland Hall. Based on my creditable academic performance and credentials on the sports front, as the University team player I was given out of turn consideration of a single room! What is more, I got possession of my old large sized corner Room No. 83! What more could have I asked for?

I set about arranging my room, which was to become my sanctuary, where I would withdraw from distractions of the outside world. A virtual hermitage to wholeheartedly devote myself to do tapasya. I surrounded myself with motivational quotes pasted at strategic points in my room, not to lose sight of my goal. My favourite one: "Even when I had nothing to do, I vaguely thought I had no time to lose".

For my choice for specialisation in the Final year, I decided to opt for Modern Indian History. Medieval History, no doubt boasted of fascinating historical figures like the Mughals, with their fairy tale royal life style. It had excellent authoritative source material. On the other hand I reasoned that Modern History from 18th Century till Independence in 1947 would be of direct relevance on current affairs and general knowledge, in preparation for my Civil Services examination. The process of further

writing down notes started in the right earnest.

In the Final year with regained confidence, my preparations started with vigour and resolve. At the same time my multifarious extracurricular activities continued. While early mornings and evenings were reserved for studies, the daytime was for the University classes and the afternoon for sporting activities, basketball and hockey practice.

One useful feature of the post-graduation examination at Allahabad University was the viva voce test, with an external examiner on the panel, to test the student's communication skills, facing up to cross questioning. For those appearing for the competitive civil services, this experience would come in handy as a foretaste, while facing the Interview Board.

Having been a city (Delhi) bred boy from birth, I aspired for a brief exposure to rustic village life first hand. In Allahabad that became a reality through a campus friend C.N. Pandey, a Philosophy student. He offered to host me in his native village, near Banaras (Varanasi). We spent a weekend there during Dussehra break. I was struck by simple, genuine rural folks, environmentally friendly surroundings, uncomplicated life style. Pandey being a high caste Brahmin, was venerated with respect by the people on the street. Prevalence of deeply rooted caste sentiments in evidence, was the only jarring note.

Till this visit I had never imbibed any intoxicants or ornate stimulants to get high. My friend insisted that I try symbolic dose of 'bharg', just to 'experience' it. It turned out to be quiet funny in nature. Within no time of drinking the liquid spiked with 'bharg', we started behaving in a strange manner. For no apparent reason we would start laughing by just looking at each other. We lost control of our faculties. I have not forgotten that experience till date.

This narrative will be incomplete without a mention of the social scene on the campus. Despite the conservative atmosphere prevailing around, free mixing between the two sexes was not frowned upon. Boys

and girls talking to each other in the faculty corridors, before and after the lectures was a common feature. Exchange of class notes, discussion on academic issue was not the only thing it was restricted to. Socialising and visiting together fine art exhibitions, drama, music shows, cinema and sports activities was indulged in by them. It was not uncommon to see a boy and girl cosily sitting under a shady tree on the campus, sharing pleasant moments. A remote part of the campus earned the name of 'Lover's Lane', where couples could be seen discreetly walking, holding hands.

At my age interest in the opposite sex was natural. My approach was to restrict myself to admiring them from a distance, interacting only on the premises but dared not asking them out for a date. I was conscious that my attention must not be diverted from the set objective of studies. I learnt a lesson from a close classmate, a topper. He got involved with a fellow student emotionally, got distracted and lost his grade.

My outings were restricted to no more than fortnightly visit to the Civil Lines shopping area with hostel mates. That day was invariably Thursday, when the inmates of the Women's Hostel were permitted an evening out. There was good chance to bump into familiar faces at the newly opened El Chico Restaurant or at the shops selling luxury items/cosmetics or designer clothes, or at a movie hall on Sunday morning screening Hollywood movies. After doing concentrated studies for prolonged hours during the week, one did need such outings for a breath of fresh air.

