



# Ambedkar Times Weekly

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## Bahujan Samaj to follow the principles of the "Ad Dharm Movement"

Prem Kumar Chumber

Editor-in-Chief: Ambedkar Times / Desh Doaba

**S**ahib Shri Kanshi Ram was born on March 15, 1934, in Khawas Pur village of Ropar District of Punjab (India). He was the eldest of eight siblings. He belonged to the Ramdassia (Ad Dharmi/Mulnivasi) community of the Scheduled Caste group, which is the largest group in Punjab. He was named Kanshi because after his birth the midwife placed him in a tray made of Kansa metal. His father owned some land and his uncles were in the armed forces. In Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram's own words, "I was born and brought up amongst those who sacrificed themselves but never betrayed the country..." Despite his low caste background, he earned a bachelor's degree in science from the Government College at Ropar (Punjab).

His upbringing was modest. During his education years there was nothing special about him to suggest that he would mature into great social revolutionary. It was only after he took up a government job in the western Indian state of Maharashtra that he began to be influenced by the writings and life of Baba Sahib Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar who voiced the concerns of India's low caste community and worked hard throughout his life for their empowerment. Soon after his graduation, Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram Ji joined the research staff of Kirki's Explosive Research and Development Laboratory (ERDL) in Pune 1957. While working in Pune, he quit his job after becoming involved in the famous Deena Bhana case. Shri Deena Bhana, a Rajasthani Scheduled Caste employee and senior colleague of Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram Ji was suspended. His fault was that he protested against the decision of ERDL management for the cancellation of holidays for Baba Sahib Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Lord Buddha Jayantis and their replacement by the Tilak Jayanti and one additional holiday for Diwali. Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram Ji decided to fight against such a caste ridden and dictatorial behavior of the management. The fighter in Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram got the suspension orders of Shri Deena Bhana revoked and Dr. Ambedkar and Lord Buddha Jayantis holidays were restored.

This was the beginning of the long battle for the emancipation of the Dalits in the country that Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram had to lead till his last breath. He resigned from his job and totally dedicated his entire life for the cause of the community. He never married nor visited his home since then. His struggle was not for the home



and family. He devised a new strategy to regain the lost glory of the original (Adi) inhabitants of Bharat (India). He gave utmost importance to the culture of work and democratic method of struggle. He also expanded the circle of the Dalits by incorporating other Backward Classes and Minorities into it.

He criticized the post-Ambedkar leadership of Dalits in India. For that he declared "Poona Pact" as the main reason. He said that "Poona Pact" made Dalits helpless. By rejecting separate electorate, Dalits were deprived of their genuine representation in legislatures. Several and various kind of Chamchas were born in the last fifty years. As and when India's so called high caste Hindu rulers felt the need of Chamchas and when the authority of the upper castes got endangered by real and genuine Dalit leaders, Chamchas were brought to the fore in all other fields".

In his "The Chamcha Age", a well-argued and polemical tirade against the pseudo Dalit leaders, Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram Ji sharpen the contradiction for the legitimate acquisition of political power by the downtrodden in electoral democracy in India. In, the Chamcha Age, "he focused very much on the Poona Pact which was a point of a rather decisive Gandhian victory over Dr. Ambedkar after a long duel between the two at the Round Table Conference". In the mid-1960s, Sahib Kanshi Ram Ji began to organize Dalit government employees to fight against

what he saw as the deeply entrenched prejudice of higher caste peoples. It was around this time that he decided that he would not marry and dedicate his life to the cause of Dalit improvement. Finally he decided play a crucial role in the politics of the country.

The result was, Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram Ji launched his first organization on December 6th, 1978: All India Backward (SC, ST, OBC) and Minority Communities' Employees' Federation, popularly known as BAMCEF. Three years later, on December 6th 1981, Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram Ji founded another organization: DS-4 (Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sangarsh Samiti) and on April 14th, 1984, Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram Ji announced the formation of the Bahujan Samaj Party (the Common Man's Party). As a politician, he became very popular among his people, who found a new hope and vision in his style of functioning and sincerity. Suddenly he became a national figure. He was a master strategist and a meticulous organizer. He used his strengths to carve out a niche for Dalits. This was done by deploying an often combative and aggressive strategy, with virulent attacks on other political parties which he claimed only represented the interests of higher caste Hindus. He was sharply different from other politicians of the mainstream. He used to communicate before he spoke.

In 1996 Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram Ji elected to the Lok Sabha from the Hoshiarpur constituency, from where 50 years ago Great Ghadri Baba Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia Ji founder of the "Ad Dharm Movement" had been returned to the Punjab assembly in 1946.

Interestingly, it was at Hoshiarpur, the strong hold of "Ad Dharm" that the BSP celebrated the 75th year of the "Ad Dharm Movement" on February 18th, 2001. On this occasion Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram Ji exhorted the Bahujan Samaj to follow the principles of the "Ad Dharm Movement" of which the BSP has now become the torch-bearer.

He was one of the few great leaders of Independent India who actually expanded the limits of Dalit politics. His political vision was never confined to Scheduled Castes only, as is often thought about him.

All of the political organizations he founded were meant for the downtrodden of all sorts - SC, ST, OBC and Minorities. It would not be an exaggeration to say that he was the one who took a lead in making Indian democracy more competitive and practically open to the Dalit-Bahujan Samaj.



Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD

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Goodie Takhar, PhD

# Bhagat Singh: A martyr who dreamt of egalitarian India

His essay Achoot Da Sawaal placed humanity way above religious identity

Enclosed within the 1929 edition of the Kirti Magazine issue was one of Bhagat Singh's iconic essay Achoot Da Sawaal or 'Question of Untouchability', penned by a 16-year-old him.

It was a scathing critique on the age-old discrimination meted out to the oppressed and a vigorous exhortation to Dalits to arise! "So called untouchables, the real sustainers of life, awake and reflect over your past," he mentioned.

Bhagat Singh's call for Dalit consciousness and simultaneous exhortation against fundamentalism rings true even in the present times. Achoot Da Sawaal also bears an important reference to the Ad Dharam Movement of Punjab, led by Doaba-based ideologue and Dalit pioneer Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, born in Hoshiarpur. With the help of Seth Kishan Das (a wealthy merchant of Boota Mandi) the headquarters of the Ad Dharm Mandal were established at Jalandhar.

In 'Achoot Da Sawaal' Bhagat Singh wrote... "When they (untouchables) discovered that the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were raking profits due to them (untouchables), they gave a thought to re-organising on their own. No one is certain whether they are doing so as a result of official prompting or at their own but once this line of thinking takes roots, this trend will be fully backed up by official quarters. "Ad Dharam Man-

dal" and the like are the end result of this trend...The answer is quite obvious; above all, it needs to be settled for good,

that all humans are equal without distinctions of birth or vocation." Schol-

ars today say Bha- g a t Singh's constant exhortations on Dalits along with the Ad Dharam Movement have had

a major impact on the Dalit consciousness in the state, the references to these however, are only found in academic circles and scholarly works while no prominent reminders are found in the mainstream political discourse.

