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2.	Reading Comprehension Concept and Factors Affecting Language Competence to L2/L3	Dr. Sudesh Bhowate	Literary Voices A Peer Reviewed Annual Journal of Languages Vol-6 ISSN : 2277-9949	2017	-	Dayanand Arya Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Nagpur	-
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# Perspectives

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# Perspectives

A National Interdisciplinary Annual Research Journal August 2017

## अनुक्रमणिका

### English Section-

✓ 1. Teaching English Poetry In L2/L3 Mix Ability Classroom With The Module Based On Four Basic Skills	Sudesh M.B. Bhowate	1
2. Techniques Of Keeping Mentally And Physically Healthy	Dr. Vandana Meshram-Ingle	7
3. A Comparative Study Of Psycho-Physiological Effects On College Students In Nagpur City	Dr. Lalita I. Punnya	10
4. Inclusive Education Strategies And Challenges.	Dr. Rajshree P. Meshram	14
5. Caste Economy And Economic Democracy	Rajendra S. Motghare	18
6. Role Of Micro Finance In Rural Development In India	Dr. Suresh A. Bhagwat	25
7. Humanistic Approach & Legacy Of Shivaji To Maharashtra	Dr.D.S. Kadhao	28
8. A Critical Study Of Role Of Human Resource Management For Implementation Of Total Quality Management In An Organisation	Miss. Monali N. Musale Dr. Suresh A. Bhagwat	31
9. Impact Of Information And Communication Technologies Education On Women Empowerment	Dr. Vivek S Chavan	36
10. Domestic Violence Against Women And Role Of Counseling	Dr. Santosh P. Mendhekar	44
11. Rural Students Problems In English Communication	Prof.Amrपाली P.Yeole	49
12. Micro Finance: Steps Towards Inclusive Economic Growth (Shg Bank Linkage Model)	Sankalp P. Hadke	52
13. Women's Role In Mouryan State Craft A Study Through Ashokas's Edicts	Prof. Jitendra S. Tagade	58
14. Psychological Approaches Of Some Of The Major Events In The Life Of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar.	Amitkumar Dhamgaye	62

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## Teaching English Poetry in L2/L3 Mix Ability Classroom with the Module based on four Basic Skills

Sudesh M.B. Bhowate

**Abstract :** Teaching of English poetry is both difficult and delightful task for a teacher. It's difficult for comprehension level of L2/L3 learners in a mixed ability class which is varied from a good learner to a slow learner. Once the students attain its comprehension, they started enjoying it with its rhythm and rhymes. Teaching in the mix ability classroom is entirely depending upon the teaching modules, teachers' level of patience and his teaching plan. The objective of teaching poetry is ought to be achieved by the teacher which makes teaching learning most effective from the students point of view. The effective teaching of poetry helps creation of learning environ in classroom. The present paper explores the problems in teaching English poetry in L2/L3 mix ability classroom and effective teaching modules for poetry. Also the present paper is based on the project assignment presented and submitted by the author in orientation programme of HRDC, RTM Nagpur University, Nagpur.

**Key Words :** L2/L3 Learners, ELT, good learner, slow learner, teaching modules, teaching plan, objectives of poetry, images, figure of speech, listening, reading, writing, recitation, accent, rhyme, rhythms, comprehension, group discussions, etc

**Introduction :** Teaching poetry is the most delighting task for a teacher in English classroom. The obvious reasons are the scope of interpreting poem, learning of new vocabulary with rhythm and rhyme, emotions involved and creation of light atmosphere in the classroom. Poetry is an art so also teaching it in English classroom. Both teacher and students enjoy poem with the progress of the vision through images and figures presented by the poet. The role of teacher is very important here especially in L2/L3 situations to help the students with visualizing those images and realizing its musical sense. The task of teaching English poem becomes difficult to L2/L3 learners because of its context and images used by the poet. Therefore, teacher basically needs to help them in comprehension of poems with providing them a rightful context and meaning. With the teaching of poetry a teacher achieves some important targets as:

1. Make the students enjoy the poem
2. Creation of light teaching-learning environment
3. Gaining of functional vocabulary and Comprehension
4. Perfection of Pronunciation and accent through the recitation

While developing comprehension; a shift of student's thought process from their own language to the target language is important especially in L2/L3 situations. Teaching of poetry helps in stimulating the shift of thought process in English. "The flexibility of poetic genres provides EFL teachers with opportunity to involve learners recalling and recounting personal experiences, to develop in their learners mental images while processing or producing language, to help learners to develop an L2 inner voice while producing and comprehending language, to engage learners in Kinesthetic activities, and to help learners to



develop an idiosyncratic version of a text." (Khatib 2013: p191) It is an observed fact that the vocabulary gained by students through the poetry remains functional to the student and long lasts its impressions. May be the task of teaching of English poetry in L2/L3 situation is not that easy but it certainly helps in developing students curiosity in learning English as well as raising their comprehension level effectively.

**Issues in L2/L3 Mix Ability Classroom Situations:** Students in L2/L3 mix ability classroom especially in regional languages found English as difficult subject. During last two important examinations i.e. SSC and HSC many of these students prepared this subject merely to pass the examination. Some of them passed the same examination in multiple attempts due to English only; therefore, they developed disinterestedness for the subject. When they reach first ladder of higher education, the approach of these students remains the same as before. They enter English classroom with no enthusiasm, some of them opt not to attend this particular lecture. The grammar which was the issue of their previous failures again occupies major portion in first two years of graduation, therefore, these students constantly develops pressure. Although sessions of poetry, short story and situational English made the classroom environment light, but planning activities with the help of teaching module requires sufficient times and implementing these modules in a large classroom brought different difficulties before teachers.

Students in Indian classrooms from the previous grades developed a habit of picking lines as the response to a question from the comprehension exercise. They found it difficult to give their response in their own words. Therefore, preparing students for annual examination on the basis of these lessons and poems consumes another large amount of time reserved for classroom activities. A well known culture of dictation of notes on subject is another area of discussion. Students easily attracted towards bazaar notes in case teacher didn't provide the same due to his engagements with the live classroom. Students found a way out with the help of bazaar notes not to attend classes; therefore, they remain away from the real language learning classroom situations.

Four basic skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing could be learn through the proper implementation of teaching modules for poetry and prose. Poetry certainly brought a light environment and happiness to students once they received the meaning of poem in progression. Therefore, teachers also love teaching poems towards achieving their goal of teaching four basic skills especially in the mix ability classroom.

**Objective of Teaching Poetry:** Teaching poetry in English classroom has multiple advantages of its own. It certainly helps develops teacher-students bonding and attachment. There are certain general objectives while teaching in English classrooms, according to Dr. R. A. Sharma they are as follows:

1. To enable students to appreciate the beauty, rhyme and style of the poem.
2. To enable pupil to read aloud the poem with proper rhythms and intonation.
3. To enable students understand the thought and imagination contained in the poem.

4. To enable student to enjoy recitation, individual or chorus of the poem.
  5. To train the emotions of students
  6. To create a love for English literature in them
  7. To develop their aesthetic sense through poetry.
- (Sharma 2005: p303)

Though the learning of words and phrases is considered as incidental only, but for L2/L3 learner's poetry becomes effective means to learn new words and their usages. Many poems left deep impression on students mind for a longer period in their life. Through the image building out of the learned vocabulary students retain difficult words and its meanings easily. They remember some lines and phrases with its effective meaning or some images of the poem helps utilize new vocabulary in different context. The present writers' intention while teaching poetry in English classroom is to create light environment of teaching-learning and to create maximum possibilities to bring down the student's phobia towards English.

**What is Poetry?** : Since we are dealing with the teaching poetry in English classroom, it is taken in the classroom activity to understand its meaning and various aspects and enjoying the aesthetic beauty. From the time period unknown to human being poetry delights generations. Music of poetry and rhythms make oneself dance. Thoughts of poetry make some cry and laugh. For P. B. Shelley 'poetry is the expression of thought'. For William Hazlitt, poetry is 'the language of imagination and the passion'. (Hudson 1913:p83) Thomas Carlyle considered poetry as the musical thought. William Wordsworth defines poetry as, 'spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings'. (Hudson 1913:p83) Mathew Arnold considers 'poetry as the criticism of life'. (Hudson 1913:p83)

**Developing Comprehension of Poetry:** When one claim to understand the poetry, here he/she receives and visualizes the series of images and pictures depicted in the poetry. Through these images various figures of speech symbols, signs, musical effects from rhythms and thoughts develops his/her understanding. He grasps the gist of the poems out of all such means. Students also need to train to understand such images. While teaching poetry English classroom could be transformed into a workshop for L2/L3 learners as a group activity. A well prepared teaching plan and module with respect to the different poems is required to be implemented by a teacher.

**Teaching Module for Poem:** An effective teaching module covers all important objective of teaching poetry. Four basic skills should be emphasized equally. From the announcement of the particular poem to the completion of entire module based teaching involves several activities for students. These could be taken as step in progression of teaching-learning in the classroom.

**Step I: Announcement of poem and developing curiosity amongst students for the activity**

Announcement of a poem as the next topic in classroom activity alone is not workable. With the announcement of the poem, it is essential to develop curiosity amongst students to know writer of the poem and pleasures from the poem. Curiosity could be



developed by introducing the brief and special information about writer, may be some stunning facts from poet's life to catch student's attention and arousing interest. While teaching a poem 'The Solitary Reaper' written by William Wordsworth, teacher could give information and incidents to students from poet's life. As writer himself mentioned in Prelude-1 an incidence from his life when as a child how he developed fascination for sailing in a boat. Unable to pay the fare, how in dark night he came to river through deep forest and threatening sounds. He sails into boat and how was he terrified with the sounds. His early life without parents with the only support of his elder sister Dorothy, his intense love for nature, all certainly could arouse curiosity amongst students to learn about Wordsworth more and it prepares ground for the poem. Also such information orients the students with the writer's life and time. A British Council Trainer Christina Smart uses background music before initiating poem "As a way in to a poem, I might play some background music to create the atmosphere, show some pictures to introduce the topic, and then get students to think about their personal knowledge or experience which relates to this topic." (Smart, 2005)

This curiosity for students certainly made him read the poem before attending the next session of the poem.

#### **Step II: Giving gist of Poem with meaning to difficult terms and references**

For the L2/L3 learner understanding poem in first hand reading is difficult unless they know the gist of poem beforehand so that they work upon their own imagination to develop the images given in the poem. Many teachers use here translation method for the L2/L3 learners. Gist of the poem may be given in simple English with minimum translation helps stay with the objectives of the teaching poem.

#### **Step III: Listening Skill and pleasure of rhythms**

Here in this step teacher recites the poem dramatically two/three time with correct accent, intonation and rhythms. The recital of poem by teacher should be clear and audible to all the students in the classroom. In the first time recital by teacher, students are supposed to listen it carefully without referring the text so that students keenly observe the lip movement, facial expression and realize the music of the poem. In the next two readings teachers allow students to open the book and mind the words and phrases with its pronunciations. In this activity learner understands the utterance of word with correct stress and intonations.

#### **Step IV: Reading Skills and Development of Comprehension as Group Activity**

In this activity learners in the classroom will be divided into some groups (8-10 Students each) with distribution of good learners in every group so that slow learner get their help easily and feel comfortable. In this activity every student will recite poem one after another and teacher will correct their pronunciation, intonation and rhythms. Teacher will give drill for certain words and sentences for its proper utterance and recital. Good learners also could extend their help with the same once teacher is satisfied with his/her performance. In this way teacher could save his time and move on to another group for helping students.

### Step V: Speaking Skill and Confidence Building

In this step students in group activity find out the difficult words with the help and teacher and good learners, all the students would develop their comprehension of poem word by word and line by line. In this activity students are free to interact with each other especially to share their own ideas and understanding about the stanza and its meaning. This will certainly develop an environment of English and platform for slow learners to develop their speaking skill. Teacher would ensure that each student are getting enough opportunity to participate in the discussion and expressing their ideas. Participation by slow learner in the discussion would build his/her confidence to speak and expressing ideas. Encouragement by teacher and good learners to such slow learners is essential here to make him/her vocalize.

### Step Six: Writing Skill and Examination oriented preparation

In this step students will be asked to write a summery or gist of poem as a group activity. Students will be asked to write the gist of a whole poem in their words and not the line to line or stanza wise summery. In this way students will be given training for writing skills. Teacher will go through the summery submitted by students group leaders as oral presentations from their place only. Once teacher is satisfied with the summery of each group he would provide them few long and short answer questions from the examination point of view. Students in group would prepare the written answers and present them. At the same time teacher would ask other simple question to test the comprehension of students. In this way also slow learner would get a chance to be vocalized with the possible answers and it will stimulate their intellectual understanding. Teacher would also correct the answers from the written sheet submitted by students. All students at the end would be allowed to take down corrected copies into their note books as their own notes. In addition to this group method Crhristina Smart suggest few suggestions stimulating creative writing skills among students as follows:

- They can write a letter to a character in the poem, write about what happened before the beginning or after the ending of the poem and so on.
- Students could use the poem as a starting point and model for some parallel writing: Each group might contribute a verse to a collective poem (or rap).
- Genre transfer presents a lot of opportunities for writing practice; letters, diary entries, radio plays, newspaper articles, agony aunt columns all based on the original text from a poem.
- My students have found reformulation exercises very stimulating, where they switch between formal and informal language.
- Longer poems can be summarized in fifty words.
- It is also fun to get students to transform content words to synonyms or antonyms and then discuss the subtleties of vocabulary.(Smart 2005)



Number of writing strategies could be assigned to students group. Once the comprehension of the poem occur to them, these students would love to work upon different creative ideas as well as examination oriented preparation.

**Conclusion:** Teaching poetry in English classroom is the multi-advantageous activity. During the poetry session, classroom environment becomes light and pleasant. Students look free from stress and show interest in every progressive activities. Through a proper workout plan English classroom would be transformed to a learner's active workshop. Here in such a workshop of poetry, objectives of poetry achieved at the maximum. Sessions of poetry gives a wholesome environment for slow learners to participate into the activity with enthusiasm. Good executed teaching module for poetry certainly provides opportunities to learners to learn four basic skills from a single module. The poetry sessions also provide maximum opportunity to learn new words and its usage with its different forms. The group activity for poetry also trains student's emotions, thought process and develops aesthetic sense. The success entire activity is depending upon the well planed module and his effective role as a facilitator. Effective use of multimedia especially during recitation of poem through audio/video mediums (LCD projectors) help develop environment and to catch learner's attention. Through multimedia students could be given exposure to the native speakers of English by audio/video clips. In this way students could understand British accent, rhythm, and intonation.

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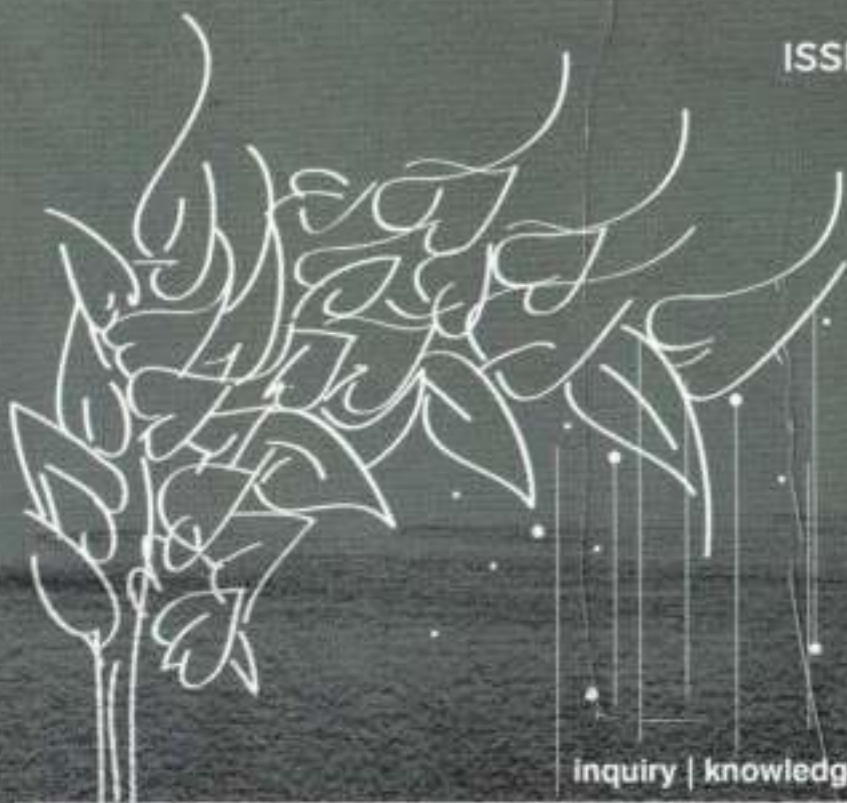
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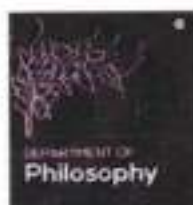
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***In Memoriam***  
***Prof. S.S.Antarkar (1931-2018)***

1

***Articles:***

1. *The Centrality of Maitri to Dr B.R. Ambedkar's Thought* 24  
- AakashSingh Rathore
2. *The Narrative Elements in Buddhist Art* 42  
- Manjiri Thakoor
3. *Concept of Metta in Buddhism* 68  
- Sandesh Wagh
4. *Paradox of Purifier as Impure* 83  
- Archana Malik-Goure
5. *Zen Buddhist Master Thich Nhat Hanh's Anti-war Poems and Poetic Meditations on Brahmavihara for Universal Peace* 103  
- Sudesh Bhowate
6. *Agarkar's Rational and Reformist Gender-Perspective: An Appraisal* 120  
- Meenal Katarnikar

# *Zen Buddhist Master Thich Nhat Hanh's Anti-war Poems and Poetic Meditations on Brahmavihara for Universal Peace*

.Sudesh Bhowate<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** Life on the earth becomes terribly unsafe than ever before with the threat of war and use of nuclear weapons any moment. Cut throat competition to grab global market and Mass production of deadly weapons ironically to secure one's nation makes the other insecure. Small nations are either grabbed or destroyed or economically paralyzed and made dependant by the powerful nations for their selfish motifs. The answer to all these threats from Nuclear War, Cyber War or Space war or invasion of small countries by the bigger one is simply a philosophy of Non-violence. Sramana tradition in India especially Buddhism offers a philosophy of non-violence through the *Metta* and aspects of *Brahmaviharas*. *Brahmavihara* means sublime or noble state of conduct or state of living. It has four aspects *Metta*, *Karuna*, *Mudita* and *Upekkha*. Teaching and practices of these aspects of Buddhist *Brahmaviharas* in the history helped states in India and abroad maintain peace and harmony. Buddhist Scholars and Bhikkhus in every age continued these teachings ceaselessly with Buddha's advice for the welfare of mankind as well as for all living beings. Poetry is the strong medium of expression adopted by Bhikkhus to teach Buddhist values and teachings of Buddha. Many verses in Buddhist Sanskrit and Pali Canon are the outcome of these efforts made by Buddhist scholars. Through various Buddhist practices monks all over the world help people overcome their suffering and to inculcate the *Metta* for happiness and welfare. Contemporary Buddhist scholars and living masters like His Highness Dalai Lama XIV is well known for his teachings of *Metta* and 92 year old Zen Master Thich Nath Hanh known for his teachings of Mindfulness and compassion. Also Exiled Vietnamese Monk Thich Nath Hanh is a well known poet and creative writer. "*Call Me by My True Names*" is the collection of his poems, most of them were written during 1960s and 70s on the theme of universal peace and brotherhood. The poems are the poetic meditations by the writer on Buddhist Philosophy of

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*Dependant Origination, amitta Metta* and various aspects of *Brahmavihara*s seeking world peace and welfare of all beings. The present paper is an attempt to study the various aspects of *Brahmavihara*s from the original text and analyzing the selected anti-war poems of Thich Nhat Hanh with those aspects in the context of contemporary conditions.

### Introduction

Post World War II life on our planet is changing rapidly than ever before. The progress and pace of life is increasing with the advent of IT and digital technology. On one hand nations are enjoying the blessings of luxury but on the other it is dwelling under the threat of (nuclear) war from the superpowers and from the so called underdog nations. Cut throat competition to grab global market, desire, greed, and jealousy brought the nations as enemy of each other. Mass production of deadly weapons ironically to secure one's nation makes the other insecure. Small nations are either grabbed or destroyed or economically paralyzed and made dependant by the powerful nations for their selfish motifs. War affected Millions of people lost their lives and equal number of people becomes homeless wondering to get shelter as refugees in the neighboring nations. From there they cry to get back to their homelands but unheard by the homeland governments. Atrocities on the homeless migrants from the known and unknown predators are brutal. These unfortunate people drown somewhere while crossing river or sea, men killed and women raped by the pirates or army or they are jailed for their intrusion in others territory. The holocaust of war from every corner across the nations brings horrible narratives and revelation of animalistic nature of human (citizen) with destructive weapons left no limits of cruelty.

The paradox in the human behavior especially of civilians is a matter of concern for the modern world. They are close to the religion yet they are far away from the practical morality and values. Fundamentalism in the practice of religious values and political nationalism make them blind to realize their humanness towards other national. Political fanaticism gives birth to the ideas like *terrorism, naxalism and separatism*. The rebel groups are not only threat to the states but at the same time they are constantly killing the social peace. People are living under fear of death everywhere. Civilians are being targeted by these rebel groups to make realize their presence to civilians and to challenge the government authorities. Terror created through their activities left undeliable effects on

people. I remember one such terror incidence occurred near my town in 1990s. Naxalites had exploded a Police van carrying police men as well as civilians (of Mangehar hamlet) which were heading towards my town Deori for the weekly market on Tuesday. In a few minutes from that massive blast, people started crying and yelling for losing their relatives or near dear. Siren of Police Lorries heading towards the spot and then back towards rural hospital was creating additional terror amongst my town people. The fear ridden people, especially villagers who were going back to their villages on the same route towards the blast could be seen grave and anxious. Since that incidence many such terror incidences happened and hundreds of civilians and policemen are killed by *naxalites* and encounter with police becomes a routine.

### Suffering (Dukkha)

Suffering through war, atrocities or through natural causes is known to us since immemorial past. Religious teachings and practices develops across the world in the past to overcome these sufferings. Religious founders, saints and sages have spent their lives to help people develop loving kindness and brotherhood beyond the boundaries of states. Buddhism is the forerunner in the campaign of loving-kindness and compassion and helping people overcome their suffering. 'The question of happiness or the problem of unhappiness is fundamental to Buddhism.' (Sangharakshita, 2004:9) Basically, 'the centre of Buddha Dhamma is man and the relation of man to man in his life on earth'. (Ambedkar, 1997: 121) Therefore, Buddha begins with existence and recognition of sufferings, that there is an origin of sufferings, an ending to sorrow and a path to the ending of sorrow. He called these principles as *the Four Noble Truths*. 'According to his Dhamma if every person followed the Path of Purity, the Path of Righteousness and the Path of Virtue, it would bring about the end of all suffering' (Ambedkar, 1997: 122) Here, Path of purity is *Five precepts* (pancasila), Path of Righteousness is the *Noble Eightfold Path* (*atthangiko Maggo*) and the *Path of Virtue* are *ten Paramitas*. The essence of Buddhist concept of peace could be trace from these teachings of Buddha.

We know the war during Buddha's time between two city states Sakyas and Koliyas which broke out of sharing water for agricultural purpose. Buddha saved thousands of lives from war killings and possible origin of sufferings on both sides. Buddhism has been working for the universal peace and brotherhood through Buddha's teachings of *Brahmavihara* i.e. 'Sublime Abidings'. 'Here *Brahma* means sublime or noble as in



*Brahmacariya* (sublime life); *vihara* means mode or state of conduct, or state of living." (Narada, 1988: 535) It has four aspects *Metta*, *Karuna*, *Mudita* and *Upekkha*. In each generation Buddhist masters and monks ceaselessly work to maintain peace and happiness wherever they go, sometimes at the cost of their life or made to accept exilement. Devoted disciples of Buddha as monks constantly walking and helping monks and elites on Buddha's advise depicted in Vinaya Pitaka: "*Carath Bhikkhave Carikam, Baluajan Hitay-Baluajan Sukhay*". Following their Master's word Bhikkhus across the world ceaselessly working for the welfare of human society.

### Living Buddhist Masters

Contemporary living Buddhist legends 'Nobel Prize for Peace Winner' His Highness Dalai Lama XIV and 'Nobel nominee for Peace' Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh are the champion of world peace. HH Dalai lama who born as named *Tenzin Gyatso* in 1935 in the Province of Amdo in Eastern Tibet is known for his *Metta retreats* and training of Buddhist practices for monks and lay people. He is considered Head of the Tibet people, struggling to get back to his homeland with his millions of countrymen who are living in exile in different countries. His approach to the problem of suffering could be guessed from his reaction, 'my religion is kindnesses' (Sangharakshita, 2004:1). The kindness in his beliefs comes from the Buddhist *Metta*. I had got an opportunity to receive his teachings first time in his Dhamma retreat organized by Nagloka, Nagpur in 2007 and another in University of Mumbai in the International Conference on 'Metta' organized by Department of Philosophy in December 2018 where I was invited as the speaker in one of the sessions. From his writings and the lectures HH Dalai Lama is constantly raising the subject of sufferings, threat of war and his concerns for the future of human society. In the present circumstances according to him, "there will be no future worth living unless everyone now takes personal responsibility for their own inner lives and universal responsibility for pain and misery in the world..." (Dresser, 1996:9) On the problems of continued war HH Dalai Lama appeals for taking a journey of *Bodhisattva* into the hearts of compassion and forgiveness.

Born in Hue of Central Vietnam in 1926, Thich Nath Hanh ordained as Buddhist Monk at the age of 16. Grown up as the highly intellectual Buddhist scholar, writer, poet and philosopher Hanh is responsible for developing many institutions in Vietnam viz. *an Quang Buddhist Institute*, *School of Youth for Social Service* and *La Bai Press* which are

helping people in spiritual and social growth. To end the decade long war in the country he visited France in early 1970s with the peace mission resulted into denial of entry back to his own country. Therefore, he established his *Mindfulness Meditation Centre* in Plum Village of France. Here, like the HH Dalai Lama he is living his life in exile since 1973. He later travels across the globe for his anti war campaigning for world peace. His association with Martin Luther King Jr. steered the entire America and rest of world gathering support to end the war. Nominated for Nobel Prize for peace, he is one of the highly influential personalities of the millennium due to his works towards world peace, talks on Engaged Buddhism and Meditation retreats. In the winter of 2006 I got an opportunity to participate in his three day retreat organized in Nagaloka, Nagpur, where I received his teachings on mindfulness and walking meditation.

Hanh is also one of the greatly publishing author with over hundred books with millions copies sold in multiple languages. His creative writings, '*the Stone Boy*' (anthology short stories) and '*Call me by my True Names*' (anthology poems) are popular besides his books on Buddhism. In this paper I've taken his anti war poems from his '*Call me by True Names*'. The most of the poetry in the first part are anti war poems devoted to the world peace. The story behind the origin of the poem has a sorrowful incident which the writer learned from one of the letters sent to him from refugee camps in South East Asia. In his book '*Being Peace*' he wrote the incidence in detail. A mere 12 years old Vietnamese girl was raped by a Thai pirate when her boat was heading towards a refugee camp. The girl drowns herself out of suffering. Here instead of hatred towards that pirate Hanh develops compassion for him for it was in unwholesome environment he was grown up. Here writer mediates upon the circumstances where the fisherman grown up criminals or pirates, Hanh's own stand is to destroy the ill mentality. He believes everyone else is responsible for the origin of pirates. In the book '*Being Peace*' he maintains: "In my meditation, I saw that if I had been born in the village of the pirate and raised in the same conditions as he was, I would now be the pirate... If you or I were born today in those fishing villages, we might become sea pirates in twenty-five years. If you take a gun and shoot the pirate, you shoot all of us, because all of us are to some extent responsible for this state of affairs." (Hanh, 1987: 65-66) Hanh identifies suffering on both levels; the suffering of unfortunate people like that innocent girl who are escaping from war torn countries and the suffering of those who are leading immoral life as



criminal and pirates born out of unfortunate environments. Hanh's poems urge the societies across the world for developing loving-kindness on the earth to save humanity.

Hanh is following the footsteps of Buddhist masters in past who developed poetry as the medium of social connectivity with the lay devotees. Majority of the Buddhist Pali and Sanskrit canon are covering the original teachings of Buddha; also it covers the composition by Buddhist *Blukklus* and *Blukkhunis*. The most prominent verses by them are 'Therigatha' and 'Theragatha.' The aspect of Buddhist poetry revolves round the elements of sufferings, mental defilements, values, morality and overcoming ill will. Since poetry is the history of emotional progress of human beings, Buddhist poetry records the anthropological and historical development of human society. When we look back to those ancient texts, one can look into the psyche and minds of these composers where they narrate their life from being to becoming (attaining Arhat). They translate their inner world of emotions and thoughts which are their concepts of present as well as future societies as their *utopias*.

Hanh's poems shifted from self to encompass human beings tackle hatred and sufferings with loving-kindness and contentedness. One of his meditational poems often taken into mindfulness practice maintains: "If we are peaceful, / if we are happy, / we can blossom like a flower, / and everyone in our family, / our society, / will benefit from our peace" (Hanh, 1987: 11). For him happiness is the cessation of suffering, 'Call me by my True Names' brought a world of sufferings especially a war torn Vietnam with pathetic images. Writers struggle as a human being to restore peace for those devastated under the war conditions could be trace from these poems. His mind travels with each migrant or the victims, he feels sufferings when they suffer and prays for their wellbeing. These poems are also remembrances and tribute to those who lost lives during war and rehabilitation works.

Understanding Hanh's anti war poems through the elements of *Brahmavihara*, we have to keep in mind the binary opposites like 'hatred' and 'love'. As in *Dhammapada* 5<sup>th</sup> verse maintains: "Na hi veren veruni sammantidha kudacanam, Azeroa ca sammanti esa dhammo samantano" (Buddharakkhita, 1985:23). Buddhism treats hatred with non hatred means love. Buddhism identifies true love with four elements i.e. *Maitri*, *Karuna*, *Mudita* and *Upeksa* which are called as *Brahmavihara*. Bhadanticariya Buddhaghosha in *Vissuddhimaggo* (The Path of Purification) relates development of elements of *Brahmavihara* with the sufferer, he maintains: "When there is suffering in others it causes

(*karoti*) good people's heart to be moved (*kampana*), thus it is compassion (*karuna*). Or alternatively, it combats (*kinati*) others' suffering, attacks and demolishes it, thus it is compassion' (Buddhaghosha, 1956: IX, 92-93). Development of elements of *Brahmacihara* through meditation is also held important in Buddhism as a way to Nibbana. Sangharakshita observes: "Throughout the ancient scriptures of the Pali canon it is made clear that the way to Enlightenment involves the cultivation of the emotions at every step, most often in the form of the four *brahmaciharas*" (Sangharakshita, 2004:11).

Meditational practice for developing these four elements of *Brahmacihara* further helps in creating bonding between human being with each living being on the earth. "The practice eliminates the ego-centric existence and develops an attitude of boundlessness and vastness that extends with no limits concerning the entire existence of living beings. The type of practice is called *appamāna vihari* (living without limit)" (Dhammananda, 1994:273.) On the similar lines of these Buddhist aspects, Hanh's poems dwell upon the idea of limitless concerns for all living beings. To understand Hanh's poems often one need to go through the background of some incidences narrated by Hanh. By taking four elements of *Brahmacihara* as a guide, the analysis of the selected poems from the anthology helps in envisioning writer's perception of the world under the shadow of war.

### Metta

*Metta* is the foundational elements of *Brahmacihara*, rest of the three elements are based on this emotion. While describing the characteristics of *Metta*, Buddhaghosha maintained that 'loving-kindness is characterized here 'as promoting the aspect of welfare' (Buddhaghosha, 1956: 344). Narada defined *Metta* 'as that which softens the heart' (Narada, 1988: 536). For Narada it is the wish for the good and happiness of all. Benevolent attitude is its chief characteristic, so it discards ill will. 'Metta has no expectations and desires nothing. *Metta* is a very pure without attachment and is given' (Sayadaw, 2008: 4). Hanh added one more important aspect i.e. 'it is the ability to bring joy and happiness to the person you loves, because even if your intention is to love this person, your love might make him or her suffers'. (Hanh, 2011:6) Hanh emphasizes the need for the training of the cultivation of loving-kindness and its understanding. Rev. Sangharakshita discusses the perceivable signs of *Metta*. "The unfailing sign of *Metta* is that you are deeply concerned for the well being, happiness



and prosperity of the object of your Metta, be that a person, an animal, or any other being.' (Sangharakshita, 2004:12) Sangharakshita further clarifies the scope of *Metta* that the friendliness of *Metta* doesn't necessarily involve actual friendship in sense of personal relationship with the person towards whom you are directing it. Talking about the binary opposite of *Metta*, Narada gives its direct and indirect enemies. 'The direct enemy of *Metta* is hatred, ill will or aversion; its indirect enemy is personal affection' (Narada, 1988: 536).

Hanh believes in one basic understanding, 'if we are peaceful, if we are happy, we can smile and blossom like a flower, and everyone in our family, our entire society, will benefit from our peace' (Hanh, 1987: 13) His aspects of *Metta* revolves round the concept of peace and happiness of living being. Hanh is disturbed with the ceaseless suffering of people of war. Meditating upon *anicca*, he sees the suffering of people will go one day with practice of loving-kindness. His poem 'Experience' urges for supreme *Metta Bhavana*. The poem was written during rescue operation for victims of flood and war. During their stay with the victims, realizing unbearable sufferings of those unfortunate people; one of the poets' disciples out of nervousness drowns self. Paying tribute Hanh bit his finger and let his drop of blood into the river and uttered prayer for the departed:

*To you who have drowned, I speak  
And to you who have survived / And to the river-  
Having heard all space reverberate / With the infants screams,  
Tonight, I've come to stand midday / Between these sheer mountains  
And to watch them bend over the river / And to listen to their eternal tales,  
Here is the impermanent / And yet and continuously flowing world  
Let us stand together for the future generation. (Hanh, 1999, 14)*

Hanh wrote poem 'Recommendation' for volunteers of Youth for Social Service who risked their lives every day during war period. He was 'recommending them to prepare to die without hatred' (Hanh, 1999, 19). While rereading these lines of poems constantly remembers the Diamond Sutra which suggests the courage of a practitioner with his smile will bloom a flower. And in this way he will earn a high respect from his loved ones. The second part of 'Recommendation' reflects on *Metta*:

*One day when you face this beast alone  
With your courage intact your eyes kind  
Untroubled / (even as no one sees them)*

*Out of your smile / Will bloom a flower  
And those who love you / Will behold you*

*Across ten thousand worlds of birth and dying. (Hanh, 1999, 18)*

'Flames of Prayer' is an emotional poem for him which has unfortunate background. One of his first six disciples Nath Chi Mai, core member of *Interbeing* had immolated herself for peace and reconciliation at Tu Nghiem Pagoda in Saigon. The mental training under which his disciples were gone through, he believed Nhat Chi mai was peaceful at the time of her death. It is only power of Metta and compassion provides peace and calm mind even when one is in grief or suffering or torture.

*Waking up early, I have slept soundly / Like an innocent child with no worries*

*My hands is it your duty to call fire home this morning*

*My hands caress my chicks/ My hands, you are loyal friends*

*Hands for handing out candies and cookies / Hands that are smudged with ink and chalk*

*Hands for weaving silk/ Hands for smoothing the heads of orphans. (Hanh, 1999, 28)*

In *Metta Sutta*, Metta has been extended to all visible and invisible living beings and objects. It is inevitable extended towards earth which nurtures all of us. It is said that to express his gratitude towards the earth Buddha sat in *Blumisparsa Mudra* meditation by touching the earth with index figure. Hanh's *Morning Peace* was written for developing peace loving community through the practices of mindfulness. One of his similar poem in the first section, 'A Morning Prayer for Peace' was used by youth in the meetings to chant during "Don't shoot your own brother campaign" throughout the South Vietnam. According to Hanh this chanting was aims at reconciliation and stopping the war and also to arouse the willingness to work for peace. The poem keeps *Kamma* as the positive action to human beings walking towards enlightenment. The poem is composed in such a way it constantly reminds the Metta Sutta:

*Homage to all Buddhas in the ten directions*

*Because of your love for all / Have compassion on us*

*Help us remember we are just one family / North and south*

*Help us rekindle our compassion and brotherhood*

*And transform our separate interests/ Into loving acceptance for all*

*May your compassion help us overcome our hatred (Hanh, 1999, 36)*

There are some more poems in the anthology like 'The Sun of the Future' the poet radiates his Metta for all fellow brothers from across the world.

## Compassion

*Metta* and *compassion* are very close emotions, where there is origin of *Metta*, emotion of compassion arises simultaneously. Buddhaghosha found it 'characterized as promoting the aspect of allaying suffering. Its function resides in not bearing others suffering' (Buddhaghosha, 1956:344). According to Narada, '*karuna* makes the hearts of the good quiver when others are subject to suffering'...Its direct enemy is wickedness and its indirect enemy is passionate grief.' (Narada, 1988: 536). Everyone has a subtle element of compassion within us. 'When we begin to cultivate compassion, we have to take whatever seed of it we can find within ourselves and help it to grow' (Sangharakshita, 2004:18). According to Hanh, '*karuna* is not only desire to eradicate pain but ability to do so' (Hanh, 2011:7). While advising Bhikkhus Buddha wants them to work out of utmost compassion. He says, 'You, O Bhikkhus, from all fetters, human and divine. Go ye row, and wander for the gain of the many, for the welfare of the many, out of compassion for the world; for the good, for the gain and for the welfare of gods and men' (Ambedkar, 1997: 439). In the light of these aspects of compassion, Buddhism sincerely works for the cause of the environment and ecology of the living planet and also reveals the nature of Buddhist compassion.

