

(3) **GRAZING GROUNDS** : Before Independence they used to keep cattle, goats and sheeps as in each village there was sufficient area reserved for grazing purposes. Its ownership vested in the proprietary body but under "Sharat-Wajibull Aarj", (revenue record prepared at the time of settlement), nobody could break up this land (Gau-Charand) and every villager had a right to graze his cattle there. Now due to the Punjab Utilization of Lands Act, The Consolidation Act and The Campaign of More Food, practically all these lands have been broken in every village. The land owners graze their cattle in their respective fields but the landless are facing great difficulties. There have been a good number of cases where these Classes have been bey-cotted and their cattle refused entry in private fields. Such complaints from the Harijans must have been received by the A.I.C.C. Office as well.

(4) **SITES FOR HOUSES** : Previously these people had hardly one room tenement per family in the villages. Their population has increased perhaps much more than that of others. They want more accommodation. Yet there is no land available to them. It is true that Punjab Government made them owners of sites under their previous houses, but that is not enough. Their housing problem has assumed a very acute form. Small plots given to them per family at the time of Consolidation operations do not solve the problem at all. Firstly this is not as a matter of right, but by way of grace and these poor people have to depend upon the mercies of the Consolidation Officer and Village Consolidation Advisory Committees. There are numerous complaints that the location of these plots does not suit them. Atleast one plot per adult member of a family should be given and loans for building houses should also be advanced to them.

(5) **SOCIAL STATUS** : In the village life these classes do not have a social status as they are landless. All those amongst them who cultivated land must be made owners and Government lands or surplus Banjar lands must be given only to them. Here again a tragic situation has been created in the Punjab. Instead of giving barren lands, which were available in large quantity in Karnal and Hissar Districts, to these people, leases were given to rich and other people from Gurdaspur and Amritsar districts. This again requires a thorough probe into.

(6) **SERVICES** : The administration is pro-rich as most of the public servants belong to the sections of our population other than these classes. They do not implement the progressive legislation as they should. It is, necessary, therefore, that recruitment even more than the reserved quota should be done from these classes. This is all the more necessary, so far as the police and the Military is concerned. In these two departments, there is another difficulty. They want a certain physical standard of health. These classes cannot compare with others, hence their physical standard must be lowered to such an extent that atleast the reserved quota is available for them. So far as military is concerned, even though distinction of martial and non-martial classes has been abolished, yet the method of recruitment is so defective that recruitment goes on practically in the same old fashion. This point is important to the Punjab Harijans as Punjab is a great centre of recruitment and service in the Military gives additional status to those who are recruited there. The door is practically closed to the young men of these classes. Something must be done in this direction.

These are some of the salient points with regard to the problem of Harijans and other backward classes in our State. A small pamphlet in Urdu issued by a leading Harijan worker of Karnal is enclosed herewith for giving a first hand knowledge of the difficulties, harrassment experienced by them and also of their aspirations.

We have every hope that these points will receive the consideration they deserve and something concrete will be done to ameliorate the condition of the most down trodden section of our society.

Shri Dhebar Bhai
President Congress,
New Delhi

Your Sincerely,
Mool Chand Jain
M.P.

For Punjab Congress M.Ps.

Note submitted to Sh. Jawaher Lal Nehru P.M. on 25-12-60 by Sh. Jain and Sh. Keshva M.P.

Problems of Harijan and the weaker sections in villages

Circumstances had conspired for many years for the neglect of the villages in our country. At last the Community Development Programme came to their rescue. Even then the Harijans and other weaker sections continued to suffer as before. The Community Development programme was expected to do its bit in this direction also, yet we have serious complaints of neglect and of slow pace of their improvement. Complaints are heard all over - more so after the advent of democratic decentralisation due to the consequent enormous awakening in the people. It is perhaps this feature that induced the Central Govt. to appoint a Seven-man Committee under the distinguished leadership of Shri Jai Parkash Narayan to go into this vital problem. The most appropriate thing is promptly done at the proper time.