#### Expert speak

Prof Raunki Ram, Political Science professor at Panjab University and an expert on Dalits, said, "As far as equality and the social justice

are concerned, Bhagat Singh was very clear that caste and religion were two categories which were responsible for the rift in the society. Bhagat Singh had his own unique under-

standing of the Dalit cause. He was very supportive of the Ad Dharam movement and believed that such

movements were necessary because they fight against the caste oppression. The Ad Dharam Movement stressed that empowerment of the oppressed castes was only possible if they got due share in the local structures of power. It asked for shares in the agricultural land, in education, in government structures at par with others. Ad Dharam Movement and Bhagat Singh's thinking have both contributed hugely to the Dalit and progressive consciousness in Punjab."

He adds, "When the question of the real leader of the oppressed classes arose, Mangu Ram wrote many telegrams to London, proclaiming Dr BR Ambedkar as their leader. He said our leader was Ambedkar, not Gandhi."

Chiranji Lal Kangniwal, eminent historian and Independence movement scholar, said, "Babu Mangu Ram started the Ad Dharam Mandal in Punjab highlighting the demands of Dalits. The movement started two years before Bhagat Singh's Achoot Da Sawaal was penned. In 1927, Katherine Mayo has also just released her book 'Mother India' which was a strong critique on oppression against Dalits. All these factors shaped the times in which Bhagat Singh lived."

Noted Bhagat Singh scholar Professor Chaman Lal said, "Bhagat Singh's Achoot Da Sawaal has come again into focus in the past three decades. It has had a major impact in shaping Dalit consciousness. However, all radical thoughts are being diluted by the establishment. And in the present times, caste has become a major socio-political factor."

Courtesy: Tribune News Service, Jalandhar,



## Aparna Banerji



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# Prioritizing Your Safety! Why I'm Supporting Prop 36

As the November 5th elections near, I want to highlight Proposition 36, a pivotal measure for Sacramento. Our community has been increasingly troubled by crimes ranging from theft to assault, driven by legislative changes and systemic shifts in crime definitions over the past decade.

The origins trace back to 2011 with AB 109, or "Public Safety Realignment," initiated under Governor Jerry Brown. This legislation shifted many felons from state prisons to local jails, leading to premature releases due to inadequate facilities. This transfer has contributed to a visible rise in crime, particularly affecting the trafficking of dangerous drugs like fentanyl.

Further complicating matters, the 2014 Proposition 47, labeled "The Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act," reclassified numerous drug felonies and all property crimes under \$950 as misdemeanors. This policy shift has fueled the increase in California's drug-addicted homeless population, surges in fatal overdoses, and rampant

retail thefts.

Proposition 57, promoted as a safety measure, redefined numerous violent crimes as non-violent, enabling earlier releases for offenders. This categorization includes heinous acts like the rape of an unconscious person. Such legislative changes have not only facilitated the growth of organized retail theft but also diminished the morale of our law enforcement and threatened the viability of small businesses.

The political landscape, influenced by a focus on decarceration and police funding cuts, has prioritized criminal interests over public safety, affecting citizens and businesses alike. Despite resistance and legislative attempts to remove it, Proposition 36 remains on the ballot, reflecting a critical public mandate to address these legislative failures.

Proposition 36 proposes several amendments to enhance penalties and accountability, particularly concerning drug-related offenses:

- Stricter penalties for smash-

and-grab incidents and repeat retail theft.

- Allows stolen property values from multiple thefts to be combined, countering tactics by career thieves who steal repeatedly to avoid harsher penalties

- Enhanced charges for drug dealers, especially those linked to fatalities, with potential for murder charges.

- Similar penalties for possessing firearms with fentanyl as with other drugs.

- Increased penalties for distributing significant amounts of fentanyl and renewed incentives for treatment programs over incarceration.

We need tougher rules to stop repeat offenders who aren't facing the consequences they should. Supporting Proposition 36 means strengthening our laws to better protect our neighborhoods and support honest businesses and residents.

This proposition will enforce stricter penalties for ongoing crimes, helping to ensure the safety of every-

one in Sacramento.

With Proposition 36, we take a crucial step toward a safer community by addressing the gaps in our current system and showing our commitment to law and order.

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@saccounty.gov](mailto:SupervisorFrost@saccounty.gov). 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.

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**Sue Frost**

Sacramento County Supervisor

## Supervisor Frost October Newsletter

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### Secured Property Tax Bills Mailed This Month

Sacramento County will mail 485,562 secured property tax bills which are payable beginning Nov. 1, 2024. These tax bills are mailed only once a year, however, property owners may pay their bills in two installment payments:

The first installment payment is due on Nov. 1, 2024. Payments will be accepted without penalty until 5 p.m. on Dec. 10, 2024.

The second installment payment is due on Feb. 1, 2025. Payments will be accepted without penalty until 5 p.m. on April 10, 2025.

Both installments may be paid when the first installment is due. A reminder notice will not be mailed for the second installment.

Taxpayers may sign up for online e-mail notifications for annual secured property tax bills and reminders before

delinquent dates. Choose "e-Subscribe for property tax payment notifications" to receive these notifications.

Payments can be made online via credit card or electronic check. Taxpayers may print tax bill installment payment stubs to mail in with their payments. Taxpayers may also pay by credit card or electronic check over the telephone at (844) 430-2823. There is a convenience fee for credit and debit cards. Electronic checks are free.

Payment can be made in person at the Sacramento County Tax Collector's Office at 700 H Street, Room 1710, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. In person payments can be paid via cash, check, credit card, debit card or money order. A convenience fee will apply for credit card and debit card transactions.

Payments can be sent via mail to P.O. Box 508, Sacramento, CA 95812-0508. The Tax Collector accepts and processes payments based on the postmark date.

Payments may not be credited to the tax bill for several business days dependent upon the volume of payments received, whether payments were submitted with the correct payment stubs, and/or whether envelopes were post-marked by the delinquent date.

Property tax law (Prop 8) requires that parcels be assessed at their factored Prop 13 value, or their fair market value (as of the Jan. 1, 2024, property tax lien date), whichever is less.

A rising real estate market can cause higher than expected increases in a parcel's annual tax bill if that parcel was in Prop 8 status last year. However, the assessed value of any parcel cannot increase beyond that parcel's factored Prop 13 level.

The 2% inflation cap applies only to Prop 13 assessments. It does not apply to Prop 8 assessments, which by law must track the property's market value until it reaches the Prop 13 factored value.

Find assessed values at [assessor.saccounty.gov](http://assessor.saccounty.gov) under "Assessed Value Lookup," including this year's value and the factored Prop 13 value for comparison. If a taxpayer has evidence that their assessed value as of Jan. 1,

2024, was less than that shown on this year's (2024-2025) tax bill, they should:

Visit the Assessor's Website

Call the Assessor's Office at (916) 875-0700

Email the Assessor's Office at [Assessor@SacCounty.gov](mailto:Assessor@SacCounty.gov)

Taxpayers may obtain current year tax bill information, copies of property tax bills, direct levy information, delinquent prior year tax information and amounts due through the Sacramento County Online Property Tax Bill Information System, searching by APN or address.

Find a QR Code on your tax bill payment stub for use with smartphones to connect to our website.

Sacramento County also has a 24-hour/7-day-a-week Automated Property Tax Information Line that provides information on tax subjects and access to detailed billing and payment information.

Tax specialists are available 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Reach the system and tax specialists by calling (916) 874-6622.