Hanh's poem '*Our Green Garden*' is the purely environmentalist in nature. Here writer is worried about the greenbelt of the universe amid the explosions and pollutions. Writers' concern for the flora and fauna is clearly discernible here:

*Fires spring up at all ten points of the universe  
A furious acrid wind sweeps them towards us from all sides.  
Aloof and beautiful, the mountain and rivers abide.  
All round, the horizon burns with colour of death  
As for me, yes, I'm still alive  
But my body and soul writhe as if they too had been set on fire  
My parched eyes can shed no more tears (Hanh, 1999, 6)*

The poet is astonished to see the approach of human being, because no war can bring peace and happiness to us. He offered self to the gunmen, if the war could end with his death. He ends the poem with compassionate urge: 'Who will be left to celebrate a victory made of blood and fire?' (Hanh, 1999, 7)

*For warmth*' is another anti-war poem written after destruction of Ben tre. The poem works on the psyche of the human being when our hands sympathetically support us in our grief. Writer provides an ironic statement made by an American soldier on the



bombing of Ben tre, 'We had to destroy the town in order to save it' (Hanh, 1999, 15). Poets' creation of image of loneliness which was haunting the each of the survivors is indicating the gravity of suffering, 'I hold my face in my two hands / No, I am not crying / I hold my face in my two hands / To keep the loneliness warm.' (Hanh, 1999, 15) Poets' inner soul is angered upon the human passion of killing; his compassion only helped in him stabilized his mind. 'Two hands protecting / Two hands nourishing / Two hands preventing / My soul from leaving me / In anger' (Hanh, 1999, 15)

The poet is of the opinion that we should appreciate the songs of birds and should not hate our body for it is the only source of humanity. The humanity has a structure reflects through the springs, the rising tide, Beethoven, Bach, Chopin, cries of baby and lullabies. Therefore, Hanh urges man: 'Do not destroy the structure of suchness within you.' (Hanh, 1999, 20). The poem 'Structure of Suchness' expresses his concern over the humanity and all living and non living being for their life. The war will destroy all, therefore, songs of birds are longs for the peace. Poet believes in the power of *Metta* and the compassion. The survival of the humanity rests on these powers.

The poets some of the poems which evoke compassion are suggestive of Buddha's teachings of *anicca* and *dependant origination* i.e. *Pratitya Samutpada*. The best example of such poems is 'Let me give back to our Motherland'. The basis of the poem is yet again mourning to his dear ones. He was in Paris when he heard of assassination of four students of Youth for Social Service, founded by the poet. On the urge of the poet they were working for the cause of social welfare, but they were shot dead at the riverbank. The writer believes as if he was killed there. He cried helplessly. Writers compassion towards the diseased made him cry: 'No, I am not a general. I am just a human being. It is I who summoned them for service and now they have lost their lives. I need to cry' (Hanh, 1999, 25). The writer is well aware of the *anicca* nature of human being, which will return to the earth. All four bodily elements will merge with the four elements of earth. To arouse compassion amongst the livings the writer offers their returns to the earth:

*'In your presence, fellow countrymen, / brothers and sisters  
 Let me return the flesh of my brothers to our motherland  
 Let me return the blood of my brother to our motherland-  
 This chaste blood and pure flesh that never soiled our name.  
 Let me return their hands to humanity, / Hands that did not destroy.*

*Let me give back their hearts to humanity, / Hearts that bore no hatred.* (Hanh, 1999, 24).

Sometimes *Metta* and *Karuna* emotions both occur together. Poems in this anthology are evident of the same. Hanh mourns his dear ones or the lay devotees, he seems to be an activist, registering his protest against merciless killings, but he urges for the compassion and *Metta* for the fellow human beings who are tamed by the soldiers of statesmen. The poem 'Condemnation' was written on the bombing of a village where the poet used to visit. The writers anguish could be visible from each line, yet he is not bowed before the ill will. Through this poem the poet is making people know that the enemies of men are not men, but ill mentality controlled by desires:

*Whoever is listening, by my witness:  
I cannot accept this war / I never could, I never will  
I must say this a thousand times I am killed.  
I am like the bird who dies for the sake of its mate  
Dripping blood from its broken beak and crying out.  
Beware! Turn around and face your real enemies-  
Ambition, violence, hatred, and greed* (Hanh, 1999, 39).

The poem 'Condemnation' was published in the Buddhist weekly 'Hoi Trieu Am' with circulation of 50,000 copies, earned the writer name as *Anti War Poet*. Some other poems like 'Resolution', 'Those who have not Exploded', 'That is the only Mind', 'The Fire that Consumes my Brother', and 'A Free White Cloud' are such poem with appeal of compassion and at the same time urges for the peace.

#### Sympathetic Joy (*Mudita*)

Happiness and contentedness are the keys to the peace of mind. *Sympathetic joy* is obviously extends to the living being especially when they are in need of it. When someone is unhappy, he is suffering, he needs sympathetic joy from someone. According to Buddhaghosha, 'its function resides in being in unenvious. It is manifested as the elimination of aversion (boredom). Its proximate cause is seeing beings success' (Buddhaghosha, 1956: 344). According to Narada the direct enemy of *Mudita* is jealousy and indirect enemy is exhilaration. Hanh relates joy with the true love. 'If there is no joy in your love- you can be sure that it is not true love' (Hanh, 2011:7). Rev. Sangharakshita believes 'the pure experience of *mudita* is because of its intensity entirely different from the ordinary pleasure we might take in knowing that somebody else is doing well' (Sangharakshita, 2004:18). By appreciating other we lose nothing. In fact HH Dalai lama



cautious us with its negative effects. 'If, on the other hand, we react negatively when other people try to correct us, or competitively when others are praised, or precariously when it is we who are praised, it will make people unhappy, and we will become lonely and friendless' (Lama, 1994: 47).

Being a Buddhist monk Hanh's entire life is devoted to the cause of happiness. Therefore, his poems search the moment of joy from other's lives. Where there is a scrap of joy what if under the pressure of war and sufferings, the poet expresses his compassion and extends his sympathetic joy towards all. The poem 'Call Me by My True Names' is example of such. The poet is feeling burden of sorrowful thought for the girl who was raped by the sea pirates, but he is unable to ignore the circumstances in which crime nurtures. Hanh humbly submit here as he is human being tend to sorrow as well as happiness. Writer hopes no such crimes to be done and no such criminals to be nurtured. His sympathies are thus with both of these unfortunate beings:

*'My joy is like Spring, so warm / it makes flowers bloom all over the Earth.  
My pain is like a river of tears, / so vast it fills the four oceans.  
Please call me by my true names, / so I can hear all my cries and laughter at once,  
so I can see that my joy and pain are one.  
Please call me by my true names / so I can wake up  
and the door of my heart can be left open, / the door of compassion' (Hanh, 1999, 73).*

Amidst the terror of war, when people of Vietnam were anxious over the fate of their life, they got a moment of joy on the eve of Vesak. People forget their pain and sufferings, they realized that whatever was happening will cease one day. The best memories for the lost dear ones in the war were unbearable but one day the light of life will go away as Buddha proclaim with the principle of *anicca* (non-permanence). Hanh call it as the newly born Buddha to them and a rebirth to the war victims. This *Mudita* or joy of these births of consciousness could be realized from the poem 'Night of Prayer':

*'In that moment / The flower of immortality opened  
In the garden of birth and death / The enlightened smile  
Words and similes / He has come / To learn man's language...  
Till east turned rose / And the lumbini gardens became a soft cradle  
Welcoming Buddha, newly born' (Hanh, 1999, 16).*

A person of mental stability tends to suffer yet he remains calm and peaceful. Under the tremendous torture and sufferings some innocent ideas too makes them experience *mudita*. 'Flames of Prayer' is one of the sensitive poems of Hanh. The poem comes with

enlightenment in four stages, where third and fourth stages were passing through the equanimity and mindfulness. Therefore, equanimity plays a vital role on way to achieve peace and contentment. Some of the Hanh's poems reveal the upeksha emotion prominently since his end object is to work for peace.

The opening poem of the anthology is 'Message'. The poem reveals the strong conviction of Hanh regarding the end of war and coming of deep peace for people. Paradoxically writer was still carrying the dead bodies of his Dhamma brothers slay in the war, yet the beautiful nature through blossomed flower bringing a message of love to him. In 'Message' while paying tributes to the brothers lost their lives in the war he sees their mortal remains with equanimity:

*'Earth will keep you tight within her arms, my dear*

*So that tomorrow you will be reborn as flowers*

*Those flowers smiling quietly in the morning field*

*This moment you weep no more my dear*

*We have gone through too deep a night' (Hanh, 1999: 5)*

Hanh's another anti war poem 'Experience' has emotional appeal which was based on his own experience of rescue operation during flooding and war. He was hopeful for the infants of the war victims will perhaps have a better peaceful world. Hanh's impartial observation of the mother who was carrying her infant baby and staring the cans of milk speaks the intensity of suffering there:

*While I watch their hands / As gentle as heavenly silk*

*Outstretched to infants / The crying stops*

*And the mothers eyes / Staring at cans of milk*

*Glow like precious stones' (Hanh, 1999, 13)*

The aspect of impartiality is one of the features for the facial expression of Buddha anywhere in the world. 'The facial expressions, postures, and attributes of the Buddha aspects shown in Buddhist art embody various kinds of enlightened qualities - qualities that are actually intrinsic to mind.' (Diamond way Buddhism: 2015) Buddha is therefore, carved to inspire followers with the various emotions expressing Buddhist compassion and Metta. In one poem 'Flesh and Skin, Bricks and Tiles' Hanh recounts the sight of Buddha idol after a village was bombed and destroyed a Buddhist monastery. Surprisingly Buddha Idol remained intact unaffected of explosion. Hanh was observing the destroyed village, suffering war victims and the Buddha with equanimity:

*The bombers are gone. / Beneath a still sun,*

*In the dying light of noon / Our ancient land stirs again  
The curved temple roof / Is burnt out, crumpled.  
But lord Buddha sits, / His guilt all smeared,  
Smiling ineffably at bricks and stones' (Hanh, 1999, 42)*

### Conclusion

The contemporary world is burning with passion and desire resulted into war and hopelessness for humanity. These politically motivated wars of crude nationalism proving fatal to the civilians made them homeless and left with endless sufferings. Atrocities, rapes, tortures and pain of being exile tormented the mind of war victims. Thich Nhat Hanh's poems in 'Call Me by My True Names' meditate upon these human sufferings and his prayers for world peace. Though there are terrific images of sufferings, crude realities sometimes violence in particular and hollowness, yet his poems offer his dream world of *Brahmavihara* in every poem with optimism. He has still hope for the new generation of an overlapped seed of loving-kindness in each one of us. His poems in the anthology are dedicated to the war victims of the world, especially of Vietnam. Chanting of Buddha *suttas* like *Karaniya Metta Sutta*, *Diamond Sutta*, etc as teaching of Buddha is a long tradition of Buddhism expressing will for love and compassion for all living beings. Side by side these canonical chanting, poems of Thich Nhat Hanh helps hundreds of war victims get peace and comfort. The Buddhist doctrinal principles of *impermanence*, *no-self* and *dependent origination* explain an important portion of a Buddhist interpretation of the world, the fact that everything is interconnected and inseparable. Therefore, human suffering has a cause and reason. The war by the nations generates endless suffering to men. Hanh's poems subtly workings on Buddhist principles reveal his observation on the present world situation. *Brahmavihara* as the philosophy of non-violence is beautifully expressed in these poems.

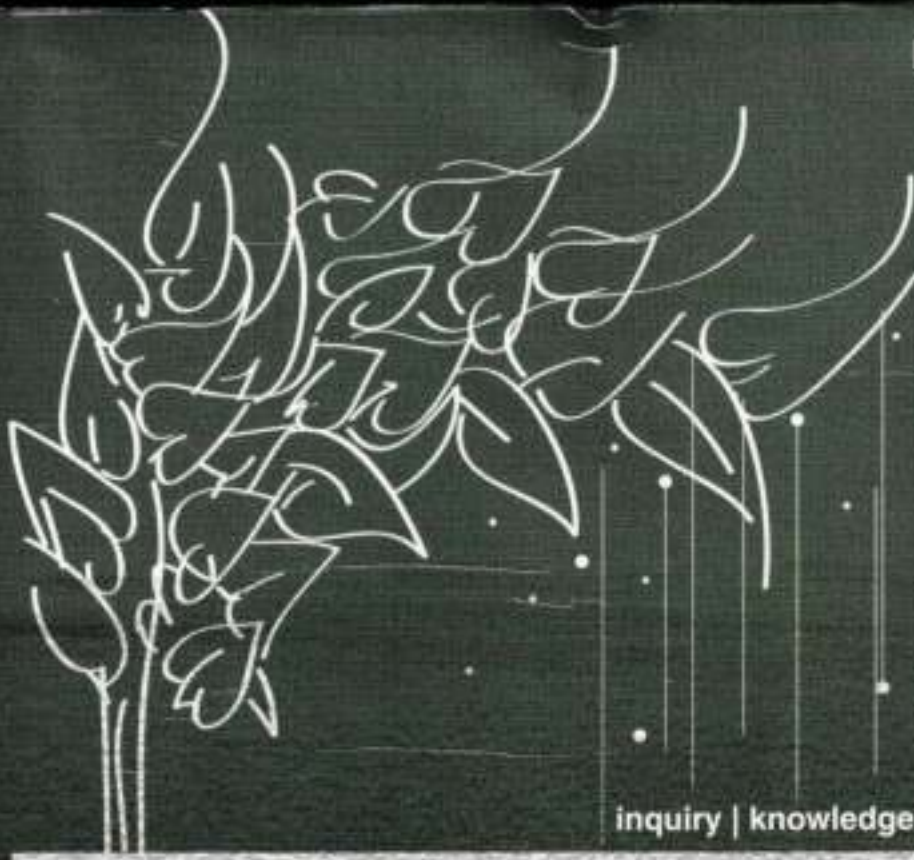
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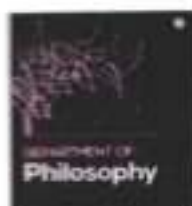
# Philosophical Traditions of the World

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**Articles:**

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| <i>Buddhist Ethics and the Case of 'Bad' Dharmas</i><br>- <b>Shyam Ranganathan</b>  | 1   |
| <i>Transformative Phenomenology and Bodhisattva Ideal:<br/>Insight from the Bodhicaryāvatāra of Śāntideva</i><br>- <b>C. D. Sebastian</b>   | 28  |
| <i>KC Bhattacharya (KCB) on Philosophy and the Symbolic Self</i><br>- <b>Geeta Ramana</b>   | 51  |
| <i>Temptation of Māra – Reflections of the Nidānakathā in the Pictorial<br/>Representations at Sanchi and Ajanta</i><br>- <b>Meenal Kapadia</b>   | 65  |
| <i>Three Essential Principles of Buddhist Philosophy Anitya, Annata and Nibbana and<br/>Cultural Transformation of Dalit's Life Recorded in Dalit Autobiographies</i><br>- <b>Sudesh B. Bhowate</b> | 88  |
| <i>Encountering the 'Problem of the 'Self' through the Philosophical<br/>lens of Buddhism and Existentialism</i><br>- <b>T.C. Roy</b>   | 101 |
| <i>The Concept of Peace as the Central Idea of Buddhist Philosophy</i><br>- <b>Archana Malik-Goure</b>  | 114 |
| <i>Dhammapada Atthakatha</i><br>- <b>Sandesh Wagh</b>   | 129 |
| <i>Love and Sympathy (Theravada Buddhism and Viśiṣṭādvaita of Svāmīnārāyaṇ)</i><br>- <b>Purnima M. Dave</b>   | 147 |



# *Three Essential Principles of Buddhist Philosophy Anitya, Annata and Nibbana and Cultural Transformation of Dalit's Life Recorded in Dalit Autobiographies*

Sudesh B. Bhowate<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** Since the ancient times Buddhism is one of the major religious philosophies responsible for bringing about a massive socio-cultural change initially in the Indian sub-continent and later in eastern and western countries. It influences the customs and the traditions and augmented the rationality and modernization of people of different race, class and creeds in different countries throughout the times. Its humanistic approach, keeping man at the centre of its philosophy for his complete development and essentially cessation of sufferings appealed the men from the different religious beliefs too. The scientific-rational approach of Buddhism towards the problem of an individual, no place to superstitions and especially its philosophical Principles of Impermanence, Non-soul and Nibbana within the life (one need not die) were thought provoking ideas brought about a massive debate amongst the intellectuals in the history. Convinced with the ideas of welfare through the practice of these principles resulted into adaptation of Buddha Dhamma as a way of life by many communities.

In our times Eastern and south Asian countries where Buddhism is as a major religious belief passed through a massive socio-cultural transformation in the recent past could be seen through its literature and other documentations. Some biographies and novels based on the life of Monks and Nuns in these countries shed lights on such phase of transformation. Some biographical books on these monastics like, "Collected Teachings of Ajahn Chah", "Mae Chee Kaew Her Journey to Spiritual Awakening & Enlightenment", and "Ven. Acariya Mun Bhuridatta Thera: A Spiritual biography" gives process of transformation of local communities into Buddhist communities. In the similar line we could locate the transformation of Pre-Aryan indigenous dalit communities in India after their conversion to Buddhism by their revolutionary leader Dr. Babasaheb B.R. Ambedkar in 1956

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through the autobiographies of some prominent dalit writers. Since dalit communities adopted Buddhism in the recent past and transformed themselves as a progressive community, it is important here to understand essential principles of Buddhist Philosophy, especially its aspects undertaken by Dr. Ambedkar and the process of its influence on the dalit communities.

### The Doctrine of Impermanence (*Anitya*)

According to Buddha everything in this *samsara* is bound to change. Everything is conditioned to change or in a state of flux. "Changeableness is a characteristic of everything that is conditioned. All conditioned things are constantly changing, not remaining static for two consecutive moments. Mind, in fact, changes even faster than matter". (Narada 1979: p462) The theory of impermanence has three aspects: One transformation of matters from one form to the other form is the impermanence of composite things. Matter combined to form a life after death return to the respective element. According to Buddhist Scholar Asaga, the founder of Vijnanvada "The body of a living being consists of the combination of four great elements, viz., earth, water, fire and air, and when this combination is resolved into the four component elements, dissolution ensues. "This is what is called the impermanence of a composite entity." (Ambedkar 1997: p240) According to Buddha where there is life, death is inevitable. Second, The moment once lived by us is passed, it cannot return again. A man grows from adolescent, childhood, teen, mature man, and old will never remain the same. This is called as impermanence of life. According to Dr. Ambedkar, "A human being is always changing, always growing. He is not the same at two different moments of his life". (Ambedkar 1997: p240)

Third, "To realize that every living being will die sometime or other is a very easy matter to understand. But it is not quite so easy to understand how a human being can go on changing-becoming-while he is alive". (Ambedkar 1997: pp240-241) According to the founder of Madhyamika Nagarjuna, "it is on account of sunnyata that everything becomes possible; without it nothing in the world would be possible." (Sogen 2009: p14) Therefore, Buddhist accepts that life that is constantly changing so also the universe, therefore, death is inevitable.

### Doctrine of Non-Soul or Without Soul (Anatta)

The doctrine of soullessness is the root of Buddhism. In Buddhism there is no place to the soul as claimed in Hinduism. Buddha's theory of non-soul is the part of his theory of Namarupa. Namarupa is the collective name of sentient being; it is composed of physical and mental elements. Four elements as earth, water, fire and air constitute the body. Consciousness is result of the combination of these four elements. Dr. Ambedkar gave analogy to the rise of consciousness on the basis of science, "there is an electric field and wherever there is an electric field it is always accompanied by a magnetic field. No one knows how the magnetic field is created or how it arises. But it always exists along with the electric field". (Ambedkar 1997: p263) He relates development of consciousness with the induced field. Buddha creates a question in relation to the soul, since all the function assigned to the soul are performed by consciousness, a soul without any function is an absurdity. So he disapproved the existence of soul.

### Nibbana: the Enlightenment

Nibbana is a Pali word. Etymologically it means departure from craving. In the Fire Sermon Buddha says, "The whole world is in flames. By what fire it is kindled? By what fire of lust, hatred, and delusion; by the fire of birth, old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair it is kindled". (Narada 1988: p492) He maintains that the extinction of these fires is Nibbana. Unlike salvation or Moksha of Hinduism, Buddha used altogether other term i.e. Nibbana. One can seek Moksha after death, but Buddha assures his follower Nibbana within present life only. Therefore, in Buddhist practices, achieving Nibbana i.e. enlightenment is the highest goal of any Buddhist. According to Buddha as he mentioned in his very first discourse at Sarnath that attainment of the noble eightfold path means Nibbana. According to Prof. Yamakami Sogen, "the realization universal impermanence and non-soul lead to the eradication of manifold causes of samsara, such as illusion, evil, passion, etc., while a correct understanding of the third principle helps in laying the foundation of the fabric of true enlightenment and supreme bliss". (Sogen 2009: p35) Explaining Buddha's ideas on Nibbana, his chief disciple Sariputta explained it as:

*"Brethren, know you that greed is vile, and vile is resentment. To shed this greed and this resentment, there is the Middle Way which gives us eyes to see and makes us know, leading us on to peace, insight, enlightenment and Nibbana. What is this*

*Middle Way? It is not but the Noble Eight-fold Path of right outlook, right aims, right speech, right action, right means of livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration; this, Almsmen is the Middle Way. (Ambedkar1997: p395)*

For Dr. Ambedkar, "Nibbana means enough control over passion so as to enable one to walk on the path of righteousness. It was not intended to mean, anything more. That Nibbana is another name for righteous life is made clear by the Buddha himself to Radha". (Ambedkar 1997: p237) According to Buddha anybody can attain Nibbana in this life, certainly women too. During his life he gave highest value to equality. He didn't discriminate between classes and men and women.

### **The Noble Eightfold Path**

The Noble Eightfold Path is one of the Four Noble Truths discovered by Buddha. It is also treated as the path to end the sufferings and attainment of Nibbana. Walpola Rahula said of the eightfold path, "practically the whole teaching of the Buddha, to which he devoted himself during 45 years, deals in some way or other with this path." (O'Brien 2015) The discourse on Noble Eightfold Path is considered as the "turning of the Dhamma wheel." In his Book Buddha or Karl Marx, Dr. Ambedkar commented that the aim of the Noble Eightfold Path was to establish the kingdom of righteousness and thereby to banish sorrow and unhappiness from the face of the world. The noble eightfold path is often classified into three broad areas or paths i.e. Panna (wisdom), Sila (Moral Conduct) and Samadhi (Mental Discipline).

### **Revival of Buddhism by Dr. Babasaheb B. R. Ambedkar**

Conversion into the faith of Buddhism in 1956 was not merely an event, but it was the movement initiated by Dr. Ambedkar himself along with Dalits of this nation since 1920s. It was also not just a religious movement, but it was the movement of emancipation of marginalized communities for their self-dignity and all round development of the oncoming generations. Close observation to Dr. Ambedkar's personal life reveals that his entire mission of life was passing through the different phases towards a gradually cleared goal i.e. to bring about a Prabuddha Bharat (Enlightened India) into reality. It was his Utopia, the safe and prosperous future of his people could be possible through Buddhism only. A. K. Narain in his article maintained, "what Ambedkar wanted was a cessation of suffering, liberation from the social



oppression and humiliation. Like Siddhartha Gotama Buddha his preoccupation was with the problem of human suffering and conflict and he found his objective of social change for purpose of cessation of suffering and freedom from the oppression through Buddhism as a way of life." (Narain 1994:p78) During his university education in America and England, he researched the root cause of depression of Dalit communities. Through the example of European communities which transformed into a modern society from the graded communities, he got what equality and equal opportunities could bring about a change. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar revived Buddhism by converting himself first along with five millions of his Dalit followers in Nagpur on 14th October 1956. Modern Dalit literary outcome has been significantly seen after event. In the democratic air of the independent India the followers of Buddhism from the Dalit communities has significantly increased within the first decade of the great conversion.

### Transformation of Dalit Community in the Air of Buddhism

Gail Omvedt called conversion as the beginning of renaissance of Buddhism in the country. It brought massive change in the outlook and behaviour of Dalit communities. Within first decade of conversion a number of Buddhists demographically roused to a high number. It was the time beginning of self-pride of calling oneself Buddhist, a new life. The major development of this renaissance was the development in the cultural wing. The development of literature of protest occurred through the right to express. The new renaissance in fact brought about psychological development, psyche of inferiority as Dalit untouchable was replaced with the superiority as Buddhist. Commenting upon the conversion of Dalits into Buddhism as Namdeo Dhasal says:

*"Conversion to Buddhism freed the Scheduled castes from mental and psychological enslavement. Religion has an attraction for the common man and it was not easy to change his attitude towards it. The Buddhists have liberated themselves from old ideas of Karma and destiny and from worship of Hindu Gods. To some extent this facilitated their adopting rational attitudes to their conditions in society, the chance of their activity striving to change their conditions for better"* (Sharma 2006: p. 68)

Dr. Ambedkar's Dalit movements prepare the grounds for Dalit Literature and on version plays a turning point for it. The radical Buddha presented by Dr. Ambedkar itself reflects the Ambedkarism. Buddhism adopted by Dalit creative writers is the same

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Dalit Autobiography brought a world of hunger, poverty, insult, oppression, injustice and struggle of Dalits to survive on the literary canvas. The autobiography runs into two different sets of the paradigm. The first paradigm is "from being to becoming" and the other "pre Conversion Dalit Community" and "the post Conversion Transformed Community". In both the paradigm the common thread is Buddhism and Dr. Ambedkar's influence on Dalit lives. These autobiographies covered life of Dalits who were crushed under the typical Indian social hierarchy. Thus they acted as a mirror of the entire Dalit community and revealed to the world the untold, unreserved and undisclosed life of the Dalits. Buddhist Philosophy through Dr. Ambedkar in the life of Dalits brought a sea change. It is a graphical representation of a historical or an anthropological change in the socio-cultural life of Dalits. "It is in these autobiographies that we come across the authenticities of experience, rather, lived experiences which form the bedrock of Dalit literature coming to us in different forms, like poetry, fiction and others". (Singh 2013: p14) It not only records a change from a Hindu Dalit community to a Buddhist Community, but also gave a graph of up gradation in the standards of a Dalit's life. Some Dalit autobiographies prominently record these changes very prominently.

#### Rejection of God, Soul (Anatta) and Acceptance of Rationality

Dalit Converted to Buddhism along with Dr. Ambedkar and took the Twenty Two Vows based on the rejection of their previous illogical beliefs which were responsible for their slavery. After Conversion, Dalit Community was transformed into Buddhist Culture therefore, rejection of old faith was prominently seen in the Dalit Narratives. Shantabai Kamble narrates the change occurred in the village, "After the Dharmantar (conversion of religion, refers to the Dhamma Diksha, conversion to Buddhism of Dr. Ambedkar and his followers) the fairs are mentioned as an event to see rather than ritually participate" (Rege 2006" p161) She herself developed rationality therefore, even as a school going girl she did not enter the temples.

Dr. Jativa in his autobiography "The Silent Soldier" narrates the base of his post-Doctoral Research which was based on the Social Philosophy of Buddha which rejects the Hindu beliefs. "The D.Litt thesis was in fact, an elaboration of the ideology of



Ambedkar Movement. Dr. Ambedkar had taught us that neither fate, nor god, or soul could save the downtrodden of India. For such ideas did not support man's freedom to change in the present situation, they dictate man to do his duties as prescribed in varnashram dharma and to wait to be born in the next birth in a family according to karma presently done." (Jatava 1999: p67)

Dr. Ambedkar's influence brought a Revolution in the thought process of the youths of Nagpur who automatically left their old beliefs and followed rationality. Vasant Moon in his autobiography "Growing Untouchables of India" maintained: "The youth read Ambedkar's call in the Janata weekly. There it was written 'the Hindus gods were not brought for us; don't do their puja. Their festivals are not ours; don't observe them' it was possible for the older generation to forsake the entire Hindu culture one by one. Not only this, the youth were conscious that if such an attempt were made all the wrestlers would be against them." (Moon 2002: p43) Wamanrao Godbole, a hard-core Ambedkarite would inspire Dalit youth in Nagpur with his speeches: "We should not travel on the paths of other. We only want to reform our community, our neighbourhood. Before we adopt another religion, we have to wipe out culture of this religion." (Moon 2002: p44)

With the wave of Rationalism under the influence of Dr. Ambedkar, Dalits showed least interest and trust in superstitions and on the existence of spirits or ghosts. Moon writes: "at nights I couldn't sleep until three or four in the morning. I kept my eyes half opened just so much as a tall tree lets in spots of light through its shadows. However, no such things as a ghost appeared to me. Attababa, Spearman used to roam through the night in burial grounds. He would say 'I have been wandering for so many years in the cemetery. I have not seen any ghosts, Ghosts are not outside of us, they are in our minds'." (Moon 2002: p117)

Dr. Narendra Jadhav's father Damu under the influence of Dr. Ambedkar adopted rationality who condemned superstition and sorcery. But once in his absence Jadhav's mother Sonu called a witch doctor taking her mother-in-law into confidence to cure her sick son Sudha. But Damu appeared suddenly in home and became infuriated with the presence of such tricky men, he slapped him instantly.

In the memory of Urmila Pawar when she was a young girl she saw the Changes occurring in the Dalit Community after the Conversion Ceremony. The people became rational and stopped believing in superstitions. "All such things-ghosts, and



supernatural experiences-stopped abruptly after the conversion ceremony took place." (Pawar 2003: p109) After Nagpur's Conversion Ceremony on the appeal of Dr. Ambedkar, the Neo-Buddhists organized local programmes of Conversion Ceremony. One such programme was organized in Gogte College in Ratnagiri where Urmila participated along with her family. People immediately adhered upon the instructions given to them while converting to Buddhism. Desertion of idols of gods and goddesses was the first work the entire Dalit Community did after that programme:

Dalit writers through their autobiographies narrated the changes that occurred with Dr. Ambedkar's call for Conversion. Dalit Communities started adopting rational way of life by stopping the worship of gods and goddesses. After the Conversion Ceremony many Dalits drowned their idols of gods. The Twenty Two Vows given by Dr. Ambedkar inspired them to discard all old beliefs and rituals which were responsible for their untouchability and marginality.

#### **The Universal Law of Impermanence and Experiences of Dalit Writers:**

According to Buddhism nothing is permanent in the world. Every element in this world neither be created nor destroyed. The change of form and change in the life of living is inevitable. Dalit writers also depict the change in life with the advancement of life, old age and diseases. These natural changes occur in human being help develop the Wisdom of writers and well as Community.

Dr. Jatava narrates the incidence of his father's death which made him courageous. "When I was at the far end of my eleventh year, my father was suddenly taken away from among us. He was still in robust health, when a choked throat painlessly ended his earthly abode and left us all deeply bereaved". (Jatava 1999: p3) He narrates the incidence from his school where he saw dying animals and human skeleton in school laboratory that help developed his Wisdom. "We saw mother growing old and the sister attaining youth. But none of us felt defeated; rather we all set in towards the days of the light, progress and happiness." (Jatava 1999: p13)

Daya Pawar wrote Baluta, he also witnessed the deterioration of his father's health and finally death. The writer already had knowledge about his father's ill habits of drinking and womanising therefore, he had developed a sense of hatred for him. His father's

deterioration brought Wisdom to the writer which helped realising the ultimate Truth of human life.

Sharankumar Limbale's "The Outcaste" is a very bold autobiography in case of revelation as a young man. Carrying dead animals, skinning it and then take away some meat to eat was a routine work for Dalits. Being a school going boy, Sharan Kumar Limbale developed a habit of contemplating over the dead animals. This was the reason why he developed aversion for dead animals. He understood the very nature of life which is tending to decay i.e. impermanence. "The skeleton of a dead animal lay rotten for many days. Ribs, the jaw, eye-sockets, horns, teeth, legs, everything looked so gruesome. In school we were once shown a human skeleton which looked far more horrifying." (Limbale 2005: p15)

In Buddhism it is believed that the four elements of body get mixed with the four elements of the earth. The writer is revealing the same elements and its merging with earth. These incidences of death and diseases by the writer suggest that the writer accepted the idea of annicca from Buddha. The realisation of Impermanence comes to Vasant Moon with the demise of Dr. Ambedkar and while standing near the blazing funeral pyre of Dr. Ambedkar in Dadar, Mumbai.

Dalit writers through these references have shown their understanding and realisation about the nature of human life. Their observation to the death of living being and then decay of the corps developed their knowledge and wisdom. Their ultimate lesson is that the every living being is reached its death someday. This not only helps correcting once Kamma but also help in generating merits for healthy life and happiness.

#### **Nibbana (Enlightenment) and new Understanding**

Nibbana is the ultimate aim of a Buddhist to achieve in one's life. To free from all desires and practice of the Noble Eightfold Path is essential for the Nibbana. It is the awakening of Bodhi mind and bliss of liberty. In case of Dalit writers they were striving to be liberated from the clutches of the unjust society. Therefore, restoration of human values by organising a movement initiated by Dr. Ambedkar was the primary task the Dalit writers undertook. On one hand Dalit writers were following the Buddhism taught by Dr. Ambedkar i.e. to generate merits and on the other hand they were burdened with the task to liberate their community from the unjustified social structures. Therefore, transformation of this liberate community into Buddhism in the view of Dr. Ambedkar



was the goal of Dalit writers. Dalit writers through their autobiographies had shown their departure from worldly desires and cravings. Following the virtuous path as the practice of Buddhism, Dalit writers knowingly or unknowingly generated merit through the Moral Code of Conduct and accepting utter Humanism.

Daya Pawar was grown up in the Nagpada of Mumbai which was adjacent to the red light district of Kamathipura and Golpitha. The environment of his neighbourhood was obviously not healthy, full of corruption, cheating, and prostitution was at every step. Writer remains untouched of all these demerits through Education and guarding of his mother from these ills. He always found his father who was a drunkard as well as womaniser in the wrong company. He develops aversion towards all these ill habits. Pawar was always contemplating for the Liberty of his Community from all these ill habits which were deep rooted in his community as blur.

Sharankumar Limbale being the Akkarmashi suffered a lot as he had no identity at all since everyone within and outside of his caste treated him as impure. So he hated all people who were responsible for his condition. Later when one of his sister's Nagi started seeing one Nandu Patil, he felt a sense of anger as she too would give birth to illicit children as their mother did. He shouted at his sister and beat her and tried to dissuade her from such illicit relationship. Another incidence is noteworthy here. One upper caste girl named Shobhi used to abuse Sharan and his friends in the name of their low status. Once, Parshya and Sharan decided to avenge the insult she did by counter insulting her. Once seeing her all alone they stop her on way to river. Since a mere touch of untouchables polluted the upper caste people, Parshya held her hand to make her feel insulted and polluted and a thought to deflower her occurred to them. But some virtue dissuades them from committing that sin. Here Sharan shows Maturity and Control over his Desires.

Through their autobiographies, Dr. D. R. Jatava, Vasant Moon, Sharankumar Limbale or Urmila Pawar have shown their material or carnal desires knowingly or unknowingly. These writers personally along with their families came under direct influence of Dr. Ambedkar's Movements. Therefore, Buddhist Values were inculcated in their family Culture and self. As a result of their family background and neighbourhood that was somewhat unhealthy, Daya Pawar and Sharankumar Limbale subsequently withdraw from material desires shown in their character and earned Character personally through Education and later coming in contact with Dr. Ambedkar's works. Aspects of escape



from all kinds of desire, developing wisdom and earning merits by all these writers were indicative of their path of enlightenment (Nibbana).

These autobiographies significantly present the growth of morality (Sila) and code of conduct in dalit communities especially after the conversion. Growth of Buddhist monasteries and increased number of Buddhist monks from amongst the followers of Dr. Ambedkar brought about a massive change in the moral code of conduct of the society, give rise to an intellectual and enlightened dalits. Education and academic growth helps in development of essential wisdom expected in Buddhism. It helps in growth of cooperation and harmony with the other upper caste communities towards the building of secular environment in the country. These transformed communities are taking occupations of dignity and leaving the trade identical to their castes. Most of them are eyeing for the administrative and corporate jobs. Attendance in the Buddhist monasteries increased due to awareness towards Buddhism with the forging of the identity for the observance days, helps in developing interest in the meditational practices. Therefore, after conversion into Buddhism observation of three major elements of Noble Eightfold path indicative of Way to Nibbana is significantly seen in neo-Buddhist communities in the country.