On the sports front there was good news when the last semester got under way. Holland Hall hockey team, of which I was an important member, ended up winning the inter-unit University championship! Just as preparation for the final examinations was getting into top gear, an accident happened. I was playing the last Basketball match of the season for Holland Hall team in late January 1965. Then in the dying moments of the game I had jumped up in the air to collect the ball. Suddenly an opposition challenger, who could not reach out to the ball because of my taller height, dispossessed me with a push, just as I was landing, resulting in my fall. The body weight fell on my right palm, twisting the right wrist. In the heat of the moment I continued playing for the remaining few minutes of the game, without realising the seriousness of the injury I had sustained. On reaching my hostel room I massaged my wrist with the then popular pain reliever IODEX and the fomenting heat treatment. No respite in the pain led me to X-Ray scan, which revealed fracture to a small soft bone (scaphoid?) in the wrist. With a couple of months to go for the final examination I decided against operation which would have resulted in putting plaster on the wrist for a few weeks,

(Contd. on next page)

Assemblyman Hoover's Representative Report

Attend One of my Community Meetings

I have scheduled three more community meetings throughout my district, and I would love it if you would attend one so that I can hear directly from you on the issues you are most passionate about. Here are the meeting details, I look forward to seeing you in person:

Thursday, June 8th in Carmichael

With special guest:
Sacramento County Supervisor Rich Desmond
6:00pm - 7:00pm
Carmichael Park Community Clubhouse (5750 Grant Avenue)
RSVP here



Thursday, June 22nd in Fair Oaks
With special guest: San Juan Unified School District Board Member

Ben Avey
6:00pm - 7:00pm
Bella Vista High School Cafeteria (8301 Madison Avenue)
RSVP here

Thursday, June 29th in Foothill Farms
With special guests: Twin Rivers Unified School District Board Members Michelle Rivas & Michael Baker
6:00pm - 7:00pm
Frontier Elementary School Cafeteria (6691 Silverthorne Circle)
RSVP here.

Assembly Approves Bill to Increase Access to Property Tax Exemption for Veterans

Yesterday AB 1361 passed the Assembly Floor, which is a bill I authored to allow 100% permanent and disabled California veterans access to a property tax exemption prior to taking ownership of a home.



Our state's disabled veterans have sacrificed so much for our country and freedoms, the least we can do is give them greater access to a tax exemption that they already qualify for. Fixing this loophole in the law will provide financial relief to veterans and enhance their buying power when purchasing a home.

The veteran property tax exemption already exists in the State Constitution, but veterans cannot qualify for it until after they own the home. During the underwriting process, taxes that veterans do not owe are collected and counted against them when qualifying for a mortgage. This means that thousands

of dollars are collected at closing that will simply be refunded back to them at a later date. This places unnecessary burdens on veterans and decreases their buying power. AB 1361 would streamline this process by allowing them access to the credit prior to closing on the home.



Police K-9 Ban Stopped for the Year

Earlier this week we found out that Assembly Bill 742 was shelved for the year and will not be moving forward. This legislation sought to restrict the use of police canines, a critical (and nonlethal) law enforcement tool for apprehending violent criminals. Our office is proud to stand in strong support of police canines and our law enforcement officers.

Update on Capitol Renovation Project

Earlier this week, I joined several other Sacramento-based community members to speak out against

the changes to the California Capitol Annex Project,

which would destroy the ability for rallies and protests on the west steps by replacing it with a visitors center.

Over the years, we've had small business owners, union leaders, law enforcement, social justice advocates, civil rights leaders, environmentalists, Democrats and Republicans come to these steps and make their voices heard. That goes away under the current version of the project.

If you want to express your opinion on this project, join me in speaking out against this by attending the upcoming public hearing:

June 6, 2023 | 4:30 – 6:30pm
Tsakopoulos Library
Galleria – East Room
828 I Street Sacramento

Twin Rivers Unified Electric School Bus Charging Station Ribbon Cutting

Earlier this week, my team was on hand to help cut the ribbon at the new Twin Rivers Unified electric school bus charging station. These zero emission school buses are healthier, cleaner, and provide tremendous cost savings - and I look forward to more school districts adopting them going forward into the future.