If you own property and do not receive a tax bill by Oct. 15, 2024, you may obtain tax bill copies, property tax information, and payment stubs (coupons) at the Tax Collector's website.

R&TC 2610.5 "Failure to receive a tax bill does not relieve the property owner of the liability to pay taxes in a timely manner or give the Tax Collector reason to cancel penalties imposed for late payment."

Even if your tax bill is being paid by a lending institution (mortgage company), state law requires that a copy of the tax bill be sent to the property owner; all property owners should receive either the original tax bill or an "Owner's Information Copy." It is the responsibility of the property owner to keep their mailing address current with the Assessor's Office.

To update your mailing address, please contact the Assessor's Office in writing at 3636 American River Drive, Suite 200, Sacramento, CA 95864 or via email at [Assessor@saccounty.gov](mailto:Assessor@saccounty.gov).

Please make sure you include a parcel number and phone number with all correspondence.

# Imperial Cinema-Journey from silent/bioscope era films, to talkies, to giant screen and finally to curtain down



Ambesdor V.B. Soni



The year 2015 saw the end of an era, when the legendary Imperial Cinema, Paharganj, pulled down curtains for the last time. Majority of similar single screen cinemas in Delhi had preceded same fate. From over 70 single screen cinema halls in operation in the 1970s in the city, not even a dozen survived. Times, they are a changing.

Indeed, the means of entertainment have gone through a sea change and face stiff challenge, from the ever-increasing number of multiplexes. The digital revolution and state-of-the-art innovations, have brought about mind boggling transformation in the entertainment sphere. There is also the high entertainment

leaders, like Rajiv Gandhi and Sanjay Gandhi in the 1960s, who turned up to watch the then popular mythological "Sampurna Ramayana".

In an interview with Indian Express, dated 25th December 2007 on former P.M. Atal Bihari Vajpayee's 84th birthday, L.K. Advani revealed that both of them were fond of watching Hindi movies. He reminisced that in

1958, after an election defeat in Delhi Municipal Corporation election, they went from the Jan Sangh party headquarters, located in Jhandewalan, to watch a movie to Imperial Cinema, in neighbouring Paharganj. The movie in question was "Phir Subha Hogi," with social theme, starring Raj Kapoor-Mala Sinha. With a dismal showing at the local elections, they comforted each other, that there will be 'phir subha hogi' (there will be a new dawn) as they walked out of Imperial Cinema, after seeing the movie. Advani was quoted as having said that, after Vajpayee became P.M. in 1998, he recalled to the party workers, that the title of that movie had turned out

further contiguous areas to expand to, lower strata of the society moved to fringe areas, beyond Ajmeri Gate and Sadar Bazar. As the land was cheaper there, low-cost settlements started springing up, where poorer sections of the society-the labourers, artisans, lower caste people, with their subculture, set up their dwellings. Muslims formed the dominant group. Red light area found place in surrounding G.B. Road.

The eldest son Mohan Lal, had taken charge of running the business, after the passing away of Nanig Ram. He gained admittance to the social and business circles in the walled city. Soon he was rubbing shoulders with the likes of Seth Jagat Narain and Kedar Nath, who had opened movie halls- JAGAT, EXCELSIOR, MOTI, and JUBILEE showing silent films. It was a novel thing to see projectors displaying figures on the screen. Mohan Lal dreamt of the family owning its own exhibition hall.

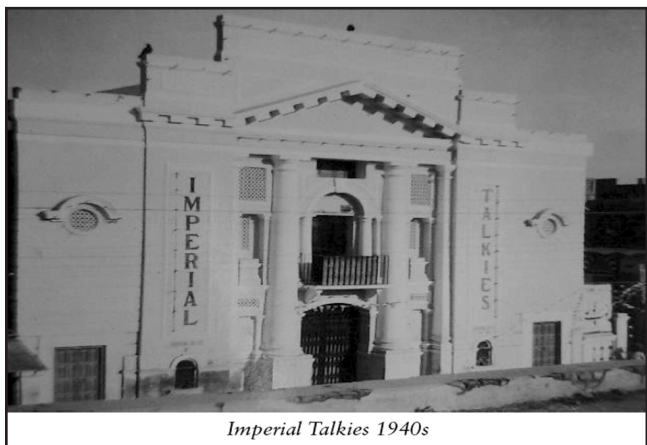
There was hindrance in the realization of his dream. Father Nanig Ram, a disciplinarian and conservative by nature, would have none of that corrupting influence on society's moral fabric, running under family name. So, for the ostensible purpose of a Com-

Cinema in 1932. It was named IMPERIAL THEATRE. From Bombay, the centre of cinematographic activities, a quality projector was purchased, along with connected equipment. Banarasi Mansion in Chandni Chowk housed many merchants and agents selling the needed items. From them were purchased accessories and carbons to run the machinery. For a start, mythological films were screened.

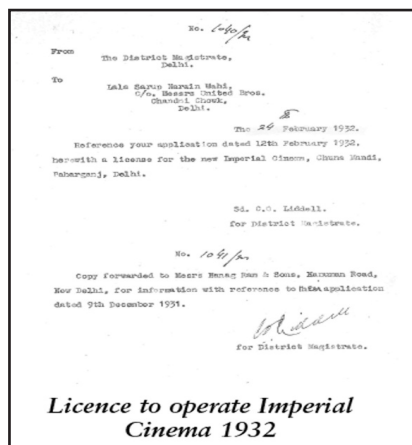
People had no idea what the hall would be screening. They knew only about drama and nautanki. To bridge the knowledge gap, a publicity drive was undertaken. The ploy was to attract the crowd by combining film screening with live performance, by lady dancers, on the pattern of popular and folk dances.

The institution was named IMPERIAL THEATRE. The venture was moderately successful. While the show timings were indicated, there was no guarantee that these would start on time. Outside the hall, people were coaxed into going inside. The show commenced only after a sufficient number of audience had assembled.

A major attraction of course was the live performance by the nautch girls, to calm down the restive audience during the long wait, till the film show started. As the artistes started their acts, there would be cat-calls and whistles by the leering crowd. On occasions they would throw coins on to the stage to show appreciation. They had to be kept constantly under control by hefty bouncers on



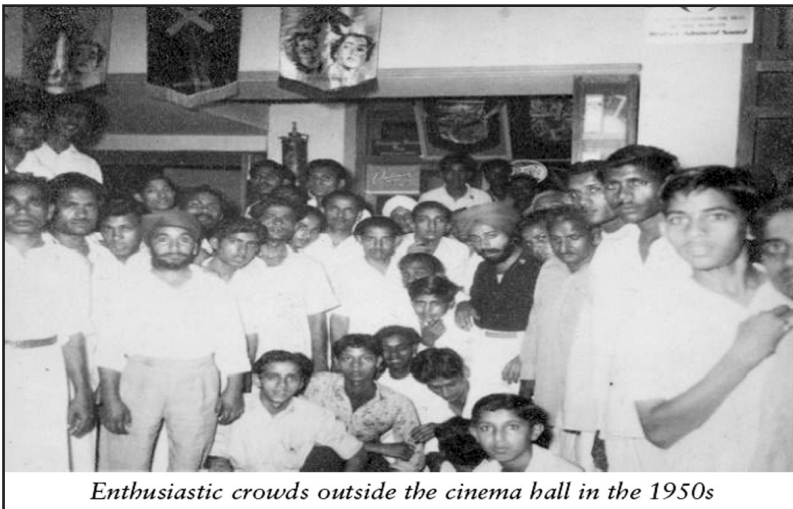
Imperial Talkies 1940s



Licence to operate Imperial Cinema 1932

tax, price of entrance tickets and piracy issues. The final blow came from the cable channels, where one can watch the latest movies, sitting in the comfort of home. High running/maintenance cost, hike in electricity charges and strict control by municipal bodies, all added to the woes of the owners. As an institution, the superstructure started crumbling.