We found that in Andhra, as in all other States, quite a good sum is provided by the Home Ministry to be spent through the Social & Welfare Department for the amelioration of the weaker sections. But practically little is spent directly for their economic uplift from the C.D. or State Plan Funds. Even the sums granted under schematic budget for village industries remain largely unspent or are spent on persons other than traditional artisans. No doubt housing colonies have come up under the auspices of sub-committee Panchayat Samitis but the source is the finance provided by Central Govt. under special schemes. These two Samitis are the best in Andhra. But even among them, one Samiti provides a paltry sum of Rs. 2800/- out of a budget of 13½ lacs (excluding Housing) for the welfare of scheduled castes and backward classes in the year 1960-61.

Not a penny has been advanced to any of the landless and scheduled castes out of the provision of Rs. 7 lacs under Cooperatives : perhaps under the shelter of want of security, despite the significant fact that they are about 40% of the total population. Even the claim of giving credit upto Rs. 500/- without security to the landless was not real as admitted by the new rule was not found to have been implemented. The claim for providing midday meal by the one Samiti appears to have touched only the fringe of the whole problem. We are told on enquiry that only 91 children were fed so far. Even this feeding of only a section of the children, we are afraid, would automatically perpetuate the psychological distinction between the haves and have nots. If even the best Samitis could acquit themselves only to this extent in favour of the weaker section, some radical thinking and tresh and earnest heart searching is warranted to tackle this age old problem. Merely to say that time will set matters right is in our humble opinion, simply shirking the issue.

Has particular attention been paid to the weaker sections after democratic decentralisation was of the important questions our team was to study. It is no doubt too premature to pronounce any verdict so soon after its introduction. But we cannot be unaware of the unanimous resolution of the Andhra Harijan Legislators demanding non-transfer, to the Zilla Parishad and Block Samitis, of the Social Welfare funds granted by Central Govt. This move is pregnant with pernicious possibilities. Any way it makes manifest that these institutions have not inspired confidence in the weaker sections. We do not at all approve this move but the cause behind this lack of confidence ought not to be ignored.

The meagre representation, in the new institutions, of the weaker sections, appears to us to imperatively demand our immediate attention. A careful scrutiny of the figures given to us of several Panchayats and a number of Samitis significantly points out that the population of the weaker section in the villages is about 40% of the village population but the representation afforded to them is only about 16% in the village Panchayats and that too due to reservation of seats for the Harijans and in the higher tier of

the Samiti, it is only 5 to 8% except in specified areas where they themselves are in a majority. Even this 5 to 8% is also by cooption. The hard fact is that this coopted member cannot but be the stooge of the majority party coopting him and he should inevitably respect their grace. Infact generally this coopted member appeared to be not interested in the welfare of the weaker sections and was found absent in many meetings we attended.

We strongly feel that cooption should be done away with, and some new alternative method of election be adopted. Both in Andhra and Rajasthan at the base the village is divided into wards. Ways of corruption and manoeuvres are mysterious. Delimitation of these little wards could easily be manipulated and there has been quite a large number of complaints even from Rajasthan recent elections. This ward system results in great disadvantage to the weaker sections.

May we make bold to suggest that a village or Gram Sabha area, instead of being divided into wards be taken as one unit and all the voters therein be empowered to elect members of Gram Panchayat by the method of simple proportional representation as in vogue in the Punjab. Complaints of meagre representation of the weaker sections in Gram Panchayats and of faulty delimitation are never heard of there. There is indeed no complication what so ever. For instance in a village of a population of 500 suppose there are 5 seats. Then add 1 to the number of seats. It becomes then 5 plus 1 to 6. Divide this with the total no. of the adult population 500/6-i.e.83. Then all those 5 candidates who secure 83 votes or more will be elected. The chances are that even those who get less votes will be elected as the prescribed number of candidates securing the highest number of votes are deemed to have been duly elected. This system prevails even in our A I C C. member elections.