#### Conclusion

Buddha's Law of Impermanence and Theory of Non-soul made the Buddhism rational and scientific. These theories brought into practice by Buddha in such a time when concepts like superstition, black magic, existence of spirits, ghosts and evils, life after death, salvation after death and heaven and hell were prevailed in the country. Buddha's teachings came as the outcome of Samana culture of the contemporary renunciants who were challenging the claim of religious belief of God's control over the life and death. The ill practices by orthodox religious beliefs were used for the exploitation of poor and ignorant people. The sufferings of these helpless men were increased with the practice of these irrational theories; therefore, Buddha had to deal these issues in a convincing manner and methods. Buddha gave his philosophical ideas in a lucid and easy language so anyone may practice the values unafraid of his *gati* after the death. Ambedkarite Buddhism radically rejects the possibility of life after death. Buddha gave the Noble Eightfold Path to lead a virtuous life and earn merits to reach Nibbana.

Dr. Babasaheb B.R. Ambedkar is a revolutionary man of our time, we know him for his high academic achievements, but more for his tireless works for social reformation and

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bringing back a rational Buddha, a radical one for emancipation of dalits in Indian social setup. Dr. Ambedkar's conversion of his people into Buddhism was for forging of the identity and restoration of dignity. Connecting dalits with Buddhism by Dr. Ambedkar was for the liberation from the mental slavery, cessation of their sufferings originated originally from casteism and for seeking equality. Buddhism as expected by Dr. Ambedkar brought a massive socio-cultural change for *dalits* especially in the field of arts and literature. *Dalit* autobiographies recorded the graph of *dalit's* development from the ignorant and robbed community in the name of Varnashram Dharma till the conversion to the progressive Buddhist Community in the present time. The role of Buddhist Monasteries is immense in developing people's interest in meditational practices the aspect of Samadhi given in the Noble Eightfold Path. The individual experiences by the writers and records of their community give us a picture of transformed their lives through practices of Buddhist principles and precepts. Especially understand principle Anitya and Anatta helped them grasped the scientific and rational vision of Buddhism which further lead them follow the Noble Eightfold path indicative of walking towards enlightenment the ultimate Nibbana.

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# MAPPING CASTE AND GENDER

Intersectionalities,  
Positionalities and Identity Politics



Edited by

Dharamdas Shende

Sanjay Patilwekar

Guest Editor

Rashmi Tikku

**MAPPING CASTE AND GENDER**  
Intersectionalities, Positionalities and Identity Politics

The intersections of gender and caste are sometimes obvious and subtle but frequently complex, invisible and indirect. Specific constructions of both caste and gender are deeply embedded in the Indian psyche and their economic and social can be seen in unexpected ways and places. Both are legitimised by sacred texts and suggest a loose and diffusive of consensus, connected with time, place and irreversible categories as did the roles and social class status of women. In rich variety of essays, this book explores, analyses, and discusses caste issues and questions pertaining to caste and gender discrimination whether portrayed in literature, or in economic, social or cultural context. A common concern are those who have a stake in building egalitarian social structures.

**Sumita Parmer**, Professor of English, University of Allahabad

*Mapping Caste and Gender* offers a comprehensive insight into the various forms and nuances of dilemma inherent in the world's largest democracy in India and elsewhere. By addressing issues of regional concerns from multiple genres, this valuable collection of essays is bound to engage the attention of academics, scholars and activists committed to making the world better and equitable.

**Pallab Choudhury**, Associate Professor

This thoughtfully compiled essays draw on issues as well as empirical evidence from some of the heartlands of the contemporary caste movement to attend the understanding of gender, caste class and consciousness that emerge in the confluence of the three. This book is an essential reading for all scholars in the history of our times.

**Professor Mande Thapa**



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**Rashmi Tikku**

The contributors of the research papers from Indian and abroad provide broader spectrum of interrelated issues on caste and gender. We hope, this anthology of research papers would enlighten all those engaged in academia and socio-political activism to further enhancement of human life.

April 2018  
Nagpur

**Dharamdas Shende**  
**Sanjay Palwekar**  
**Rashmi Tikku**

## Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	5
<b>SECTION I: POETICS OF CLASS</b>	
1. Gender on the Inside, Class on the Outside: The (Bio)Politics of Literary Criticism and its Impact on the Irish Women's Poetry Movement <i>Emma Penney</i>	19
2. Song of Revolt in <i>Therigarhar</i> : Rejection of 'Controlled Sexuality' and 'Caste Superiority' <i>Sudesh Bhawate</i>	37
<b>SECTION II: GENDERED TESTIMONIES</b>	
3. Talking Back: Use of Orality in the First Marathi/ Indian Dalit Woman's Autobiography <i>Maya Pandit Narkar</i>	53
4. Walking the Tightrope: The Challenges of Articulating Gendered Subjectivity in Dalit Women's Life Narratives in Maharashtra <i>Tejaswini Deo</i>	69
5. Incarcerated in Person but not in Spirit: Prison Narrative of Anjum Zamarrud Habib <i>Vandana Pathak</i>	84
6. Minority Discourses across Cultures: Dalit Voices <i>Shobha Shinde</i>	102
<b>SECTION III: THE THEATRE OF CASTE</b>	
7. Reading Caste and Gender in Vijay Tendulkar's <i>Ghashiram Kotwal</i> <i>Urbashi Barai</i>	115



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## 2

## Song of Revolt in *Therigatha*: Rejection of 'Controlled Sexuality' and 'Caste Superiority'

Sudesh Bhowate

The history of women in India is a trajectory of their lost liberty from a matrilineal liberal individual to the subjugated woman under patriarchy through male domination. Caste domination and patriarchy, the tools developed to control her sexuality to preserve the purity of the groups of kin, later developed into water tight compartments of class/caste. Women were viewed as the central object to develop caste politics in the history. Buddhist Theris (nuns) were perhaps the first women poets in the world. They not only vocalized their agonies and sufferings of subjugation as being women, but also revolted against the patriarchy by entering Buddha's Sangha to forge their identity. Buddha seems to be a guiding light to them who himself rejected the unequal social order of the time and the illogical religious beliefs. His equal treatment of woman and granting them opportunities to build an identity as a 'learned' equal, on par with their male counterpart, attracted the women towards Buddhism. *Therigatha*, the poems by these nuns, document the life narratives of the contemporary Bhikkhunis (Buddhist nuns) who reached enlightenment. In the stories of these oppressed women, among the many themes, we can see a revolt against the control of women's sexuality and against caste politics aided by patriarchy. This research paper is an attempt to investigate and trace the historical development of women's subjugation



through the Therigatha and its context and to understand the revolt of Buddhist Nuns through their narratives.

The subordination of women in Indian society has a close relation with the caste system and graded social structure which is justified by Hindu religious scriptures and its practices. The process of degradation of women from the Vedic period is well explained by Gail Omvedt:

Vedic society was a male dominated one, like most nomadic pastoral societies. However, 'patriarchy' as such began only with the rise of the state and the beginning of class based exploitation and this happened most clearly in India around the middle of the first millennium BC. Women are associated with the household, and as childbirth begins to weigh them down they became tied to it, increasingly subordinated to the dominant patriarch in the emerging household-based kin system" (Omvedt 2003, p81)

Caste as a unique feature of Indian society makes the distinction between high and low status of men determined by their birth. According to G. S. Ghure, castes were groups with a well-developed life of their own, the membership of which, unlike that of voluntary association and of class, was determined not by selection but by birth. (Ghure 2014: p2) Uma Chakravarty writes that religious scriptures are responsible for the origin of caste: "the caste system comprises a series of hereditary groups or jatis characterized by hierarchy or gradations according to ritual status. The basis of inequality underlying the caste system in India is application of evaluative-value based standards in placing particular castes as high or low. These standards are rooted in Dharmashastras, the religious-legal texts of the Hindus". (Chakravarty 2006: p10) In his article 'Caste in India' Dr. B. R. Ambedkar gives the reason for the development of caste in the country as: "Prohibition or rather the absence of intermarriage-endogamy, to be concise is the only one that can be called the essence of caste when rightly understood." (Moon, 1979: 8) Also in the essay he claimed that for creating superiority on all the other communities, Brahmins created the caste. From the analysis of caste he comes to the conclusion that to create and perpetuate endogamy was the same as perpetuation of

caste. He gives the analogy of surplus men and women and their place, when they become widower and widow. To maintain the gender equilibrium within the caste, different means were used, like celibacy, *sanyasa* or child marriage and burning the widow on the funeral pyre of her husband (*sati*). This (*sati*) was forbidden initially to Brahmana wives and there are few cases of any references to lower caste women doing so. Possibly in many cases it was an assertion of higher caste status conveniently requiring only the women to burn' (Thapar 2014: p2-67). The tradition of 'sati' was taken from the vedic sources where widow would lie on the funeral pyre of her husband and later would marry the brother of her husband and remain as the property of the family. *Sati* was more predominant among the higher castes whereas *Niyoga* (controlled sexual relations of the widow with others) was popular amongst lower castes. The caste system as a closed class was systematically created for maintaining purity and later it percolated down to all the other lower classes.

If caste is one side of the coin, patriarchy the other side of the same within Indian culture. Patriarchy is one of the 'means' of regulating the caste system: by controlling the sexuality of women and maintaining endogamy the caste divisions are ensured. According to the ancient patriarchal culture followed even today women are supposed to follow the rules of *Dharmashastras*: the ideal wife should be devoted to her husband and the household. An ideal wife should be loyal to her husband, steadfast and chaste. "This meant that the ideal of a wife was the one dancing at the will and command of the husband". (Gupta, 1982: 59). Women are controlled by men as advised in the *Manusmriti*: 'a woman is under the surveillance of her father when unmarried, of her husband when married and finally of her son when widowed.' (Thapar, 2014: 269). Here a crucial question is answered by Romila Thapar as to why the patriarchal control over women's sexuality is vital to ensure caste purity, "where identity is determined by birth and is crucial as in caste, it is essential to know the parentage. In order to maintain the rules of the caste it is essential to keep woman under control. This is obvious because ultimately only a woman knows



the biological father of her child. Caste and patriarchy are therefore inseparable". (Thapar, 2014: 270). Honour killings and lynching for "Love Jihad" are the modern avatars of the earliest brutalities against women for breaking caste rules. To maintain the patriarchal mindset motherhood was glorified and monitored through rituals. Feminist historian Uma Chakravarty states, "motherhood itself was idealized and ritualized, and numerous rituals were prescribed, starting with marriage, going on to conception, and then to birth of the 'son' to ensure safe delivery of the male child." (Chakravarty, 2006: 69). Glorification of mother is mentioned in Manusmriti, saying that women were created for the purpose of childbirth and worthy to worship. Leela Dube while observing puberty rituals in several castes of Orissa and Maharashtra concludes that the message of these rituals is clear, the girl has become a sexual being and this calls for restrained behavior on her part and emphasizes the need for protection and vigilance. Leela Dube further maintains "Restrained and controlled sexuality is a pre-requisite for socially sanctioned motherhood. The puberty ceremony informs the people within the kin-group and the jati that the girl has come to an age and her marriage is open to negotiation. The mechanisms which set limits and restraints also sacralize and sanctify sexuality." (Dube, 2006: 13) It has been observed that the tight control over female sexuality was prevailed more in high castes, and according to Uma Chakravarty it is their rationale for purity and impurity. The pre-pubertal marriages in upper caste girls were conducted to own the unpolluted womb of the wife as the sexual property of the husband before she began to menstruate, immediately after which the *garbhadhanam* or consummation ceremony would be completed.

To maintain the caste purity, endogamy was (is) strictly followed in the Indian Hindu culture where marriages play a crucial role for maintaining purity within the caste through the chastity of woman. Contrary to the women, men are kept free from these restrictions and promiscuity encouraged. To ensure "caste as an enclosed class" marriages are glorified where wives are tied to their husbands for seven lives, whereas divorce is looked down upon due to a fear of caste disintegration in society. Gender bias in the Indian

society is developed especially to protect the close class of caste and patriarchy appears to be deeply intertwined with caste to control the female sexuality through ensured endogamy.

Contrary to the graded society, based on inequality in the Pre-Buddhist society, the rise of Buddhism developed hope for an alternate society based on liberty, equality, fraternity and justice. Women were treated as equals in Buddhism and considered capable of *Nibbana* (enlightenment). Buddha's teachings were not based on any beliefs in god and supernatural entity; it was the inquiry into human life, their sorrows and sufferings of all strata of men. Buddha's teachings were based on human values and man was at the centre of his philosophy. He shows his utter disagreement with the superiority of Brahmin and inferiority of lower communities: "By birth is not one an outcaste, by birth is not one Brahmin. By deeds is one an outcaste, by deeds is one a Brahmin" (Narada 1988: 308).

Realising the importance of women in the society, Buddha helped raising the status of women by establishing the organisation of nuns, *Bhikkhuni Sangha*. Initially he resisted to take them in the *sangha*, but he was convinced by his disciple, Ananda and his foster mother Mahaprajapati Gotami by her determination to enter the *sangha*. He accepted her in the *sangha* as the first Buddhist Nun. Buddha's concern for the upliftment of women can be substantiated with the example of the story about the King of Kosala. Hearing news of the birth of a daughter he was displeased, but Buddha comforted him with the words: "a women child, O lord of men, may prove even a better offspring than a male" (Narada 1988: p 313) Buddha opened up a platform for women from all strata society without any discrimination. "When Buddha admitted Chandal women in the *sangha*, King Pasenjit, Brahmins and *kshatriyas* came to remonstrate on his conduct. Buddha demonstrated to them the futility of caste distinctions by simple reasoning." (Narasu 2002: 70). Buddha's great disciples were from different strata of society. Among Theris there were Ambapali the courtesan, Vimala the daughter of a prostitute, Purna the daughter of a slave and *champa* the daughter of a hunter. Thapar writes,



"Buddhist texts did not support sati and widows were instead offered the option to become nuns if they so choose. Some of the votive inscriptions at Buddhist stupas record donations by widows". (Thapar 2014: 286) Nowhere in Buddhist texts can one find that Buddha discriminated between his disciples. Therefore, in such a liberal environment, it was possible for the Theris to be bold and expressive while narrating their feelings without any hesitations.

Therīgāthā is one of the important volumes of Tripiṭaka of Buddhism that comes under Khuddak Nikāya (Minor Collection). Since these Theris (Nuns) were contemporary to Buddha, their self-narratives are included in the Pali canon of Tripiṭaka along with Buddha's teachings. The importance of this book is immense in the context of history since this is the first book to be based upon women narratives. It is no exaggeration to call it the first canon call of women's liberation and rebellion against patriarchy. Referring to it, Uma Chakravarty says that the search for identity outside the domesticity, in case of women, goes back to sixth century B.C. Seventy three Theris who attained supreme enlightenment (Arhathood) wrote some 522 'gāthas' their story from "being" to "becoming". Chakravarty writes, "in these poems women spoke of their joy at leaving behind the drudgery of the kitchen, and the brutalities of husband. They also spoke of the space they found for themselves as they entered the sangha and practiced self-awareness." (Chakravarty 2006: 95). Learning from Buddha to understand their sufferings and find the way to overcome it by practicing the Noble Eightfold Path, they realized the change from their past life of patriarchal domination to the present life of 'mukti' i.e. liberation from all desires and deeds. Charles Hallissy, English translator of *Therīgāthā*, found these poems to be the central Buddhist teachings on 'anica' i.e. impermanence. Professor Vimalakirti maintains, "Theris appeared in this *Therīgāthā* comes from the different strata of contemporary society, therefore, each has different kind of sufferings. They are all suffered and oppressed by social system, hence their sufferings are due to the social systems only." (Vimalakirti, 2011: 19) The Theris overcame their sufferings and found the optimism in the new life as Bhikkhuni. Here they

were free to gain knowledge and free from the dark traditions of culture that originated from Vedas. In appreciations to Therīgāthā Rhys Davids the great scholar of Pali Tripiṭaka and founder of Pali Text Society, London says,

a good many of these verses are not only beautiful in form but also gives evidence of a very high degree of mental self-culture which played so great a part in the Buddhist ideal of the perfect life. Many of the women who joined the order became distinguished for high intellectual attainments as well as for moral earnestness. Some women of acknowledged culture are represented not only as being the teacher of men and as expounding the deeper and subtler points of Dharma, but also as having attained the great peace which is the final result of intellectual illumination and moral earnestness. (qtd in Narasu, 2002: 91)

The Theri Sumangalamata was born in a very poor family and married to an umbrella maker who did not give her respect and treated her badly. To support her family she had to beat the paddy for rice had meager dirty clothes to wear and her husband considered her to be mere object. So to be free from these sufferings she joined Buddha Sangha and attained enlightenment. She expresses her supreme bliss as

Dear one who is quite freed, dear one who is quite freed,  
I too am well-freed from pestle,  
My shameless husband, even the sunshade he worked under  
And my pot that stinks like a water snake all disgust (Hallissy  
2015: p 21)

Their Adhikashi belonged to a rich family. But she was not content with the family affairs in her parents' home which she found devoid of culture. She left her home one day and ended up in prostitution. Here she realized her value as a human being which was broken into pieces by her lusty customers. Therefore, she renounced this life and joined the Buddhist Sangha which transformed her. Theri Adhikashi's entry into the Sangha was a rejection of the social norms which exploited her through prostitution.



There is a reason why I was called "Half-kashi"

As much as the country of kashi was worth

My price was just the same/While that was once my value

After too many customers/My worth was cut by half

By then I had enough/Of what my body brought

And weaned I turned away (Hallissy 2015: p 23)

Theri Anupama was beautiful girl as her name indicates. She became a nun to escape the humiliation of being examined as an object in the marriage market and "bought" in marriage for gold.

I was born in a good family with great wealth and many possessions

Good looking, I was Megha's very own daughter

I lived up to my name which means "without compare"

I was sought after by princes, coveted by sons of millionaires

Until one sent my father a message: give me Anupama.

I will give eight times what your daughter Anupama

weighs in gold and silver as bride price" (Hallissy 2015: p 83)

The narration by Theri Isidasi is terrible and pathetic. Though from a wealthy family and married into another, she was constantly exploited in her in-laws house and finally driven out. Her father arranged a second marriage but it ended in a similar manner. Later her father married her to a renunciant and brought him home but her husband abandoned her to go back his sanyasa. In her story of past lives, she narrates the pathetic story of one who was repeatedly exploited, as every husband wanted to possess her but did not respect her as a person. The closing lines of her narration are indicative of how a women's sexuality was controlled by patriarchy. "His son Giridasa noticed that I had reached puberty/In my sixteenth year and he claimed me as his own" (Hallissy 2015: p 209)

Abhaymata's real name was Padmavati, she was the prostitute (Ganika) of Ujjain who gave birth to the son of King Bimbisara of Magadha, named Abhaya, who became a Buddhist monk and later gave discourses to his own mother. Inspired by his discourses,

Abhaymata left her profession as an object of entertainment, and became a nun.

Theri Punna was born as a servant in the house of Buddha's devotee Anathapindika. When she converted a Brahmana into Buddha's faith, Anathapindika released her from bondage. She got enlightenment. As a tradition a Brahmana was taking a bath to wash his sins in a river. Seeing this Punna advised him with the wisdom she learned from Buddha:

*Who told you that,*

*Like a know-nothing speaking to a know-nothing,*

*That one is freed from the fruits of an evil act*

*By washing off in water?*

*It is that frogs and turtles/ Will go to heaven*

*And so will water monitors and crocodiles,*

*And anything that lives in water,*

*As will killer of sheep and killer of pigs,*

*Fisherman and animal trappers,*

*Thieves and executioners,*

*Everyone who habitually does evil?*

*They are freed from the fruits of their evil acts*

*If these rivers can just carry away the evil already done?*

*But these rivers might carry away all the good done too,*

*You'll be beside yourself about that,*

*Aren't you afraid of that, Brahman,*

*Each time you go down into the river?* (Hallissy 2015: p 125)

This poem not only depicts Theri Punna's wisdom but it also unveils the rationalism of Buddhism versus superstitions led by Brahmins of the time.

Enlightenment, i.e. Nibbana, considered as the ultimate goal of any Buddhist, means departure from craving. It is the experience of supreme bliss and peace of mind. In the Fire Sermon Buddha says, "The whole world is in flames. By what fire it is kindled? By what fire of lust, hatred, and delusion; by the fire of birth, old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair it is kindled". (Narada 1988: 492) He maintains that the extinction of these fires is

Nibbana. Through the teachings of Buddha and the practice of Dhamma in the community of Sangha, Theris were able to forge their identity as independent beings, away from male dominance. Sumangalamata achieved enlightenment by extinction of her anger and cravings. She narrates her blissful mind after enlightenment as:

As I destroyed anger and the passion for sex  
I was reminded of the sound of bamboo being split  
I go to the foot of a tree and think, "Ah, happiness"  
And from within that happiness, I begin to meditate.

(Hallisey 2015: p 21)

Theri Soma, who gave birth to ten sons and suffered the humiliations of a patriarchal family system, waited a long to get happiness in her life. When her husband became monk, she had to support the family by sacrificing her own happiness. Though she wanted to renounce domestic life, being a woman, it was only when, in the Manusmriti ideology, she became the responsibility of her sons and daughters-in-law that she was made up her mind to leave them. Entering the Sangha was no easy task for her at such an advanced age, and to achieve the desired goal of enlightenment. But due to the conducive environment and support from the Bhikkhuni Sangha she succeeded in achieving Nibbana, the supreme bliss. She writes, "I cultivated a state of mind/That depends on nothing else and cannot be measured/I become focused, collected/I am free, and I will always be completely free" (Hallisey, 2015: 63).

Theri Uppalavanna is another example of a woman who belonged to reputed family, and became Bhikkhuni in her youth because this intelligent woman developed an aversion to household life and was not ready to get married because huge offers of bride price and threats of abduction formed the environment of her marriage. Her aversion for sexual life is present in the lines below and in another poem where she narrates a story of a mother and daughter who due to lust both married a young man who was a son and brother to the women. When they discovered the reality of their relations they were filled with remorse and each of them became a Buddhist nun and the son as monk. Theri Uppalavanna writes:

The pleasures of sex are like swords and stakes  
The body, senses, and the mind  
Just the chopping block on which they cut  
What you call the delights of sexual pleasures  
Are no delights for me now. (Hallisey 2015: p 121)

The Buddha gave equal opportunity to both men and women, irrespective of their social background or past moral conduct to become Bhikkus and Bhikkhunis; to forge their real identity and reach supreme Nibbana. These Theris were great disciples of Buddha, known for their deep knowledge and understanding of Buddha's teachings, and helped in the awakening of many other women.

During the times of Buddha, Indian society was advancing towards urbanization and the Vedic culture steeped in its rituals and traditions. The women of the time were certainly under the domination of patriarchy that restricted them within the household duties, whether it be the kitchen, childbirth or devotion towards husbands and parents-in-law. Apart from paying bride price to obtain a wife, women were forcibly abducted for marriage and later used as sex object. Those who resisted or when more than two or more prospective grooms come forward in competition, the girl had to become a *ganika*, a kind of sophisticated prostitute for them. Women of the time, due to Buddha's teachings, found a ray of the hope to forge their identity and womanhood by entering the Sangha as the men of the time were doing. The confidence showed in them by Buddha for their potentialities to reach supreme knowledge and Nibbana, was a boosting of morale to them. Not only did they become influential nuns, but they also taught many *mon* as their disciples. They reached the height of popularity as their counterpart in the field of knowledge and helped other women embroiled in domestic roles. In the following centuries, as Buddha had declared that the influence of Buddhism will decrease after five hundred years, we witness the degradation of the status of women within the family. The symbolic sati tradition was in force and women were



more subject to the impurities and objectified with the role of reproduction and household duties like slaves.

The Theris resisted an unjust, caste based, patriarchal social order. Though they were from different stratas of the society, they lived together and helped each other in attaining their Nibbana. The Therigatha is a historic document of women's liberation and a milestone in the feminist movement, being the first vocal expressions of women in the world. By rejecting the 'Controlled Female Sexuality' these Theris showed that women's bodies need not be used as vehicles for caste reproduction as was conspired by the Dharmashastras. They also rejected many other forms of patriarchal male domination and their self-narrative poems have a relevance to Indian society even today.

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डॉ. मिथिलेश अवस्थी  
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## ग्रंथ के संदर्भ में.....

व्यक्ति कोई भी हो व्यक्तिशः बनता है परंतु व्यक्तिस्वरूपः बना रहता है। भाव के भौतिकता तथा तांत्रिकता से प्रभावित युग में संवेदनाओं का क्षरण तथा आदर्शों का विखंडन निरंतर जारी है। शिक्षा जैसे पवित्र क्षेत्र में मानवीय कुंठाओं तथा चरमताओं ने प्रवेश कर अपनी दखल देना शुरू कर दिया है। परीणामस्वरूप शिक्षा का भाव कटोरे प्रश्नों के घेरे में आता जा रहा है वहीं 'शिक्षक' का चेहरा अभिरुचिहीन होता जा रहा है। यह स्थिति न तो समाज के लिए अच्छी है और न राष्ट्र के लिए। ऐसे समय में डॉ. मिथिलेश अवस्थी के जीवन मूल्यों, सिद्धांतों, अनुपालन के तरीकों की चर्चा गंभीरता के साथ होना समय की आवश्यकता है।

परिवार का ज़िम्मेदार सदस्य होना, सामाजिक दायित्व बोध के निर्वाह में सतत क्रियाशील होना, रिश्तों के निर्वाह में संवेदनशील होना, गंभीर अध्येता होना, आदर्श प्राध्यापक होना, सच्चा पत्रकार होना, एक अच्छा इंसान होना अच्छी बात है किंतु इन सब या इनसे भी ज्यादा विशेषताओं का एक ही व्यक्ति में केंद्रित होना दुर्लभ होता है। शिक्षा एवं समाज दोनों क्षेत्रों में सशक्त एवं प्रभावशाली भूमिका का निर्वाह करने वाले डॉ. अवस्थी का स्वयं का निर्माण कैसे हुआ, उनके अपने समय की सच्चाई, परिस्थिति जन्म संघर्ष, भोग हुआ यथार्थ, क्या तथा किस रूप में रहा इसे प्रचुद्ध समाज के सामने लाना उनके अपनों की जिम्मेदारी है। इस दायित्व को पूरा करने हेतु डॉ. अवस्थी को केंद्र में रखकर एक ग्रंथ के प्रकाशन की योजना लगाना चार वर्षों से विचारणीय थी परंतु डॉ. अवस्थी हमेशा यह कह कर सक्रिय नहीं होने देते थे कि इसकी कोई आवश्यकता नहीं है। समय-समय पर इस विषय को लेकर चर्चा होती रही और योजना टलती रही लेकिन अब उनके सामने यह स्थिति रखी गई कि अब इस तरह के ग्रंथ का लाभ आपके अध्ययकीय जीवन में किसी भी रूप में नहीं होने वाला तब जाकर बड़े संकोच से हरी झंडी मिली।

किसी भी ऐसे व्यक्ति के बारे में जिसका व्यक्तित्व बहुआमामी हो, लिखना तो आसान हो सकता है किंतु किसी ऐसे ग्रंथ की योजना, जिसमें उसके व्यक्तित्व के सभी पहलू आ जाएँ, अपेक्षाकृत मुश्किल है। अनेक लोगों के सहयोग के बिना ऐसे ग्रंथ के संपादन का औचित्य सिद्ध कर पाना एक चुनौतीपूर्ण कार्य है। इसलिए ग्रंथ की

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मनुष्य के विचार ही उसे समाज में अच्छा या बुरा कहलाने का अधिकार देते हैं। व्यक्ति का सकाएतमक एवं सूजनतमक चिंतन संपूर्ण मानवता को दिया देने का कार्य करता है। इस विचार ग्रंथ के केंद्र डॉ. मिथिलेश अवस्थी उदात्त चरित्र के स्वामी हैं, जिन्होंने अपनी सादगी पूर्ण ईमानदारी से अपने आप को बार-बार तराशा है, जिसकी उज्ज्वलता एवं शुभता ने उन्हें आदर्श-पुंज बना दिया। जो भी उनके संपर्क में आया, उनके संघ में संघ गया। वे एक ऐसी शोखस्यत हैं जिन्होंने अपने सिद्धांतों से कभी समझौता नहीं किया। स्थितितर्क कैसी भी हों, संकट किन्सी भी रूप में आए लेकिन वे अडिग रहे, निर्भीक रहे। यह ग्रंथ उनके संपूर्ण व्यक्तित्व को रेखांकित करने की कोशिश है। डॉ. अवस्थी के व्यक्तित्व, उनकी जीवन शैली को, उनके मूल्यों व सिद्धांतों को समझने एवं सीखने का यह ग्रंथ प्रयास मात्र है।

ग्रंथ के मुद्रण कार्य हेतु श्री पांडुरंगजी पांडे के प्रयास अत्यंत महत्त्वपूर्ण रहे हैं। विद्या प्रकाशन के श्री वॉरिंट जी शुक्ल ने प्रकाशन की जिम्मेदारी संभाल कर एक बड़े कार्य से हमें निश्चित कर दिया।

### संपादक संजय विबारी

डॉ. मिथिलेश अवस्थी : सृष्टि एवं दृष्टि

### अनुक्रमणिका

01 अशेष आशीर्वाद....	डॉ. परचंद जैन, अमरावती	11-12
02 मिथिलेश जी के साथ व्यतीत पुष्प अविस्मरणीय क्षण	डॉ. सतीशराज पुष्करणा, पटना	13-21
03 अंतर्गत-क्षण	डॉ. एच.एस. द्विवेदी, शैलानाबाद	22-23
04 मैं खुशानसीब हूँ कि मुझे दादा जैसा मित्र मिला.....	डॉ. अशोक सम्भवाल, चण्डीगढ़	24-27
05 मिथिलेश अवस्थी : किम प्रखरता की पूर्ति	डॉ. वसंत त्रिपाठी, प्रयागराज	28-32
06 भाग्य बदलने वाला प्रोफेसर	संजय विबारी, नागपुर	33-40
07 बीस बरस का साथी : मिथिलेश अवस्थी	डॉ. हेराम पाठक डिगबोई (असम)	41-44
08 साहित्य-मनीषी डॉ. मिथिलेश अवस्थी व्यक्तित्व और कृतित्व	डॉ. मेहता नरेंद्र सिंह, पटना	45-50
09 बड़े भाई - मिथिलेश !	डॉ. विमल महर्षि पांडे, सांगली	51-56
10 डॉ. मिथिलेश अवस्थी : व्यक्ति और सूजनकार	प्रो. डॉ. अशोक गुलपुते, नासिक	57-61
11 चिन्तन के क्षणों के यात्री : डॉ. मिथिलेश अवस्थी	डॉ. मीनाक्षी जोशी, भंडारा	62-65
12 मित्रता की जूमी के शपथ	डॉ. ईश्वर फार, शिकर	66-69
13 विद्या विमलेन शोभते	डॉ. कृष्ण शर्मा, अहमदनगर	70-71
14 संवेदनाओं से लबालब भरा कविमन	प्रो. सूर्यकांत चव्हाण, लाहूर	72-74
15 जो अच्छा है, वह सबका है	डॉ. आपा सिंह, नागपुर	75-78
16 'सर' से कब 'बड़े भाई' जन गण, पता ही न चला....	उषा अग्रवाल, नागपुर	79-81
17 शिक्षाविद, सूजनशील, ज्ञानयोगी डॉ. मिथिलेश अवस्थी	डॉ. सुरेश मोरा-बलराम भोवते नागपुर	82-101



## शिक्षाविद, सृजनशील और ज्ञानयोगी

### डॉ. मिथिलेश अवस्थी

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- डॉ. सुदेश मीरा-बलराम भोवते, नागपुर



कई हफ्तों से मैं इस (आ)लेख को लिखने अथवा मेरे अंतर्भूत में भ्रम, मित्र और दार्शनिक के रूप में सतत साथ रहने वाले एक व्यक्तित्व डॉ. मिथिलेश अवस्थीजी को शब्दों में व्यक्त करने के लिए अपनी सम्पूर्ण ऊर्जा के साथ प्रतिदिन प्रयास करता रहा, लेकिन कुछ पलों में मैं इस बहुआयामी व्यक्तित्व को कैसे आकृतिबद्ध करूँ? यह बंध प्रश्न मेरे सामने सबसे पहले आता है। जबकि एकदम साफ है, डरता हूँ कि कहीं मेरे शब्द और आकस्मिक दोनों ही इस व्यक्तित्व के साथ अन्याय न कर बैठें। एक कनिष्ठ साथी होने की वजह से उन पर लिखना मेरी अंतर्द्वेषना पर एक दबाव निर्मित कर रहा है, लेकिन यह मेरा सौभाग्य भी है।

मेरे लिये डॉ. अवस्थीजी किसी पुर से कम नहीं हैं, उम्र का फासला भी काफी है, लेकिन मैं मेरे अन्य सहयोगियों की तुलना में थोड़ा स्थायी हो सकता हूँ, क्योंकि मैंने उन्हें मेरा दार्शनिक मित्र समझा, शायद इसी से मैं उनके साथ कई विषयों पर काफी सहजता से वैश्विक चर्चा कर लेता हूँ। हालाँकि पी. डब्ल्यू. एस. महाविद्यालय के शुरुआत के दिनों में मेरे लिये उनका परिचय किसी ऐसे बड़े व्यक्ति की तरह था जिसके करीब आना शायद ही पहुँच सकते हों। उस वक्त भी वे एक लेखक, समीक्षक, पत्रकार, चुम्बकीय शिक्षक ही नहीं अपितु एक वक्ता और मार्गदर्शक के रूप में महाविद्यालय और शहर में प्रसिद्ध थे। ऊँचे कद के, गोठ रंग और सुन्दर व्यक्तित्व के धनी अवस्थीजी महाविद्यालय में अपना विशेष स्थान रखते हैं। हमेशा खूबखूब मठी उनकी कक्षा और स्ट्राफ़ रूम में भी वे कभी विद्यार्थियों से तो कभी अपने वरिष्ठ-कनिष्ठ सहकर्मियों से घिरे हुए दिखते हैं। हर सप्ताह उनके खास मुशायरों के चलते हमेशा किसी ठोस नतीजे तक पहुँच जाती है। इसलिए भी साल भर तक मैं उनके करीब जाने से शिक्षकता रहा लेकिन साहित्य, अध्यापन और शिक्षा क्षेत्र में समान शक्ति की वजह से शायद हमारा करीब आना निश्चित था।

मुझे यह समझने में बहुत देरी नहीं लगी कि अपने कार्य के साथ निष्ठा रखने वाले और विशेषतः अनुसन्धान में रुचि रखनेवाले हर सहकर्मी के साथ वे सहज हो जाते हैं, पिच हो जाते हैं और फिर आप चाहेंगे तब भी अपनी मित्रता उनसे छुड़वा नहीं सकते। आप उनसे किसी भी बन्धन में बंध जाइए, ज्ञान की गंगाजी आप तक

बहती रहेंगी और पित्रता अपने स्तर से ऊँची होती रहेंगी, यह निश्चित है। फिर आप उनसे मिलिए या ना मिलिए, वे जरूर आप को याद दिलायेंगे कि पिछली मुलाकात 'सदियों' पहले हुई थी। आप यकीन मानिए, यह शिकायत पूर्ण व्यर्थ (Sarcasm) आपको समझने के लिये काफी है कि सर आपसे नागात्र हैं। सिकं पांच मिनट की आपकी अपनी बगल की कुर्सी पर बिठाएँ, और सबसे पहले आपका हाल पूछें, आपकी अपनी बगल की कुर्सी पर बिठाएँ, और सबसे पहले आपका हाल पूछें, जिस आत्मीयता के साथ वे अपना सर्वोत्तम समय (Quality Time) आप के साथ बिताएँगे आप अपनी सारी थकान भूल जायेंगे और एक नई ऊर्जा के साथ अपने कार्य के लिये निकल पड़ेंगे।

हाँ!!! उनके कनिष्ठ मित्रों के लिए एक नियम जरूर है, रोत्र सुबह दाढ़ी (Clean Shave) बनाकर तथा शर्ट और पैंट की योग्य धीरेण और अच्छी इसी किए हुए कपड़े पहनकर ही महाविद्यालय में उनसे मिलिए, अन्यथा आपकी खैर नहीं। इस सन्दर्भ में प्रतिदिन वे किसी न किसी की प्रसंगा करोंगे तो किसी की खिचाई। वे मजाकिया स्वभाव के भी हैं, पूर्व प्रचार्य गान सर से भी हैंसी-मजाक का अवसर वे नहीं छोड़ते थे। गान सर तो मले इसान थे, वे कभी चुप नहीं मानते थे। गान सर की अनेक अटपटी आदतों पर सर की अक्सर नजर रहती थी और मजाकिया अन्दाज में अवस्थी सर उन्हें टोक देते थे। कभी बागड़ेजी (जो बोले तगड़े हैं, जिन्हें हम डू सर पुकारते हैं) तो कभी मेरे अन्य मित्र सिद्धार्थ वाला (मूर्ति छोटी लेकिन कीर्ति बड़ी) सर की मजाक की रडार पर रहते हैं। सुमेघ और अवस्थीजी रोत्र ही एक-दूसरे की टाँग थोचते रहते हैं।... अवस्थीजी के इस व्यवहार में एक खास स्नेह छलकता है। किसी भी प्रकार का कार्य हो, कुछ नीतियों (Professional Ethics) का पालन करना, उस कार्य के प्रति न्याय करने जैसा है। हमारे व्यवहार, पहनावे अथवा भाषा पर इन मूल नीतियों के चलते ही अवस्थीजी का हम पर हमेशा कटाख (Moral Policing) रहता है और हमें यह अच्छा लगता है। अवस्थीजी खुद ही व्यावसायिक मूल्यों पर पहले अमल करते हैं और अपने मित्रों पर उन मूल्यों को प्रभाव से बांधते हैं और उनका अनुपालन करने के लिए बाध्य करते हैं। इसमें हम सुरक्षित ही महगुरु करते हैं। ऐसे और कई अव्यक्त प्यारे नियम आपनों और अन्य सहकर्मियों के लिए भी हैं जो आपो इस लेख में जरूर आयेंगे। दो-चार मिनट के लिए हम सब हर सुबह अपनी कक्षा में जाने के पहले पोर्च में मिलते हैं, उनकी वजह हमें खूब हैसते हैं और फिर अपनी-अपनी कक्षाओं में चले जाते हैं। हर दिन सुबह हमें हैसाना पानो अवस्थीजी का एक नियम सा बन गया है जूही के शब्दों में- 'मेरा सुख बस वही है, जो तुम्हें खुश कर जाता है।' ('खुशी', इन्व्हाशन योज होले हैं- यू. 04)