Delhi's entertainment scene began with theatres showing silent films in the 1920s. Imperial Theatre, Paharganj was the premier institution to have started that trend in New Delhi, by public screening of films in 1932. It had the distinction of being the first one in Delhi to have screened the Indian film Ardeshar Irani's "Alam Ara", during the silent film era. It even hosted the brown sahibs, by periodically screening western films. Imperial Cinema was rooted to the ground and had patrons like the former P.M. Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Lal Krishna Advani, among them. Then there were youth



Enthusiastic crowds outside the cinema hall in the 1950s



Owners Soban Lal, Bankey Lal, Manager Jai Prakash

to be prophetic. That there was dawn eventually, in the fortune of the party. Imperial Cinema went through many vicissitudes, ups and downs since its opening in 1932. Its story forms an important part of Delhi's cultural heritage and needs to be told.

**The emerging entertainment scene with Imperial Cinema as the trendsetter** Up until 1930s Delhi's population was concentrated in the walled city of Shahjahanabad. The high density, thickly populated area was bursting at the seam. As there were no

munity Centre, a plot of land was bought in Chuna Mandi Paharganj and named "SONI Hall".

In 1929 when Nanig Ram passed away, the path was now cleared for the dream project being realized. Permission was obtained to extend the scope of the proposed structure in the name of 'Soni Hall'. Chanan Brothers, with office in Sita Ram Bazar, were the architects for the building. Infrastructure for the forthcoming establishment was completed and a licence obtained to run it as a

standby, to pre-empt any possible unruly misbehaviour.

After the silent film era came the moving and talking cinemas. The theatre changed its nomenclature to 'IMPERIAL TALKIES'.

Growth of the cinema industry had started in earnest. Structural changes were made to the building and imported projectors installed. Instead of benches, proper cushioned chairs were installed in the stalls and the balcony. It was then that the first

(Contd. on next page)

# Imperial Cinema-Journey from silent/bioscope era films, to talkies, to giant screen and finally to curtain down

(Continue from page 4)

Indian path breaking talking film, 'Alam Ara' was screened, to the bewilderment and excitement of the audience. There was increase in the clientele with renewed interest and the movie scene had well and truly made its entry on Delhi entertainment scene.

In 1942 management of the neighbouring cinema was taken over to be run in the name of Nanig Ram's mother Radha. However, on account of the slump during World War II (1939-1945) that initiative was given up. It re-emerged on its own as Khanna Talkies.

from Pakistan Punjab was a frustrated lot, having lost home and belongings, now reduced to living on handouts. Some among them, having no preoccupation, became restless and started creating law-and-order problem, for the existing businesses like Imperial Cinema. Jealousies abounded for the success of this establishment. They became aggressive and started stirring up trouble. While visiting the cinema premises they would pick up fight, making loud noise inside the auditorium, disturbing the audience. The miscreants would tear up seats and damage furniture.

For Imperial Cinema the game changer was, the release of the film "Nagin" in mid 1950s, starring Pradip Kumar and Vyjayantimala, which hit the jackpot. A particular favourite of the audience was the snake charmer's 'been' instrument. The song-dance sequence 'Man dole mera tan dole' became an all-time hit. Real snake charmers entertained the crowd outside the hall before and after the show timing, making loads of money.

The film ran for a record silver jubilee 25 weeks continuously at Imperial Cinema, churning out money. Many awards were conferred on Impe-

tions. Leading actors/actresses of those times often showed up on the opening nights on the stage, to promote their films.

During the release of the blockbuster multi starrer star cast films, the common problem faced was black-marketing of cinema tickets. The Indian middle-class brags about seeing a film, first day, first show. Advance booking of a week was no guarantee to deter the menace, as the tickets would be sold out, soon after opening of the box office. Huge profits would be made by unscrupulous antisocial criminal elements. Imperial Cinema



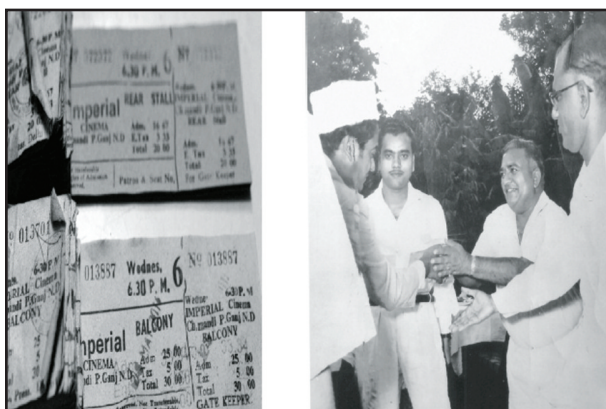
Imperial Cinema 1950s



Award for silver jubilee run of "Nagin" at Imperial Cinema 1955. Standing in the group Bankey Lal and Sohan Lal. Seated from left V.B., S.B., R.P., K.B. and Binu.



Dream run finally comes to an end



Famous singer/actor Kishore Kumar meets Bankey Lal



Hindustan Times 10.10.1959



Altar at the temple with Hanuman's original self-manifesting idol on the right

was no exception. Police intervention seldom worked. It came to light that it would be an insider's job. Constant vigilance did not work.

Another issue one faced with rising popularity of the cinema, was the constant demand for free

Spurred on by the success of the Imperial Talkies, the three brothers ventured into the business of touring cinemas, in and around cities in Western U.P. like Bareilly and Pilibhit. They had to move lock, stock and barrel, equipment and other paraphernalia, every few weeks to new venues for road shows. But that experiment had to be given up, as it was too taxing and the profit margins were hardly adequate.

### Post partition scenario props up Imperial Cinema

After the partition of India in August 1947, Delhi was swarmed with newly arrived refugees in hordes from across the Punjab border. The population of the city doubled from 6.93 lakhs in 1941 to 14.5 lakhs in 1951, as per the census figure. It further rose sharply to 23.59 lakhs in 1961. Paharganj was the one area where they flocked to in hordes, displacing the concentration of Muslims there. It led to communal tensions, riots and bloodshed.

This cataclysmic demographic change upset the peace and order of the area. The newly arrived population

The management had to appoint tough bouncers to keep them under control. Personal bodyguards for the owners had to be on alert. Sometimes, the miscreants would come charging at the Cinema building with hockey sticks/lathis and knives, throwing stones to disrupt the shows and damage the property. During such pitched battles, the police authorities would stand by as helpless spectators.