Similarly in the next tier of the Panchayat Samitis also the representation of the weaker sections could be enormously improved. Now both in Andhra and Rajasthan, the Sarpanch is ex-officio member of the Samiti. The panchas have no voice therein. The link is very weak. And sarpanches are generally not elected from the weaker sections. As is in Punjab all the panches of all the Panchayats of a Block area could easily constitute an electoral college and be made to elect the required number of members of the Panchayat Samiti by means of the same method of simple proportional Representation. Thus the weaker section can, if they so choose have their legitimate representation in the Panchayat Samiti as well, because they have already secured a fair representation among the panches of different village Panchayats by means of this very method. Panchayats Raj is a great revolutionary step in the country. Let us do every thing humanly possible to create confidence in these new wonderful institutions in the hearts of the weaker sections of our Society.

At the risk of repetition we urge that the present method of election in Andhra and Rajasthan has come to this that 60% economically and socially strong populations gets 85% representation in the village Panchayats and a population of 40% weaker sections is reduced to less than half of their strength. The injustice is greater in the Panchayat Samitis as has been mentioned earlier. How can such over-representation to the already strong section and gross under-representation to the weaker sections in the powerful institutions we are forging create a sense of community life between the two sections in the villages. This is under-representation, apart from their ignorance, is the cause why even village works are not often located in their areas. This tendency will grow. It is inherent in our nature due to the influence of the age long caste system. The official check on any excessive growth of this tendency is there, but wisdom lies in developing and forging internal checks from within the village community so that imbalances in the village life is not only prevented but is gradually reduced.

One can clearly understand and appreciate the good work done to the weak sections by the one Samiti as mentioned by our colleagues in the main report. A little deeper look and investigation would easily bring home to us that this very good work justifies the very stand we have taken. This

Samiti has a majority of backward class members (14 out of 24) and the Samiti has therefore acquitted itself best in promoting their interests.

We have therefore after very careful and sustained consideration come to the definite conclusion that if Panchayat Raj has to be a glorious success and to inspire equal confidence in all, the method of election both for Gram Panchayat and Panchayat Samitis now in vogue in Punjab must be adopted by every State in the country.

One more important point :

There is no doubt that, excepting about the weaker sections, the results so far achieved strengthen our confidence that this movement of Panchayat Raj will usher a new era in our country. Apart from other benefits these institutions, if properly nurtured, are bound to be the best instruments for community mobilization. How these institutions are nurtured in different States and whether one State can learn from the experience of the other are important questions. Andhra and Rajasthan States have been pioneers in this bold venture, but their experience is only of one year and it is too early to find many instances of sharp comparison and contrast. Yet we found that in Rajasthan Panchayat Samitis feel a more free climate than in Andhra where the atmosphere is somewhat rigid. The result is that in Rajasthan Panchayat Samitis are showing more initiative and more spirit of self reliance than in Andhra. We have tried to find out the causes thereof. In our opinion following are some of the salient distinguishing features between the two States :-

(i) In Rajasthan the B.D.O. is an officer of higher rank than even the S D O. His high position enable him to get work out of every department - even from district heads of other departments. The status of the Panchayat Samiti and its President is higher even to the B.D.O. Hence the status of Panchayat Samitis in Rajasthan becomes automatically high vis-a-vis other departments. The B D.Os. junior officer in Andhra - junior to heads of all other departments in the district. Hence such B D Os. and the Panchayat Samitis in Andhra cannot and infact did not get as much ready co-operation and response as in Rajasthan. Ready response to the felt needs of the people evokes further enthusiasm amongst them and thus a continuous better psychological climate is being created in Rajasthan than in Andhra.

(ii) In Rajasthan the Govt. and the Collector come into the picture only if some office bearer of /or the Zila Parishad or the Panchayat Samiti misbehaves. In Andhra they are in the picture from the very start. The Collector, and not the Chairman Zila Parishad, presides over its standing committees. The budgets of Panchayat Samitis have to be approved by a standing committee of the Zila Parishad over which the Collector presides. Then there are rules, instructions and G.Os leaving practically no freedom of action to these institutions in Andhra. In Rajasthan, however, apart from some basic rules issued by the State Govt., these institutions are encouraged to frame their own bye-laws - may be on the basis of model bye - laws suggested by the State Govt. But the freedom to adopt or not to adopt them is there.