कहते हैं- 'व्यक्ति अपने कर्मों से बनता है, अपने व्यवहार से पहचाना जाता है और कार्य के प्रति निष्ठा से गौरव प्राप्त करता है', अवस्थीजी इसी उक्ति के आधार पर निश्चित ही हम सब मित्रों के लिए शैक्षणिक क्षेत्र में कार्य करने के लिए एक आदर्श



और प्रेरणा स्रोत है। यह कहना अतिशयोक्ति नहीं होगी कि उनका सम्पूर्ण जीवन अध्यापन, साहित्य और सूजनशील कार्यों के लिए समर्पित है। जैसा कि मीन डॉ. अवस्थीजी को अपना भगत, मित्र और दार्शनिक कहा, इन्हीं संज्ञाओं के आधार पर एक अनुज-सहजगामी के रूप में मेरा यह लेख उनके प्रायोगिक चिंतन और ज्ञान-लातस को विषद करने की चेष्टा है। मेरी कोशिश यही रहेगी कि मुझ पर एक भाई-मित्र हवावी न हो क्योंकि मैं उनके व्यक्तित्व एवं कार्यों को अपने अनुभवों के आधार पर सामने लाना चाहता हूँ। मुझ पर उनका प्रेम हवावी होने की पृष्टता कर सकता है।

### उच्च शिक्षा के लिये शिक्षा दर्शन

शिक्षा-दर्शन और अध्यापन (Education Pedagogy) पद्धतियों में शिक्षक-केन्द्रित और विद्यार्थी-केन्द्रित प्रणालियाँ विश्व में प्रसिद्ध हैं। दोनों का ही अपना अलग-अलग महत्त्व है। शिक्षक-केन्द्रित प्रणालियाँ पारम्परिक तरीकों से अध्यापन का अवलम्बन करती हैं जबकि विद्यार्थी-केन्द्रित प्रणालियाँ आधुनिक वैज्ञानिक शिक्षा पद्धति का अनुसरण करती हैं। भारतीय शिक्षा अध्यापन क्षेत्र में आज भी कई शिक्षक-केन्द्रित प्रणालियाँ प्रचलित हैं, जहाँ शिक्षक अपनी तरफ से विद्यार्थियों पर प्रभाव बनाते हैं और इस तरह यहाँ एकपक्षी सम्भाषण में विद्यार्थी पूर्णतः सुनने के स्तर पर अध्यापन करता है। मानसिक शिक्षा-विदों की खोज के अनुसार विद्वान शिक्षक होने के बावजूद ऐसी पद्धतियों में पर्याप्त सम्भाषण न होने की वजह से विद्यार्थियों के अध्यापन का स्तर काफी कम होता है। अर्थात्, विद्यार्थी-केन्द्रित प्रणालियों में अध्यापन के लिये पर्याप्त अवकाश एवं सम्भाषण के लिये स्वतंत्रता रखी जाती है, शिक्षक एक मार्गदर्शक और नित्य शिक्षा प्रयोग में सहप्रवासी की तरह हर सम्भव मदद के लिए उपलब्ध होता है। इसमें शिक्षक और विद्यार्थी दोनों का विकास निहित होता है। दूसरी बात इस पद्धति में अध्यापन का स्तर काफी ऊँचा होता है। लेकिन हमारे लिए यह विडम्बना है कि विश्वविद्यालय अभ्यासक्रम का यह चुनाव शिक्षक के भरोसे छोड़ देता है। हमारी अपनी संस्कृति से पर्याप्त परिचय न होने और शिक्षा विज्ञान का आधारभूत अध्यापन न होने की वजह से बड़ी संख्या में शिक्षक शिक्षा-प्रणाली का चुनाव करने में गलती करते हैं। इस विषय पर आज गंभीर मंथन की आवश्यकता है।

जब से मैंने डॉ. अवस्थीजी को अध्यापन करते देखा है, उन्हें केवल विद्यार्थी-केन्द्रित पद्धतियों पर प्रायोगिक चिंतन करते देखा है। महाविद्यालय में अवस्थीजी के अलावा सिर्फ डॉ. प्रणोती चक्रवर्ती मैडम, जो कि कई साल पहले टिपरा हो चुकी हैं, इस प्रभावी शिक्षा प्रणाली का अवलम्बन करते हैं। महाविद्यालय की पचास साल की अवधि में विद्यार्थियों की अनेक पीढ़ियों के चहरे अवस्थीजी विद्यार्थियों के लिए न सिर्फ विषय के प्रति रुचि-वृद्धि के लिए, सहायक बने बल्कि अध्यापन-स्तर की प्रक्रिया में उत्कृष्टता पाने के लिए भी प्रेरक बने। उनके साथ पढ़ने वाले छात्र स्नातक उपाधि के साथ विषय में गहन चिंतन और रुचि प्राप्त करते हैं और

गहन प्रयास होता ही ऊँचे अनुसन्धान के लिए तैयार बनते हैं। उनके विद्यार्थी कई बार आज पढ़ा रहे हैं, कई दफ्तों व विभागों में ऊँचे पदों पर आसीन हैं, साथ ही अनुसन्धान में भी संलग्न हैं। इससे बड़ी उपलब्धि किसी शिक्षक को और क्या चाहिए?

### शिक्षा का आदान-प्रदान, भारतीय संस्कृति और परम्पराएँ

विद्यार्थी-केन्द्रित शिक्षा प्रणाली भले ही आज पाश्चिमात्य आधुनिकतात्मिक कार्यों की वजह से प्रसिद्ध हुई है, लेकिन यह भारतीय संस्कृति और परम्पराओं के साथ मेल पाने से विशिष्ट रूप से भिन्न स्वरूप ले चुकी है। भारत में प्राचीन समय से गुरु-शिष्य परम्परा अपने खास अन्दाज में विकसित हुई है। इसकी अपनी गिरगा है जिसे शिक्षक और विद्यार्थी दोनों को ही अपने-अपने स्तर पर चहना करना है। यह एक विशिष्ट बन्धन भी है जो इन दोनों के सम्बन्धों को आकृतिबद्ध करता है। यहाँ शिक्षक गुरु-पिता ही है और विद्यार्थी बेटा/बेटी ही है। भारतीय श्रमन, बौद्ध, हिन्दू और जैन परम्परा में गुरु-शिष्य सम्बन्धों को पवित्रता के एक खास स्तर पर पहुँचाया गया है, लेकिन पाश्चिमी राष्ट्रों के अनुकरण के चलते आज कितने ही लोगों ने इस गरिमामय बन्धन को चूर-चूर किया है। कई शिक्षक इस पेशे में मानो किसी प्रेरणा के बगैर आते हैं, यह भी वजह है कि वह अध्यापन के लिए पाश्चिमात्य पद्धति का अनुकरण करते हैं। भारतीय अध्यापन पद्धति के प्रति वे जागरूक नहीं दिखते हैं। अवस्थीजी हमारे महाविद्यालय में अपने व्यवहार और अध्यापन में उनकी अनन्य निष्ठा से एक रोल मॉडल-एक लिजेंड बन चुके हैं। एक ऐसे शिक्षक जो भारतीय संस्कृति से ओत-प्रोत हों, विद्यार्थियों के लिये प्रेरणा बन चुके हैं। मैं जब भी अवस्थीजी को देखता हूँ, तब हमारी भारतीय परम्परा की घाटा के भविष्य के प्रति आश्वास होता है, क्योंकि उनके विद्यार्थी और उनके हम जैसे सहधर्मि मित्र यह कारवाँ आगे बढ़ाएँगे।

चाहे काळ पाठ हो, कथा-कथन, नाट्यांकन, समीक्षा इन सभी पर अवस्थीजी की कक्षा में भारतीय परम्परा का प्रभाव स्पष्टता से दिखता है। उनके विद्यार्थी जब किसी गीत को विशिष्ट तथ्य में गाते हैं तब उस पर भारतीय शैली की छाप दिखती है। ऐसी तथ्य कानों में पड़ते ही मन आनन्दित हो उठता है। गत वर्ष महाविद्यालय में नैक मूल्यांकन होना था, सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रम के लिए हमने डॉ. अवस्थीजी से निवेदन किया कि वे अपनी पसन्द के किसी तथ्य नाटक को निर्देशित करें। उन्होंने 08-10 तथ्य नाटकों की लिस्ट कमेटी के सामने रखी। नाटक में लगने वाले पात्रों की संख्या, समय और आवश्यक खर्च बताया। अंत में 'इम्पेक्टर मातादीन चाँद पर' नामक तथ्य नाटक निर्देशित किया गया और 08 दिन में ही उसका मंचन होना था। उन्होंने जिस तरह से विद्यार्थियों को तैयार किया, उनके निर्देशन में विद्यार्थियों ने न केवल नाटक का बेहतरीन मंचन किया बल्कि यह गुण अन्य नाटकों के लिए भी सार्थक स्तर पर तैयार हो गया। तथ्य नाटक में पात्र अपने संवाद कैसे याद करेंगे? इसे लेकर सहभागी बच्चे असमंजस में थे, उन्हें तैयार करना यही अवस्थीजी की कला



थी। भारतीय पारम्परिक नाटकों की नैयारी कैसे की जाती है, उन्हें अच्छे से पता था क्योंकि उनका बचपन छत्तीसगढ़ (पुराना म.प्र.) में दूरदराज के दंतवाड़ा जिले के गौदम जैसे देहात में बीता था। रामलीला और अन्य लोककलाओं से वे बच्यूपी परिचित थे ही तथा उन्होंने नागपुर के हिन्दी रंगमंच और नाटककारों पर अनुसन्धान भी किया था, यहाँ से सीखी युक्तियाँ उन्होंने विद्यार्थियों के साथ साझा कीं जिसका बच्चों को फायदा मिला। आज वे सारे बच्चे मंच पर आत्मविश्वास से अंत-प्रोत दिखते हैं। यह नितांत बकरी है कि हमारे विद्यार्थी हमारी संस्कृति से परिचित हैं और यह शिक्षक की ही बकाबदेही है। मुझे अवस्थीजी इसके लिये हमेशा जागरूक और आग्रही दिखते हैं।

‘शिक्षा में निरंतर विकास प्रक्रिया’ यह ऐसा आंतरआनुशासनिक विषय (interdisciplinary) है जिसका विश्वविद्यालयीन अनौपचारिक अभ्यासक्रम में समावेश है जिसमें सामाजिक, आर्थिक विषय और पर्यावरण को ध्यान में रखा गया है। साथ ही इसका उद्देश्य है पिछड़े समुदाय एवं शिक्षा और बुनियादी आवश्यकताओं से वंचित समुदाय के लोगों को मुख्य धारा में लाना। इसके लिए अभ्यासक्रम के माध्यम से विद्यार्थियों को जागरूक बनाना। इसमें उद्देश्य यह रखा गया है कि स्नातक स्तर के अभ्यर्थियों में ऐसा ज्ञान, गुण और क्षमताएँ निर्मित हों कि वे समाज में पोषक वातावरण की निर्मिति के लिए सहजक हों और इसकी जिम्मेदारी उठाने के लिए तैयार हों। यह अनौपचारिक अभ्यासक्रम अमल में लाने की बड़ी जिम्मेदारी शिक्षकों के ऊपर डाली गयी है। यह देखा गया है कि तंत्र और व्यावसायिक अभ्यासक्रमों से निकले छात्र अपनी इस जिम्मेदारी को समझ ही नहीं पाते, क्योंकि उनका अभ्यासक्रम पूर्णतया कार्यकुशलता के विकास पर आधारित होता है। ऐसे में मानव शास्त्र (Humanities) के छात्रों से इसकी अपेक्षा की जाती है। इसलिये भी कला शाखा के शिक्षकों की नैतिक जिम्मेदारी बढ़ जाती है। अब बुनियादी सवाल यह है कि किनने शिक्षक इसको गम्भीरता से लेते हैं?

पी. डब्ल्यू. एस. महाविद्यालय में लगभग 90% प्रतिशत बच्चे पिछड़े समुदाय से आते हैं। अनेक बच्चे अपनी प्रवेश परीक्षा भी नहीं भर सकते। परिवार में गरीबी पीढ़ियों से चली आ रही है, एहने को छत नहीं, पहनने के लिये पर्याप्त कपड़े नहीं, लेकिन डॉ. बाबासाहेब अम्बेडकरजी की प्रेरणा लिए बच्चे उच्च महाविद्यालय तक का कठिन रास्ता तय करके पहुँच जाते हैं। इन बच्चों को पढ़ना है और बढ़ना है। यह सामान्य अभ्यापन से सम्भव नहीं है। इनके लिए प्रेरक शिक्षक की आवश्यकता है जो 45 मिनट की अपनी कक्षा के अलावा छपटों तक उनके विकास के लिए समर्पित हो। मुझे यहाँ यह बताने में बिचकृत अनुचित नहीं लगता कि अवस्थीजी ने इन्हीं समुदाय से आए विद्यार्थियों की उच्च शिक्षा तथा विकास के लिए पी. डब्ल्यू. एस. महाविद्यालय को अपनी कर्मभूमि बनाया। उनकी ज्ञान और अध्ययन की बैठक

जिस स्तर की है, वे सहजता से विश्वविद्यालय अथवा बड़े महाविद्यालयों में कब के स्थानांतरित हो चुके होते, लेकिन कुछ प्रेरणाओं के चलते, जो उन्होंने डॉ. अम्बेडकर के जीवन एवं कार्यों से प्राप्त की हैं और अपने परिवार के खास परिवेश में जो कि उनके माता-पिता ने उन्हें सौंपा है, से वे आज भी पी. डब्ल्यू. एस. महाविद्यालय में गर्व के साथ अपने पिछड़े समाज बन्धुओं के प्रति अपने कर्तव्यों का निर्वहन कर रहे हैं।

एक दिन एक प्रसंग अवस्थीजी ने हम दोस्तों को बताया था जिससे यह पता चलता है कि उनके पिता कैसे उन्हें महाविद्यालय के उन पिछड़े समुदाय के बच्चों के प्रति उनके कर्तव्यों की याद दिलाते थे और इतना ही नहीं अवस्थी सर ने अपने पिता के सामने स्वयं को एक अच्छा शिक्षक साबित करने की मुहिम जीवनभर के लिए छेड़ रखी है। हुआ यह कि प्राध्यापक बनकर साल-दो साल ही हुए थे। एक बार पिताजी गाँव से नागपुर आए थे इसलिए अवस्थीजी ने उस दिन महाविद्यालय से छुट्टी ले ली। सुबह 10 बजे के करीब एक विद्यार्थी का लैडलाइन पर फोन आया, अवस्थीजी ने घर के किसी सदस्य से कहलवा दिया कि घर में नहीं है। पिताजी को यह समझ चुका था कि अवस्थीजी आज महाविद्यालय क्यों नहीं गए थे। शाम को उन्होंने अवस्थीजी से कहा कि कुछ बात करनी है। पिताजी के विशिष्ट स्वर से अवस्थीजी यह तो समझ गए थे कि वे कुछ तो गलत कर बैठे हैं। पिताजी ने स्पष्ट शब्दों में उनकी खिचाई की, उनके अनुसार अवस्थीजी बिना बच्चों को जानकारी दिए छुट्टी लेने से बच्चों का अत्यधिक नुकसान कर बैठे थे। पिताजी के अनुसार 45 मिनट एक पीरियड गुणा तीन कक्षा के लगभग 270 विद्यार्थी याने 12,150 मिनट का नुकसान हुआ। दूसरी बात, फोन करने वाला वह बच्चा आधे घण्टे से पीसीओ पर खड़ा होगा, गरीब होने के बावजूद फोन के लिए एक-दो रुपये खर्च किए होंगे वह अलग नुकसान। पिताजी के इस गणित ने अवस्थीजी के होश उड़ा दिए। उस दिन से मानों आज तक अवस्थीजी अपने को पिताजी के सामने एक अच्छा शिक्षक साबित करने की कोशिश कर रहे हों। हर दिन वे पिताजी के उस तीखेपन को याद करते हैं और अपनी पूरी ऊर्जा के साथ महाविद्यालय में अभ्यापन कार्य करते हैं। जिस घर में अभ्यापन को लेकर इस तरह की धारणा हो वहाँ से निश्चय ही समाजसेवा का द्रव लिए अवस्थीजी जैसे शिक्षक का कन्म होना ही है।

मैं कई बार अवस्थीजी के बारे सोचता हूँ और तब-तब वह मुझे चकित करते हैं। एक ओर उनकी कार्यकुशलता और दूसरी ओर दिन भर न जाने कितने ही प्रकार के कार्यों में वे व्यस्त रहते हैं। अभ्यापन, पत्रकारिता, साहित्य निर्मिति। वक्ता के रूप में उन्हें नागपुर तथा अन्य शहरों में हमेशा ही आमंत्रित किया जाता है,



संगोष्ठियों के लिए नियमित शोध पत्र, नित सामाजिक दृष्टियों का निर्वहन और न जाने कितने ही अन्य कार्य वे समान ऊर्जा के साथ करते हैं। हर महीने दो-तीन संगोष्ठियों के लिए प्रवास करते हैं। हिन्दी साहित्य जगत के कई महत्त्वपूर्ण सम्मानों एवं पुरस्कारों से उन्हें सम्मानित किया गया है। वे बड़ी आत्मीयता तथा व्यक्तिगत रूप से सिर्फ मुझे, सी.एस. पाटिल और सुमेध को अपने उन सम्मानों के बारे में बताते हैं। कई बार अन्य सहकर्मियों को इसकी जानकारी देने की हमें बड़ी इच्छा होती है, लेकिन सर इनकार कर देते हैं। हालाँकि महाविद्यालय को उनकी ख्याति की जानकारी न हो, ऐसा नहीं, लेकिन तब भी हमें ऐसा लगता है कि महाविद्यालय उनके गुणों एवं ज्ञान का उचित उपयोग नहीं कर पाता। सर अपने सम्मानों एवं पुरस्कारों को प्रभावित करने की कोशिश करते हैं, जैसा कि अन्य लोग अक्सर करते हैं। शायद उन्हें ऐसा लगता हो कि यह सम्मान उनकी और अन्य प्राध्यापकों एवं विद्यार्थियों के बीच की सहजता कम न कर बैठे। एक बार सर को उनके एक खास सम्मान प्राप्त पर मैंने हर्षित होकर कहा कि आपकी वजह से हमारे महाविद्यालय का नाम भारत के कई शहरों तक पहुँच गया है, लेकिन महाविद्यालय को इसका कितना महत्त्व है? मेरा आश्चर्य दूसरी बात में था। सर बड़ी ही विनम्रता से मुझसे कहते हैं— भोवतेजी, असल बात यह है कि महाविद्यालय की वजह से मुझे सम्मान प्राप्त हुआ है। मेरे सारे पुरस्कार और सम्मान मुझे नहीं इस महाविद्यालय को प्राप्त हुए हैं; मैं तो केवल एक माध्यम हूँ। इस महाविद्यालय ने मुझे वह दिया है जो शायद ही अन्य कोई संस्था दे सकती है। महाविद्यालय के प्रति शायद ही ऐसी कृतज्ञता कोई व्यक्ति कर सकता था। मेरे पास शब्द नहीं थे बस गालिब याद आये—

हैं और भी दुनियाँ में सुखन—वर बहुत अच्छे

कहते हैं कि 'गालिब' का है अन्दाज़—ए—बर्बा और।

हमारा महाविद्यालय उत्तर नागपुर में स्थित है और यहाँ पिछड़ी जनजाति के विद्यार्थियों की संख्या अधिक है। इसलिए ज्यादातर विद्यार्थी नाजुक आर्थिक स्थिति के परिवारों से आते हैं। ऐसे में उनमें पढ़ाई का स्तर काफी हद तक कमजोर रहता है। प्रथम वर्ष में दाखिला लेनेवाले अधिकतर बच्चे तीसरी श्रेणी में तथा एच.एस.सी. की परीक्षा वे दो-तीन से भी अधिक प्रयासों से पास हुए रहते हैं। नियमित पढ़ाई करने की आदत इनमें नहीं होती है, ऐसे में प्रथम वर्ष में ही बहुत बड़ी संख्या में बच्चे फेल हो जाते हैं। ए.टी.के.टी. की सुविधा के साथ बहुचिन्तित आये बच्चे ही द्वितीय वर्ष में दाखिला ले पाते हैं। अवस्थीजी ने बच्चों की मूल समस्या को समझा। उन बच्चों को एक मॉडर की आवश्यकता थी जैसा कि नैक भी महाविद्यालय में मॉडर प्रक्रिया की

आवश्यकता मानता है। कई दिनों तक चिंतन करने के बाद उन्होंने एक प्रयोग की शुरुआत की। बच्चों के घर जाकर शिक्षक उन पर देख-रेख नहीं कर सकते थे, बच्चों के माँ-बाप नियंत्रण या कस पड़े-लिखे होने की वजह से अपने बच्चों को उनकी अध्ययन प्रक्रिया में मदद नहीं कर सकते थे— ऐसे में उन बच्चों को ही स्वयं अनुशासित होने की आवश्यकता थी। अवस्थीजी ने पहले कुछ बच्चों को उनकी बही में एक टेबल बना दिया। हर दिन कम से कम तीन विषयों की पढ़ाई तथा पढ़ने का औसतन समय निर्धारित करना था। इस तरह एक सप्ताह तक सारे विषयों के साथ, उस बच्चे ने सप्ताह में औसतन हर विषय को कितना समय दिया तथा कितना अभ्यासक्रम वह पूर्ण कर पाया, इस आधार पर उसे अपनी पढ़ाई की योजना बनानी थी। हर दिन ईमानदारी के साथ उसे नोटबुक में लिखना था और सप्ताह के हर सोमवार को अवस्थी सर को दिखाना था। नोटबुक लेकर आए बच्चे को सर और प्रेरित करते, तो किसी को सातलता नहीं रखने के लिये डाँटते, फिर उसे वापस स्वयं अनुशासन के लिए पुनर्कारक तैयार करते। कुछ ही समय में यह कार्यक्रम बहुत प्रचलित हुआ और इसमें अधिक विद्यार्थी जुड़ने गए। इस कार्यक्रम में हिस्सा लेनेवाला हर बच्चा वार्षिक परीक्षा में सफल हुआ। लेकिन इससे भी सफल बात यह थी कि उसमें पढ़ाई के लिए स्वयं अनुशासन की आदत पड़ गई थी और वह अपने कैरियर के प्रति गंभीर बना। इस सफल कार्यक्रम में आज बड़ी संख्या में बच्चे हिस्सा ले रहे हैं और इसके सिर्फ अवस्थीजी ही प्रोत्साहित हैं।

हमारे महाविद्यालय में प्रतिभा की कोई कमी नहीं है— हर प्राध्यापक अपने विषय का निपुण और गहन चिंतक है तथा हमारे विद्यार्थी भी हर क्षेत्र में अपने महाविद्यालय का प्रतिनिधित्व करते हैं। अनुसन्धान के मामले में भी शिक्षक किसी अन्य महाविद्यालय की तुलना में कम नहीं हैं लेकिन सुयोग्य मार्गदर्शन और अपर्याप्त संसाधनों की वजह से आगे नहीं बढ़ पाते। अच्छे जर्नल में शोध पत्र प्रकाशित करने के लिए योग्य अनुसन्धान पट्टति तथा योग्य प्रयोगों से सुयोग्य विचारों एवं सिद्धांतों (Ratification) के चुनाव की आवश्यकता पड़ती है। एक तरफ विद्यार्थियों की आवश्यकता है कि उन्हें पर्याप्त आनुसन्धानिक वातावरण मिले और दूसरी तरफ कनिष्ठ शिक्षकों को महाविद्यालय के वरिष्ठ प्राध्यापकों से अनुसन्धान में मार्गदर्शन प्राप्त हो तथा उन्हें भी आनुसन्धानिक कार्यों के लिए खुली चर्चा का मंच मिले। अवस्थीजी ने महाविद्यालय के ही कुछ मित्रों के पो-एच.डी. के थोसिस पढ़े थे। इससे उन्हें एक कल्पना सूझी कि क्यों न पी-एच.डी. प्राप्त शिक्षकों के शोध विषय पर चर्चा आलोचित की जाए। उनके भविष्य में एक खास आनुसन्धानिक मंच को लेकर योजना शुरू हो चुकी थी। हिन्दी विभाग की ओर से यह कार्यक्रम शुरू करने के लिये अवस्थीजी के ही विभाग के सुमेध ने तुरंत हमी भरी और डॉ. मेधाजी



रामटेके को पहली चर्चा के लिए आमंत्रित किया गया। उन्हें तब डॉक्टरेट प्राप्त हो चुकी थी। उन्होंने पहले अपने अनुसन्धान विषय पर बात रखी, अपनी अहमियों को बताया और मार्गदर्शिका से कैसे तालमेल के साथ अपना अनुसन्धान पूर्ण किया यह बताया। विद्यार्थी और शिक्षकों ने भी अनेक प्रश्न पूछे और मेधाजी ने उनके तर्कपूर्ण उत्तर दिए। पहले ही प्रयास में कई शिक्षक मित्रों एवं पी.जी. के विद्यार्थियों ने हिस्सा लिया और यह चर्चा अपेक्षा से अधिक साफल्य रही। यह कार्यक्रम दूसरे चरण में 'शोध सत्संग' का स्वरूप धारण कर चुका था। बाद में गायकवाड़जी, सी.एस. पारिल, विवेक चव्हाण, नरेन्द्र बागड़े और नागपुरे मैडम ने अपना शोध चर्चा के लिए प्रस्तुत किया (मेरा नम्र अब लगने वाला है।।।)। अवस्थी सर हर वक्ता की प्रस्तुति में से अनेक मुद्दों को नोट करते हैं। पहले विषय समझने के लिए अपने प्रश्न पूछते हैं और अंततः एक मार्गदर्शक के रूप में कुछ सुझाव देते हैं। सुझाव देने के लिये वरिष्ठ प्राध्यापिका प्रज्ञा बागड़े मैडम और अन्य वरिष्ठ गण भी पूरे उत्साह के साथ शोध सत्संग में सम्मिलित होते हैं। विगत दो-तीन सालों में हमारा महाविद्यालय मान्यों शोध-कार्यों को लेकर काफी गम्भीर दिखा, इसका फायदा यह हुआ कि प्राध्यापकों को अपने शोध-प्रबंध को पुस्तककार करने की योग्य सलाह मिली, साथ में शोध-कार्य में हुई गलतियों का ज्ञान हुआ, जो उनके आगे के अनुसन्धान के लिए उपयोगी सिद्ध हुआ। यह कार्यक्रम महाविद्यालय की नैक के लिये दूसरी महत्वपूर्ण बैस्ट प्रैक्टिस बना जो कि सिर्फ अवस्थीजी की सूझ-बूझ और शिक्षा दर्शन में उनके चिंतन का परिणाम है। यह प्रैक्टिस महाविद्यालय, शिक्षक और विद्यार्थियों के लिए आज बहुत-उपयोगी सिद्ध हो रही है। उल्लेखनीय बात यह है कि मूल्यांकन के लिए, महाविद्यालय आए नैक-पियर टीम के अध्यक्ष डॉ. शंभुमुखजी ने भी इस कार्यक्रम की काफी सराहना की।

उच्च शिक्षा क्षेत्र के इन दो प्रयोगों से अवस्थी जी रुके नहीं, उन्हें और भी आगे नए-नए प्रकल्पों पर कार्य करना था। साहित्य या सूजन को लेकर महाविद्यालय में एक खास मंच हो जिससे हमारे सहयोगियों और विद्यार्थियों के अन्दर रुचि कला को बाहर निकाला जाए इस पर अवस्थीजी विगत कुछ सालों से चिंतन करते दिखे। उनके साथ हुई विगत कुछ चर्चाओं में इसकी झलक मिलती थी, लेकिन उनकी पूरी कल्पना को हम पहले समझ नहीं पाए। हममें से अनेक मित्र कविता, लेख, नाटक और कथाएँ लिखते हैं, लेकिन प्रसार माध्यमों में प्रसिद्ध नहीं हुए थे। दूसरी तरफ साहित्य-चर्चा का माहौल हमारे विद्यार्थियों को नहीं मिलता था। लेखक-समीक्षक और श्रोताओं की चर्चा का मूल स्वरूप में अनुभव विद्यार्थियों को मिले यह अवस्थीजी की मंशा थी। उन्होंने मुझे, सुमेध और अन्य साथियों के समक्ष एक प्रस्ताव रखा कि हम अपने साहित्य को प्रस्तुत करें और अन्य शिक्षक और विद्यार्थी

प्रश्न-उत्तर के माध्यम से चर्चा करेंगे। हमने तुरंत हामी मारी। इस अनोखे कार्यक्रम में काव्य प्रस्तुति के लिये सर ने प्रथम मुझे ही आने को कहा। मेरा सौभाग्य भी था कि मैं ओपनिंग बैट्समैन बना। मैंने निर्धारित दिन पर अपनी मराठी और हिन्दी की कविताओं का पाठ किया, कुछ ही देर में वहाँ पूरी तरह से साहित्य संगोष्ठी जैसा माहौल तैयार हो गया था। विद्यार्थी और सहयोगी मित्रों ने काव्य निर्मिति, प्रेरणा, विषय-वस्तु और नाना तरह के प्रश्न पूछे तथा मैंने उन प्रश्नों के उत्तर दिए। इस पूरे कार्यक्रम का मार्गदर्शन अवस्थीजी कर रहे थे, उन्होंने भी अंत में कुछ प्रश्न पूछे और अनेक अच्छे सुझाव भी दिए। उनका समीक्षा करने का तरीका और प्रश्न पूछने का लहजा विद्यार्थियों के लिए एक अनोखे अध्ययन का अनुभव था। यह कहने की आवश्यकता नहीं कि अवस्थीजी का यह प्रकल्प भी सफल हुआ। इसमें फिर सुमेध, मेधाजी और बागड़े मैडम ने हिस्सा लिया और अपनी रचनाओं की प्रस्तुति की। फरवरी-मार्च-अप्रैल 2018 में निर्मित प्रकल्प 'सूजन-संवाद' के रूप में विकसित हो गया है। विद्यार्थियों में साहित्य के प्रति रुचि विकसित हुई और साहित्य का आनन्दोत्सव महाविद्यालय में अवस्थीजी की वक्तव से प्राप्त हुआ। इस कार्यक्रम में सभी भाषाओं के विद्यार्थी और शिक्षक बढ़-चढ़ कर हिस्सा ले रहे हैं - कहना अनुचित नहीं होगा कि अवस्थी सर के हिन्दी विभाग की साहित्य-चर्चा के द्वारा महाविद्यालय में एक नई ऊर्जा का संसरण हुआ है। विद्यार्थियों और शिक्षकों दोनों के विकास के लिए सहायक अवस्थीजी के चिंतन परक सभी प्रकल्प महाविद्यालय आगे बढ़ाएगा इसमें कोई संदेह नहीं।

अवस्थीजी एक वक्ता के रूप में पूरे देश में प्रसिद्ध हैं लेकिन महाविद्यालय के छात्रों पर उनके भाषणों का अनेक वर्षों तक प्रभाव रहता है। बच्चों के लिए उनके बोल जीवन भर के लिए प्रेरक हो जाते हैं। एन.एस.एस. शिबिरों तथा अन्य कार्यक्रमों में वे स्वास्थ्य, खान-पान, नशा-मुक्ति, कैरियर मार्गदर्शन, व्यक्तिगत-विकास इत्यादि अनेक विषयों पर सतत मार्गदर्शन करते हैं। हिन्दी विषय के होकर भी उनका एक व्याख्यान, जो कि एन.एस.एस. शिबिर में अंतर्राष्ट्रीय बैंक व्यवहार और चतन पर दिया गया था, आज भी अनेक विद्यार्थी याद करते हैं। इन विविध विषयों पर उनके चिंतन से पता चलता है कि वे कितने जिज्ञासु हैं। वे अपने व्याख्यानों को अनेक दिनों की मेहनत से तैयार करते हैं। महाविद्यालय में उनका एक और खास प्रकल्प हर साल चलता है जो विद्यार्थियों द्वारा परीक्षा की तैयारी के सम्बन्ध में एक कार्यशाला के रूप में होता है। इसमें पढ़ाई कैसे करनी चाहिए, प्रश्न पत्र को समझना, उत्तर पत्रिका में कैसे लिखना चाहिए, इत्यादि अनेक बातें किन्हीं उन्हें समझाई जाती हैं। हर साल इस कार्यशाला में उनके अलावा सुमेध, मेधाजी, नरेन्द्र बागड़ेजी और मैं स्वयं भी अपना



अनुभव बच्चों से साझा करते हैं। नौक के चलते महाविद्यालय के हर विभाग में वैल्यू एडेड अभ्यासक्रम चलाने थे। अवस्थीजी ने, जो कि पत्रकारिता के लिए भी जाने जाते हैं, अपने विद्यार्थियों के लिए पत्रकारिता का अभ्यासक्रम बनाया और प्रिंट से लेकर इलेक्ट्रॉनिक मीडिया के जाने-माने पत्रकारों एवं समादाओं को व्याख्यान के लिए आमंत्रित किया। लगभग सौ विद्यार्थियों ने इसका लाभ उठाया।

अवस्थीजी कवि मन के संवेदनशील व्यक्ति भी हैं। आस-पास घटित होने वाली तमाम घटनाओं पर वे चिंतन करते हैं। उनके साथ सामान्यतः बातचीत करते हुए भी अवसर वे अपनी पीढ़ी हम सभी से व्यक्त करते हैं। एक पत्रकार के रूप में अनेक बार उन्हें शहर के ऐसे इलाकों में जाना पड़ता था जहाँ लोगों के जीवन में घोर अन्धकार है, गरीबी से बेहाल लोग, बेसहारा बूढ़े लोग, भूखे-गो बच्चे जिनका भविष्य ही गायब हो... मिछड़े समुदाय के लोग अपने अधिकारों के लिये संघर्ष कर रहे हैं... इन तमाम बेहाल जिन्दगी जी रहे लोगों में भी अवस्थीजी को जीने की आस दिखती है। उन्हें दुखी लोग भी मुस्कान लिए बढ़ते दिखते हैं। उन्हें लोग यातनाएँ सहते हुए भी अच्छे कल की आस लिए दिखते हैं। इसलिए शाश्वत अपनी कविता में वे लिखते हैं - 'पर है गरल, आश्रय वे जीवन, अमृत कल हो जायेगा' ('मेरे लिये जीना होगा', इमरतान रोड होते हैं, पृ. 83) अपनी कई कविताओं में वे जीवन के सुख-दुख, आशा-निराशा, जीने की ललक और प्रेरणा इन विषय वस्तुओं पर ज्यादातर चिंतन करते दिखते हैं। केवल कविता नहीं सामान्यतः आम बातचीत में भी वे इन विषयों पर अपनी संवेदनशील व्यक्त करते रहते हैं। उनकी प्रतिनिधि कविताएँ 'इमरतान रोड होते हैं' काव्य संग्रह में हैं जिसे आस्तोक प्रकाशन, नागपुर ने सन 2008 में प्रकाशित किया था। वे सुन्दर लय में काव्यपाठ भी करते हैं और श्रोताओं को अपने गीतों से भावविभोर कर देते हैं। एन.एस.एस. शिबिर में जब उन्होंने अपनी मौसेरी बहन पर लिखी कविता 'जिटिया मेरी' सुनाई थी तो सारे बच्चों और प्राध्यापकों की आँखें नम हो गई थी।

एक कथाकार के रूप में भी वे इसी संवेदनशीलता से अपनी लघु कथाओं के माध्यम से समाज की पीड़ा उजागर करते हैं। अपनी इन कथाओं में वे छोटे-छोटे परन्तु विद्रोहक चित्र निर्मित करते हैं और इनके माध्यम से एक गहन चिंतन समाज-मन के लिए छोड़ जाते हैं। जैसे एक चित्रकार कैनावास पर चित्र निर्मित करता हो, वैसे ही अवस्थीजी की कथाएँ गम्भीर चित्र साकार करती हैं। उनकी एक कथा मन की शिशोड़कर रख देती है, जहाँ एक माँ को, उसका बेटा साठी सम्पत्ति बेचकर, हवाई-अड्डे पर खाली हाथ छोड़ अमरीका चला जाता है। इस कथा को पहली बार पढ़ने पर मुझे 1960 में प्रदर्शित सिनेमा अंशुलिमाल में मन्नाडे द्वारा गाया वो प्रसिद्ध गीत याद