The films during the period with nationalistic, historical and mythological themes were popular. In early 1950s the top-draw actors Ashok Kumar, Dilip Kumar, Raj Kapoor and Dev Anand, and heroines like Nargis, Meena Kumari and Madhubala reigned supreme. Films like Barsat, Mahal, Naya Daur and Munim ji turned out to be blockbusters. The religious theme films screened at the cinema, drawing capacity crowds, included 'Har Har Mahadev', 'Ramayana', 'Sati Savitri' and later 'Jai Santoshi Maa'. By screening Pakistani films in Punjabi, the appetite of the recently arrived refugees was whetted.

The blockbuster NAGIN hits the jackpot

rial Cinema, with its prestige rising sky high. Its success could not have come at a better time. The extra moolah came in handy to invest in future development of the state-of-the art facilities. The 25-year-old cinema building needed to be replaced by a more modern structure with a new projector, imported modern Westrex sound system and push back comfortable seats. Air cooling system was installed.

With this innovative thinking and planning, the newly revamped building, with almost 580 seating capacity, opened for business around Christmas time 1958. Its majestic exterior façade, elegant staircase leading to the balcony and polished marble floorings in the foyer/ lobby brought a touch of class. The colorful neon sign of the Cinema's name at the top corner attracted attention from a distance.

As an institution, it carved a niche for itself. Film producers and distributors, vied with each other to book their films for shows at this prestigious place. It became the envy of even Connaught Place cinemas. Dilip Kumar-Madhubala starrer Mughal-e- Azam broke the previous record of collec-

complimentary pass, even from our school teachers. Goodwill resulted by our gesture.

The period from 1960s to 90s saw Imperial Cinema rising to its exalted position. But after the passing away of the two brothers Sohan Lal and Bankey Lal, downward slide in the Cinema's fortunes stared. Paharganj's social milieu was changing once again, with the influx of the budget foreign tourists, hippies, the drug scene and the mushrooming of cheap and shady hotels. Bemused foreigners started frequenting the hall for novelty reason, to find out what all goes on the Indian cinemathe romantic songs and dances, fight scenes, tear jerkers and melodrama. But that did not add much to the coffers.

From quality films to action-oriented B grade films and those with sleazy themes, added to the declining trend. Cable TVs had found their way in most households. The death knell was sounded by competition from the entry of multiplexes /PVRs at the shopping malls. Even the low balcony rate of Rs 30 at Imperial Cinema, compared (Contd. on next page)

# Imperial Cinema-Journey from silent/bioscope era films, to talkies, to giant screen and finally to curtain down

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to the exorbitant cost of Rs 300 at the multiplexes, could not attract the public.

At the dawn of the new millennium, the business model also changed. The exhibitors, instead of running the film show themselves, started giving the hall on hire to distributors, at a fixed weekly rate to reduce their risk.

With successful Punjabi refugees moving on from Paharganj to prestigious areas, the labourers/working class from Bihar, Nepal, Bangladesh, started moving in to take their place. That brought the advent of Bhojpuri films on the screen to cater to their demands. The next innovation was the festival of 'daily change' of films. This ruse also did not work, as the films selected were too recent to evoke nostalgia and too old to ride on novelty.

There were also the morning shows on offer. Here the distributors invariably showed films with sleazy themes, some of them foreign, with semi naked attractive women, romping and frolicking around with studs, with prolonged kissing scenes, to titillate the audience. That experiment was hardly likely to last long.

Nothing remains permanent. Life has to move on. So, the magic of the single screen has inevitably come to an end. Multiplexes, PVRs have caught imagination of the younger generation. They have 4D, IMAX and Dolby technology. The tickets may be many times more expensive but these can be booked online with ease. No standing lines or buying in black market. One has the luxury of ordering fresh baked popcorns, tacos, Barista coffee, served right while seated. They know how to splurge on just about anything. Money is of little concern.

The requiem for the single screen cinema can be best summed up with song like '...Ay mere dil kahin aur chal... gham ki duniya se dil bhar gaya. Dhoond le ab koi ghar naya'.... The time for traditional cinema halls which had been part of the emerging Delhi came to an end. Only the older generation can relate to it and appreciate what this institution had done to enrich the social life of Delhi for almost nine decades of existence. A graceful exit was the honourable way to call it quits.

Imperial Cinema, as it walked into the sunset, held its head high with pride, for being the trendsetter. Old order gives way to the new. That is the law of nature. But this institution earned its place in history for being an integral part of the old charm Delhi.

On a somber occasion like this, one is reminded of the poet Shailendra's lyrics from Raj Kapoor and Hema Malini's film: 'Sapnon ka Saudagar': "Hum to jate apne gaon, apni Ram, Ram, Ram". I had gone to watch it in 1968 at Imperial Cinema the first day, with my newly wedded wife and her sister. A huge crowd had gathered outside the cinema. As our slow-moving car was making its way to the hall, some among the crowd mistook that

Hema Malini was in the car. They started surging forward, banging at the car window, to have a clearer view of the actress, who was not even there! That's the memory that will stay etched in one's memory for a long time, when everything else is gone and forgotten.

**The dream run ends. Curtain down**

HINDUSTAN TIMES of Delhi on 10th October 2019 gave due acknowledgment to Imperial Cinema's great contribution in a box item in 2019, reproduced here.

Earlier THE HINDU newspaper's Delhi edition had carried a full-length article on the subject, showcasing Imperial Cinema's towering stature.

**A. The legend of Hanuman Mandir, New Delhi**

One of the famous landmark structures in central Delhi is the Hanuman Mandir, situated on Baba Kharak Singh Marg (formerly Irwin Road), not far from Connaught Place. Its antiquity goes back to ancient times. The mahants who conduct religious service there, claim that the statue of Hanuman at the original spot is not sculpted by human hands, there being no tell-tale signs of chisel having been worked on it. It self-manifested at some point of time.

An apocryphal story spun by a temple priest runs like this. Mughal Emperor Akbar (1542-1605), not being literate, had surrounded himself with learned persons from various disciplines. By initiating dialogues among them in his darbar (court), he would learn many things from the deliberations, the various philosophies and beliefs they talked about. Among the nine jewels who adorned his court, Birbal was his favourite.

During one such session, the story goes, Birbal talked of miracles. Akbar asked him to produce evidence of it before him. The former had in mind Sant Tulsi Das, a devout follower of Lord Rama, who composed one of the most revered Hindu epics, "Ram-charitmanas", and "Hanuman Chalisa". He claimed that this enlightened person had visions of Rama and Hanuman. In those moments he could perform miracles. Tulsidas, who happened to be visiting the region, was summoned by Akbar and asked to perform a miracle.

When his representatives went to Tulsidas, with the royal command, he refused to comply. He had to be forcibly produced before the emperor. On being asked to display his special talent, he showed no inclination to act. Akbar was annoyed by this defiance and sent him to prison, as punishment.

After incarcerating him, Akbar started going through a traumatic experience. He would dream of being bitten by monkeys. When that identical dream kept recurring, day after day, he became a nervous wreck. This started

affecting his health because of sleepless nights. His favourite Queen Jodhabai, concerned at the continuing deterioration of the emperor's health, enquired the reason for it. Birbal immediately suspected that it may have something to do with the unfair imprisonment of the great saint. He advised that he be set free with due apologies, to relieve the emperor of the curse.