(iii) With regards to allocation of funds and then permission of their transfer from one head to other, Panchayat Samitis enjoy much greater freedom in Rajasthan than in Andhra. This is very significant. In Andhra the State Govt. fixes the head or subject upon which a particular grant has to be spent. Rajasthan has created a special fund from which Panchayat Samitis are given ad hoc grants. They can spend it on any felt need of their people. No such discretion exists with Andhra Panchayat Samitis. Even with regards to the schematic budget the permission to transfer funds from one head to other has to be taken from the State Govt. In Rajasthan - the Collector - the Captain of the team - has been given this power. The result is obvious.

(iv) In Rajasthan Sarpanches have to convene meetings of the Gram Sabha and thus have to take the whole adult population into their confidence. There is no such provision of Gram Sabha in Andhra.

Comparisons are always odious. We have ventured to make above observations by way of comparison because we feel that, despite the fact that Zila Parishads of Andhra enjoy more powers than of Rajasthan; this latter State in many small but significant ways, is encouraging the spirit of democratic working not democratic composition alone - in these newly created institutions. We are confident that these observations will be taken by Andhra and other States in the spirit they are made.

Sd./- 1 N. Keshava

2 Mool Chand Jain
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25-12-60

भगवान महावीर का 2500वां निर्वाण महोत्सव (बाबू जी के विचार जो 'वीर' समाचार पत्र में 15 फरवरी, 1973 को प्रकाशित हुए।)

कुछ साल पहले जैसे भगवान बुद्ध की पच्चीस सौ वीं निर्वाण जयन्ती सारे भारत में मनायी गई थी। उसी प्रकार अप्रैल सन् 1973 में भगवान महावीर का पच्चीस सौ वां निर्वाण महोत्सव सारे भारत में मनाया जायेगा। जहाँ भिन्न-भिन्न जैन सम्प्रदायों ने इस महोत्सव को मनाने के लिये समितियाँ बनाई हैं। वहाँ भारत सरकार ने भी एक अखिल भारतीय समिति बनाई है जिसके प्रधान स्वयं हमारी प्रधानमन्त्री 'श्रीमती इन्दिरा गांधी जी' हैं। भारत सरकार ने इस ध्येय के लिये 50 लाख रुपये खर्च करने का वचन दिया है।

मानव समाज को भगवान महावीर की सबसे बड़ी देन "अहिंसा परमोधर्म" का मन्त्र है। उसकी साधारण व्याख्या है :— "मन वचन और कर्म से किसी प्राणी को कष्ट न देना"। हजारों सालों से भगवान महावीर के अनुयायी इस सिद्धांत पर दृढ़ता से अमल करने का प्रयत्न कर रहे हैं और भारत के सांस्कृतिक, आर्थिक और राजनीतिक जीवन में अपना योगदान देते आये हैं। हजारों वर्षों तक भारत की संस्कृति मध्य एशिया से लेकर पूर्वी एशिया तक समस्त देशों में छाई रही, परन्तु एक शक्त आया कि भारत पर विदेशियों के आक्रमण होने लगे और धीरे-धीरे भारत पराधीन होने लगा। अंग्रेजों ने पूरे भारत को गुलाम बना लिया। इस आधीनता के खिलाफ भारत में स्वतन्त्रता की ज्वर उठी। सन् 1857 में फोगों ने बग़ावत की। परन्तु अंग्रेज इस बग़ावत को दबाने में कामयाब हो गया। परन्तु आजादी की लहर दब न सकी। फिर उभरी। 1885 में कांग्रेस का जन्म हुआ। कुछ समय पश्चात् 'लोक-मान्य नितरु' ने नारा लगाया कि "आजादी हमारा जन्म सिद्ध अधिकार है।" अंग्रेज की गुलामी की जंजीरों में जकड़ी भारत माँ को कैसे आजाद कराया जाये, यह सवाल सभी देशवासियों के लिये महत्वपूर्ण बन गया। हर देशवासी अंग्रेजों से भयभीत था। इतना बड़ा साम्राज्य जिसमें कभी सूर्य न छिपता हो, उससे छुटकारा कैसे मिले? गाँवों में साधारण लोग पुलिस के सिपाही से तो क्या चौकीदार से भी डरते थे। श्रान्तिकारी नौजवानों ने इक्के-दुक्के बहादुरी के कदम उठाये, कहीं सरकारी खजाना लूटा कहीं किसी अंग्रेज की मारा। इससे कुछ समय के लिये जानकार हजकों में बाह-बाह तो ही गयी मगर साधारण लोगों का डर ज्यों का त्यों बना रहा। इसी डर के कारण ही अंग्रेज की हकूमन टिकी हुई थी।