आया था - जब दुनिया से प्यार उठे... नफरत की दीवार उठे... माँ की ममता पर जिस दिन बेटे की तलवार उठे... यह गीत जिस तरह मन को सुन्न कर देता है, अवस्थीजी की कथाएँ भी मन को हिला कर रख देती हैं। यह कथाएँ प्रत्यक्ष जीवन से ली गई हैं। अवस्थीजी अपनी कथाओं को करीब से अनुभव करते हैं तभी उनमें संवेदनशील चित्र उभरते हैं।

मेरे पिताजी के बारे में एक बार मैंने अवस्थीजी को बताया था कि कैसे एक शिक्षक ने पिताजी को, जब वे बच्चे थे, उन दिनों की खुली कथा के चक्कर पर चढ़ने से मना किया था और पिताजी सामाजिक भेदभाव के चलते पढ़ नहीं पाए थे। लेकिन उन्होंने देवरी में एक ग्रंथालय निर्मित किया। इस पर सर ने एक कथा लिखी। उनकी यह कथा 'रघुभिमान की पुकार' शीर्षक के साथ 'सर्जना' पत्रिका (पटना) में नवंबर 2014 में तथा वही कथा 'आस-पास की बातें' इस लघुकथा संकलन में अप्रैल 2016 में छपी है। इस कथा में लिए गए स्थानों को अवस्थीजी स्वयं देखना चाहते थे। ऐसे ही मेरे जीजाजी के जीवन के बारे में उन्हें अन्यायस बताया कि कैसे वे स्कूल के दिनों में तेन्दू पत्ता तोड़ने जंगल जाते, साल भर की पढ़ाई के लिए खेत में मकदूरी कर पैसा इकट्ठा करते। आज उनकी कृषि, डेयरी और सी.बी.एस.सी. के स्कूल हैं। अवस्थीजी ने इनके जीवन पर भी कथा लिखी... लेकिन वे गाँव देखने के लिए काफी आतुर थे क्योंकि तभी कथा पूर्ण हो सकती थी।..... समय बीत रहा था और हम देवरी और लिङ्का जाने की अपनी योजना नहीं बना पा रहे थे। दोनों गाँव राष्ट्रीय महामार्ग क्र. छह के आस-पास ही हैं। देवरी होकर ही अवस्थीजी अपने गाँव गीदम, पिता - दंतोवाड़ा (छ.ग.) जाते-आते रहते हैं। आखिरकार एक दिन अवस्थीजी, मैं, सी.एस. और सुपेय उन्हीं की कार में बैठकर मेरे गाँव पहुँच गए। माँ पुरे सफर में हम एक कथाकार के साथ जा रहे थे। दोनों गाँवों में जाकर अवस्थीजी ने अपनी कथाओं का मूल स्रोत स्वरूपात्मकता से देखा - और जब कथानक (Plot) को अनुभूत किया तो उनकी आँखों में सगुहिका का अहसास था एवं वे अत्यंत समाधानी दिखे। जीजाजी के स्कूल में उन्होंने वहाँ के कृषि शिक्षकों से बातचीत की, साथ ही देवरी में भी ग्रंथालय के कर्मचारियों और स्थानीय कार्यकर्ताओं से बातचीत की। दोनों जगह वे पूरी तन्मयता के साथ माँओं अनुसन्धान कर रहे थे या फिर किसी और नई कथा का सूत्र ढूँढ़ रहे थे। फिर शाम में देवरी के एक शाकाहारी होटल में हमने खाना खाया। पहली बार हम भाई लोग एक साथ लम्बे प्रवास का आस्वाद लेकर, एकदम मुकुन के साथ लौटे। इस प्रवास के बहाने अवस्थी सर में जो एक कथाकार बसता है, उसे करीब से देखने का मौका मिला।

लेखन कार्य में उच्च कोटि के कार्य के प्रति अवस्थीजी हमेशा आग्रही



दिखते हैं। उनके साथ काम करने से लेखन शैली की काफी गौरीकियाँ सीखने को मिलती हैं। उन्होंने महाविद्यालय में लेखन और सम्पादन से जुड़े कई कार्यों में अपने पत्रकारिता के अनुभव से योगदान दिया। उन्होंने 'मैत्री' वार्षिकिक और हमारे जर्मल 'पर्सोक्टिव' के कुछ अंक सम्पादित किए हैं। इनमें कवर पेज, मार्जिन, पैराफ्रॉफन, रेसिसिंग, व्याकरण, सामग्री का अनुक्रम इत्यादि बातों का नमूना वे हम सब को बताते थे। उनकी शुरु की गई 'पट्टितियों' का आज भी हम अनुकरण करते हैं। 'इनसाइट' मासिक पत्रिका के कुछ अंकों के सम्पादन में भी अवस्थीजी का योगदान उल्लेखनीय है।

सम्पादन से सम्बन्धित मेरा निजी अनुभव उनके साथ दो अंतर्राष्ट्रीय संगोष्ठियों के प्रयत्नों के सम्पादन के समय रहा। वे संगोष्ठियाँ खासकर हमें और करीब लाई, क्योंकि मुझ पर संगोष्ठी के सेक्रेटरी के रूप में जिम्मेदारी दी गई थी और अवस्थीजी के ज्वर्दस्त सहयोग की वजह से मैं वह निर्वाहन कर पाया। संगोष्ठियों की सम्पादित किताबों में छपने वाले हर शोध पत्र की विश्वसनीयता पर अवस्थीजी ज्यादा जोर देते थे। कुछ शोध पत्रों को हमने साथ मिलकर तैयार किया था। कुछ डेलीगेट हम पर नाराज भी हुए, लेकिन सर साथ थे तो मुझे हिम्मत थी। एक पुस्तक के सम्पादन में हमारे ही एक अध्यापक साथी मित्र का पेपर छूट गया था। वे मुझ पर नाराज हुए, क्योंकि मैं अंग्रेजी सेक्शन सम्भाल रहा था और मुझसे चूक हुई थी। अनेक जगह वो मित्र खुले तौर पर नाराजगी दिखाते लगे थे। वे मुझसे चाहते थे कि उनका पेपर किताब की बार्डिंग खोलकर उसमें पेस्ट किया जाए, जो सम्भव नहीं था। ऐसे में अवस्थीजी ने मामला सुलझाया, उन्हें भी उस मित्र की बेकारगढ़ सलाह पसन्द नहीं थी। शिक्षक परिषद में अवस्थीजी ने सम्पादक के तौर पर हमारी मजबूरियों का खुलासा किया और बड़ी ही विनम्रता से उस नाराज मित्र को समझाया। यह नाराजगी मिटाने का कार्य केवल अवस्थीजी ही कर सकते थे। मूल्यों के साथ छेड़छाड़ उन्हें पसन्द नहीं है लेकिन यह मामला उन्होंने काफी संजीदगी के साथ निपटाया। वह नाराज मित्र आज सामान्य रूप से मुझसे मिलते हैं। 2011 में महाविद्यालय द्वारा बौद्ध धम्म पर आयोजित अंतर्राष्ट्रीय संगोष्ठी के लिए शोध पत्रों पर आधारित ग्रंथ 'पण्णायोदिये' (पी.डब्ल्यू.एस. प्रकाशन) और 2014 के डॉ. बाबासाहेब अम्बेडकर पर आयोजित अंतर्राष्ट्रीय संगोष्ठी में प्रस्तुत किए गए शोध पत्रों पर आधारित दो खण्डों में प्रकाशित ग्रंथ: 'डॉ. बाबासाहेब अम्बेडकर: जीवन, कार्य एवं विचार' (पी.डब्ल्यू.एस. प्रकाशन), इन दोनों ग्रंथों के सम्पादन में मैं उनके साथ था। हिन्दी विभाग द्वारा आयोजित राष्ट्रीय संगोष्ठी, जो राङ्कुमार केवलरामानी कन्या महाविद्यालय तथा सिंधु महाविद्यालय के संयुक्त सत्वावधान में आयोजित की गई थी, में प्रस्तुत शोध पत्रों पर आधारित ग्रंथ 'हिन्दी आलोचना: इक्कीसवीं सदी' जो अस्मिता प्रकाशन, नागपुर द्वारा प्रकाशित है, का सम्पादन भी उन्होंने उन महाविद्यालयों के

प्राध्यापकों के साथ किया। विश्वविद्यालय स्तर पर क्रमिक अध्यासक्रम पर आधारित साहित्य और भाषा दोनों विषयों के लिए उन्होंने अनेक पुस्तकों का सम्पादन अन्य विद्वत जनों के साथ मिलकर किया है। उनके सहयोग से सम्पादित दो पुस्तकें विश्वविद्यालय के इस समय के अध्यासक्रम में सम्मिलित हैं।

अपने महाविद्यालयीन जीवन से ही उन्होंने पत्रकारिता के साथ-साथ एक शोधार्थी के रूप में भी लिखना शुरू किया था। उनके अनेक शोध पत्र और लेख अनेक अंतर्राष्ट्रीय और राष्ट्रीय स्तर की संगोष्ठियों में उनके द्वारा प्रस्तुत किए गए और प्रकाशित भी हुए हैं। आज भी वे अपने किसी भी शोध पत्र को गम्भीरता से लेते हैं, विषय से सम्बन्धित ग्रंथों का अध्ययन करते हैं, नोट्स बनाते हैं, शोध प्रश्न पर चिंतन कर पत्र का ढाँचा बनाते हैं और अपने शोध पत्र को लिखते हैं और कम से कम 07-08 बार उसे पुनरावलोकन (उत्तरी ही बार वह प्रिंट होता है) करने के बाद ही उसे प्रकाशन के लिए भेजते हैं। शोध पट्टिति पर उनकी पकड़ इतनी है कि अनेक प्रकार के शोध कार्य करते वाले शोधार्थियों को वे मार्गदर्शन करते हैं। उन्हें अनुसंधान तथा भाषा एवं साहित्य संबंधी विषयों पर बोलने के लिए कई महत्त्वपूर्ण मंचों पर निमंत्रित किया जाता है। देश के अनेक-अनेक में आयोजित संगोष्ठियों में विविध सत्रों की अध्यक्षता भी वे कर चुके हैं और इन मंचों से शोध कार्य में अपना चिंतन हर किसी के साथ साझा करते हैं। उनके अनुसन्धान पर आधारित कुछ मौलिक ग्रंथ प्रकाशित हुए हैं, जिनमें साहित्य समीक्षा पर आधारित विश्वभारती प्रकाशन, नागपुर से प्रकाशित 'चिंतन के क्षण' (2008), उनके पी-एच.डी. पर आधारित और गोपिका प्रकाशन लखनऊ से प्रकाशित 'यशपाल के उपन्यासों में युग चेतना' (2009), और उनके खास फील्ड वर्क पर आधारित और नागपुर में नाटक क्षेत्र में कार्य करने वाले रंगकर्म्मियों पर आधारित एवं विद्या प्रकाशन, कानपुर द्वारा प्रकाशित 'अहिन्दी भाषी और हिन्दी रंगमंच' (2016) महत्त्वपूर्ण हैं।

हम कुछ मित्र महाविद्यालय में हर हफ्ते अवस्थी सर के कक्ष में मिलते हैं और अनेक आनुसन्धानिक विषयों पर चर्चा करते हैं। उनके शोध कार्यों के अनुभव का हमें निश्चित ही फायदा होता है। उनकी एक खास खूबी है कि वे बेझिझक अपने से कनिष्ठ साधियों से भी नई बात सीखते हैं। इतना ही नहीं किसी विषय पर अगर किसी सहयोगी की पकड़ है तो उसे वे चर्चा के लिए बाध्य करते हैं, उसके ज्ञान का दोहन तब तक करते हैं जब तक उनकी संतुष्टि नहीं होती। फिर ऐसी चर्चा दो-तीन दिन तक भी चलती है लेकिन अंत में सहयोगियों के प्रति कृतज्ञता व्यक्त करना वे कभी नहीं भूलते। यही वजह है कि उनके अनेक सहयोगियों के साथ खास सम्बन्ध बन चुके हैं।



अवस्थीजी हमारे महाविद्यालय में एक टेक्नोसेवी प्राध्यापक हैं और उच्च शिक्षा में आधुनिक तंत्रों के प्रयोग के पक्षधर हैं। अपने सभी साधियों को वे हमेशा तंत्र आधारित अध्यापन पद्धति के लिए प्रोत्साहित करते हैं और कम्प्यूटर, पेजमेकर के लिए खासकर प्रेरित करते हैं। वे स्वयं कम्प्यूटर पर सतत अपने काम में लीम दिखते हैं। एम.एस.वर्ड, पेजमेकर और एक्सल इन तीनों में समान रूप से उन्हें महारत हासिल है। मुझे व्यक्तिगत तौर पर उन्होंने पेजमेकर सिखाया है। पद्य भारत के 'नवभारत दैनिक' में लम्बे समय तक सम्पादन कार्य से जुड़े रहने के कारण पेज सेटिंग और इलस्ट्रिंग का उन्हें विशेष ज्ञान है। इसकी वजह से महाविद्यालय की अनेक पुस्तकों एवं जर्नल के सम्पादन में उनकी खास मदद मिलती है। किसी सॉफ्टवेयर की समस्या निर्मित होती है तो वे उसे सुलझा लेते हैं या उनके किसी परिचित टेक्नीशियन की मदद लेकर समाधान निकाल लेते हैं। डिजीटल विश्व उन्हें खूब आकर्षित करता है। इंटरनेट बैंकिंग, इंटरनेट बुकिंग, सर्फिंग इत्यादि में सतत लगे रहते हैं।

### विद्यार्थियों के लिये प्रकाश स्तम्भ (Light House)

अवस्थीजी महाविद्यालय के लिए एक विद्वान शिक्षक, लेखक और मार्गदर्शक हैं लेकिन विद्यार्थियों के लिए वे किसी मन्त्रवृत्त प्रकाश स्तम्भ की तरह हैं। जो गहरे और मीलों दूर तक फैले महासागर में भटकते जहाजों को खतरों से बचाने तथा बन्दरगाह तक सुरक्षित पहुँचाने के लिए मार्गदर्शन करते हैं। उनकी कक्षा सिर्फ कक्षा में ही नहीं लगती, बल्कि उनके कक्ष में, प्रयालय में और महाविद्यालय के प्रांगण में भी लगती है। कक्षा के अलावा भी बच्चे विविध विषयों पर भिन्न-उनका मार्गदर्शन प्राप्त करते हैं। आप उनकी हैसती और ठाहके लगती हुई कक्षा और व्याख्यान में तल्लीन-भावविभोर विद्यार्थी हमेशा ही देख सकते हैं। उनकी कक्षा समय पर शुरू होती है, बच्चों को समय पर पहुँचना है अन्यथा वे उस दिन उनके मार्गदर्शन से चूक जाएंगे, इसलिए बच्चे वक्त पर पहुँचते हैं। उनकी कक्षा में अध्ययन और अध्यापन मानों एक संस्कृति है। विद्यार्थियों से वह अपनी संतुष्टि के स्तर तक परीक्षा की तैयारी कराते हैं, वह एक निपुण माँझी की तरह अपनी कक्षा रूपी नौका को सुरक्षित रूप से किनारे ले जाते हैं- अपने विभाग से कई भेंट और प्रथम श्रेणी के विद्यार्थी महाविद्यालय को देते हैं।

उनकी एक खास खूबी है- हर बच्चे का नाम वे कई सालों तक याद रखते हैं। छात्राओं के प्रति उनका स्नेह पिता समान बहता है। कई साल बाद भी जब बच्ची महाविद्यालय में सर से मिलने पहुँचती है, तो वे सभी अपना शीश झुकाती हैं ताकि सर उनके सिर पर अपना स्नेहभरा हाथ रख दें। छात्रों के लिये थोड़ा अलग स्नेह है और बच्चे इसमें ही संतुष्ट होते हैं। छात्रों की पीठ पर थाप, तो कभी प्यार भरा घूँसा,

कभी जोर का तो कभी हल्का, लेकिन बच्चे इसके लिए भी लातपात रहते हैं। उनके लिए उनके विभाग की अंशकारीन प्राध्यापिकाएँ भी बेटियाँ बन जाती हैं। गौतम मैडम बड़ी बेटी हैं, तो संतोषी और रोमा मैडम छोटी बेटियाँ हैं। अग्रोवी विभाग की भोगाजी तो उनकी लाइली बेटी हैं। इसके साथ ही वे सी.एस., सुमेय और मरे प्रताप्री हैं और हम सभी उनके अनुज हैं और इसीलिए अपनी कई बातें मनवाते हैं। इतना ही नहीं हम अनुज होने का पूरा-पूरा फायदा उठाते हैं।

अवस्थीजी छात्राओं और संस्था की सुरक्षा के लिए काफी गम्भीर रहते हैं। अनुसन्धान और साहित्य के साथ ही इस बारे में भी हमारे विचार एक समान हैं। आते-जाते हमारा सतत ध्यान बच्चों की गतिविधियों पर रहता है। खासकर उन दिनों में जब गणवेश अमल में नहीं था, अक्सर बाहरी गुण्डागर्दी करनेवाले लड़के महाविद्यालय में घुस आते थे। गणवेश के लिए हम सभी ने प्रबन्धन पर काफी दबाव डाला, इनमें देशमुख सर, चहान्दे मैडम, यशवन्त पाटिल सर, बागडे मैडम, मिश्रा मैडम और साथी प्राध्यापक भी शामिल थे। संभवतः प्रबन्धन को लगता था कि हमारे बच्चे गरीबी की वजह से गणवेश खरीद न पाएँ परंतु आए दिन कुछ न कुछ घटित होता रहता और कोई अनुचित घटना होने का हमें डर बना रहता। एक दिन मैं किसी काम से पर लौटा ही था कि चहान्दे मैडम ने मुझे फोन लगाया और कहा कम न. 102 में कुछ अर्बीब से लड़के लैपटॉप और सी.डी. लेकर बैठे हैं। मैं उल्टे पाँव महाविद्यालय लौटा और सीढ़ियों पर चढ़ते हुए अवस्थीजी को आवाज लगाई और अपने साथ आने को कहा। मेरा अन्दाज देखकर वे दौड़ पड़े। हम उस कम में पहुँचे- वे लड़के वहीं थे और वाकई मैं असामयिक तत्त्व थे। वे भागने की किराक में थे लेकिन हम दोनों ने उन लोगों को दरवाजे पर रोक लिया। हमने उनका सारा सामान जब्त किया और प्रिंसिपल को सूचना भेजी। प्रिंसिपल ने पुलिस को बुलवा लिया और पुलिस उन्हें पकड़ कर ले गई। कुछ सालों पहले विद्यार्थियों ने उनके बीच पड़ने वाले हमारे एक प्राध्यापक पर हाथ उठाया था। इसलिए कोई भी प्राध्यापक बच्चों के जिवाटों में पड़ना नहीं चाहता था लेकिन अवस्थीजी उनमें से नहीं हैं, इसलिए मुझे उनसे प्रेरणा और हिम्मत मिलती है। कुछ ही समय में ऐसी दो और घटनाएँ हुई इनमें बाहर के लड़के महाविद्यालय में घाए गए। इन घटनाओं में भी मैं और अवस्थीजी ने परिस्थिति को संभाला था। एक घटना में तो पूर्व प्राचार्य गान सर ने खुद हमारे पकड़े लड़के की खूब धुलाई की थी लेकिन प्रबन्धन गणवेश को लेकर गम्भीर नहीं था। क्रयम नाम का एक सीधा-साधा चिन्मय बच्चा बी.ए. प्रथम वर्ष में पढ़ता था। मैं उसकी कक्षा में अग्रोवी और अवस्थीजी हिन्दी साहित्य पढ़ाते थे। क्रयम के अनुसार अक्सर बाहर के कुछ लड़के उस कक्षा के बच्चों से मिलने आते रहते थे। एक बार उन्होंने कक्षा के किसी बच्चे के साथ झगड़ा शुरू किया। वेबजह उन्होंने क्रयम पर भी हाथ उठाया,



उसके प्रतिहार करने पर उसके सिर पर किसी चीज से मापा तो उसके सिर से खून बहने लगा था। किसी ने अवस्थीजी को सूचना दी, उन्होंने सबसे पहले पुष्टे आवाज लगाई और हम दोनों दौड़ पड़े। हमने सबसे पहले ऋषभ को प्राथमिक उपचार के लिए भेजा और उन लड़कों को दौड़ने लगे। सारे बच्चे इकट्ठा हो गए थे। अवस्थीजी आपसबूला हो चुके थे, जिस तरह उन्होंने दहाड़ लगाई थी, वे बदमास लड़के दुप दवा कर भाग गए। फिर उसी अवेश में हम और भी साधियों तथा बच्चों के साथ प्रिसिपल और वाइस प्रिसिपल के सामने गए और गणवेश के लिए अवस्थीजी ने मानो उनको अल्टीमेटम दे दिया था। प्रबन्धन को आखिरकार बात समझ आई और अगले ही सत्र से गणवेश महाविद्यालय में लागू किया गया।

खैर वे तो हमारे अपने बच्चे नहीं थे जो गुंडगर्दी करने महाविद्यालय पहुँचते थे। एक साल हमारे कुछ बच्चे भी किसी वजह से दो गुटों में बँट गए और उनमें किसी कारण रंजिश शुरू हो गई। दोनों गुट के लड़के अवस्थीजी का सम्मान करते थे। सर ने उनको काफी समझाया लेकिन एक दिन शाम में महाविद्यालय के बाहर उनके बीच अच्छी-खासी मार-पीट हो गई। दूसरे दिन सर ने उन्हें फिर समझाया। एक लड़का तो गुप्ती लेकर सर के कक्ष में पहुँचा और दूसरे पक्ष के लड़के को मार छलने की बात कहने लगा, उस वक्त मैं वहीं था। मामला हर हद पर कम चुका था लेकिन अवस्थीजी सुलझे हुए हैं। पहले तो उसे अपनी पूरी आग जलाने दिया बाद में जिस अन्दाज में अवस्थीजी ने उसको भावनात्मक तौर पर समझाया कि वह बच्चा रो पड़ा और मखिया में शांत रहने का सर को भरोसा दिलाया। दूसरे दिन सर ने दूसरे पक्ष का भी मत परिवर्तन किया और वह मामला सुलझ गया। चाकूधारी बच्चे की आज कायापालट चुकी है और वह निर्बिघ्न है। आज उसकी गणना पढ़ाई करने वाले होनहार विद्यार्थियों में होने लगी है। सर ने जिस प्यार और भावनात्मक तरीके से उन गुंडगर्दी करने वाले विद्यार्थियों को प्रेरणा देकर मत परिवर्तन कर उन्हें नीतिमत्तापूर्ण जीवन जीने के लिए प्रेरित किया तथा अपने जीवन में कुछ महत्त्वपूर्ण कार्य करने के लिए प्रोत्साहित भी किया, उससे उनकी सूझ-बूझ दिखती है। इस तरह के बच्चे होने के बावजूद वे उन्हें आपो बढ़ने की प्रेरणा देते हैं। ऐसे वक्त मुझे उन्हीं की कविता 'प्रेरणा' की पंक्तियाँ याद आती हैं- पर्वतों के संकीर्ण पथ से, अटकने-मटकने बिना रहे, नीचे आकर प्रशस्त पथ पर, बहने वाला झरना, हर हाल में, आपो बढ़ने, बढ़ते रहने, पीछे न मुड़ने की प्रेरणा देता है। ('प्रेरणा', इन्व्हेन पोज होते हैं- पृ.- 104)

महाविद्यालय में यदि कोई विशेष कार्यक्रम अथवा संगोष्ठी का आयोजन हो रहा है ऐसे कार्यक्रम का स्वरूप और उसके प्रबन्धन के लिए अवस्थीजी की सलाह जरूर ली जाती है। महत्त्वपूर्ण कार्यक्रमों के संचालन अथवा समारोहीय आभार प्रदर्शन

के लिए उन्हीं से आग्रह किया जाता है। वे मान भी जाते हैं, लेकिन इन दिनों औरों को भी यह मौके उपलब्ध बनने के लिए वे अक्सर मना भी करते हैं। कार्यक्रमों की कमेटियों में उनकी परदेदी कमेटी अगर कोई होती है तो अनुशासन कमेटी। सभी पर उनका प्यादा डर होने की वजह से सभी अपने कार्य के प्रति सज्ज रहते हैं। महाविद्यालय में कोई भी निर्णय लोकतांत्रिक तरीके से लिया जाना चाहिए, ऐसा उनका आग्रह रहता है। कभी-कभी प्राचार्य अथवा अन्य किसी को चन्द लोगों के बीच निर्णय लेना पड़ता है, ऐसे में उन्हें बुरा लगता है कि अन्य सहयोगियों को निर्णय प्रक्रिया का हिस्सा नहीं बनाया गया। कई मौकों पर वे फिर अपनी नाएजगी जताते हैं, ऐसे में वापस अवस्थीजी की नाएजगी को ध्यान में रखकर गणतांत्रिक पद्धति द्वारा उन्हीं निर्णयों को बदला जाता है। उनके इस आग्रह का अथवा स्वभाव का सकरात्मक प्रभाव नए शिक्षकों के ऊपर पड़ता है और उनकी कार्यपद्धति में आपूर्त परिवर्तन आने लगता है।

महाविद्यालय के विकास सम्बन्धी हर पहल में वे सबसे अग्रसर रहते हैं। कई महत्त्वपूर्ण जिम्मेदारियाँ वे स्वयं उठाते हैं। उनके सटीक सुझावों को महाविद्यालय की किसी भी परिषद में गंभीरता से लिया जाता है। उनके अनुभव और ज्ञान का उपयोग आई. ज्यू. ए. सी. के सह-समन्वयक तथा शिकायत निवारण समिति के समन्वयक के रूप में लगने समय तक महाविद्यालय को प्राप्त हुआ। नैक के तहत निर्धारित प्रकरणों के अमल का जिम्मा वे स्वयं ले लेते थे, इस वजह से हम पिछले नैक मूल्यांकन की प्रक्रिया में बेहतर प्रवास कर पाए। नैक मूल्यांकन जब करीब होता है तो अक्सर सम्भाओं में बाद-विवाद की स्थितियाँ निर्मित होने लगती हैं, ऐसे में वे स्ट्रक के सदस्यों को समझाते रहते हैं और उनका मनोबल बढ़ाने में महत्त्वपूर्ण भूमिका अदा करते हैं। सामान्यतया अगर किसी पर अन्याय हुआ है या गलत निर्णयों के चलते शिक्षकों में असंतोष फैलता है तब अन्य लोग प्रतिकार करने की हिम्मत नहीं जुटा पाते ऐसे में अवस्थीजी सम्भाओं में बोझिलक बोलते हैं और अपने साधियों का पुर्जोर साथ देते हैं। मुझमें भी ऐसी थोड़ी सी बेधड़क बोलने की आदत होने की वजह से और जलने-अनजलने में हम कई मुठों पर समान विचार रखते हैं, इसलिए भी वे मुझे पसन्द करते हैं, ऐसा मैं मानता हूँ। सम्भाओं में गलत शब्दों का उपयोग करनेवाले अथवा दूसरों को अपमानित करनेवाले व्यक्ति का वे कड़े शब्दों में विरोध करते हैं। फिर ऐसे में प्रबन्धन और प्राचार्य को भी नरम शब्दों में ही सही लेकिन उन्हें भी उनकी गलती दिखाने से वे नहीं चूकते। वे भारतीय संविधान जैसे कठोर एवं नरम (Rigid and Flexible) दोनों ही स्वभाव वाले दिखते हैं। कुछ मामलों में अगर उन्हें 'ना' है तो वह 'ना' एक पथर की लकौर है। अगर उनका मत परिवर्तन किसी भी परिस्थिति में नहीं कर सकते और अगर 'हाँ' है तो वे उस के साथ हर परिस्थिति में साथ होंगे



यह मानें उनके जीवन के नियम हैं।

महाविद्यालय में वे हर किसी के सुख-दुख के साथी हैं। चाहे खुशी के मौके हों या दुःख के, वे अपने साथी के साथ खड़े रहते हैं। कभी किसी से नाराजगी भी है, तो कठिन समय में वे उसके साथ खड़े रहकर उसकी हिम्मत बढ़ाते हैं। कई बार वे मुझसे कहते हैं कि हम इतने लम्बे समय तक अपने घर के लोगों के साथ नहीं रहते जितना कि हम महाविद्यालय में सहयोगियों के साथ रहते हैं। इसलिए महाविद्यालय को वे अपना खास परिवार मानते हैं। आनन्द और खुशी के मौके वे कभी नहीं छोड़ते। कभी-कभी हम प्राध्यापकों की सहायता (पिकनिक यात्रा) निकलती है। ऐसे में हम खूब मजे करते हैं और अवस्थीजी अपने अलग अन्दाज में दिखते हैं। मनोरंजन, हैसी-मजाक, किसी की टांग खींचना, किसी को उल्लू बनाना यह सब वे करते हैं। कभी वे बच्चे जैसा व्यवहार करते हैं। तालाब या डैम के पास तो उनकी गान सर के साथ पानी पर उछलते हुए पत्थर फेंकने की होड़ लगती थी तब हम सब इस प्रसंग का खूब तालुक उठाते थे। ऐसे समय महाविद्यालय के अवस्थीजी एकदम नए रूप में परिवर्तित दिखते हैं। जीवन जैसा कि शेरसपियर मानते हैं, सुख और दुःख का संगम है, अवस्थीजी भी अपनी कविता में कुछ ऐसे ही भाव व्यक्त करते हैं जो उनके स्वयं के जीवन से झलकता है- 'जीवन- एक समिश्रण, मुस्कानों की मिठास, और आँसुओं के खारेज का।' ('जीवन', इन्सहान रोज होते हैं, पृ. - 58)। इसलिए भी शायद वे सुख के क्षणों को खासकर अपने माथियों के संग बिताने से कभी नहीं चूकते।

मेरी उनसे निकटता की वजह सिर्फ साहित्यिक रूचि अथवा समान अवधारणाएँ नहीं हैं, सिर्फ इसीलिए वे मेरे भाता नहीं हैं। मुझे, उम्र में छोटा होने के बावजूद, जिस तरह का सम्मान और प्रोत्साहन देते हैं, छोटी से छोटी सफलता पर गले लगाते हैं, चुपके से अपनी सफलता साझा करते हैं, इससे शायद हम भावनात्मक स्तर पर जुड़ते हैं। कई मौकों पर महाविद्यालय की परिषद में मैं अपने स्पष्ट विचार रखता था, नया और तरुण होने की वजह से मेरे शब्द किसल जाते थे, लेकिन अवस्थीजी मेरे विचारों एवं सुझावों की गम्भीरता को समझते हुए हमेशा ही न केवल मेरा बचाव करते थे बल्कि उन्हीं सुझावों को दूसरे अन्दाज में सभा को समझाते थे। कई बार आपस में बात न होते हुए भी किसी विषय पर परिषद में अपनी बात रखते हैं अथवा किसी पर अन्याय हुआ है तो वैचारिक हमला बोलते हैं, संयोग से हमारी बातें समान होती हैं। मुझे हमेशा ही उनकी वजह से एक आश्रय मिलता है और महाविद्यालय में किसी भी कार्य के लिए मेरे मन में उनकी मौजूदगी में एक विशिष्ट सुरक्षा का भाव हमेशा बना रहता है।

मेरे बड़े विजित को वे बहुत पसन्द करते हैं। उसे वे 'टेटर' कह कर बुलाते

हैं। एक बार हम सी.एस. पाटिल के पुत्र आर्य के जन्म दिन के कार्यक्रम में इकट्ठा हुए थे। उन्होंने विजित से कहा कि 'तुमको गोद में लेकर खींचा फोटो (पाँच साल पहले का) आज भी मेरे पास है।' विजित बहुत खुश हुआ, उन्होंने उसके साथ फिर कुछ सेल्फी ली। मेरी सहचरिणी निधि (उसे वे बहू संबोधित करते हैं) के महाविद्यालय में अंतर्महाविद्यालयीन वाद-विवाद स्पर्धा के लिए भी वे कुछ साल पहले जब के रूप में सम्मिलित हुए थे। हुआ यह था कि स्पर्धा का विषय कुछ ऐसा था कि निधि को ज़रा नहीं मिल पड़े थे। उस विषय पर अवस्थीजी की पकड़ थी। अवस्थीजी से मेरे उनकी बहू की दुविधा बताई और वे मान गए थे। हालाँकि वे शहर की स्पर्धाओं में नहीं जाते हैं क्योंकि अक्सर उनमें हमारे बच्चे भी सम्मिलित होते हैं। मेरी निद्रिया धिती जब आई और किसी कारणवश वे उसके नामकरण में सम्मिलित नहीं हो पाए थे, लेकिन कुछ ही दिनों बाद वे भाभीजी को लेकर घर आए थे। दोनों बच्चों को उन्होंने खूब प्यार किया। एक दिन उन्होंने हम भाइयों से भाभीजी के हाथ से बने दाल-चावल के स्वाद के बारे में बताया था। कुछ दिनों तक सुमेय ने उन्हें चिढ़ाया भी था। सर ने हमें कई बार न्योता भी दिया था, लेकिन हम सब इकट्ठा जा नहीं पा रहे थे। फिर एक दिन सी.एस., मैं और सुमेय उनके घर पहुँच गए और भाभीजी ने हम सब को दाल-चावल और पूरा खाना खिलाया। भाभीजी ने हमें उनकी कुछ रेसपी भी बताई। हम चारों भाइयों ने उनके घर पहली बार सुकून के साथ खाने के बहाने एक अलग और यादगार दिन बिताया, खूब बातें कीं। उन्होंने पुनर्निर्मित अपने घर को पूरा दिखाया। इसमें भी अपने कला-सौन्दर्य और उपयोगिता की समझ का उन्होंने पूरा-पूरा उपयोग किया है, ऐसा स्पष्ट रूप से दिखता है। उस दिन जिस समाधान के भाव को अवस्थीजी के चेहरे पर देखा था, तब मुझे यकीन हो गया कि मित्रता और प्यार को उन जैसा और कोई नहीं निभा सकता।

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# सुवर्णमहोत्सव

(१९६८-२०१८)



पीपल्स वेलफेअर सोसायटी, नागपूर

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## प्रज्ञा-पथ



## English Section

### INDEX

1) In Restrospect: Jewel in the Crown	- Dr. Pranoti Chukerbutty	92
2) Mind Pops	- Dr. Urmila Dabir	95
3) Kaleidoscope	- Dr. Shubha Mishra	97
4) Reminiscence of PWS College	- Dr. Ajay Joseph	99
5) Dr. Madhukarrao Wasnik: A Visionary Ambedkarite Politician and Educationist	- Dr. Sudesh Bhowate	101
6) Dr. Madhukarrao Wasnik P.W.S.Arts and Commerce College - A Mile Stone in the journey of My Life...	- Mr. Amol Mendhe	108
7) A Story of the Blooming Bud to a Flower	- Divyadeep Kaur Arora	111
8) My Alma Mater : The Fountain Head of	- Nilesh Nandanwar	113
9) My Academic Nurturance	- Sanket Motghare	114
10) Education	- Prem Nandanwar	116
11) Life at College		





## Dr. Madhukarrao Wasnik: A Visionary Ambedkarite Politician and Educationist

Dr. Sudesh Bhowate

Post Ambedkar dalit leadership is often questioned for their contribution to the development of society. It was such a time when leaders were engaged in baking their cakes on political hearth. There are a very few who were consistently engaged in the social cause through their contribution in terms of socio-cultural and educational development. Dr. Ambedkar himself found education as the key to all round development of the community; therefore, through his Bahishkrut Hitkarani Sabha he established schools and hostel for the backward communities in 1920s-30s and brought a massive educational awakening. Later he found People's Education Society for Higher Educational Development. But After Dr. Ambedkar focusing on the educational development of the community was never been the priority to the leaders.

From the beginning support from Nagpur and Vidarbha put a great impetus to the Ambedkar movement. Many meetings of scheduled caste federations were held in Indora where Dr. Ambedkar himself had participated number of times. Such an area like North Nagpur from where a large number of supporter and activists participated in Ambedkar movement was later remained ignored by post Ambedkar leadership. Dr. Madhukarrao Wasnik unlike other leaders while doing his medical practice in Indora Nagpur grieved with the pathetic conditions of people with higher education. The beginning of P.W.S. College by him in Indora was a great revolution in late 1960s. The institution not only fulfilled the educational need of the people but also brought a ray of hope to weaker section of society majority of which were dalits, OBCs, Muslims and Tribal for having a dreamy career through public and private sector employment.

In the leadership of Dr. Madhukarrao Wasnik teachers and employee of the institution

initiated many projects directly helping the needy and brought all round social awakening. In the later period Dr. Wasnik when he was engaged with his active role in Republican Party of India under the leadership of Barrister Rajabhai Khobragade and later when he joined congress he never had shifted his attention from this institution. Also From the beginning Dr. Wasnik concentrated on the youth from dalit community for their skill based development because these were the future pillars of the community. Indian Institute of Youth Welfare (IIYW) is one of such project where he initiated an organized vocational training for the youth of the region, especially for girls. His contribution in educational field comes as another feather in the cap 'Indira Gandhi Arts and Commerce College', in rural area like Kalmeshwar in 1984. During last 50 years these institutions under the leadership of Dr. Wasnik has made a significant contribution in the higher educational development of the backward communities of suburban and rural part of Nagpur.