Allahabad University-The Campus Experience

(Continue from page 9)

immobilising its movement, hampering writing the examination papers. I suffered the pain and discomfort for weeks and soldiered on bravely. With reduced speed of writing, I was forced to shorten my answers in the final examination. Every now and then I had to stop to press and rub my wrist, but was not deterred. Unable to complete all the answers to my satisfaction, I did the best I could. In the end decent grade in the results gave me satisfaction.

It may sound incredible but the fractured bone was never operated upon but miraculously, slowly but surely the pain subsided to a bearable level. After a reasonable gap I was even started to play tennis, bowl at medium pace speed in cricket and follow other activities with minimum discomfort.

A surprise was in store, just as I was getting ready to return home! A simple Bengali classmate, with whom I barely exchanged greetings, at the time of handing over class notes, invited me over for a farewell lunch at her home! I found that most unusual. I was touched by the family warmly receiving and entertaining me with typical 'macher-jhol', among other dishes. I guess they appreciated my help by sharing notes. That fine gesture remains etched in my memory till date.

As I headed back to my home in Delhi at the end of two year course, I did so with a sad feeling. Allahabad University campus experience had turned out to be productive, useful and pleasant. It set me on to the path of preparing for the All India Civil Services (AIS) examination in an organised and sustained manner.

EPILOGUE

I was not done with Allahabad just yet. There had to be a second home-coming!

On reaching New Delhi in April 1965 I set about planning my next move in preparation for the ultimate goal. Back in those days a number of coaching institutes for AIS had sprung up to guide aspiring candidates for the competitive examination. The most popular one was Rau Study Circle which contributed significant number to various cadres. But it was pretty expensive. I did not join it then. But after qualifying in the written examination, I did so to hone communication skill for the UPSC interview.

While interacting with similarly placed AIS aspirants, I gathered that there was a coaching institution with a similar objective, operating in Allahabad. Without losing any time I applied for and got admission to it. That's how I returned to the land of my destiny-Triveni Sangam in November 1965 for the second time. It

opened up its arms to provide the refuge and succour I needed.

On joining I found that the Pre-Examination Training Centre (PETC) had a cosmopolitan character, ambience and set up. The fellow inmates hailed from far off, remote parts of the country, like tribals from the Northeast (Nagaland/ Mizoram), Bastar, Darjeeling, Orissa, Tamilnadu, Kerala. The three girls in the group came from Nagaland, Panjab and a Tibetan refugee. What was fascinating was that the group represented varied background and comprised of different ethnic, social and linguistic groups. A microcosm India.

It was an enriching inexperience, mixing around and getting to know each other. We had a common objective to achieve. The facilities at the 'karmabhoomi' (PETC) provided academic guidance, coaching and counselling.

To add to that the main effort had to be individually exerted by the aspirant to make the most of the facility and opportunity.

With like minded inmates I formed a small study group, comprising of persons with specialisation in diversified academic disciplines. We would often meet over tea and try to clarify doubts with the specialist in that field.

This was immensely beneficial in preparing for the General

Knowledge and Essay papers. I certainly benefited in my vulnerable areas of science and geography. Thus instead of wasting time in trivial pursuit and non-serious issues, we gained knowledge, clarification in house.

Starting with work schedule of 8 hours, its duration was gradually increased to 12 hours or more, as the examination date closed in. Entertainment and leisure hours were restricted to the minimum-evening walks or a game of table tennis.

In the event we faced the ordeal of the examination with confidence and reassurance. I felt reasonably satisfied after writing the examination. But of course it was not the issue of getting a degree but to compete with those with better marks, for selection. That issue had to be left to divine force. Time to return home to unwind, before preparing for the viva voce, if one cleared the written examination.