साधारण लोगों का डर कैसे दूर हो, इस प्रश्न का हल गाँधी जी ने किया। "अहिंसा परमोधर्म" का सहारा लिया। मगर इस सिद्धांत का अर्थ और ज्यादा व्यापक किया। उसके अर्थ यही नहीं रहे कि "मन वचन और कर्म" से किसी को कष्ट न दिया जावे।" किन्तु यह भी किये कि मन, वचन, कर्म से दुखी का दुःख दूर किया जावे। जिस पर अत्याचार होता हो उसे मन वचन और कर्म से अत्याचारी से बचाया जाये। अहिंसक रहते हुये यह कैसे हो सकता है। इसके लिये सत्याग्रह और नामिल-वर्तन का हमें एक मन्त्र दिया। यानी बुराई, अत्याचारी को किसी प्रकार का सहयोग न दें और आवश्यकता हो तो सत्याग्रह करते हुए जेल आदि में जाना पड़े तो उसे भी खुशी से कबूल किया जाये। जेल में बन्द होने का ही सब से बड़ा डर लोगों के दिल में था। जब बड़े नेता जेलों में जाने लगे और उनके पीछे साधारण कार्यकर्ता भी तब हकूमत का भय काफूर होने लगा। विदेशी हकूमत के खिलाफ गाँधी जी ने कई अहिंसात्मक आन्दोलन चलाये और आखिर में "अंग्रेजों भारत छोड़ो" का नारा लगाकर सन् 1942 में आन्दोलन चलाया जिसके फलस्वरूप सन् 1947 में अंग्रेजों को भारत छोड़ना पड़ा और इस तरह अहिंसा और सत्याग्रह के सिद्धांतों ने देश को एक बहुत बड़ी समस्या "स्वतन्त्रता प्राप्त करना" को हल किया। इन्हीं आन्दोलनों और सफलता के कारण दुनिया के बड़े-बड़े ज्ञानियों का ध्यान अहिंसा की तरफ गया और गहराई से इस मन्त्र का अध्ययन होने लगा और वह सोचने लगे कि भगवान महावीर के दिये इस मन्त्र में शायद दुनिया का कल्याण छिपा है।

इस मन्त्र में स्वतन्त्र हुये पच्चीस साल से अधिक हो गये, मगर यह केवल राजनीतिक स्वतन्त्रता थी। पिछले दिनों लोक-सभा में बताया गया कि भारत में 60 लाख पढ़े लिखे नौजवानों ने रोजगार दिलाऊ दफ्तरों में नाम लिखवाये हुए हैं। इससे स्पष्ट है कि उनसे कहीं ज्यादा गिनती में ऐसे बे-रोजगार नौजवान हैं जिन्होंने अपने नाम इन दफ्तरों में नहीं लिखवाये। लोक सभा में यह भी बताया गया कि भारत में 22 करोड़ से ज्यादा ऐसे लोग हैं जो गरीबी की लाइन से भी नीचे हैं। भ्रष्टाचार, गरीबी, बेरोजगारी और महंगाई की चक्की