Tulsidas offered to forgive the transgression on one condition. He pointed to the haloed spot of Hanuman statue, located at some distance away from, what later came to be known as Shahjahanabad (Delhi) had deteriorated due to neglect. As an act of redemption, the shrine had to be

developed and a priest/caretaker appointed to look after it. This was duly agreed upon. The current temple management explains, that that was how the present temple premises came about, with the help of Raja Man

Singh of Amber. The connection of the haloed surroundings from the Mughal times is explained by the symbol on the religious flag, along with 'Om' and 'Shiva', the insignia, of the metallic half-moon replica that has been adorning it since then. The first priest to be appointed to the temple was stated to have been Mangal Das. It was he who had started the daily ritual of the pooja of the deity. According to the prevailing belief, there is a burial place of his, on the premises. As one enters the temple, on right-hand side a pillar signifies existence of his samadhi. At a depth of about 12 feet, as per the claim, lie buried his remains-some bones, dentures and a 'chillum', a contraption used by holy men for weed smoking.

According to a myth, recounted by a priest, a spirit can be seen wandering around the temple surroundings in the morning hours. Who is this mysterious figure? Could it be of that priest? It seems to be a tall frame, with a flowing beard in white clothes. It is said to protect those living on the premises. It performs rituals and prayers and quietly disappears.

It is believed that in the period after decline of the Mughals, the then Maharaja of Jaipur Jai Singh had owned a vast tract of land that surrounded the Hanuman Mandir. It extended from the present area, encompassing Connaught Place, up to Jantar Mantar, on Sansad Marg.

Around 1724 Maharaja Jai Singh II of Jaipur was building astronomical observatory, which became known as Jantar Mantar. He decided to make additional land available for extension of the temple. That's when the Mandir got a face lift. The present line of Mahants for temple service started from then on.

Hanuman Mandir has been managed privately continuously, by the 30 succeeding generations from that lineage. They have exclusive right of

conducting religious service for the devotees, and in the process, accepting the offerings made in cash and kind, including valuable gold and precious items. Bulk of it is supposed to be ploughed back to improve conditions at the temple for providing better facilities to the devotees. Most of it quietly finds its way to private pockets.

The temple had the 'murty' of Hanuman adorning the sanctum sanctorum for centuries. Subsequently many additions were made. By the side of Hanuman's original image, the scene of Ram Darbar was installed, perhaps in 1932. Radha-Krishan, Lakshmi, Sarasvati, Shiva-Parvati, Durga and Ganesh and other deities in the Hindu pantheon found their place next to each other outside the sanctum, to cater to diverse devotees.

The title deed of the original land over which they have exclusive right, claim the temple management, is freehold with ownership rights held in perpetuity. In addition, in the early twentieth century some more land, adjoining the original area was acquired on a leasehold basis for a token amount of Re.1. Initially it was for a period of 25 years. After the stipulated period the lease had to be renewed. This is being done routinely. During the mid-seventies, when Jagmohan was Lt. Governor of Delhi, under Central Government's control, the need to improve the temple's virtual ghetto surroundings, caught his attention. This was the time when Sanjay Gandhi was on rampage, clearing up slums and illegal constructions. Indira Gandhi had declared a state of emergency. The administrators assumed dictatorial powers.

Around that time, the next renewal of lease after 25 years, became due. The temple authorities, who had possession of the additional land, demanded that the lease be extended for a hundred years. The reality was that they were not utilizing the additionally acquired land for legitimate activities of the temple but for personal commercial use. A well-developed cow/buffalo shed, had been in existence in central Delhi against the regulation. On the other side of the temple a big area was sublet for car repair/body workshop garage and other sundry business activity. The rent collected was pocketed by priests for their personal fortunes. This illegal commercial use proved to be their undoing.

That gave Jagmohan an opportunity, to interfere in temple management and form a kind of trust, to be run on the lines of the Vaishno Devi shrine, which he had successfully put in place. He encountered roadblocks and political pressure. He did the next best thing, by not renewing the 25 year lease. There was adequate proof that the surrounding land was not being used for religious activities. With his familiar trademark bulldozer policy, illegal structures outside the immediate vicinity of the temple were demolished, causing much heartburn among those affected. Too late to reverse the action. Mention should be made of the

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(Continue from page 6)

early 1950s, the heydays of the temple and its religious, socio-cultural effervescence and flowering. There used to be regular katha/bhajan singing sessions, sometimes by the wandering minstrels, on the premises. Every morning and evening an elaborate arti, with giant sized flowing diya swaying to the accompaniment of the high decibel sound of the gong bells, could be heard distance away. Around Dussehra/Diwali Ramlila stage drama was a regular feature. Janamashtmi

has to be haggled. Indian sweets made from desi ghee, boondi prasad and motichoor laddoos for offerings at the temple make brisk business. The most popular items on offer are glass bangles, costume jewelry, handicraft and handloom items, children's toys, chooran/ aam papad and what not. Indian savouries to choose from include gol gappa, chat masala, aloo tikki, dahi vada, chhole bhature, falooda kulfi and ice cream. Soft drink bottles with marble stoppers make brisk sales in hot summer, along with colourfully sug-

flowers, incense and boondi/sweets/prasad items are now available at the stalls. Permanent kiosks were constructed for selling trinkets, glass bangles and toys. As the place was famous for savouries and food, special stalls were constructed and auctioned off commercially. Thus, the money made from leasing out the kiosks went to the municipal authorities. This is one grouse the priests harbour till date. Moreover, the character of the place has totally changed, looking more like a concrete jungle.

cember 2018, following the statement attributed to the Chief Minister of U.P. Yogi Adityanath, that Bhagwan Hanuman was a tribal. Some members of the low caste community gathered outside the premises, pointing out that high caste pandits have been unjustifiably controlling the temple affairs for millennia. Their demand was that members from their community should now be given the responsibility of conducting service there. According to press reports, some high caste devotees who happened to be visiting the



Food stalls and shopping kiosks doing brisk business, especially on Tuesdays



Bangle churiwala vendor with VBS



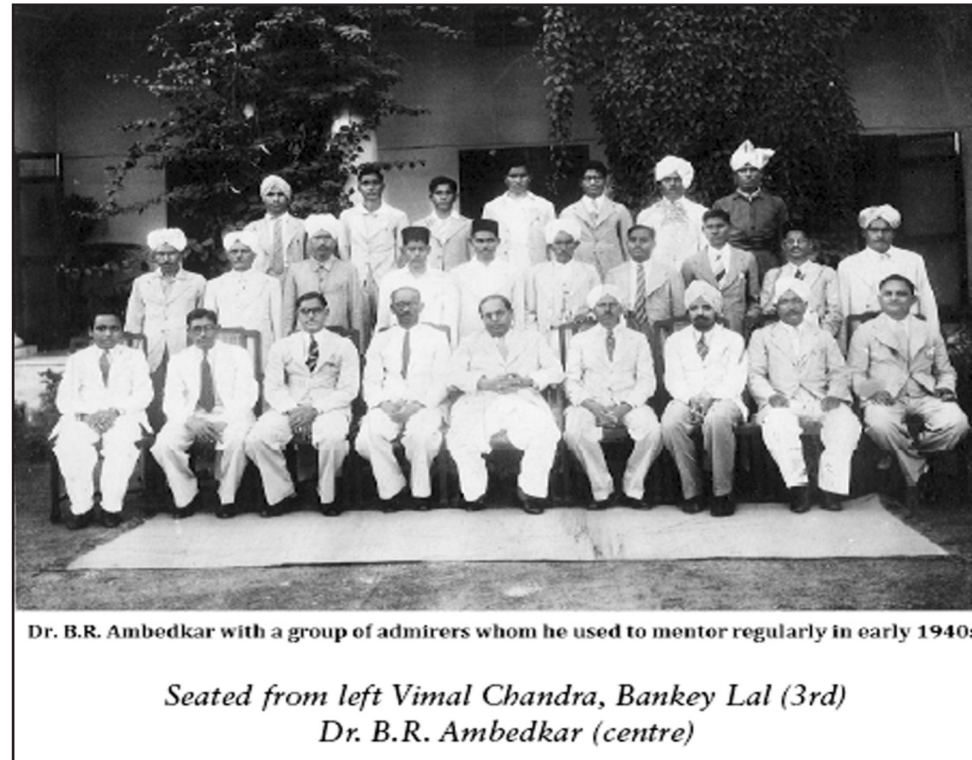
Protestors demanding that Dalit priests be allowed to perform service