When I left Allahabad in October 1966 I did so with a feeling of satisfaction that I had done the best I could and pray to Prayag Raj that my hard labour would bear the desired fruit.

Fast forward to May 1967. My joy knew no bound when I saw my name appearing in the UPSC list of those who made it to IAS/IFS! MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!!!





V.B. Soni
Ambassador (Retd.)

Kishan Devi : Agra-The maternal connect

To trace my origin from mother's side, one has to go to Agra, the city of the famous Taj Mahal. To Birbal and Sunder were

approved. The rush job, keeping in view the scale of operations, was met within the prescribed delivery schedule. Constant flow of orders kept the factory busy. The product became a big hit and he earned handsome profit. His prestige grew overnight. He became Sarpanch of scores of mandis/puras (areas) sorting out civil disputes and dispensing justice in a fair manner. He was inducted as a member of the local Ram Lila Committee, which used to host Ramlila dramas and Dussehra.

The surname Muir adds to the aura of the family

The surname of Muir was assumed by son Kishan Lal and succeeding generations, tracing back ancestry to Maurya empire era. He got married to Narayani in 1938. Around that time another entrepreneur, artisan Nanig Ram, had made his mark, not far from Agra. For his second son Sohan Lal he found perfect match in Nand Kishore's elder daughter Natho and their marriage was solemnised around 1921. On one of Sohan Lal's visit to 'in-laws in

while Gian Singh accompanied him on sarangi. The two of them used to enthral the gathering with their 'jugabandi' in unison on many cultural occasions. To celebrate the newly acquired wealth and social status, the

machinery and deliberately producing shoddy products. There was burglary in the factory, resulting in huge losses. Soon the venture went into the red. The health of Nand Kishore started deteriorating during this downward trend and he passed away in April 1939. But not before he got his youngest daughter Shakuntala (1921) married off to Kanshi Ram (7.10.1917) on April 29 1937.

After Nand Kishore passed away, the business took a nosedive and could barely survive. Kishan Lal moved to a Government job, as Chief Surveyor of Leather industry in U.P. During World War 2, he assumed charge of Assistant Director in the office of Director General of Supplies and Disposal. For a brief period he joined the inner circle of youngsters, personally mentored by the great Baba Saheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. He



Babu Nand Kishore

born two sons Nand Kishore (1874) and Gian Singh (1878). From a modest beginning, Nand Kishore in the 1910s was able to build up a mini empire in the footwear industry. A hard working and enterprising person, he got together a team of leather experts, shoe designers and craftsmen. Up until then the entire process in producing shoes involved hardly any machines but mostly handwork. The end result lacked symmetry and hardly had a great finish.

Nand Kishore-the entrepreneur

Nand Kishore, as a pioneer, introduced special machines, imported from England in the production line, in 1905. With sewing techniques improved and mechanisation, the end result was durable and attractive. In the absence of competition, he had a field day capturing the market. In no time his Aryan Shoe Factory was busy fulfilling a constant flow of orders from Lahore, Karachi, Bombay, the rest of India and even from abroad. At any given time 50 to 60 workers were hired to cater to the increasing demand. He acquired a 1000 sq yds plot of land in an area called Kazipada in Agra. The three-storey building had a workshop, factory and office on the ground and first floor and living quarters on top.

From his marriage to Subhadra, Nand Kishore had five children. Kishan Lal (1902), Badri Prasad (1904), Natho (1907), Kishan Devi (1912) and Shakuntala (1921). His brother Gian Singh was his partner and collaborator. From the latter's marriage to Sumer, he had 3 daughters-Chandrakala (1909), Iba (1912) and Kallo (1915) with one son Khub Singh (1925). They all stayed together as one happy family under the same roof.