The life of Dr. Madhukarrao Wasnik is full of struggle and hardships. It is highly inspiring to the present generation who might found themselves be trapped between personal and political career. Dr. Wasnik enjoys his loved Medical Profession as well as his involvement in Political sphere to continue the works of Dr. Ambedkar. The achievements and opportunities in medical academics and politics come in his way through hardship only and there was no looking back. On occasion of 50 years of P.W.S. Arts and Commerce College which is now extended with his own name, the brief life sketch of Dr. Madhukarrao Wasnik would certainly be motivating and inspirational to students and youth of the present generation.





### Hardships and Struggle of Family:

Dr. Madhukarrao Wasnik was born on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1935 in Ganeshpur (Bhandara) at scheduled caste matriculated Bidi Kamgar father's home. The name of father was Shyamrao Thunaji Wasnik and mother's name was Kamalabai. He was also raised in the family of freedom fighters. One of his Cousins Late Kamal Wasnik becomes martyr during Quit India Movement in 1942. Another Cousins late Premnath Wasnik was involved in the Goa Liberation movement and later elected as the MLA. Therefore, patriotism and social work was naturally inculcated in him from the childhood. It was the time when education was not easily available to backward communities in village. As his father understood the importance of education to overcome from poverty due to Dr. Ambedkar's movements, so he directed his children on the path of academics. Unfortunately Madhukarrao was 14 only when he lost such a visionary father and left the responsibility of three bright children on his mother Kamalabai's shoulders. Fatherless Madhukarrao's childhood passed through many hardships due to poor and pitiable condition of the family, but his mother took all care for her children's studies so that they might not go away from education. To support his education in the year 1954 he started working in Mahar Regimental Centre, Sagar (M.P.) for few months. His Mother always told her son that he must educate himself and become a doctor and eventually serve the have-nots. Madhukarrao passed his inter from Govt. Science College, Nagpur and took admission in Govt. medical College, Nagpur which he completed in 1960 and later passed DCH in 1965.

### Career in Medicine and a Devoted Physician:

Due to driving forces from his family background he turned toward medical education for social service. When the famous freedom fighter late Shri Marpakwarji opened a school in

Lashkaribag Nagpur, Madhukarrao who was a student of MBBS, he started teaching in a school out of the inner urge to do something for the community. After completing his MBBS he started his medical practice at four centres in Indora, Sadar, Gaddigodam and Ambedkar Marg the then known as slum areas. These centres were overly crowded with patients from morning till late night. He charged a very meager fee for his poor patients. Many a times these patients had nothing to pay but Dr. Wasnik gave them treatment and medicine. Sometimes he carried critical patients to medical college in his own vehicle personally. Due to such a nature, within a short span of time he became the leading practitioner in Nagpur. His sincere remorse for his patients who came from very poor backgrounds became the key to his popularity. Being a Pediatrician he organized many health camps for children. With the growth of his popularity he became the first doctor to start a multispecialty clinic in North- Nagpur in 1970s which was inaugurated by Ex Union Minister Late Babu Jgajivanram and Ex. Home Minister of M.S. Late Shri, Balasaheb Desai. To take care of daily wage earners and Molkarin's (A domestic help) kids he started Balvihars in Indora. Also he started Sutikagruha (maternity home) for women in 1971.

### Education as a Key to the development of Backward Communities:

North Nagpur was earlier known as very backward and surrounded by slums. Workers of Model Mill and Empress Mill who migrated from the far and the surrounding Districts were living here in huts and make shift shades. Except Municipal Corporation School no educational institutions were available here. Therefore, Students from these areas were struggling to get higher education due to unavailability of Higher Educational Institutions. Students had to walk 8-10 km to attend colleges in 1960s. Hundreds of his patients had narrated to Dr. Wasnik their children's





troubles in getting education. Especially travelling to attend distant college for girls in those days was not safe. Dr. Wasnik was the first social worker who understood people's troubles at that time. Being a hard core follower of Dr. Babsaheb Ambedkar whom he personally met in 1954 in Bhandara, he understood the importance of education for the progress and development of the backward communities. He himself acquired degrees in Humanities and in Law apart from his medical is indicative of his personal love for knowledge and studies. Also during his practice he comes in contact with Education Minister Madhukar Chaudhary and later long association with him had a strong influence on Dr. Wasnik. Chudhariji also insisted him to open school or college to help these poor people. Dr. Wasnik without delay established People's Welfare Society's in 1967 and it's Arts & Commerce College in 1968 in Indora to promote higher education and self-dignity among them. His close friends like Dr. R.R. Bhole, Shri. Balaraj Aher, Dr. Sankale, and Shri. Wamanrao Gedam supported him for the establishment of the college. After his medical practices and presently his initiation of higher educational institute in the area, North Nagpur becomes his Karmabhoomi. It is a matter of fact that P.W.S. Arts and Commerce College established on the piece of land which he bought for opening a Multi-specialty Hospital of its own type in Vidarbha region. The urgency of the college for his brethren made him stay in rented house when the college began functioning on his personal land. For him no happiness was bigger than watching his own dream of PWS College was redeemed in his own land.

In the college Subjects like Pali Prakrit and Dr. Ambedkar Thought for UG besides other traditional courses were introduced which received a massive response from students. The college gives topper in these subjects in the University almost every year. The college also has the biggest PG department in the university,

running as many as 10 PG Courses. An accredited B+ by NAAC PWS College till the date produces more than 50,000 Graduates and Post Graduate in Arts and Commerce with well placed alumni. Under the able guidance of Dr. Wasnik PWS College becomes the Centre of Community Services in the region. During seventies and eighties Dr. Wasnik asked his teaching staff to survey the slums and nearby villages. Teachers after teaching hours met back Kamgar and daily wage labours families; hear their problems and eventually tried to solve them they also encouraged them to send their children to schools.

Till 1980s he had seen the troubles and difficulties of rural students who come to city for higher education. Problems of accommodation or transportation made these students leave their education in the middle. Many of his close associate in social works hails from rural areas like Kalmeshwar insisted him to take care of these rural students as well. It's very surprising fact that this area was known for the very powerful leaders, none of them bothered to look into the educational development of the area. Therefore, Dr. Wasnik established one more Senior College in Kalmeshwar, 17 KM from Nagpur. A die hart Congress man he opened this college in the year 1984 after the name of Late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in her memory. This college is also running courses for Graduation and Post Graduation. Besides these two senior colleges Dr. Wasnik inspired many of his close associates for opening educational institutions for the Backward and Minority Communities in Nashik, Bhandara, Gondia, Gadchiroli and Chandrapur Districts. He personally visited the places and provided necessary help in this regard. Dr. Wasnik's intention was to spread education equally to all with the intension of pay back to the society.

### **Second Generation Ambedkarite Leadership in Politics and Academics:**

Dr. Wasnik's practice in medicine and his





works in the field of education won the hearts of people in Vidarbha in 1960s. While in practice only Dr. Wasnik's association with Republican Students Federation brought him close to Barrister Rajabhau Khobragade. Due to such popularity in Indora, Gaddigodam and surrounding rural areas, Barrister Khobragade and Adv. Sakharan Meshram insisted him that he should contest the NMC elections. Due to his social worker's bent initially he hesitated on such offer. But very soon he realized that he could help poor people in area like Indora as member of NMC. He agreed to contest NMC election. Great leadership qualities and his abilities through social work were the key factors in winning the NMC election in 1968 against Ex-MLA and Mayor of Nagpur Dr. D. P. Meshram. A big name in State politics. Also he elected as the chairman of standing Committee in 1971. Due to his association with Dr. Rajabhau Khobragade and as he himself was from bidi Kamagars family he had seen the problems of men in this work, he took interest in the issues of Bidi Kamagar. He joined Bidi Kamagar Sangh. He involved personally in many agitations organized during those days for the rights of these workers. He becomes the Vice-President of RPI during the tenure of Dr. Khobragade as President. He also became the organizer of Bidi Kamagar of Nagpur, Bhandara and Chandrapur districts and fight for their rights. He had to go to remote areas to meet these workers on the cost of his own earnings from his clinics without any regrets.

Dr. Wasnik was a very conscious person for protecting rights of backward communities. Many posts in medical college Nagpur had no reservations for people from these communities. Dr. Wasnik was instrumental in getting reservation in different faculties in Medical College for the post of House Officer and Registrar for which he ceaselessly fought with the state government in 1963. In North Nagpur, a majority of Muslim and backward communities

get easy medical treatment and medicines with minimum charges in Indira Gandhi Medical College (Mayo). In 1971, this Medical College was on the verge of closure due to ruling and opponent parties during his tenure as Chairman of Stranding Committee in NMC. His fighting spirit for common men seen when, he fought tooth and nail to save IGMC from closure. His efforts are still acknowledged by IGMC. He was also instrumental in reopening of Post Graduate courses in IGMC which were closed down earlier.

Dr. Wasnik surprised all the established politician of the time on national level when he becomes Dean of Medical Faculty of Nagpur University by defeating Ex. Union Health Minister and founder Director of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences, Sevagram Dr. Sushila Nayar in 1974. Dr. Nayar was known for her association with Mahatma Gandhi and high respect as national leader. Election of Dean of Medical College was very crucial one. It was of his identity through social works he created and Great social worker Baba Amte and others had supported him for this election, he defeated Dr. Nayar with huge margin. Later when he met Late PM Indira Gandhi, she was pleased to hear that news. Another sensational achievement occurred during this time that he become the Member of Management Committee of the Nagpur university by defeating another heavy personality in the field of Medicine Dr. Rajani Rai who was later became the Governor of Pondichery in the BJP government (1998-2003). Due to these important win in such a prestigious elections Dr. Wasnik become the iconic personality in Medical College and in the Nagpur University. Soon one more achievement he bagged in 1975-76 when he elected as the Senate member and also elected as Member of Executive Council of Nagpur University. He was also become the Vice President of the Academy of Medical Sciences an important academic association in the field of medicine. These were the achievements and





academic records for which his name was among the probable candidates for the Vice Chancellorship of Nagpur University.

Being a popular Pediatrician, Dr. Wasnik had foreseen the wider scope of the branch like Pediatrics. But earlier Pediatrics was the part of the medicine faculty. A specialized study of this field was the need of the hour but none had shown any movement in this regard. He was constantly in touch with renowned Pediatrician in the country Prof. Dr. A.M. Sur in this connection. As Dean in the Faculty of Medicine he prepared a draft along with specialized Professors and getting it passed in the University Board of Studies in 1974. In this way Discipline of Pediatrics separated from Medicine, due to which Nagpur University becomes first in the nation to have a Special Discipline of Pediatrics. This seminal contribution of Dr. Wasnik was publically acknowledged by All India Pediatrics Association in its National Conference.

It was the time when upper caste doctors only had monopoly in university politics and members from backward community were sidelined. Therefore, Dr. Wasnik's success in prestigious University elections made him hero among Doctors from marginalized and minority communities. Also Members from backward communities always need felt of one organization which could help them for protecting their rights and provide a united force for fighting against injustice. Dr. Wasnik took initiatives in this regard and gathers these doctors under the banner of Dr. Ambedkar Medicos Association in 1976-77. A loved leader Dr. Wasnik becomes the founder President of the organization which is still working on wider perspectives as National level. He was also associated with Giants International the famous organization. Due to his caliber as leader he was elected as the President of the Organization. He was also became the President of Nagpur Unity Centre, devoted for the cause of National Integration.

In the early 1960s Late Babu Jagjivanram and Balasaheb Desai proposed he to join Congress but Dr. Wasnik refused initially due to his attachment with RPI, especially with Barrister Rajabhai Khobragade. But he witnessed the split of RPI at the residence of Dadasaheb Gaikwad in Nashik and frustrated with the selfish motifs of RPI leaders. Utterly disappointed with this incidence he then joined Congress after few years to continue his social work through a National Party. With his works and devotions to the social cause within a few years he became a pioneer Dalit leader in creating Congress Party platform in North Nagpur which is earlier known as hard core RPI forte. It was the time when no Congressman could dare enter in North Nagpur due to people's intense emotional feelings for their messiah Dr. Ambedkar. Because of his popular medical practice, his wide contacts among Poor, Backward people and Minorities and his selfless works in social causes Dr. Wasnik was the first Congress Party worker who convinced people and make Congress Party popular among them. His influence on local workers and leader on the basis of trust he created for Party work, he was made Vice-President of Congress Nagpur in 1975 the crucial year of emergency and also he was made General Secretary of MPCC (I) in 1980 by late Ms. Indira Gandhi. It was this time when many hard core Congress leaders were leaving Party and joined BJP and other independent parties. Dr. Wasnik had a great belief in the leadership of Iron Lady Late PM Indira Gandhi. He was also known for his close association with Late Rajivji Gandhi. Under the great affection for Rajivji Gandhi he organised three medical camps in 14 blocks of Amethi Loksabha Constituency in 1981-83 where he facilitated three teams of doctors from Nagpur.

As a leader of grassroots, Dr. Wasnik's has been associated with Congress for more than 50 years now with his devotion to the social cause through party leadership, but In spite of his hardships and devotions he remained the unsung





hero of the Party from Vidarbha who was intently sidelined every time by the West Maharashtra leadership on the basis of Caste. In spite of his selfless efforts for party every time MLA seat was given to RPI candidates under coalition which they lost many a times. Under the leadership of Late Rajivji Gandhi, the first national leader who recognized Dr. Wasnik's efforts for party in Vidarbha region and recommended him for MLC seat (1990-96) as Governor's nominee in the social worker's category. In this way Dr. Wasnik's 50 years of Party work was recognized for these Six years that too as under Governor's nominee.

As he was known for, he utilized this opportunity for the maximum. As an MLC, he was a very active and vocal member of the house, pioneer in fighting against the corrupt practices, corrupt officials, particularly in the interest of common and for public cause. It was a record that he raised more than 1900 questions in Vidhan Parishad. As an MLC Dr. Wasnik was one of the pioneers who raised his voice in Vidhan Parishad for a separate Medical University in the state during 1993-94. He fought single handedly for the same. He wanted the University to be in Nagpur. Political maneuvering and meanwhile due to change in government eventually took it to Nashik (1995), but all concerned still acknowledge Dr. Wasnik's initiative. He was also instrumental in drafting Maharashtra University Act, 1994. Due to his efforts only ICCU unit and labour room opened in IGMU Nagpur. A very significant role he played in Vidhan Parishad when he brought in light Dal Ghotala. Due to his arguments in the assembly ruling party leaders become speechless. A National Daily Lokmat declared him "The Hero of the Day" for such efforts.

### **Supporting the Wildfire: the literature of Marginalized**

Dr. Wasnik's contribution in supporting Dalit literary and cultural movement in Maharashtra is noteworthy. Dalit literature is the

literature of marginalized people in the nation. This important medium is instrumental in connecting all dalit communities in the nation for raising their voice against socio-cultural injustice and their protest against unjust system in the name of caste. For more than a decade dalit writers were thinking of creating a platform for them but needed all round help. Famous thinker Dr. M. N. Wankhede was the friend of His, time to time he talked to Dr. Wasnik for a supporting hand in developing a platform for dalit writers. Dr. Wasnik come forward with helping hand by facilitating a team of P.W.S. Arts and Commerce College, Nagpur and its building for organizing First significant Akhil Bharatiya Dalit Sahitya Sammelana on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> January 1976. Emergency was just over then. Therefore, in such a condition it was quite a difficult to gather people from all over the country in one place. He was made Chairman of Reception Committee of the Sammelana. He personally involved in drafting a plan to make the event successful. In the Sammelana Baburao Bagul grace the occasion as the inaugurator and Dr. M. N. Wankhede Chaired the Sammelana. The event was grand success in preparing a ground for dalit literary and cultural movement in the state. Dr. Wasnik's image as social worker and as a grass root level worker of the congress party helps in organising event smoothly. Therefore his contribution is still remembered by all the dalit writers who saw the involvement of Dr. Wasnik in First All India Dalit Sahitya Sammelana. He also edited the Magazine "Nikay" devoted to dalit writing.

**Commitment to the Society:** foundation of IYW Dr. Wasnik is deeply involved in the social services and social work throughout the life. His approach has always been remained systematic and scientific and his focus is on the upliftment of suppressed, oppressed and under privileged communities. Therefore, due to his engagement and involvement in social services Dr. Wasnik established The Indian Institute of Youth Welfare,





Nagpur in 1973 which is a Non-profit Voluntary Agency dedicated to work among the under privileged slum, rural and tribal communities especially focusing on issues relating to youth welfare, child welfare, promoting women development and organizing communities for integrated development. Dr. Madhukarrao Wasnik is the founder President of IYW and his close colleague Shri. Manohar Golpelwar, a well known social worker is the secretary of the institute. Shri. Golpelwarji previously was the Director of International Youth Centre, Chanakyapuri. He was called by Dr. Wasnik to work with him in this seminal work.

The biggest strength of the nation today is its youth. But due to issues like caste, creed and economically poor condition, a large number of the youths are not in main stream yet. A nationwide programme focusing all round development of youth was needed so that this youth could contribute to the growth of the nation. IYW is the leading organisation for youth and social work in Western India. The institute believes that the young people, their benefactors and others engaged in the work of growing process of social change and development play a very important role in shaping the society as well as empowering youth on preciousness of life is essential for sustaining a community's life with dignity. Vision building, empowerment and team work are essential to address the mortality, morbidity child protection and extinction, and therefore the institute attempts to plan and organized several need based programmes/projects and training courses. The institute has branches in Chandrapur, Gadchiroli, Ralegaon, Lonara and Tamia (M.P.)

While planning and implementing activities, institute takes care that activities identified should be based on the felt need of the communities with whom the institute works. At the same time institute takes care that the activities

identified and implemented should also facilitate a process of accomplishing the goals and objectives of the institute. Therefore, efforts are always made to match the needs of the community and objectives of the institute. The institute intends to initiate a process of self sustained, self reliant process of development in the communities for accomplishing this people and community's needs to be empowered and get organised. With this approach and strategies institute is engaged in various activities under the leadership and guidance of Dr. Wasnik.

#### **Efforts for the Dream of Vidarbha State:**

From the beginning Dr. Wasnik has been supporting the demand of separate Vidarbha in the light of a thought that small states develops rapidly with equal representations to maximum. Even Dr. Ambedkar favoured the 3/4 small states within Maharashtra for the all round development. The demand of separate Vidarbha was quite an old but statesman and leaders especially from the West Maharashtra opposed this separation. Many Commissions already gave their reports favouring the separate Vidarbha. Dr. Wasnik time to time pursues the matter to the Central leadership of Congress and later before other ruling Parties but once elections in State and Centre are over the demand left behind.

Dr. Wasnik always stands with the leaders of grassroots of the Vidarbha agitating always for the rightful demand. During his MLC tenure he fought tooth and nail to bring every possible facilities and developmental plans for the Vidarbha. Through his speeches in Vidhan Parishad he drew attention of the house towards the negligence of State towards Vidarbha in terms of meager development in irrigation for agriculture, creation of employment, creation of small and large scale industries, importance of Statutory Development Board for the Vidarbha, improvement in Health Services and requirement of more number of doctors for rural Vidarbha,



parmanenet of secretariat based at Nagpur etc. From his speeches given in Vidhan Parishad one can easily guess his urgency of justice to the people of Vidarbha. He raised his voice loudly for separate Vidarbha from inside the house and from the road along with his fellow friends. When agitations for separate Telangana State were intense in A.P. in 2012-13 at the same time the entire local leaders came on the road with their demand of separate Vidarbha, Dr. Wasnik was stand with the hardcore leadership with firm attitude. Coincidentally Telangana won the battle but unfortunately Vidarbha's demand delayed one more time. It brought a great frustration to all Vidarbhaite leaders who are fighting for years, but Dr. Wasnik though hurt this time but is still looking forward to the near future favouring the dream of Vidarbha.

**A Leader of Unparallel Caliber and a down to the earth person:**

Dr. Wasnik is loved and revered in his friend circle and amongst his followers. On his birth day on 23<sup>rd</sup> January every year queues of his well-wishers gathered from morning till the evening in his home at Shivaji Nagar. Presently the veteran leader is away from the active politics yet his associates and friends meet him like earlier. He still shares his memories and good moments of his life with all of his old friends. People still found in

him a guide and a mentor politician for their backward community. Even at such a ripened age he expresses his opinion boldly and fearlessly on the present situation in the country. His every speech especially on Independence and Republic days given in P.W.S. College are always equipped with his concern for his brethren and the country. His encouragements to teachers and students provide an impetus to them towards the notion of pay back to society through our work of teaching learning. After the program he would always call many of the teaching and non-teaching staff and would enquire personally about the family and the progress of the institute. He would always ask them to take care of the institute which he built with hardships. Such a man of rare quality Dr. Wasnik, I wish live long, healthy and happy. Also I congratulate him for the achievement of his nurtured PWS which is celebrating its Golden Jubilee!

Bhavatu Sabba Mangalam!

Bio Note : Dr. Sudesh M. B. Bhowate is Asst. Professor & Head Department of English Dr. Madhukarrao Wasnik P.W.S. Arts and Commerce College, Nagpur-26. He is also the IQAC Coordinator of the college.  
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**COVID-19 Pandemic Special**

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# Perspectives

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## INDEX

S. No.	Title of Research Paper	Author	Page No.
1	Indian Agriculture- Challenges And Opportunities During & After Covid19 Pandemic	Mr. Ajinkya G. Deshpande	1-9
2	Challenges and Reformative Measures for Higher Education in India- Post Lockdown Period	Mr. Govindaraja A.Bhatta	10-15
3	Opportunities And Challenges For Overall Development Post Corona Virus Pandemic	Dr. Anand T Chahande	16-22
4	Fight Against Corona Virus (Covid-19) Pandemic: Current Status Of India	Dr. Yeshvant Patil	23-26
5	The Study Of Impact Of Corona On Cricket	Dr. G. Ramchandra Rao	27-33
6	Yoga- The Best Hobby of Relaxation	Dr. Arunabha Ray	34-38
7	Anxiety and Aggression among Sportspersons and Non-Sportspersons with different Socio-Economic Status	Dr. MS. Manda Thengne Dr. Arvind P. Joshi	39-44
8	Corona Virus: Pandemic Disease	Dr. Nirajsingh F. Yadav	45-50
9	Corona Virus (Covid-19) Pandemic: Need Of Social Distancing	Dr. Kiran Yeshwant Patil	51-53
10	Post Corona Pandemic Challenges in Schools for Physical Education Teachers	Miss Neha Dubey	54-62
11	Understanding The Role Of Yoga In Covid-19 Pandemic :A Systematic Approach	DR. O. P. Aneja	63-66
12	Corona Virus Pandemic: Ways Of Social Change	Dr. S. H. Shakya	67-71
13	Maintaining Physical Fitness In Covid-19 Pandemic Period: A Prespective	Dr. Raju Dayaram Chawake	72-74
14	Effects Of Corona Virus Pandemic On Spheres On Life And Recoveries, Solutions	Mr. Anil Nahate	75-78
15	The Corona War Of India	Dr. Yagya Singh	79-80
16	Extension Services Initiatives by HEIs in Covid-19 Pandemic: Redefining Roles of Academic Wings	Dr. Sudesh B. Bhowate	81-90

## Extension Services Initiatives by HEIs in Covid-19 Pandemic: Redefining Roles of Academic Wings

Dr. Sudesh B. Bhowate

### Abstract:

During prolonged Lockdown due to Covid 19 pandemic; active life in every spheres of life comes to a standstill, so also our higher educational activities. During last few months' people from every strata of society come forward with every kind of help to the needy. Providing food, masks, temporary shelter homes, medical aids to needy, care of old people, etc are undertaken by most of us. Some organizations and NGOs are continuously working along with the Covid warrior and government agencies. Awareness programmes and structured helps are provided by the state as well as government at the centre. During lockdown many colleges and schools become shelter homes for migratory labourers and some of the teachers and students responded to the call of government to participate in the social services. The work undertaken by these teachers and students are obviously valuable, yet we as academia can redefine our role with the given limitations by UGC and NAAC. In the light of social extension services in general and Covid 19 pandemic in particular this paper is exploring the possibilities of redefining our (academics) role in the welfare of society and to the needy. The nature of the paper is to ponder over the extension works with respect to the guidelines laid down by Government, UGC and NAAC for higher educational institutions and also exploring the possibilities to be undertaken by HEIs in the pandemic and during natural calamities.

**Key Words:** HEIs, Extension services, UGC guidelines, NAAC, NSS, NCC, Extension services, Spanish flu, Covid-19, disaster Management, natural calamities, awareness programmes, promotions of Govt programmes and projects for social welfare, etc.

### Introduction:

Life teaches us lessons in different situations, sometimes survival becomes so much difficult that in spite of everything we have life drifts from us. A situation like outbreak of some disease makes life terrible everywhere, but more we suffer due to locked situation without life sustaining things than the disease. Joblessness, starvation, hunger, migration on foot, stranded somewhere on the mercy of social workers, and the list goes on for the situation we are facing in our country and people around the world due to Covid 19 pandemic. We hear



many narratives of tragic incidents around the world of the situation but also we should appreciate the responses of human being around the world to save the situation. The way people are coming forward with every possible aids and help to a fellow brother is highly commendable. Along with government many NGOs are working day and night to provide every possible help to people as a covid warriors. We should not forget the sacrifices given by the doctors, nurses, Police, sanitary workers and medical people while serving the covid patients, police, social workers who caught up with the disease while helping the people to control the situation and lost their life. Much appreciable work is going on with many organized and unorganized organizations towards the welfare of people and donations, etc. some colleges and especially some wings like NSS and NCC are working along with its dared volunteers. Works at college level is seems to be limited to a certain level like awareness campaign, generating donations for food and cloths and distribute to the needy etc, but when we look at the natural calamities occurred earlier and previous pandemic some innovative ideas were brought into practice by academic institutions which are noteworthy and paved a way for future. Academic institutions have many guidelines laid down by government and regulatory bodies for certain wings for its better implementation with set objectives. When we look at those objectives and philosophy for the certain academic wing we automatically get some ideas to work in a structured way.

### **Understanding the core Philosophy of NSS and NCC:**

Since the independence, Government brings various programme for the academic institution in the light of inculcating nationalism, social responsibilities, for grooming the future leaders and students' practical learning in the social environ, etc. The philosophy of such learning passed in our parliament or state assembly takes shape in certain programme and projects like NSS, NCC, Scouts & Guides and many such programme through small committees like women's cell, extension cell, Needy fund, opportunity cell etc. sometime special directives are communicated to the institution by Universities under the guidance of government. In the quality enhancement initiatives by the HEIs laid down by NAAC, extension services comprised a significant score to earn. "The role of HEIs is significant in human resource development and capacity building of individuals, to cater to the needs of the economy, society and the country as a whole, thereby, contributing to the development of the Nation. Serving the cause of social justice, ensuring equity and increasing access to higher education are a few ways by which HEIs can contribute to the national development". (NAAC Manual for institution accreditation, 2018: 6) Therefore, extension services through its natural wings are in vogue in the HEIs which takes extension projects seriously. It has been noted that the participation in every initiatives through such



extension services are huge from students. Irrespective of gender students are always ready to undertake any adventure in the interest of society.

National Service Scheme (NSS) took shape from the ideas and philosophy of Mahatma Gandhiji who wished students are to be trained in HEIs for the higher goal towards the welfare of society. According to him, "the first duty of the students should be, not to treat their period of study as one of the opportunities for indulgence in intellectual luxury, but for preparing themselves for final dedication in the service of those who provided the sinews of the nation with the national goods & services so essential to society. Advising them to form a living contact with the community in whose midst their institution is located". He suggested that instead of undertaking academic research about economic and social disability, the students should do "something positive so that the life of the villagers might be raised to a higher material and moral level".(NSS official Website) From this ideas of the father of nation NSS take a motto "Not me but you". Students should learn this philosophy of dedication for the fellow brothers and sisters and obviously needy in every respect. As NSS maintain, "The cardinal principle of the programme is that it is organised by the students themselves and both students and teachers through their combined participation in social service, get a sense of involvement in the tasks of national development".(NSS official Website) The programme is certainly a joint effort by students and teachers therefore, a great expectation is relies from the dedicated teachers who are joining such projects. A trained teacher in such a programme is capable of undertaking positive projects for students to implement for the end objective. The objectives laid down NSS which are given in its official website for the universities and colleges are itself cleared enough to understand and to think for our work area.

1. "Understand the community in which they work
2. Understand themselves in relation to their community
3. Identify the needs and problems of the community and involve them in problem-solving
4. Develop among themselves a sense of social and civic responsibility
5. Utilize their knowledge in finding practical solutions to individual and community problems
6. Develop competence required for group-living and sharing of responsibilities
7. Gain skills in mobilizing community participation
8. Acquire leadership qualities and democratic attitudes
9. Develop capacity to meet emergencies and natural disasters and
10. Practice national integration and social harmony" (NSS official Website)



These objectives speak about the students' training and grooming for the social causes and while learning their exposure to the social work and dedication to the country. The objective number nine speaks about students' skills in meeting with any disaster management. We need to understand the role of students in natural calamities and such situation are expected. Therefore, a positive programme during natural calamities and outbreak like situation is naturally expected from the extension wings of HEIs. Students' participation in the extension services in pandemic like situations is highly expected.

Besides NSS, NCC is another programme is given to the universities and HEIs. Though it is expected that the cadets of NCC to be trained for the military requirements of the country but at the same time the wing is allied to the social causes and extension services within the HEIs. The role of cadet for social services is highly expected. "The 'Aims' of the NCC laid out in 1988 have stood the test of time and continue to meet the requirements expected of it in the current socio-economic scenario of the country". (National Cadet Corps official website, 2020) The motto of National Cadet Corps (NCC) is "Unity and Discipline" which is indicative of the expected role of the cadets for the national integrity. As per the philosophy laid down for NCC, it is a continuous evolving organization where cadets are given exposure to the social cause and collaborative learning projects with Government and non-government organizations. The core values maintained in the official website of NCC are indicative of the work area for NCC wings in HEIs.

1. "A sense of patriotic commitment to encourage cadets to contribute to national development
2. Respect for diversities in religion, language, culture, ethnicity, life style and habitat to instill a sense of National unity and social cohesion.
3. Abiding commitment to learn and adhere to the norms and values enshrined in the Indian Constitution.
4. Understanding the value of a just and impartial exercise of authority.
5. Ability to participate in community development and other social programme.
6. A healthy life style free of substance abuse and other unhealthy practices.
7. Sensitivity to the needs of poor and socially disadvantaged fellow citizens.
8. Inculcating habits of restraint and self-awareness.
9. Understanding the values of honesty, truthfulness, self-sacrifice, perseverance and hard work.
10. Respect for knowledge, wisdom and the power of ideas". (National Cadet Corps official website, 2020)

The core values of NCC indicate towards development of sense of patriotism amongst the youth of the nation and their sense of belongings to the people and



respect for our heritage. The core values direct students to participate in the national development programme through academic ventures. The cadets are expected to extend help to the poor, disadvantaged fellow citizen and the needy. Therefore, cadet's participation in rescue operation in any natural disaster is obviously expected could be related with value number 5 and 7. The covid-19 outbreak situation is more than any natural disaster causes for millions of lives. In this situation nation requires large number of Covid warriors in different spheres of life to extend help to the government and different organizations working in medical and social field. This situation of pandemic is ideal one to test the will of students in HEIs. NAAC expects inculcation of social belongings amongst the students through the higher learning. "In a country like India, with cultural pluralities and diversities, it is essential that students imbibe the appropriate values commensurate with social, cultural, economic and environmental realities, at the local, national and universal levels....The seeds of values such as cooperation and mutual understanding during the early stages of education have to be reiterated and re-emphasized at the higher education also through appropriate learning experiences and opportunities". (NAAC Manual for institution accreditation, 2018: 7) NAAC guidelines for the social extension wings of the HEIs indicate towards the participation of students in different social outreach programme and learning in actual life like situations. HEIs and its social extension wings can come forward with the more comprehensive planning in collaboration with government and non-government organisations to initiate for the interest of general public.

In spite of the fact that the broad philosophies are set for the social outreach programmes through HEIs but students participation in the natural calamities and such situation seems to be insignificant or un-highlighted. When we look at the major calamities hit the nation in last two decades, students' participation in the rescue operation or relief works is not recorded significantly. Earthquake in Bhuj in 2001, Kashmir Earthquake in 2005, Tsunami in Tamil Nadu in 2006, Kedarnath flood in 2013, Flood in Kerala in 2018, periodic cyclone in South India and in Odisha. Major works of NSS were highlighted during Kerala Flood. In the Kerala flood situation more than 1200 NSS units were working in the rescue and relief operation. The NSS volunteers were sanitizing the affected area, preparing food packets for the flood victims, running common kitchen and distributing medicines. The Volunteers and other functionaries are distributing food packets to the affected people at various places and were also involved in rescue operations. (Press Information Bureau (2018)) But in rest of the calamities HEIs participation through its NSS is quite insignificant. Although students participation in awareness campaign in Covid 19 seems to be enhanced comparing to its participation in the previous calamities.



It is a matter of fact to look at the student's participation in the outbreak of Spanish flu in 1918 in the light of students' responses to the relief works. According to Marry Battenfield in her article "3 lessons from how schools responded to the 1918 pandemic worth heeding today" mentioned about school nurses' works during Spanish flu situation which was acknowledged by New York City Health Commissioner Royal Copeland in 1918. The article also claims that in St. Louis, while schools were closed, police cars became ambulances, and teachers worked in health agencies. From the other records also we know that how college students participated in relief works along with the teachers in collaboration with social organisations across the world. To curb the spread colleges were run in the open air. While schools were closed, many American school children made toys for the refugee children overseas". (The Atlantic, April 2018), University of Idaho student Esther Thomas's journal from 1918 flu pandemic reveals her approach towards Spanish flu pandemic and her small initiatives. It is a matter of fact that some 100 years before, students' responses to the pandemic situations after Spanish flu in the form of extension activities have been recorded. These small initiatives though unorganized by those school and college youths need to be taken into considerations at the present day situation in covid-19 by college students.

From the references of student's initiatives in the previous pandemic of Spanish flu we can imagine the student's awareness towards their social responsibilities. Comparing to that contribution by world students our students' contribution is quite low. During last 74 years of independence, our country passed through many natural calamities and shadows of war. College students should show their presence by contributing their participation in different required works to extend help to government and non-governmental organization. Students can participate in rescue works with respect to their training and capacity and of course participation in awareness campaign. Taking inspiration from those students we need to contribute from our side as well. When we think of students' participation in such works, coordinating teacher's interest and dedication is a vital source of inspiration to their students. Unless teachers put forward a suitable plan and initial step towards student's participation in certain disaster management work, no such initiatives will be pushed. The will of teachers and college is an important factor here and making students ready mentally is another one. Students won't come forward unless they are encouraged and properly guided. Therefore, regular meeting with students is important while introducing the task and its importance. Students participated in NSS and NCC should be given exposure to the disaster management time to time. Students living in the danger zone prone to any natural



calamities should be exposed to certain disaster management programme to prepare students for any such emergent work.

Another important factor in such initiatives could be a proper training and orientation of students regarding the work they are about to enter. With respect to the rescue work or disaster amangement in certain calamities, students are needed to be trained systematically. Students should be aware of their capacities and limitation as a human being. A properly trained volunteer only can participate in such programmes; enthusiasm only cannot be the measure to include certain volunteers for the work. Without a training and knowledge of the disaster management volunteer can put his own life into risks. One cannot enter into the rescue mission like the Abhimanyu to sacrifice once life. College should include name of such students who have properly completed a course or a training programme for the rescue mission. When we talk of outbreak or pandemic situation, students directly cannot participate into medical assistance works. In such cases students can help the rest of civilian with different kind of help. Certified and educated health workers only can participate in medical assistance works as Covid-Warrior. Student volunteer can work in a safer zone to provide awareness and various helps to people so that they could be prevented from catching the disease. Due to lockdown situation or due to danger of catching any contagious disease, many people remain stranded somewhere and since there is no work outside, a risk of starvation increases. Student volunteers can find out such people to can provide necessary helps to them. College NSS or NCC teams can work systematically to trace such people through social media or by survey method. The point is this; coordinators rightly can decide their work area and accordingly volunteers can participate in the mission with prior permission from their parents. If the mission is undertaken in collaboration with some NGOs, it helps students learn along with trained social workers and at the same time a students are exposed to the structured work process in such missions. On the other hand financial part is easily managed by NGOs from their funds and received donations, therefore, NGOs can expect a trained manpower which could be made available through our student volunteers.

### Some Novel Initiatives:

When we think of any outbreak like situation we can understand a lockdown situation is automatically created for people. Government is formally announced it to control the situation. The important factor of such situation is that life becomes standstill and people's commutation as barred. Workstations and school colleges and travel are shut down. Therefore a large number of labourers and migrants are locked in some place who cannot sustain without finances for a longer period. In that case NGOs and college Volunteers can find out such people and need to help



them with the necessary life sustaining items, mainly food, water and medicines. In case of migrants are travelling, they are stranded in different shelter homes developed by government and municipal corporations, volunteers can help NGOs and government agencies to provide them necessary materials. Such stranded people require cloths and temporary beddings. Volunteers can run a campaign to collect the used cloths and beddings to provide to such shelter home people. Many NGOs are making masks which needed to be provided to a common people, since masks are proven method to prevent from the disease which was proved in the last Spanish flu outbreak, this time also people needed to be oriented about wearing mask in the public places and while interacting with others. Volunteers not only can provide help in distribution of masks but also they can create awareness via different methods college students generally do. The matter is this lock down situation may last for months therefore, a continuous work of volunteers will be required to gather necessary life sustaining things.