and Shivratri were the occasions for temple to be decked up with colourful lights and buntings. Devotees would throng the worship area, where recitation from the holy scriptures, bhajan singing and shloka sounds pervaded the atmosphere around. On Holi festival a huge structure to burn Holika would come up in the open space on the premises, attended by devotees/neighbours.

The surroundings hummed with sporting/recreational activities too. There were Indian style wrestling enthusiasts among the young priestly generation, ready for 'dangal' in the 'akhara' situated a few hundred yards down the road on Y.M.C.A. premises. Amazing talent among the young budding pujaris was visible in the traditionally popular game of hockey, played at the nearby Shivaji Stadium (then called Lady Hardinge Ground). A top hockey team of Delhi, INDEPENDENTS Club, was managed by a senior priest of the temple. Chess was the most popular game, played almost throughout the day, on the foreground steps of the temple. Anybody could participate in it.

Pigeons were bred professionally for 'kabutar bazi'. Their landing port was perched on top of the Mandir roof. Partridges were groomed and richly fed to prepare for competitive fights, on the lines of cock fights, for betting purpose. Palmists are on hand on the premises to forecast one's future, for some consideration. Mehndi Walis for henna decorations, do brisk business, on the eve of festive occasions.

The biggest event has to be the weekly mela on Tuesdays, a day dedicated to Hanumanji. Devotees throng the temple in big numbers from long distances, for prayers and offerings. The temple surroundings assume the look of a village fair, on the lines of a 'haat'. A festive spirit pervades the air. Number of makeshift stalls are put up temporarily by the hawkers, selling a wide range of items, price for which



Dr. B.R. Ambedkar with a group of admirers whom he used to mentor regularly in early 1940s

Seated from left Vimal Chandra, Bankey Lal (3rd)  
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar (centre)

ared ice 'chuskies'. It would appear as though mini rural India, with all its socio-cultural-culinary diversity has been transplanted.

In the 1970s there was deterioration in the security atmosphere, flowing from the park situated behind the temple on Hanuman Road. It had become a den for the junkies/drug runners, foreign hippies, anti-social elements, joined by poor blood donors, catering to the requirement of the nearby blood bank. Part of their nefarious activities started to spill over around the mandir. In that vitiated atmosphere authorities had to act tough, in the process to clip wings of the overreaching temple authorities.

It is in this backdrop that the razing of the illegal structure proved justified. The surrounding area was cleared of eyesore slum like encroachments. In its place the authorities put up concrete stalls to create an ambience of a semi urban mela. The obligatory requirement for pooja and offerings, through thalis laden with

In recent times the scene outside the temple has undergone transformation. In the 1960s, Baba Kharak Singh Marg saw rows of State emporia coming up, drawing tourist crowd. The game changer was when the Shivaji Stadium Metro station, connecting directly to Indira Gandhi International Airport, became operational around 2010. Its entry point is right at the temple's doorsteps. As a result, the crowd frequenting around the temple has increased manifold, even though not all of them have 'darshan' at temple as their intended purpose.

With improved facilities and better regulation of the crowd for temple entry, Hanuman Mandir has once again regained its prominence as a must visit place of worship and a family outing. The only regret is that in the process it has lost its endearing ethnic character and assumed urban ambience, much to the disappointment of the traditionalists.

**Postscript:** The Mandir attracted attention in the month of De-

Mandir at that time, demanded that entry of the Dalits to the inner sanctum be barred. To the credit of the managing priests present, they opposed the call for an entry bar. That saved the day. Police came in time to restore order and normalcy.

**B. Guess who came for dinner?**

**Dr B.R. Ambedkar-the inspiration for generations**

Baba Saheb Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar was an icon, a beacon and a lighthouse, who guided the destiny of millions of Indians. He gave his people respect, dignity and hope for the future. His depth of knowledge in wide varied fields was vast and profound. His charismatic personality evoked awe, admiration and inspiration.

Baba Saheb put in place, the amazingly well thought out Constitution of India. That alone is a good enough reason for him to be assigned an exalted position, among the galaxy of all-time great Indian personalities.

Ambedkar's encyclopedic knowledge, debating skills, oratorical qualities and putting across his argument in a convincing manner, made him the obvious representative of the deprived backward community at Round Table Conferences in early 1930s, convened by the British Government in London, to discuss the future course of political action in India. He put up a convincing case, to espouse the cause of the Scheduled Caste community for separate representation. He famously crossed swords with Mahatma Gandhi at the 1932 Round Table Conference and gave up, for the time being his demand, only to save the life of Mahatma, who had gone on an indefinite hunger strike. Even though he agreed to sign the Poona Pact, Ambedkar gave a Memorandum of demands to the British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald, which included adequate representation for the community in legislature, government jobs, educational

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institutions etc. and legal provision, against caste-based prejudices/practices.

All India Scheduled Caste Welfare Association (SCWA) was formed at Baba Saheb's initiative in 1942. Up and coming earliest graduates from Punjab, Vimal Chandra and Kartar Singh, who had taken up Government jobs in New Delhi, became two of its office bearers. At the height of World War II in July 1942, Dr. Ambedkar was invited to join the Executive Council of the Governor General, as Member in charge of the labour portfolio.

Baba Saheb's priority was to

ther gave up on him. Even at the age of 31 years he had not settled in life. Then he fell in love with a girl, but did not dare approach his father for permission to marry her. Vimal Chandra's closeness made him to seek his father's permission through him. With great trepidation, when the subject was broached, the big man flared up and in a brusque manner, dismissed the proposal aside by a remark: "I am against marriage just for the sake of it. People should become somebody and be useful to society before considering marriage. The purpose in life should be acquiring knowledge, by reading books. Anybody who does not read at

grooming and imparting various skills, had borne fruits in his protégé.

To add a personal note to this narrative, I must have been four years old when Baba Saheb came to our home in 1946. As my mundan ceremony (tonsuring the hair) was postponed till the age of 5 years, I was sporting flowing locks. On seeing me Dr. Ambedkar remarked to my father: "what a pretty daughter you have". He was surprised to be corrected, that the child in question was a male. His response was an affectionate hug for the bemused me.