Fortune smiled on Nand Kishore during the First World War (1914-1919). Britain was a direct combatant in the hostilities, and as the colonial ruler in India, not only recruited Indian soldiers to fight on the Eastern front on their side, but ordered huge supplies from India for the war effort. These included sturdy military boots, which could withstand the desert heat, marshy battleground on the one hand and extreme icy conditions in snow bound areas on the other. Local British administrator in Agra, an Englishman, was aware of the credentials and reputation of Nand Kishore in quality shoe production. He approached him for the immediate production and supply of military boots, as per the specifications provided.

Nand Kishore, after evaluating the technical parameters, prepared a proto type, which was immediately

Agra, younger brother accompanied him. Back in those days water for domestic consumption was usually drawn from nearby wells. For Bankey Lal, who was to take bath alongside the well, it was the pretty younger sister Kishan Devi, who drew water buckets for him. He liked her instantly.

In the meanwhile, Nanig Ram had bagged contracts for some aspects of construction of prestigious Government buildings after Sohan Lal's marriage to Natho. Ram gave credit to the new Bahu, as a lucky mascot for bagging the contract. He was more than happy to approach Nand Kishore for Kishan Devi's hand for Bankey Lal. The matter was pursued and the two got married in December 1925. As she had barely entered the teens the 'gauna' ceremony was deferred for a few years.

With cash flow swelling the coffers, it was time to indulge in a bit. Both brothers were amateur musicians. Nand Kishore was a singer

two brothers took to heavy drinking. At some stage they would argue and fight over trifles, like why the peg of a drink was not served in equal measure to the other. After getting sozzled, sometimes they would lose control and exchange physical blows. On one particular occasion it resulted in a drinking partner being accidentally pushed off the roof, resulting in serious injury. But the beauty of it all was that the following morning it was back to normal, as if nothing had happened the previous evening.

The money made from good business for once was usefully utilised, when with the help and advice of a locally based English Administrator, eldest son Kishan Lal was sent to England to earn Advance Diploma in Footwear Technology from Northampton College of Technology (1930-32). The extended stay of another year (1933) was utilised for a special course in leather tanning sectors. On return he joined his father's venture and helped introduce 'new cut technology' easy to wear shoes, in the fashion of 'loafer' range, in the factory. The new process combined hand sewing with machine processing. With this value addition, their product range commanded a premium in the market.

Decline of the establishment

As it usually happens, after reaching commanding height, a fall was inevitable. In addition to their erratic lifestyle and drinking bouts, control and surveillance on the assembly line gradually eased up. The resultant laxity meant quality control was not strictly enforced. Competitors conceived of a sabotage plot. Some workers were bought over, leading to pilferage, mishandling the installed

was appointed Principal, Government Leather Institute Kanpur in 1941, where he stayed on till his retirement in 1959-60. His authoritative book "Charam Kala", became an excellent reference and source material. Only the younger son Badri Pershad, showed no inclination for studies concentrating on his hobby as a wrestler. He could not make a mark in life.

Gian Singh was a broken man, after the demise of his elder brother, followed by collapse of the institution he helped build. He tried hands at various things, none of which succeeded. He passed away on April 29, 1960. He drew comfort from the fact that his son Khub Singh, excelled himself by joining P.C.S. He made the family proud with his multi sided talent. An extrovert, he possessed qualities as an excellent marksman and an ace hunter (shikari). Following the family tradition he turned into a superb singer. Above all an able administrator. After a successful career Khub Singh passed away prematurely on 29.7.1983. His granddaughter Niharika, became 2nd Runner Up for Miss India World title. Another one, Aditi Singh Shamra, who is Rita Singh's daughter, is the reigning rock star singer of Bollywood.