A very important task student volunteers can do and that is awareness campaign through social media and via personal contact with locals. Coordinators can prepare campaign material from the reliable experts and could be circulated through social media. We need to understand that social media releases fake messages in a large number therefore, making people aware about proper requirements and cautions are necessary to prevent them from catching this disease.

In America during Spanish flu many students prepared toys for the stranded workers children. In this pandemic also we can see many parents are stranded in different shelter homes around the country. We also can provide some easily sports material for children as well as for adults. Lock down situation can demoralize people who are away from their family and village. Sports and reading material for them could be a great help them for passing their time in ease and in hopes. Student volunteers can teach small children who are away from school and are missing their classes. A group of volunteers can take up a task of teaching such children in the shelter homes so that no such children develop a huge gap in their learning due to migration.

Due to lockdown teaching in schools and colleges are stopped, but it is the time of rising of digital classrooms. Though online classes are proving fruitful but at the same time hundreds of the students are there who are not able to afford a smartphone to join his online class. Volunteers with some NGOs can run a drive for collecting used smartphone for such poor students. We are not sure as to when will be the classes' opens for the regular teaching learning. Till then we need to cope with the available help via digital media. On the other hand teachers can



deposit their teaching material or tutorial videos on the college website or on YouTube so that student can visit them whenever he gets facility. Volunteers can help in creating such repository in their respective colleges using social media platform and websites. Colleges can open a You Tube channel for tutorial videos. Software professional and students in computer courses can extend their invaluable help to the teaching community in developing digital teaching material for students. At the same time volunteers can help in circulating the study material or connecting the stranded students with their course material. There is a possibility that online examinations will be announced soon. In that case a proper campaigning could be done by the volunteers so that none can miss their examinations.

For student volunteers in NSS and NCC there are multiple possibilities to take initiatives for helping people in the pandemic period. I have worked in NSS for long a time from that experience I can say that students are highly enthusiastic for any kind of work in the interest of people in any situation. They only require encouragement and wholesome support from the college management. During the regular activities and in camping I come across many such students who always come up with innovative ideas to work and involve others to complete the activity successfully. During camps I find students took parts in survey of villages and during feedback meeting they would always submitted their plans to work for villagers. within a short period of camp activity they always earned a high respect and honour from the villages for the bonding they created and whatever small contribution they made towards the development of village.

### **Conclusion:**

Under UGC and NAAC guidelines extension services covers major portion of incentives to be earned by college towards accreditation. Out of many extension services and activities in college NSS and NCC acts as umbrella committees for social initiatives in colleges and universities. Therefore, significant social outreach programmes are to be planned by the college for their students. College units have to develop their strong student's wings to be participating in different disaster management works around the city. The role of student's disaster management projects becomes significant in the danger zones related to the natural calamities. Students' collaborative participation with NGOs and Government agencies towards any disaster management fetches both learning experience for students and their social contribution. When country and world is passing through the Covid-19 pandemic situation Volunteers works becomes more important in much respect. Students' participation in awareness campaign as well as social extension services in various ways will be counted and remembered for a long time. Country is suffering from manpower crunch in case of



implementing social outreach programmes and awareness programmes. Trained volunteers from senior colleges and universities can extend a great boost for such social initiatives for government. Therefore, colleges and universities need to think of revamping the role of such programmes. Till the date students are engaged in different celebrations and awareness programmes round the year. Now disaster management and such courses need to be introduced in colleges as value added programmes especially for NSS and NCC students. The trained students not only would extend their services for society during their higher learning but they will continue helping society in every possible way in their life time. Such students will set an example for next generation volunteers and of course for society through their significant contribution.

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**COVID-19 Pandemic Special**

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# Perspectives

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**Dr. Madhukarrao Wasnik**  
**PWS Arts and Commerce College**  
Kamptee Road, Nagpur - 26.  
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## INDEX

S. No.	Title of Research Paper	Author	Page No.
1	Indian Agriculture- Challenges And Opportunities During & After Covid19 Pandemic	Mr. Ajinkya G. Deshpande	1-9
2	Challenges and Reformative Measures for Higher Education in India- Post Lockdown Period	Mr. Govindaraja A.Bhatta	10-15
3	Opportunities And Challenges For Overall Development Post Corona Virus Pandemic	Dr. Anand T Chahande	16-22
4	Fight Against Corona Virus (Covid-19) Pandemic: Current Status Of India	Dr. Yeshvant Patil	23-26
5	The Study Of Impact Of Corona On Cricket	Dr. G. Ramchandra Rao	27-33
6	Yoga- The Best Hobby of Relaxation	Dr. Arunabha Ray	34-38
7	Anxiety and Aggression among Sportspersons and Non-Sportspersons with different Socio-Economic Status	Dr. MS. Manda Thengne Dr. Arvind P. Joshi	39-44
8	Corona Virus: Pandemic Disease	Dr. Nirajsingh F. Yadav	45-50
9	Corona Virus (Covid-19) Pandemic: Need Of Social Distancing	Dr. Kiran Yeshwant Patil	51-53
10	Post Corona Pandemic Challenges in Schools for Physical Education Teachers	Miss Neha Dubey	54-62
11	Understanding The Role Of Yoga In Covid-19 Pandemic :A Systematic Approach	DR. O. P. Aneja	63-66
12	Corona Virus Pandemic: Ways Of Social Change	Dr. S. H. Shakya	67-71
13	Maintaining Physical Fitness In Covid-19 Pandemic Period: A Prespective	Dr. Raju Dayaram Chawake	72-74
14	Effects Of Corona Virus Pandemic On Spheres On Life And Recoveries, Solutions	Mr. Anil Nahate	75-78
15	The Corona War Of India	Dr. Yagya Singh	79-80
16	Extension Services Initiatives by HEIs in Covid-19 Pandemic: Redefining Roles of Academic Wings	Dr. Sudesh B. Bhowate	81-90



## Extension Services Initiatives by HEIs in Covid-19 Pandemic: Redefining Roles of Academic Wings

Dr. Sudesh B. Bhowate

### Abstract:

During prolonged Lockdown due to Covid 19 pandemic; active life in every spheres of life comes to a standstill, so also our higher educational activities. During last few months' people from every strata of society come forward with every kind of help to the needy. Providing food, masks, temporary shelter homes, medical aids to needy, care of old people, etc are undertaken by most of us. Some organizations and NGOs are continuously working along with the Covid warrior and government agencies. Awareness programmes and structured helps are provided by the state as well as government at the centre. During lockdown many colleges and schools become shelter homes for migratory labourers and some of the teachers and students responded to the call of government to participate in the social services. The work undertaken by these teachers and students are obviously valuable, yet we as academia can redefine our role with the given limitations by UGC and NAAC. In the light of social extension services in general and Covid 19 pandemic in particular this paper is exploring the possibilities of redefining our (academics) role in the welfare of society and to the needy. The nature of the paper is to ponder over the extension works with respect to the guidelines laid down by Government, UGC and NAAC for higher educational institutions and also exploring the possibilities to be undertaken by HEIs in the pandemic and during natural calamities.

**Key Words:** HEIs, Extension services, UGC guidelines, NAAC, NSS, NCC, Extension services, Spanish flu, Covid-19, disaster Management, natural calamities, awareness programmes, promotions of Govt programmes and projects for social welfare, etc.

### Introduction:

Life teaches us lessons in different situations, sometimes survival becomes so much difficult that in spite of everything we have life drifts from us. A situation like outbreak of some disease makes life terrible everywhere, but more we suffer due to locked situation without life sustaining things than the disease. Joblessness, starvation, hunger, migration on foot, stranded somewhere on the mercy of social workers, and the list goes on for the situation we are facing in our country and people around the world due to Covid 19 pandemic. We hear

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many narratives of tragic incidents around the world of the situation but also we should appreciate the responses of human being around the world to save the situation. The way people are coming forward with every possible aids and help to a fellow brother is highly commendable. Along with government many NGOs are working day and night to provide every possible help to people as a covid warriors. We should not forget the sacrifices given by the doctors, nurses, Police, sanitary workers and medical people while serving the covid patients, police, social workers who caught up with the disease while helping the people to control the situation and lost their life. Much appreciable work is going on with many organized and unorganized organizations towards the welfare of people and donations, etc. some colleges and especially some wings like NSS and NCC are working along with its dared volunteers. Works at college level seems to be limited to a certain level like awareness campaign, generating donations for food and cloths and distribute to the needy etc, but when we look at the natural calamities occurred earlier and previous pandemic some innovative ideas were brought into practice by academic institutions which are noteworthy and paved a way for future. Academic institutions have many guidelines laid down by government and regulatory bodies for certain wings for its better implementation with set objectives. When we look at those objectives and philosophy for the certain academic wing we automatically get some ideas to work in a structured way.

#### **Understanding the core Philosophy of NSS and NCC:**

Since the independence, Government brings various programme for the academic institution in the light of inculcating nationalism, social responsibilities, for grooming the future leaders and students' practical learning in the social environ, etc. The philosophy of such learning passed in our parliament or state assembly takes shape in certain programme and projects like NSS, NCC, Scouts & Guides and many such programme through small committees like women's cell, extension cell, Needy fund, opportunity cell etc. sometime special directives are communicated to the institution by Universities under the guidance of government. In the quality enhancement initiatives by the HEIs laid down by NAAC, extension services comprised a significant score to earn. "The role of HEIs is significant in human resource development and capacity building of individuals, to cater to the needs of the economy, society and the country as a whole, thereby, contributing to the development of the Nation. Serving the cause of social justice, ensuring equity and increasing access to higher education are a few ways by which HEIs can contribute to the national development". (NAAC Manual for institution accreditation, 2018: 6) Therefore, extension services through its natural wings are in vogue in the HEIs which takes extension projects seriously. It has been noted that the participation in every initiatives through such



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extension services are huge from students. Irrespective of gender students are always ready to undertake any adventure in the interest of society.

National Service Scheme (NSS) took shape from the ideas and philosophy of Mahatma Gandhiji who wished students are to be trained in HEIs for the higher goal towards the welfare of society. According to him, "the first duty of the students should be, not to treat their period of study as one of the opportunities for indulgence in intellectual luxury, but for preparing themselves for final dedication in the service of those who provided the sinews of the nation with the national goods & services so essential to society. Advising them to form a living contact with the community in whose midst their institution is located". He suggested that instead of undertaking academic research about economic and social disability, the students should do "something positive so that the life of the villagers might be raised to a higher material and moral level". (NSS official Website) From this ideas of the father of nation NSS take a motto "Not me but you". Students should learn this philosophy of dedication for the fellow brothers and sisters and obviously needy in every respect. As NSS maintain, "The cardinal principle of the programme is that it is organised by the students themselves and both students and teachers through their combined participation in social service, get a sense of involvement in the tasks of national development". (NSS official Website) The programme is certainly a joint effort by students and teachers therefore, a great expectation is relies from the dedicated teachers who are joining such projects. A trained teacher in such a programme is capable of undertaking positive projects for students to implement for the end objective. The objectives laid down NSS which are given in its official website for the universities and colleges are itself cleared enough to understand and to think for our work area.

1. "Understand the community in which they work
2. Understand themselves in relation to their community
3. Identify the needs and problems of the community and involve them in problem-solving
4. Develop among themselves a sense of social and civic responsibility
5. Utilize their knowledge in finding practical solutions to individual and community problems
6. Develop competence required for group-living and sharing of responsibilities
7. Gain skills in mobilizing community participation
8. Acquire leadership qualities and democratic attitudes
9. Develop capacity to meet emergencies and natural disasters and
10. Practice national integration and social harmony" (NSS official Website)

These objectives speak about the students' training and grooming for the social causes and while learning their exposure to the social work and dedication to the country. The objective number nine speaks about students' skills in meeting with any disaster management. We need to understand the role of students in natural calamities and such situation are expected. Therefore, a positive programme during natural calamities and outbreak like situation is naturally expected from the extension wings of HEIs. Students' participation in the extension services in pandemic like situations is highly expected.

Besides NSS, NCC is another programme is given to the universities and HEIs. Though it is expected that the cadets of NCC to be trained for the military requirements of the country but at the same time the wing is allied to the social causes and extension services within the HEIs. The role of cadet for social services is highly expected. "The 'Aims' of the NCC laid out in 1988 have stood the test of time and continue to meet the requirements expected of it in the current socio-economic scenario of the country". (National Cadet Corps official website, 2020) The motto of National Cadet Corps (NCC) is "Unity and Discipline" which is indicative of the expected role of the cadets for the national integrity. As per the philosophy laid down for NCC, it is a continuous evolving organization where cadets are given exposure to the social cause and collaborative learning projects with Government and non-government organizations. The core values maintained in the official website of NCC are indicative of the work area for NCC wings in HEIs.

1. "A sense of patriotic commitment to encourage cadets to contribute to national development
2. Respect for diversities in religion, language, culture, ethnicity, life style and habitat to instill a sense of National unity and social cohesion.
3. Abiding commitment to learn and adhere to the norms and values enshrined in the Indian Constitution.
4. Understanding the value of a just and impartial exercise of authority.
5. Ability to participate in community development and other social programme.
6. A healthy life style free of substance abuse and other unhealthy practices.
7. Sensitivity to the needs of poor and socially disadvantaged fellow citizens.
8. Inculcating habits of restraint and self-awareness.
9. Understanding the values of honesty, truthfulness, self-sacrifice, perseverance and hard work.
10. Respect for knowledge, wisdom and the power of ideas". (National Cadet Corps official website, 2020)

The core values of NCC indicate towards development of sense of patriotism amongst the youth of the nation and their sense of belongings to the people and



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respect for our heritage. The core values direct students to participate in the national development programme through academic ventures. The cadets are expected to extend help to the poor, disadvantaged fellow citizen and the needy. Therefore, cadet's participation in rescue operation in any natural disaster is obviously expected could be related with value number 5 and 7. The covid-19 outbreak situation is more than any natural disaster causes for millions of lives. In this situation nation requires large number of Covid warriors in different spheres of life to extend help to the government and different organizations working in medical and social field. This situation of pandemic is ideal one to test the will of students in HEIs. NAAC expects inculcation of social belongings amongst the students thought the higher learning. "In a country like India, with cultural pluralities and diversities, it is essential that students imbibe the appropriate values commensurate with social, cultural, economic and environmental realities, at the local, national and universal levels....The seeds of values such as cooperation and mutual understanding during the early stages of education have to be reiterated and re-emphasized at the higher education also through appropriate learning experiences and opportunities". (NAAC Manual for institution accreditation, 2018: 7) NAAC guidelines for the social extension wings of the HEIs indicate towards the participation of students in different social outreach programme and learning in actual life like situations. HEIs and its social extension wings can come forward with the more comprehensive planning in collaboration with government and non-government organisations to initiate for the interest of general public.

In spite of the fact that the broad philosophies are set for the social outreach programmes through HEIs but students participation in the natural calamities and such situation seems to be insignificant or un-highlighted. When we look at the major calamities hit the nation in last two decades, students' participation in the rescue operation or relief works is not recorded significantly. Earthquake in Bhuj in 2001, Kashmir Earthquake in 2005, Tsunami in Tamil Nadu in 2006, Kedarnath flood in 2013, Flood in Kerala in 2018, periodic cyclone in South India and in Odisha. Major works of NSS were highlighted during Kerala Flood. In the Kerala flood situation more than 1200 NSS units were working in the rescue and relief operation. The NSS volunteers were sanitizing the affected area, preparing food packets for the flood victims, running common kitchen and distributing medicines. The Volunteers and other functionaries are distributing food packets to the affected people at various places and were also involved in rescue operations. (Press Information Bureau (2018) But in rest of the calamities HEIs participation through its NSS is quite insignificant. Although students participation in awareness campaign in Covid 19 seems to be enhanced comparing to its participation in the previous calamities.

It is a matter of fancy to look at the student's participation in the outbreak of Spanish flu in 1918 in the light of students' responses to the relief works. According to Marry Battenfield in her article "3 lessons from how schools responded to the 1918 pandemic worth heeding today" mentioned about school nurses' works during Spanish flu situation which was acknowledged by New York City Health Commissioner Royal Copeland in 1918. The article also claims that in St. Louis, while schools were closed, police cars became ambulances, and teachers worked in health agencies. From the other records also we know that how college students participated in relief works along with the teachers in collaboration with social organisations across the world. To curb the spread colleges were run in the open air. While schools were closed, many American school children made toys for the refugee children overseas". (The Atlantic, April 2018), University of Idaho student Esther Thomas's journal from 1918 flu pandemic reveals her approach towards Spanish flu pandemic and her small initiatives. It is a matter of fact that some 100 years before, students' responses to the pandemic situations after Spanish flu in the form of extension activities have been recorded. These small initiatives though unorganized by those school and college youths need to be taken into considerations at the present day situation in covid-19 by college students.

From the references of student's initiatives in the previous pandemic of Spanish flu we can imagine the student's awareness towards their social responsibilities. Comparing to that contribution by world students our students' contribution is quite low. During last 74 years of independence, our country passed through many natural calamities and shadows of war. College students should show their presence by contributing their participation in different required works to extend help to government and non-governmental organization. Students can participate in rescue works with respect to their training and capacity and of course participation in awareness campaign. Taking inspiration from those students we need to contribute from our side as well. When we think of students' participation in such works, coordinating teacher's interest and dedication is a vital source of inspiration to their students. Unless teachers put forward a suitable plan and initial step towards student's participation in certain disaster management work, no such initiatives will be pushed. The will of teachers and college is an important factor here and making students ready mentally is another one. Students won't come forward unless they are encouraged and properly guided. Therefore, regular meeting with students is important while introducing the task and its importance. Students participated in NSS and NCC should be given exposure to the disaster management time to time. Students living in the danger zone prone to any natural



calamities should be exposed to certain disaster management programme to prepare students for any such emergent work.

Another important factor in such initiatives could be a proper training and orientation of students regarding the work they are about to enter. With respect to the rescue work or disaster amangement in certain calamities, students are needed to be trained systematically. Students should be aware of their capacities and limitation as a human being. A properly trained volunteer only can participate in such programmes; enthusiasm only cannot be the measure to include certain volunteers for the work. Without a training and knowledge of the disaster management volunteer can put his own life into risks. One cannot enter into the rescue mission like the Abhimanyu to sacrifice once life. College should include name of such students who have properly completed a course or a training programme for the rescue mission. When we talk of outbreak or pandemic situation, students directly cannot participate into medical assistance works. In such cases students can help the rest of civilian with different kind of help. Certified and educated health workers only can participate in medical assistance works as Covid-Warrior. Student volunteer can work in a safer zone to provide awareness and various helps to people so that they could be prevented from catching the disease. Due to lockdown situation or due to danger of catching any contagious disease, many people remain stranded somewhere and since there is no work outside, a risk of starvation increases. Student volunteers can find out such people to can provide necessary helps to them. College NSS or NCC teams can work systematically to trace such people through social media or by survey method. The point is this; coordinators rightly can decide their work area and accordingly volunteers can participate in the mission with prior permission from their parents. If the mission is undertaken in collaboration with some NGOs, it helps students learn along with trained social workers and at the same time a students are exposed to the structured work process in such missions. On the other hand financial part is easily managed by NGOs from their funds and received donations, therefore, NGOs can expect a trained manpower which could be made available through our student volunteers.

#### **Some Novel Initiatives:**

When we think of any outbreak like situation we can understand a lockdown situation is automatically created for people. Government is formally announced it to control the situation. The important factor of such situation is that life becomes standstill and people's commutation as barred. Workstations and school colleges and travel are shut down. Therefore a large number of labourers and migrants are locked in some place who cannot sustain without finances for a longer period. In that case NGOs and college Volunteers can find out such people and need to help

them with the necessary life sustaining items, mainly food, water and medicines. in case of migrants are travelling, they are stranded in different shelter homes develops by government and municipal corporations, volunteers can help NGOs and government agencies to provide them necessary materials. Such stranded people require cloths and temporary beddings. Volunteers can run a campaign to collect the used cloths and beddings to provide to such shelter home people. Many NGOs are making masks which needed to be provided to a common people. since masks are proven method to prevent from the disease which was proved in the last Spanish flu outbreak, this time also people needed to be oriented about wearing mask in the public places and while interacting with others. Volunteers not only can provide help in distribution of masks but also they can create awareness via different methods college students generally do. The matter is this lock down situation may last for months therefore; a continuous work of volunteers will be required to gather necessary life sustaining things.

A very important task student volunteers can do and that is awareness campaign through social media and via personal contact with locals. Coordinators can prepare campaign material from the reliable experts and could be circulated through social media. We need to understand that social media releases fake messages in a large number therefore, making people aware about proper requirements and cautions are necessary to prevent them from catching this disease.

In America during Spanish flu many students prepared toys for the stranded workers children. In this pandemic also we can see many parents are stranded in different shelter homes around the country. We also can provide some easily sports material for children as well as for adults. Lock down situation can demoralize people who are away from their family and village. Sports and reading material for them could be a great help them for passing their time in ease and in hopes. Student volunteers can teach small children who are away from school and are missing their classes. A group of volunteers can take up a task of teaching such children in the shelter homes so that no such children develop a huge gap in their learning due to migration.

Due to lockdown teaching in schools and colleges are stopped, but it is the time of rising of digital classrooms. Though online classes are proving fruitful but at the same time hundreds of the students are there who are not able to afford a smartphone to join his online class. Volunteers with some NGOs can run a drive for collecting used smartphone for such poor students. We are not sure as to when will be the classes' opens for the regular teaching learning. Till then we need to cope with the available help via digital media. On the other hand teachers can



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deposit their teaching material or tutorial videos on the college website or on YouTube so that student can visit them whenever he gets facility. Volunteers can help in creating such repository in their respective colleges using social media platform and websites. Colleges can open a You Tube channel for tutorial videos. Software professional and students in computer courses can extend their invaluable help to the teaching community in developing digital teaching material for students. At the same time volunteers can help in circulating the study material or connecting the stranded students with their course material. There is a possibility that online examinations will be announced soon. In that case a proper campaigning could be done by the volunteers so that none can miss their examinations.

For student volunteers in NSS and NCC there are multiple possibilities to take initiatives for helping people in the pandemic period. I have worked in NSS for long a time from that experience I can say that students are highly enthusiastic for any kind of work in the interest of people in any situation. They only require encouragement and wholesome support from the college management. During the regular activities and in camping I come across many such students who always come up with innovative ideas to work and involve others to complete the activity successfully. During camps I find students took parts in survey of villages and during feedback meeting they would always submitted their plans to work for villagers. within a short period of camp activity they always earned a high respect and honour from the villages for the bonding they created and whatever small contribution they made towards the development of village.

### Conclusion:

Under UGC and NAAC guidelines extension services covers major portion of incentives to be earned by college towards accreditation. Out of many extension services and activities in college NSS and NCC acts as umbrella committees for social initiatives in colleges and universities. Therefore, significant social outreach programmes are to be planned by the college for their students. College units have to develop their strong student's wings to be participating in different disaster management works around the city. The role of student's disaster management projects becomes significant in the danger zones related to the natural calamities. Students' collaborative participation with NGOs and Government agencies towards any disaster management fetches both learning experience for students and their social contribution. When country and world is passing through the Covid-19 pandemic situation Volunteers works becomes more important in much respect. Students' participation in awareness campaign as well as social extension services in various ways will be counted and remembered for a long time. Country is suffering from manpower crunch in case of

implementing social outreach programmes and awareness programmes. Trained volunteers from senior colleges and universities can extend a great boost for such social initiatives for government. Therefore, colleges and universities need to think of revamping the role of such programmes. Till the date students are engaged in different celebrations and awareness programmes round the year. Now disaster management and such courses need to be introduced in colleges as value added programmes especially for NSS and NCC students. The trained students not only would extend their services for society during their higher learning but they will continue helping society in every possible way in their life time. Such students will set an example for next generation volunteers and of course for society through their significant contribution.

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## BUDDHISM TO THE ENGAGED BUDDHISM : A ROUTE OF PEACE AND HAPPINESS

□ Dr. Sudesh B. Bhowate\*

### ABSTRACT

Post World War II life on our planet is changing rapidly than ever before. The progress and pace of life is increasing with the advent of IT and digital technology. On one hand nations are enjoying the blessings of luxury but on the other it is dwelling under the threat of (nuclear) war from the superpowers and from the so called underdog nations. Mass production of deadly weapons ironically to secure one's nation makes the other insecure. War affected Millions of people lost their lives and an equal number of people became homeless wondering to get shelter as refugees in the neighboring nations. The holocaust of war from every corner across the nations brings horrible narratives and revelation of animalistic nature of human (citizen) with destructive weapons left no limits of cruelty. The paradox in the human behavior especially of civilians is a matter of concern for the modern world. They are close to the religion yet they are far away from the practical morality and values. When we look for peace, welfare and happiness of people we need to seek refuge in welfare thoughts and philosophies developed in the past with the ideas towards social change. For centuries Buddhism has been taken as a philosophical approach for the cessation of human suffering and to be adopted as the welfare principles to any ideal state. In this paper I'm trying to reflect over the tenets of Buddhism and its transformations as the engaged Buddhism by the Buddhist Masters towards social change.

**Keywords :** Buddhism, social change, engaged Buddhism, Annata, Anatma, Nibbana, compassion, love, peace, equanimity, interbeing, Navayana, etc

### Introduction

Pre-Buddha India was rapidly approaching urbanization and a new civilization. It was taking shape under the fourfold Varnashrama dharma which was based graded society. Contrary to this the rise of Buddha and his Sangha developed hope for another practical communal life based on liberty, equality, fraternity and justice. Appealed by the Buddha's treatment of equality and respect to self-dignity, contemporary Royal family members, intellectuals, Businessmen, the marginalized communities and ordinary men immediately accepted Buddhism. Prof. Laxmi Narasu Says, "Gotama Buddha, though born of an aristocratic and ruling class, lived the life of an ordinary man, discarding the narrow

distinctions of caste, rank and wealth." (Narasu, 2002: 19) Buddha's teachings and thoughts are reflected upon every aspect of personal and social life.

When we talk of Buddhism we often wonder as to why and how Buddhism can influence the world mind? The answer is simply its Rationality. In such a time where ideas of God, Goddesses and ghosts and spirits, salvation and life after death were prevailed, Buddha came as a teacher without any proclamation as super human being. Buddha's teachings were not based on any dogma or beliefs in God and Supernatural entity; it was the inquiry into human life, their sorrows and sufferings of all strata of men. Prof. Narasu maintains "Its goal is not heaven or a union with god or Brahman, but to find a refuge for man

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from the miseries of the world in the safe haven of an intellectual and ethical life through self-conquest and self-culture.”(Narasu 2002: 21) Buddha's teachings were systematic approach towards human problems and miseries and he brought logical solutions to them through self-efforts. Buddha invokes the inquiry into the contemporary mind about anything which is related to one's life. According to this belief which was established in the past or in present should be questioned particularly about its reliability by the self. In one of his discourses to Kalamas of Kesaputta town in Kosala, Buddha advised them to stand on the firm rock of fact and reason only. Buddhism has no belief in anything which is not the outcome of knowledge and factual realization.

Buddha in his first discourse to five disciples in Sarnath which is known as Dhamma Chakka Pavattana claimed that “he was the believer in the Majjhima Patipada, the middle path, which is neither the path of pleasure nor the path of self-mortification.” (Ambedkar, 1997: 120) According to Buddha both the extremes stimulate the passion and the middle way leads to the subjugation of passion resulting in peace. Buddha's quest began in search of the causes of the sufferings to men. Therefore, Buddha's philosophy and teachings revolve around human life. In fact emancipation of human beings is at the center of his philosophy. In the first sermon, Buddha claimed that “the centre of his Dhamma is man and the relation of man to man in his life on earth.” (Ambedkar, 1997: 121) To overcome human suffering and to build a welfare society throughout his life Buddha preached four noble truths, five precepts and Noble eightfold path to his followers. The realization of suffering and the cessation of suffering are at its base. The path of purity means five precepts (Pacasilani) to be observed by men for the purity of mind. These are held as the fundamental moral code of conduct in Buddhism. The Noble Eightfold Path is the fourth noble truth discovered by Buddha. It is also treated as the path to end the sufferings and attainment of Nibbana. The discourse on Noble Eightfold Path is considered as the “turning of the Dhamma wheel.” In his Book Buddha or Karl Marx, Dr. Ambedkar commented that the aim of the Noble Eightfold Path was to establish the kingdom of

righteousness and thereby to banish sorrow and unhappiness from the face of the world.

Buddha's teachings revolve around the Three Essential Principles of his doctrines and the three universal characteristics Anitya (Impermanence), Anatta (non-soul), and Nibbana (Enlightenment). These doctrines not only makes Buddhism more rational but offers its practical help to human welfare without letting them wait for their fate after death. Buddha's scientific approach towards life and rationality could be traced from these three essential principles. A Buddhist accepts that life that is constantly changing so also the universe, therefore, death is inevitable. Buddha believes that everything in this Samsara is bound to change. Such an essential change he called 'anitya' (Impermanence) or the law of impermanence.

The doctrine of 'Anatta' i.e. soullessness or non-soul is the root of Buddhist philosophy. Buddha's theory of non-soul is the part of his theory of Nama-rupa which is a composite of physical and mental elements. Four elements i.e. earth, water, fire and air constitute the body and consciousness is the result of the combination of these four elements. Since all the functions are assigned to consciousness and performed by consciousness, a soul without functions is absurd. So Buddha opposed the existence of the soul. “The body (rupa), O Bhikkhus, is the soulless (anatta). If, O Bhikkhus, there were in this a soul then this body would not be subject to suffering” (Narada, 1988: 100)

Buddha talks of Nibbana and not nirvana. Buddha's Nibbana could be attained during life itself because death closes all possibility related to human life. Buddha proclaimed in a fire sermon as the extinction of worldly desires. Also in his first sermon in Sarnath (Varanasi) he maintained that the attainment of the Noble Eightfold Path is the Nibbana. “Nibbana is also explained as the extinction of the fire of lust (lobha), hatred (dosa), and delusion (moha).” (Narada, 1988: 492) According to Buddha anybody can attain Nibbana in this life, certainly women too.

Buddha proposed the universal law of cause and effect. The Law of Cause and Effect is the explanation of any happening depending upon its antecedent state.



According to Buddha one who destroys ignorance by wisdom could reach the state of Nibbana. "Nibbana is a condition of heart and mind in which every earthly craving is extinct; it is the cessation of every passion and desire of every feeling of ill-will, fear, and sorrow. (Wright, Dudley, 1912: 40) Therefore, Buddhism held ignorance as the chief source of human suffering.

Buddha was an ardent supporter of Human Values which essentially makes a man liberated being on the earth. From the Buddhist philosophy and Buddha's approach towards social life, we can easily build his idea of Buddhist socialism which supports Liberty Equality, Fraternity and Justice for harmonious coexistence of different communities as a global society. Buddha became influential because, a common man despite rank, caste, creed and gender was at the center of his philosophy. Whether a person is Brahmin the upper caste or a Chandala, the lower caste or a woman of any community, they enjoyed equal treatment and status in the Sangha. Contemporary society was divided into graded patterns therefore; a large section of society was degraded up to the dehumanized state. These marginalized people needed to be taken care of. Therefore, Buddha developed his Sangha to teach these values to men to bring about a society without discriminations and full of happiness. Buddha's teachings included Moral Code of Conduct and wisdom.

We know of the war during Buddha's time between two city states Sakyas and Koliyas which broke out of sharing water for agricultural purposes. Buddha saved thousands of lives from war killings and possible origin of sufferings on both sides. Buddhism has been working for the universal peace and brotherhood through Buddha's teachings of *Brahamavihara* i.e. 'Sublime Abindings'. "Here *Brahma* means sublime or noble as in *Brahamacariya* (sublime life); *vihara* means mode or state of conduct, or state of living." (Narada, 1988: 535) It has four aspects *Metta*, *Karuna*, *Mudita* and *Upekkha*. In each generation Buddhist masters and monks ceaselessly work to maintain peace and happiness wherever they go, sometimes at the cost of their life or made to accept exilement. Devoted disciples of Buddha as monks constantly walking and helping rustics and elites on

Buddha's advice depicted in Vinaya Pitaka: "*Carath Bhikkhave Carikam, Bahujan Hitay-Bahujan Sukhay*". "Go and wander for the gain of many, for the welfare of many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, for the gain and for the welfare of good and men. Let not the two of you go the same way. Preach the doctrine which is glorious in the beginning, glorious in the middle, and glorious in the end, in the spirit and in the letter; proclaim a consummate, perfect and pure life of holiness". (Radhakrishnan, 1949: 13) Following their Master's word Bhikkhus are ceaselessly working for the welfare of human society across the world.

Contemporary living Buddhist legends 'Nobel Prize for Peace Winner' His Highness Dalai Lama XIV and 'Nobel nominee for Peace' Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh are the champions of world peace. From his writings and the lectures HH Dalai Lama is constantly raising the subject of sufferings, threat of war and his concerns for the future of human society. In the present circumstances according to him, "there will be no future worth living unless everyone now takes personal responsibility for their own inner lives and universal responsibility for pain and misery in the world..." (Dresser, 1996:9) On the problems of continued war HH Dalai Lama appeals for taking a journey of Bodhisattva into the hearts of compassion and forgiveness. Zen Master Thich Nath Hanh is known as the highly intellectual Buddhist scholar, writer, poet and philosopher. Hanh is responsible for developing many institutions in Vietnam viz. an Quang Buddhist Institute, School of Youth for Social Service and La Boi Press which are helping people in spiritual and social growth. He also has established his *Mindfulness Meditation Centre* in Plum Village in France. Hahn is the promoter of the novel approach of Buddhism i.e. Engaged Buddhism.

The concept of engaged Buddhism came after Thich Nath Hanh's teachings of Buddhism to apply Buddhist principles to human life crisis across the world. He initiated the movement of engaged Buddhism from the time of the Vietnam War. "It is often said that suffering is the gateway to compassion. By deep insight into the nature of individual and social suffering, Buddhist practice cultivates the qualities of attention, loving-

kindness, and inner renewal that sustain a life of service. Thich Nhat Hanh speaks of interdependence as central to a Buddhist view of the universe—the “*interbeing*,” as he puts it, of people, nations, and the whole ecological fabric of the natural world.” (Harvard University: 2020: 2) Hanh's thinking behind the engaged Buddhism to bring about social change especially in such a time when war-torn nations were passing through the subhuman conditions. “During the Vietnam War, he and his community of monks and nuns had to decide what to do when the villages around them were being bombed – should they continue to meditate in their monastery, or should they go out into the streets to help the people who had been hurt? They decided to do both – to help people and to do so in mindfulness.” (Duerr, 2010) Reflecting over engaging oneself in social welfare H.H. The Dalai Lama maintains “It is not enough to be compassionate. You must act. There are two aspects to action. One is to overcome the distortions and afflictions of your own mind, that is, in terms of calming and eventually dispelling anger. This is action out of compassion. The other is more social, more public. When something needs to be done in the world to rectify the wrongs, if one is really concerned with benefiting others, one needs to be engaged, involved.” (Ecodharmacentre). According to the Dalai Lama, Buddhist practices should be public oriented and collective on compassionate grounds.

Dr. Ambedkar also initiated a movement of Social change through the novel approach of Buddhism called as Navayana. “His Navayana Buddhism came to be identified as a form of socially engaged Buddhism, paralleling movements for self-determination and economic justice in Tibet, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Thailand. Further parallels to the Humanistic Buddhism of China and Taiwan, the Nichiren-inspired New Religions of Japan, and many engaged Buddhist organizations in the West have been analyzed by scholars.” (Queen 2014) Dr. Ambedkar gives his followers twenty two precepts to live a life of rationality and harmony with the society. On the other hand Thich Nhat Hanh gives 14 precepts. Dr. Ambedkar's Buddhism could be taken as the active Buddhism. He wants people to “educate, organize and agitate”. This we can take as Dr.

Ambedkar's mantra of social change. Through this mantra Dr. Ambedkar simply indicates Socio-economic, political, educational and cultural development of community to form an ideal society. Socio-political approach towards social life cannot be separated from Buddhism. Dr. Amdekar's indication is certainly democratic governance. He cited an example in his book “Buddha and his Dhamma”, when Buddha reflected over the Ajatshatru's intention of invading Vajji. When Ajatshatru sent a message to Buddha through a monk and sought his opinion, Buddha told Ananda:

"So long, Ananda," rejoined the Blessed One, "as the Vajjins hold these full and frequent public assemblies; so long may they be expected not to decline, but to prosper. "So long as they honour and esteem and revere and support the Vajjin Elders, and make it a point of duty to hearken to their words. " So long as no women or girls belonging to their clans are detained among them by force or abduction. " So long as the Vajjins respect and follow religion. "So long, Ananda, the Vajjins may be expected not to decline but to prosper and no one can destroy them." (Ambedkar, 1997: 407)

Dr. Ambedkar through this example cited that Buddha believes in Democracy and he has firm beliefs that no one can harm the country practicing democracy.