From that visit Baba Saheb was visibly impressed that Bankey

Scheduled Tribe, under Home Ministry in early 1950s. Till his retirement as Director in the 1970s, he tirelessly worked for the welfare and upliftment of the community, as per his Mentor's vision and overall directions. His name will go down in history as a pioneer who authored publications on the subject, which are often quoted as reference material.

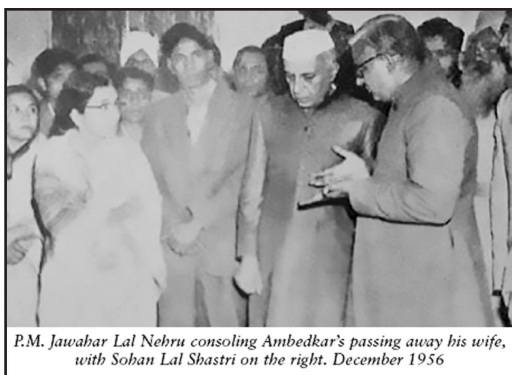
Delhi Municipal Committee (DMC), located opposite Clock Tower in Chandni Chowk, had to be constituted in 1947 after independence. To ensure due representation for his community in it, Dr Ambedkar forcefully put forward the name of Bankey Lal to the post of Municipal Councillor. Underlining the family's sterling contribution to the construction of New Delhi, he justified his case, as an old resident of the city since the early 1920s which had contributed so much to the evolution of New Delhi. The master tactician won the argument and his nominee found his rightful place in DMC.

Dr. Ambedkar's good taste in dressing up was evident from his wardrobe, full of smartly tailored suits and shirts, specially crafted neckties, many stylish hats and a wide collection of leather shoes.

The range of walking sticks of all shapes and sizes in his possession was pretty impressive. His collection of quality Swiss watches would be the envy of any connoisseur. Baba Saheb had a fondness for fountain pens, of which he had a great collection. These included brand names of the time viz. PARKER, SHEAFFER'S and WATERMAN. He was at pains to emphasize the need to develop good handwriting, which in his opinion, was the hallmark of an impressive personality. Bankey Lal keenly observed these traits and followed his mentor in his own lifestyle.

During formative growing up years I was guided by my father, who fed me with inspiring stories from the life of Baba Sahib. Not only for me, but for the today's generation too, the Mahanayak continues to be the only role model, motivating all to work with single minded devotion to break the shackle of the caste system. A marg darshak, who shows the path and a beacon of light for the community.

It was a poignant and sad moment indeed, when on December 6, 1956 Bankey Lal, led me as a teenager, to Sansad Marg, near our ancestral home at Hanuman Road, when the cortege bearing mortal remains of Dr. Baba Sahib Ambedkar, was being taken in an open carriage around the city, for the last darshan. Paying respects, our heads bowed to the great Messiah with pride. There is never going to be another charismatic leader like him, for some time to come. His name has been written in golden letters in the history of India. The coming generations must not allow his message to be forgotten. They should revisit his life's struggles and learn lessons on how the challenges must be overcome. Only then will his soul rest in peace.



P.M. Jawahar Lal Nehru consoling Ambedkar's passing away his wife, with Sohan Lal Shastri on the right. December 1956



VBS at the age of 4 years



Vimal Chandra with Ambedkars

fight hard for a fair deal for his people. As a follow up to the Memorandum submitted earlier, he forwarded a reminder: "Grievances of the Scheduled Caste" to the new Viceroy Linlithgow, for action in October 1942. He listed specific steps under three headings viz. political, educational and miscellaneous. He was aware of the standard excuse given, that there were not enough qualified people from among the community, to be considered for important positions. He swung into action to address the issue.

Ambedkar got together, a select group of promising young members from the community, to personally mentor and guide them for leadership role. Some of them had already made a mark and showed promise as professionals, engineers, entrepreneurs or in Government jobs. Vimal Chandra was already in touch with him, in connection with the activities of Scheduled Caste Welfare Association. He became a trusted confidant of Ambedkar and helped him in putting together an informal study group and took over responsibility for logistical arrangements for its meetings.

Bankey Lal was one such young man to have been included in the group. He created a good impression, helped no doubt by impressive family credentials, as builder of New Delhi. His willingness to learn through hard work, sincerity and overall personality impressed his mentor, who saw promise in him. This group used to meet regularly over tea. Dr. Ambedkar would hold court and give lessons on various aspects of life.

His main emphasis was on acquiring knowledge, through books and education, as tools to uplift his people. In this context, it would be relevant to bring into picture Baba Saheb's only son, Yashwant Rao. Much to the father's disappointment and distress, the boy showed no inclination for studies and books. After trying in vain, the fa-

ther has no right to exist."

Dr. Ambedkar had a well-stocked private library. There were thousands of books in his personal collection, most of which were later donated to Siddharth College, founded by him. He exhorted the group to do the same at home, so that the younger generation had ready access to books. His common refrain was: 'mortgage your house if you must, but ensure that books are within easy reach of children. So, buy them without a thought'.

The topics at the motivational sessions for the promising youngsters included academic, political/social issues and human-interest themes. He gave lessons on social grace, dressing appropriately, how to gracefully move in the society, and ways to conduct meaningful conversations. A group photo of one such session at the top, demonstrates eloquently the members turning up dressed up in suits and neckties.

The proudest moment for Bankey Lal was when Baba Saheb graciously accepted an invitation to visit his home at Hanuman Road, New Delhi. As a man of taste, Lal had a fine collection of bone China crockery and silver cutlery in which to offer hospitality. He had remembered Baba Saheb's counsel, that due importance should be given to the presentation of whatever is offered, to please the guest's senses. His wife Kishan Devi was known for her accomplished culinary skills.

Aware of Baba Saheb's fastidious eating habits, Lal relayed to her the big man's remark: "I am afraid of going to a North Indian's home for a meal. In order to reach the dish on offer, one has to swim through a lake of ghee". After the visit, Dr. Ambedkar seemed visibly satisfied that his

Lal's family had a touch of class and standing. Their mansion at Hanuman Road added to their prestige. He became convinced that the promising young man had the right credentials to assume an appropriate public position, among Delhi's expanding social elite.

Dr Ambedkar recommended to Chief Commissioner (CC) of Delhi, an Englishman by name Christie, Bankey Lal for the post of Honorary Magistrate. As a Member of Governor General's Executive Council, his recommendation was taken seriously and the process set into motion.

To prepare him for the oncoming responsibility, Bankey Lal was taken under his wings by Baba Saheb. He guided him in acquiring the basic knowledge of law, and familiarise himself with legal processes, through law books.

There was some delay in the appointment order being issued. Vimal Chandra was at that time posted as Resident Clerk in the Central Registry in South Block. His duty involved overlooking smooth movement of Government Dak to various Government Departments and higher ups. Baba Saheb became impatient and wanted to know the reason for delay in issuance of formal orders. When Vimal Chandra met the Chief Commissioner of Delhi to pursue the matter, it was confirmed that the proposal was indeed under consideration but that the delay was procedural in nature. Within a week a formal order for Bankey Lal's appointment as Honorary Magistrate, was issued.

As Baba Saheb's protégé, Vimal Chandra joined the office of Commissioner of Scheduled Caste and