Daughter Shakuntala's challenges

Nand Kishore's youngest daughter Shakuntala's husband Kanshi Ram, hailed from Hindon in Rajasthan. After the 1857 revolt, his grandfather and uncle fought in the Anglo-Afghan War, for which they were given land around Lahore by the British. He joined the Agriculture Department of the United Punjab state, based in Lahore. At the time of partition, as a result of communal carnage, they had to flee from the Muslim dominated Lahore in August 1947. Kanshi Ram was assigned by his parent Agriculture Department to the newly built Punjab Capital of

(Contd. on next page)



From left Sher Singh, Badri Parshad, Bankey Lal, Kanshi Ram, Kishan Lal, Sohan Lal, Anant Ram. Jan 1967

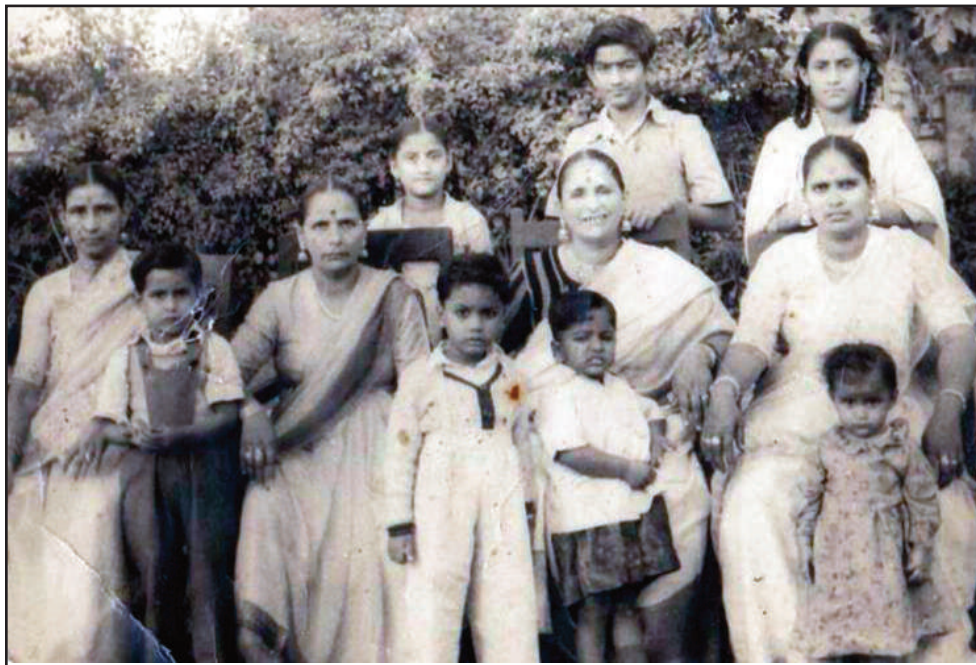
Kishan Devi : Agra-The maternal connect

(Continue from page 11)
Chandigarh. That is where they settled down after retirement. The only thing missing in their lives was a

nally landing up in Agra with her younger brother Badri's family. That is where she passed away in 2004.

ancestral place were duly passed on to us. Our lesson in secularism was learnt from her, celebrating other religious festivities, baking a cake/pud-

bringing process. She was a cultured person, adept in the art of singing. No marriage celebration in the family would be complete without her reper-



Narayani Muir, Natho, Kishan Devi, Shakuntala, Ratan, Bhagyalaxmi



Mama Kishan Lal family 1960s

child. Shakuntala did conceive twice but suffered miscarriages. That void in their lives always rankled them. After his death on 15.8.1996 Shakuntala felt terribly lonely and went into depression. She kept on moving from one place to another, without finding peace and stability, fi-

The enduring legacy of the nanihal in Agra

For our generation, Agra is the nanihal, the place where our mother, Kishan Devi was born and brought up. Her attachment to Agra was abiding, going back to her roots often. The values she imbibed at her

ding at Christmas, and kheer/seviyan at the Eid festival.

She was a gourmet cook, famous for dishing out the tastiest food from her magical hands. And through her, we remained connected to Agra. Amma made sacrifices to give us children the best she could in the up-

toire of melodious rendering of folk and religious songs.

Deeply religious, Kishan Devi inculcated in us fine spiritual values. My generation would be eternally be grateful to the city that gave us our mother. Thank you Agra, for bestowing the greatest gift.



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