### **Conclusion :**

The contemporary world is burning with passion and desire resulting in war and hopelessness for humanity. These politically motivated wars of crude nationalism proving fatal to the civilians made them homeless and left with endless sufferings. Atrocities, rapes, tortures and pain of being exile tormented the mind of war victims. Unfortunately the modern democracies are choosing economic goals over social one. Therefore, in the present scenario, welfare policies are influenced by economic aspects towards capitalistic gains. There are many incidents that can be cited from across the world when due advantage is given to the capitalistic gain in the name of growth but we need to look into the suffering of people around us more. The capitalistic competition provokes war amongst the nations for their interests. We are constantly living under the threat of nuclear war. War situation in the twentieth century destroyed many nations



and disturbs the social fabric that continued in the twenty-first century. The need of the hour is to think more of social welfare besides economic gains. Buddhist principles which are interpreted by Buddhist masters and social revolutionaries are needed to be adopted for the larger interest of world peace and happiness. In the modern perspectives the socially engaged Buddhism reinterpreted by living Buddhist masters Thich Nhat Hanh and HH The Dalai lama gives a peaceful way towards social welfare and happiness.

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DEPICTION OF CULTURAL AND GENERATIONAL CONFLICTS  
IN MAHESH ELKUNCHWAR'S *OLD  
STONE MANSION : AN ANALYSIS*

Dr. Sudesh B. Bhowate\*

ABSTRACT

*Old Stone Mansion* is the popular stage play translated from Marathi *Wada Chirebandi* written by Mahesh Elkunchwar. The play has highly emotional appeal from the beginning till end unfolding the undisclosed traditional family life in rural India signifying the title *Wada Chirebandi*. Joint family culture is still a distinct feature in majority of rural India which is now coming on trial with the challenges from modernity and urbanization. The play progresses with the two distinct but parallel conflicts, one is cultural and other is generational. The conflict stand before the family tests the bonding of relations very severely which ends with the compromise by the members. The end of the drama also brought a situation where new generation faced the deadlock and helplessness under the patriarchy and traditionalism. The playwright here is not taking us towards the solutions to the problem but making us realize the very situation of tension created out of contemporary social pressures which is shaking the roots of Indian culture. Therefore, we need to understand the issues raised by dramatist on broader perspectives. This paper is an attempt to analyze the covert and overt elements depicted in the play to bring the cultural and generational conflicts.

**Keywords :** Culture, conflict, joint family, modernity, urbanization, rural India, patriarchy, agricultural problems, Tenants law, economic crisis, liberty, space, etc.

Introduction

Mahesh Elkunchwar is a popular Marathi playwright and a retired professor of English. He is considered as one of the great Marathi writers and widely translated in different languages. The play *The Old Stone Mansion* is written in 1984 in Marathi entitled *Wada Chirebandi* focuses upon the declining culture of Wada i.e. mansion. The drama focuses upon socio-political and cultural change were occurring after independence in the country, especially, the tenant's law and the landowner's law implemented in the 1960s. Because of this a constant tension is seen in this play. The tension came from both ways, the tension from outside how the relationship between the Brahmin land owner and the tenants is working in the changed environment. On the other hand, there is a generational conflict seen in a Deshpande family of Dharangaon. The members from the old

generation are still stick with age old traditions and customs whereas the new generation wants to move ahead with the urban culture, want to educate themselves and to have a new kind of job. The custom bound old generation here in the village doesn't want to even own a shop. Unavailability of career opportunities in village new generation is constantly knocking the door of their elders who rejected them on cultural pretext and creates a deadlock.

Discussing about *Cultural Conflict* as a theory, Jonathan H. Turner defines *cultural conflict* as a conflict caused by "differences in the cultural values and beliefs that place people at odds with one another". (Wikipedia, 2020). Conflict theory views that social structure as inherently unequal based on power differential related to issues like class, gender, race and age. For a conflict theorist Culture is seen at reinforcing issues of privilege

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for certain groups based upon race sex class and so on. The second theory which is applied in this article is *Generational conflict*. “*Generational Conflict* arises whenever the interests or ideals of one generation collide openly with those of another. A generation is defined here as a "cohort group" that is born over a span of years—typically about twenty—and that shares characteristics, including some shared childhood and coming-of-age experiences, a set of common behavioral and attitudinal traits, and a sense of common identity.

The first cultural conflict (*Urban versus Rural*) in the play occurs through Sudhir who had shifted to Bombay many years ago returned to the village to perform the thirteenth day rituals (Terahavi) of his late father as he was unable to attend the funeral. To initiate this ritual the family required a lot of money, especially to spend on different odd rituals and mainly on the meal to the entire village. Due to his adopting the life of Mumbai, Sudhir had learnt the economic way; therefore he resisted the proposal. The family at village is empty handed and had already borrowed lots of money from outside, and they were not in a position to even hope to get groceries from the shopkeeper. Both the elder brothers don't want to touch their own share in property from selling at this juncture to save it for their own children. Sudhir passed on a suggestion that they can have a small family program to reduce the cost of rituals. His elder brother Bhaskar rejected the possibility instantly, “Come on. That's the custom here. We have to feed the whole village on the thirteenth day or we lose the face.” Sudhir was dumbstruck and asked surprisingly, “And no thought for the expense! Five thousand plates means at least twenty or twenty five thousand rupees. Where will you get that?” (Oxford, 2009: 168) Vahini intervenes in the discussion to add the opinion of orthodox culture, “Bhauji it is the last expenditure for a family elder. Do we refuse it and get closer to hell.” upon which Sudhir expresses his displeasure. “What old fashioned ideas, Vahini!” (Oxford, 2009: 168) With this opinion in fact Sudhir's suggestion collided with his orthodox elders who did not agree to go with those suggestions. Traditional culture bound Mother too when saw that her sons are not resolving the conflict; she finally offers to

sell off the part belonging to her which brother agreed to. In spite of the fact that the family was in a financial crunch, the final rites of the late father were so important for them to save their respect in the town they decided to sell off part of the property to arrange money.

The second instance of cultural conflict occurs in this drama with the tenants who were working on the farm of Deshpandes. Before his death Tatyaji bought a tractor to till his land, but labourers went against the tractor as it was curtailing their labour. “Now the landlord has bought a tractor, he'll till the land himself. They thought. They were dead set against him.” (Oxford, 2009: 143) So they did not support the tractor, which remained unutilized and finally came to the front gate of the mansion as the Nandi in Shiva Temple. In addition to this episode, Bhaskar narrated a hostile environ against the Brahmins after the tenants law implemented that too is indicative of cultural conflict in the region:

“Then the land went to the tenants. We had to fight it out in the law courts...I lost so much money doing that. From top to bottom, they were Brahmin-haters, every one of them. Didn't allow a single verdict to go in our favour. Wining or dining with top officials isn't something I can do. You don't know how difficult it is for Brahmins to survive as a farmer.” (Oxford, 2009: 170)

Another instance of cultural conflict occurs with the episode of Gaja the cook. The forefathers of the cook were living in the family as the cook. But the cook Gaja is not ready to work in the family since Deshpande's were not paying his due wages to him. He found a way out to get regular wages by joining a hotel as a cook. The discussion between Sudhir, Bhaskar and Vahini unveils this episode of cultural conflict:

Bhaskar: “Ungrateful bugger. This fellow's father and grandfather spent their lives in the Deshpande kitchen. This fellow couldn't care less.”

Upon Vahini's reminder over unpaid wages to Gaja, Bhaskar replied in anger

Bhaskar: “But who stood behind them in their times of need? we'd have continued to do that. I sent a word to that Gaja : We are in mourning. help us out till the rites are over.' Didn't show up, the bastard!” (Oxford, 2009: 145)

The fourth conflict depicted in the play is Deshashtha versus Kokanastha sub-castes in Brahmin of Maharashtra. As depicted in the play Deshashtha of the Amaravati region still follow their orthodox family culture while Kokanastha of Mumbai region seems to be modern. The two representative especially Vahini belongs the former sub-caste while Anjali Sudhir's wife belongs the later. In the play a subtle clash of ideas based in culture on trivial issues between the two women was often depicted by writer.

The second part of the paper is generational conflict. The first generational conflict is seen between the deceased Tatyaji and his elder son Bhaskar. Tatyaji is the one who follows his old way of family culture and traditions. When Bhaskar wasn't able to get educated, he decided to run a dairy business. But father rejected the possibility of running such businesses which could invite disrepute to the family being the Brahmin Landowners. The person who is rejected by his father later follows the footsteps of the father in case of orthodox thoughts helplessly and turned greedy.

Later the conflict between Bhaskar and his own son Parag and daughter Ranju was seen in the play. Parag failed in 12<sup>th</sup> standard but somehow he wish to continue his education in the city since further education was unavailable in the village. But out of prejudice against him father wasn't supporting him. Without any work he was reported to mingle with low men of the village and consumes liquor. Bhaskar's daughter Raju too failed in 10<sup>th</sup> standard and she was attracted towards the cinema life, she would always reading the filmfare magazines and listen to the radio all the time. Her mother wants her to clear 10<sup>th</sup> standard anyhow so that she could be engaged with a good bridegroom. Therefore, mother sends her to a local Brahmin young man for tuition, but she falls in love affair with the man and elopes with him to Mumbai carrying with her entire jewelry of family. Later she was found by Uncle Sudhir deserted by the teacher in the hotel and cheated with the entire jewelry. The miscommunication between father and children resulted in no bonding of love amongst them. Dr. Sandhya Amrute on the episode of Ranju's elopement maintains: "that attempt isn't indicative of maturity, but because of the

pressures of the established values; it brings deformation to men, becomes faceless, and they started leaving the track, reach to any level, it is indicative of that." (Amrute, 1995: 121)

A generational conflict could be seen from the episode of Chandu in the play. Chandu youngest brother of Bhaskar is the most neglected person in the family. Since he is not educated, he does every core of household duties and farm work too. He has no voice in the family. "He works in the family as a servant and is not taken care of when injured by the tractor. Bhaskar and Sudhir are self-centered and think of their family only. Although Chandu's future is dark, he is ready to sell his four acre land to pay the debts of Bansilal. Chandu is also a victim of traditions and family lineage" (Sanap, 2015: 157)

Then another generational conflict occurs between Tatyaji and Prabha. Prabha was a brilliant student and scored meritorious marks in 10<sup>th</sup> standard. Energized with the success she wanted to move to Amravati to get higher education, but father didn't agree with the girls to go to another town for education. Instead he told her to get ready for marriage out of the old culture that not to allow women out of the mansion. Family doesn't want Prabha's education for yet another reason that Sudhir was already taking education in town and the family couldn't afford education of both. Later, father and family bring some relations for Prabha for marriage but she went on rejecting each one of them and later she passed from her marriageable age. After Tatyaji's death she decided to demand her share in family jewelry to pursue her education and to settle in some job independently. Unfortunately her dreams went in vain when Ranju lost entire family treasure, made her shut the door of her room in utter distress. Speaking about the fate of Prabha and Ranju Sandhya Amrute maintain:

"A brilliant, having realisation of inner powers, keeping her own ambitions, thinking with wisdom only, having knowledge of changing time, having understand about outer life she is Prabha and a causal by nature, having no realisation of her inner potentials, no ambitions, no understanding of outer world, she is Ranju both comes to a common end. With the changing circumstances of the family they were not allowed to go



out. (Amrute, 1995: 120)

There is rural versus urban generational conflict depicted in the play i.e. sons of Bhaskar and the son of Sudhir. The effects of the lifestyle adopted by these two brothers could be seen in their sons. Bhaskar's son Parag is a college dropout and not on good track in village while Sudhir's son Abhay in Mumbai plays cricket and is expected to pass 12<sup>th</sup> standard with merit. In spite of being belong to the same generation Abhay doesn't find Parag as suitable as his company. Therefore, Parag who was grown up in a village is not suitable to the urban culture so rejected by his cousin Abhay. "Enough educational facilities in the city and aware parents about the career of the child, one of the successor of the Dharangaonkar Deshpande's fourth generation Abhay and there struck his future in the village that Parag, it was clear that their life streams will flow in different directions." (Arvikar, 2001: 42) In spite of the different way of bringing-up for these two successors of Deshpandes, the one who grows in village develops love for his cousin living in the city but the another who grows in city have no sensibility to his cousin living in village. Dr. Amrute reflects on this generation gap: "Abhay and Parag are the two end of the new generation. Abhay has blocked the Parag. In fact, the legacy of the Tatyaji means of the Deshpande's comes to both of them. But Abhay hasn't accepted it. Parag has to accept it. Therefore, he felt the meanings of love, care and sympathy. He loves the Abhay who lives distant; this is the longing of unbreakable blood relations. But Abhay has no such longing and attraction for Parag" (Amrute, 1995: 123) It is noteworthy here to understand that Abhay has come out of the traditional approach of family values. Therefore, on one hand Bansilal demolishes the back house of the Wada is indicative of the gone by reputed culture of the family but on the other hand Abhay has demolished the bond of love and care.

The last generational conflict could be seen with the three women who enjoy the place of being power women in the family one after another. Once upon a time Dadi was the power person when Aai came as daughter in law. When Dadi lost her husband, Aai came to her place and Dadi gradually lost her voice. Today Aai is facing the same challenge after she lost her husband Tatyaji. Till

yesterday the footsteps of Vahini were unheard, but now her voice could be heard with passing orders and sort of taking control of the situation in the Wada. The closing note of the play "Gradually Aai is begins to look like Dadi" (Oxford, 2009: 198) is highly indicative of generational conflict particularly for women where she lost her place under patriarchy to the next successor.

### Conclusion

Mahesh Elkunchwar's *The Old Stone Mansion* brings many issues of Conflict and generations gaps in the play. In the decade of 1980s when India was all set to enter into a new era of technology, the Deshpande's of the Dharangaon became representatives of the traditional orthodox Brahmin family which was passing through the transition from their old ways to the modernity. Therefore, the family divides into two ways of thinking. The cultural conflict from within the family and outside is an indicative of new ways of life came from the democratic air in the country. Prabha is the unfortunate woman in the play struggling to get out of the orthodox clutches. The family, on the other hand, is facing rebellion from the labourers and household help. Sudhir is the progressive person in the play who learns new economic ways and leaves a hope for the new generation. In the family of orthodox women old women were neglected. The Dadi receives no responses from the family members except diseased Tatyaji and now Chandu. Aai now becomes a widow after Tatyaji's death, she is also in the same way, the closing notes of the play maintained that she was also looking like Dadi creates a sensibility in the Elkunchwar's audiences. The playwright successfully depicted the agonies of these women in the play and left a question for society to think over the liberty of women from the traditional family outlook. The rural environment which crushes the dream of Prabhja is all set to crush the future prospectus for Parag and Ranju in the village. The playwright not only here is depicting the generational gap within the family but also laments over the pathetic situation turning against the new generation. The cultural and generational conflict towards the end of the drama seems to be merging into one that looks like the two sides of the same coin. The changing democratic air creates an urge to upgrade the living made the tenants

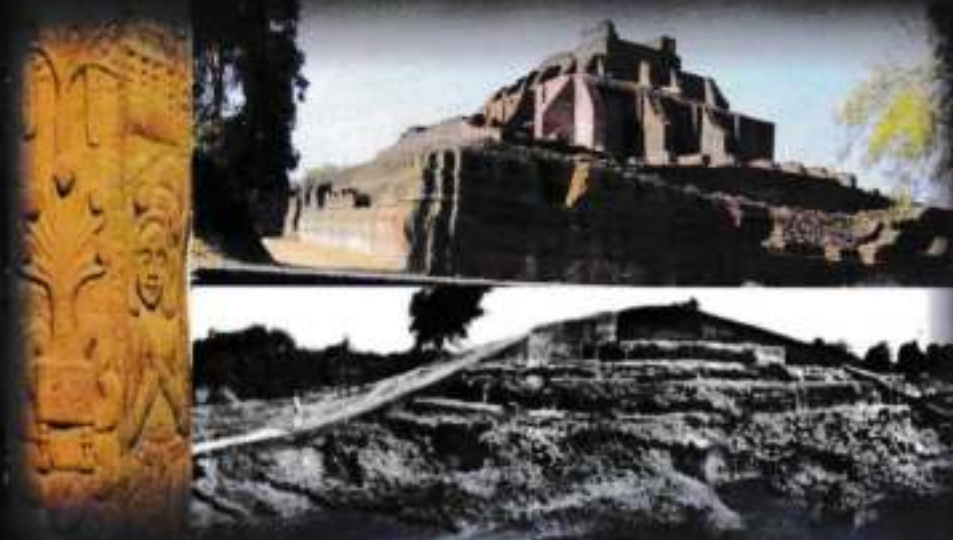
protest for their rights. With the mode of development in the light of urban pressure, a new generation in the village find themselves suffocated, so they start rebelling against the family limitations. In this way the playwright very successfully depicted the generational and cultural conflict in the play.

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## INDEX

S. No.	Title of Research Paper	Author	Page No.
1	Archaeological History of Art and Architecture in Gujarat: A Study of Buddhist Monuments	Dr. Alok Kumar Verma	1-7
2	A Study of Buddhist Remains in Karnataka	Dr. Suresha B.	8-15
3	Historic Traces of Ancient Hinayana Buddhist Learning Centre (University) of Valabhi	Dr. Sudesh M.B. Bhowate	16-23
4	Archaeology a Medium for Development of Buddhist Pilgrimage Sites	Mr. Rahul Rao	24-31
5	Ancient Education In The University Of Taxashila As Depicted In The Pali Literature	Ashwaveer W. Gajbhiye	32-38
6	Ratiocinative Perspective on Pali language literature and Buddhist Archeology	Alka W. Patil	39-45
7	Buddhism in Ashokan Edicts with special reference to Karnataka	Dr. Jayamma B.	46-52
8	Patience Ability for Harmonious Social Work: A Buddhist Perspective	Dr. Nilima Chauhan	53-56
9	The Jataka Tales In The Pali Canon Of Literature And In The Paintings Of Ajanta Caves: A Comparative Study	Dr. Megha Ramteke	57-65
10	त्रिरल डी बौद्ध-सनाज में भूमिका	डॉ. मनीष मेथाम	66-75
11	पालि भाषा में वर्णित बोधिसत्व संकल्पना का बौद्ध स्थापत्य कला पर द्र्भाव	प्रा. सरोज चौधरी (पण्डी) डॉ. प्रा. निरज न. बोधी	76-82
12	अमर्त्य सेन, जॉन रील्स एवं रॉबर्ट नीज़िक के नीति एवं न्याय के सिद्धांत की समालोचना	उमेश चंद्र दीक्षित	83-87
13	वेसावलि : पालि लिपिपिठक साहित्य में संदर्भित पुरातत्वीय अवशेष	डॉ. रोझा मेथाम	88-92
14	बौद्ध स्थापत्यकला एवम पालि साहित्य के संदर्भ में चैत्य गदाक्ष का महत्व	प्रा.डॉ.नागसेन लाङगे	93-97
15	दीपदंश ग्रंथ में वर्णित विहार	प्रा. नितीमा गजभिदे	98-102
16	सम्राट अशोक के जनिसेखों में शांति चेतना	प्रा. सुजित बनकर	103-109

Editor

## Historic Traces of Ancient Hinayana Buddhist Learning Centre (University) of Valabhi

*Dr. Sudesh M. B. Bhowate*

### Abstract:

India has a rich tradition of higher learning from ancient times. A tradition of learning seems to be initiated from the forest Ashramas and grows further in the historic developments to the skyscraper monasteries like Nalanda. The Buddhist Education System evolved vis-à-vis Vedikas and Jainas, but overshadows the other two from the period of the Great Emperor Asoka till the invasions from Arabs and other counter-revolutionary attempts. After the schism in Buddhist Sangha into Hinayana and Mahayana and especially following the decline in Maurya dynasty, increase in Mahayana activities was seen. During the heyday of Buddhist Universities in India many of the great Buddhist scholars reported to be the follower of Mahayana hence helped in the growth of historic Buddhist universities devoted to the Great Vehicle mostly. Unfortunately when we look for the sources for the Hinayana learning centers like Valabhi, a very few references are left scattered in the history about the education system. These (Hinayana) learning centers were equally superior in case of its education system and its scholar teachers, but remain unreported in the History. During his visit Xuangzang prominently mentioned Valabhi as the Hinayana learning center, but when we go through the report of all three Chinese travelers we are given more information of Mahayana following Universities than those of Hinayana. Historians compare the Nalanda university tradition to understand the Valabhi to come to an unclear conclusion; coincidentally they speak more of Nalanda and Taxila than the Valabhi. Therefore, the attempt of this paper is to connect different threads of references in the history about Buddhist Monastic education at ancient Vallabhi to develop a better understanding about the remnants of the center.

**Key Words:** Hinayana, Mahayana, Buddhist Monastery, Higher learning center, university, royal patronage, grants, Faxian, Xuangzang, I-Tsing, archeology, etc. Valabhi was one of the few known Hinayana based Buddhist universities in India. The remains of the Valabhi University are situated around its present day modern name Valabhipur in Bhavnagar district of Gujarat. The fame of the university which was situated in western India was quite equal to that of Nalanda which was the Mahayana based university. For educational status in ancient India the rivalry or competition between these two universities could be traced from the reports of Xuangzang and I-Tsing. Although we do not have much historical documents about the growth of the university and its teachers and scholars (except Gunamati



## Learning

times. A tradition grows further in the Nalanda. The and Jainas, but for Asoka till the After the schism following the seen. During the Buddhist scholars growth of historic fortunately when Valabhi, a very few a system. These education system During his visit learning center, but are given more of Hinayana. and the Valabhi to of Nalanda and is to connect stic education at remnants of the

learning center, archeology, etc. universities in India. present day modern of the university and which was India the rivalry in the reports of tical documents xcept Gunamati

and Shtirmati) as we get the list from the other ancient Buddhist universities, but archeological evidences and few references give us an idea about the quality of advanced education was being disseminated here considered all over the country for the higher jobs in royal courts. Coincidentally Valabhi during its heyday caters to the different religious beliefs especially Jainas and Saivas besides Buddhism. The documentary remains of the Valabhi give us an interesting picture of the time where religious tolerance amongst the followers was clearly evident. Intellectual and philosophical debates would decide the change or acceptance of certain beliefs. Scholars would prepare for years to challenge some scholars or Acharyas for debate. The University for Centuries enjoyed the royal patronage until its final culmination by Muslim invaders.

About the establishment of Valabhi, According to Radhakumud Mookerjee, "Nalanda had its rival in a university on the other side of India at Valabhi which was the capital of the Maitraka Kings for the period AD 475-777". (Mookerji, 1947: 585-586) Valabhi was founded by the Maitraka Kings in Saurashtra of Gujarat. As per documents Maitrakas were a war like tribe and Xuangzang called them as Kshatriyas. Dr. Krishnakumari in her Thesis maintained that "Maitakas were Kshatriya clan of the Yadava race and that their origin may probably be traced to the Mitra dynasty that ruled over the region around about Mathura". (Virji, 1955: 19) "This offshoot kingdom seems to have inherited the Gupta tradition of Royal patronage to monasteries, and Buddhism flourished at its capital Valabhi which rose to widespread fame as a center alike of learning and commerce under a dynasty of kings styling themselves 'Maitrakas' in their royal seals." (Dutt, 1962:224) From the documents it is clear that during the decline phase of Gupta dynasty one its Senapati named Bhatraka went westward in search of the region to develop as his kingdom. "Bhatraka carved out of the dissolving empire a feudatory state for himself in Sourashtra. He made Valabhi its capital and founded the dynasty named Maitraka. The third descended in the line Dronasimha, became an independent sovereign and took the title of Maharaja." (Dutt, 1962:225). Why Bhatraka was not calling himself as maharaja because, "he feared that it might be contested" (Virji, 1955: 24) Interestingly Maitrakas were the followers of Shaiva faith "the royal seal on their copperplate grants bear sign of Nandi (Shiva's Bull) above the name of founder of the dynasty, Bhatraka." (Dutt, 1962:225) Yet their patronage was enjoyed by the Buddhists without any discrimination.

About the place we get a clear report from Xuangzang who visited India during the seventh Century. He maintained in his records, "There are some hundred houses (families) or so, who possess a hundred lakhs. The rare and valuable products are here stored in great quantities. There are some hundred sangharams, with about 600 priests. Most of them study the little vehicle, according to the Sammatiya School. There are several hundred deva temples with

very many sects of different sorts. (Beal, 1884: 66-67) Xuangzang gives us an idea that many rich people lived in this part that were the sources of patronage to the Buddhist education here and over hundred Sangharams means a complex of educational centers. It was the region where Buddha already paid a visit. Xuangzang also heard about the Buddha's dwelling in this region. "When Tathagata lived in the world, he often traveled through this country. Hence Asoka-raja raised monuments or built stupas in all those places where Buddha rested. Scattered among these are spots where the three past Buddhas sat down, or walked, or preached the law". (Beal, 1884:267). Therefore, the region around Valabhi had already come under the influence of Buddha's teachings from his lifetime and later Ashoka built stupas and many monuments to guide locals for Buddhist practices. The Buddhist educational center was already taking shape before the foundation of Maitrakas bringing this region under their rule. "It might have been promulgated there, as in southern Gujrat (Aparant), by the Buddhists of Ceylon (Sinhadvipa). The name of one of these Buddhists, according to the edicts of Asoka, the Mahavamsa and Dipvamsa, was Dharmarakshita". (Virji, 1955: 170) During the reign of king Milinda this region enjoyed popularity. Talking about the fame of Valabhi, even I-Tsing reported the existence of Valabhi as the Buddhist higher learning centre equal to Nalanda. The earliest reference to Buddhism in Valabhi is found in copper plate of Dhruvsena I. "In I-Tsing's time there were two pre-eminent centers of learning in India- Nalanda in the east and Valabhi in the West. Speaking of the 'Method of learning in west (i.e. India), I tsing says that it was usual for learners, after preliminary training, to resort to Nalanda or to Valabhi for further studies". (Dutt, 1962:230)

During the visit of Xuangzang, the King Druvapata was ruling the country who was a Kshatriya as other rulers in the country. He is the nephew of Siladitya-raja of Malava, and son-in-law of the son of Siladitya. According to Xuangzang, "He is of a lively and hasty disposition; his wisdom and statecraft are shallow. Quite recently he has attached himself sincerely to faith in the three "Precious ones." Yearly he summons a great assembly, and for seven days gives away most valuable gems, exquisite meats, and on the priests he bestows in charity the three garments and medicaments, or their equivalent in value, and precious articles made of rare and costly gems of the seven sorts". (Beal, 1884: 267) Here when Xuangzang mentioned the "three precious ones" indicating his attachment to Buddhist three triple gems. Like the previous Buddhist kings he too was organizing Buddhist assemblies where he would be generously supporting the Buddhists.

Close to the Valabhi city a big Sanghrama was established and was flourishing during Xuangzang's visit. He reported that "the great sangharama was built by the Arhat Achara ('O-che-lo) ; here the Bodhisattvas Gunamati and Sthiramati (Kien-hwui) fixed their residences during their travels and composed



treatises which have gained a high renown". (Beal, 1884: 268) Dipakkumar Barua confirmed the fact of Arhat Acharya with Sanskrit evidence. "This information (of Arhat Acharya) was supplemented by a grant of Dharasena II of Valabhi, in which the Sanskrit name of the founder was given as Atharya". (Barua, 1969: 60-61) "This monastery was known as the BAPPAPADIYA monastery (monastery of the father) as was found in a grant to this vihara, made by King Druvasena II in circa AC 588". (Barua, 1969: 61)

The period of the establishment of the great Sangharama was not reported but it must be during and after the Ashoka's period, as we got evidence of Ashoka's patronage to Buddhism to this part. Therefore, Buddhism was flourishing around Valabhi, Hinayana and Pudgalvadin in particular. According to Sukumar Dutta, "The growth of Valabhi as a centre of Hinayana Buddhism seems to have started contemporaneously with the foundation of the Maitraka dynasty itself. Bhattraka was not Buddhist Himself, but a Saiva. Yet an old monastery associated with his name, it's referred to as 'Bhattraka Monastery' in one of the grants (AD 567) of Guhasena, suggesting its foundation by Bhattraka himself. (Dutt, 1962:226) He indicated Bhattraka as the founder of the Bhattraka Monastery, but we already know that Buddhism was available here and to that Buddha's dwelling was evident through the tradition reported by Xuangzang. Therefore, Hinayana was already introduced to this part before Bhattraka granted financial support to the Sangharama.

Following Bhattraka's reign the successor of the dynasty continued the grants to the Buddhist Monastic practices here by granting finances to the Monasteries and ceremonies. Bhattraka's granddaughter Dudda's monastery then became the nucleus of an extensive monastic group known as the 'Dudda' group of monasteries and was looked after by the State. (Dutt, 1962:226) King Dharsena later grants finances to build a vihara for Acharya Sthirmati. Radhakumud Mukerjee supported the same. "Again in AD 580, King Dharasena I made a grant in favour of another vihara called Sri Bappada which was founded by Acharya Bhadanta Sthiramati". (Mookerji, 1947: 585-586)

As a matter of fact the different monasteries were the outcome of generosity of royal patronage and local merchants. The monasteries built from the grants of the Bhattraka's successors and Buddhist following local rich merchants are as follows:

1. Buddhadasa Vihara named after Acharya Bhadant Buddhadasa
2. Abhaytarika Vihara built by Nimma
3. Kaka Vihara built by Merchant named Kaka
4. Gohaka vihara built by Gohaka,
5. Vimalagupta Vihara built by Acarya Vimalagupta
6. Stiramati Vihara built by Sthiramati (probably not the Vasubandhu's descipel Sthirmati)

The complex of Buddhist monasteries indicated the different Buddhist schools under its nikaya's and under acharya's were established under the royal patronages helps develop Buddhist educational environment.

As a matter of fact, the Dudda Mandala of monasteries was for the use of monks only. But there was another Mandala founded by one Yaksasri, which was intended for nuns. It was always tradition that Buddhist sangha Nunneries are quite separate from the Monk's residents, but they are close to them. In Valabhi also we can locate these two mandala's were developed for Monks and Nuns separately. According to Sukumar Dutt, The names of these nunneries too appear from the grants:

1. Yaksasri vihara built by Yaksasri
2. Purnannabhata Vihara built by Purnannabhata
3. Ajita Vihar was built by merchant Ajita.

"Both Siladitya I and Dhruvasena II made grants to some of these nunneries" (Dutt, 1962:228)

From the grants to the monasteries and local Buddhist practices it is indicated that they were all related to the Hinayana sect of eighteen Nikayas. "The grants refer to the resident monk-community as 'Arya Bhiksu Sangha, or as in Guhasena's grant, as Sakyarya Bhiksu Sangha of eighteen Schools (Nikayas)- the traditional numbers of schools in Hinayana Buddhism". (Dutt, 1962:228-229) From the grants sanctioned by the royal patronage it is also evident that these grants were given to the Mahayana school of Buddhism which was also established around the main mandalas. "Druvasena II made a grant to the Monastery at the village of Yodhavaka, built by one Skadabhata, the resident sangha of which is described in the grant as 'Maha-nikaya Arya Bhiksu Sangha' where the expression Maha-Nikaya, most probably means Mahayanist. (Dutt, 1962: 229) Dr. Krishnakumari referred in her thesis that, "In the hey-day of Valabhi, i.e. in sixth and the seventh centuries, the chief form of religion must have been Mahayanism. it is possible that the influence of Nalanda was responsible for the growth of the Mahayana sect in Valabhi. The form of Mahayana that prevailed in Valabhi was that of the Stavira school" (Virji, 1955: 176)

From the Buddhist monastic tradition we learnt that Buddha Viharas are built to provide shelter to monks, for discourses and training of novices. The Valabhi monasteries were no exception to this. In the book 'Viharas in Ancient India', Dipak Kumar Barua maintained that The Valabhi monasteries were built, as the inscriptions related, for three reasons, e.g. (a) to lodge the Buddhist Sangha which gathered together from different quarter, and considered of Bhikkhus who practiced the eighteen nikayas. (b) For the worship of Buddha-image and (c) for the installation and maintenance of books (library). (Barua, 1969: 61) The special grants to the library indicate the higher learning centers at Valabhi besides the



scholars who are creating the inscriptions here. The grants were sanctioned by the royal patronages to purchase the manuscripts and books. "This monastery was equipped with a library which was considered deserving a royal grant for the express provisions for purchase of books (saddarmasya pustakopanchayartham, in grant of Guhasena I of AD 559.)" (Mookerji, 1947: 586)

Besides the building of monasteries and library aids, the royal patronage provided grants for the day to day ceremonies performed in the monastery. The regular ritual performance was quite expensive which might not be possible through the support of the lay followers. Therefore, royal patronage was received for various items required for the performance of rituals. Sukumar Dutt mentioned that "In the Hinayanist monastery in Valabhi, Buddhapuja the ritual image worship seems to have been a major activity of the monks, attended with due rites and ceremonies. The Kings on their grants provide for it; they include in the items of expenditure the cost of incense, lamps, oil, flowers". (Dutt, 1962:228-229) According to Xuanzang image of seven Buddha in a Vihara built by the King Siladitya shows that the worship of the image of previous Buddha and Gautama Buddha was in vogue in the Valabhi era. I-Tsing also reported of details of the way in which Buddhist image was bathed and worshipped. "The priest in charge of performing the ceremony of worshiping the image was known as the padmala and the grants made special provision for his livelihood". (Virji, 1955: 175) Sukumar Dutt further maintained that "Buddhist Vihara of the age, as we gather from the Chinese records were open to all learners, Manavakas (ordinary pupils) as well as monks, it was not necessary to be ordained to take advantage of the learning dispensed by them. The Saivait Maitrakas would not be concerned with the propagation of Buddhism". (Dutt, 1962: 231) This indicates that Maitrakas were tolerant towards the propagation of Buddhism in their kingdom by the Buddhist monastics while they themselves followed the Saiva belief.

It is a matter of interest to know the skilled scholars of the Valabhi University and their further career. As we have seen that both monks and lay persons could earn education here, therefore, laypersons did have a high prospect of getting recognized by the royal patronages to serve the court. Mookerji maintains that "Students of Valabhi like those of Nalanda, after graduation, used to present their theories and even demonstrate their administrative talent to be employed in government services related to I-tsing. This shows that Valabhi provided for other studies than the purely religious secular vidyas like dharma, Niti, Vartta, Chikitsa Sastras. (Mookerji, 1947: 586) Altekar mentioned that the fame of the university was such that from the eastern part of India Brahmins would think of sending their wards to learn here. "Like Nalanda, Valabhi also was not an exclusively Buddhist or Monastic center of Learning. Even Brahmanas from the distant Gangetic plain used to send their sons to that place for higher education". (Altekar, 1944: 124)

The courses taught in the university were completed in two to three years with rigorous teaching learning sessions as monastics. Like Nalanda it was known for the intellectual environment. Here not only monastic education was disseminated but also scientific education was imparted on the basis of religion. "The university was famous for its catholicity and intellectual freedom. We are told that the scholars from all parts of India used to assemble at Valabhi and stay there for at least two or three years to discuss 'possible and impossible doctrines'". (Altekar, 1944: 124). Altekar further maintains that since Maitakas were generous towards higher learning "give direct grants for the purpose of meeting the general expenses of the University as also for strengthening its library" (Altekar, 1944: 124). The scholars who completed their courses in the university received special recognition from the community and Kings in particular. "They used to receive some financial help to enable them to start their life. This continued to be the case till c. 775 A. D. when the reigning dynasty succumbed to an Arab attack, which resulted in the destruction of the city and of the University. (Altekar, 1944: 124) the beginning Arab invasion began from the north-west and later to western part of the country, therefore, Valabhi came under primary Arab attacks which caused its destruction. Sukumar Dutt rejects the possibility of destruction coming from Rashtrakutas of the time. "It came from the Tadjika (Arab) invaders-perhaps at some time in the eighties of the eighth century AD. They reduced all its edifice to rubble and dust including the Maitraka monasteries. (Dutt, 1962: 231) The Rashtrakutas kings like Dantivarman and Dharavarsa provided grants to the Kampilya monasteries on the outskirts of Surat. "A copperplate inscription of Dantivarman dated S. 789 (AC 867) recorded that, after bathing in the river Puravi (Purna), the King donated lands at the request of the monk, Stiramati, in favour of the Kampilya Vihara, where there lived five hundred Bhikkus of Sinddhudesa. It may be presumed that the Buddhist monkish community migrating from Sindh, due to probably Muslim aggression there, established a monastery at Kalimpya which was already regarded as a sacred spot". (Barua. 1969: 64) the movement of Arab invasion could be traced here during the eighth century from the North-west pushing the Buddhist activities towards south.

In a nutshell, the region of Saurashtra blessed with the dwelling of Buddha himself and later came under the royal patronage of Emperor Ashoka, gives us the idea that the region was came under influence of Buddha's teaching from the beginning and from the Ashoka's reign Buddhist monastic shelters were being built. The beginning of higher learning as per the historic evidence shows that Maitraka kings came to this region during the decline of Gupta dynasty and established the Valabhi as their kingdom. The status of kingdom to the Valabhi helped flourishing the monastic education on university level here with the royal patronage provided by the Maitraka kings and their successors. The significant contribution came also from the local Buddhist following merchants for the



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building of monasteries and its maintenance. The fame of the university was not less than the Nalanda which was the Mahayana educational center. The development of Hinayana educational center at Valabhi with its scholars' recognition all over the country was noteworthy. Unfortunately the death blow came from the Arab invasion which caused the complete destruction. Though the primary setback occurred in the eighth century, it continued to survive till the twelfth century when the forceful Arab aggression caused the complete extinction of the university. Yet the university created its high benchmark being only Hinayana University in India.

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