

ANTAR RASHTRIYA SAHAYOG PARISHAD BULLETIN

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THE FIRST SETTLEMENT

(Continued from the Previous issue)



We had thus been in jail for a fortnight, when fresh arrivals brought the news that there were going on some negotiations about a compromise with the Government. After two or three days Mr. Albert Cartwright, editor of *The Transvaal Leader*, a Johannesburg daily, came to see me.

All the daily papers then conducted in Johannesburg were the property of one or the other of the European owners of the gold mines, but except in cases where the interests of these magnates were at stake, the editors were unfettered in the expression of their own views on all public questions. Only very able and well-known men were selected as editors. For instance the editor of *The Daily Star* had formerly been Private Secretary to Lord Milner, and later went to England to take Mr. Buckle's place as editor of *The Times*. Mr. Albert Cartwright of *The Transvaal Leader* was as broad-minded as he was able. He had almost always supported the Indian cause in his columns. He and I had become good friends. He saw General Smuts after I was sent to jail. General Smuts welcomed his mediation. Mr. Cartwright thereupon met the Indian leaders, who said, 'We know nothing about legal technicalities, and cannot

possibly talk about compromise so long as Gandhi is in prison. We desire settlement, but if Government wants it while our men are in jail, you should see Gandhi. We will ratify any arrangement which he accepts.'

Mr. Cartwright thus came to see me and brought with him terms of settlement drafted or approved of by General Smuts. I did not like the vague language of the document, but was all the same prepared myself to put my signature to it with one alteration. However, I informed Mr. Cartwright, that I could not sign without consulting my fellow-prisoners, even if I took the consent of the Indians outside prison for granted.

The substance of the proposed settlement was that the Indians should register voluntarily, and not under any law; that the details to be entered in the new certificates of registration should be settled by Government in consultation with the Indian community, and, that if the majority of the Indians underwent voluntary registration, Government should repeal the Black Act, and take steps with a view to legalize the voluntary registration. The draft did not make quite clear the condition which required Government to repeal the Black Act, I therefore suggested a change calculated to place this beyond all doubt from my own standpoint.

Mr. Cartwright did not like even this little addition and said, 'General Smuts considers this draft to be final. I have approved of it myself, and I can assure you that if you all undergo re-

registration, the Black Act is bound to be repealed.'

I replied, 'Whether or not there is a settlement, we shall always be grateful to you

for your kindness and help. I should not like to suggest a single unnecessary alteration in the draft. I do not object to such language as would uphold the prestige of Government. But where I myself am doubtful about the meaning, I must certainly suggest a change of language, and if there is to be a settlement after all, both the parties must have the right to alter the draft. General Smuts need not confront us with an ultimatum, saying that these terms are final. He has already aimed one pistol in the shape of the Black Act at the Indians. What can he hope to gain by aiming a second?'

Mr. Cartwright had nothing to say against this argument, and he promised to place my suggestion for the change before General Smuts.

I consulted my fellow-prisoners. They too did not like the language, but agreed to the settlement if General Smuts would accept the draft with my amendment. New-comers to jail had brought a message from the leaders outside, that I should accept any suitable compromise without waiting for their consent. I got Messers Leuing Quinn and Thambi Naidoo to sign the



M K Gandhi





draft along with myself and handed it to Mr. Cartwright.

The second or third day, on January 30, 1908, Mr. Vernon, the Superintendent of Police, Johannesburg, took me to Pretoria to meet General Smuts, with whom I had a good deal of talk. He told me what had passed between him and Mr. Cartwright. He congratulated me on the Indian community having remained firm even after my imprisonment, and said, 'I could never entertain a dislike for your people. You know I too am a barrister. I had some Indian fellow students in my time. But I must do my duty. The Europeans want this law, and you will agree with me, that these are mostly not Boers, but Englishmen. I accept the alteration you have suggested in the draft. I have

consulted General Botha also, and I assure you that I will repeal the Asiatic Act as soon as most of you have undergone voluntary registration. When the bill legalizing such registration is drafted, I will send you a copy for your criticism. I do not wish there should be any recurrence of the trouble and I wish to respect the feelings of your people.'

So saying General Smuts rose. I asked him, 'Where am I to go? And what about the other prisoners?'

The General laughed and said, 'You are free this very moment. I am phoning to the prison officials to release the other prisoners tomorrow morning. But I must advise you not to go in for many meetings or demonstrations, as in that case Government will find itself in an awkward position.'

I replied, 'You may rest assured, that there will not be a single meeting

simply for the sake of it. But I will certainly have to hold meetings in order to explain to the community how the settlement was effected, what its nature and scope, and how it has added four responsibilities.'

'Of such meetings,' said General Smuts, 'you may have as many as you please. It is sufficient that you have understood what I desire in the matter.'

It was then seven o'clock in the evening. I had not a single farthing in my pocket. The Secretary of General Smuts gave me the railway fare to Johannesburg. There was no need to stop at Pretoria and announce the settlement to the Indians there. The leaders were all in Johannesburg, which was our headquarters. There was now only one more train for Johannesburg, and I was able to catch it.

(To be Continued)

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PURNACHANDRA RAO SURAPANENI ELECTED AS PRESIDENT OF THE INDO-AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Purnachandra Rao Surapaneni, a Hyderabad-based industrialist, has been elected as national President of the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce (IACC). He is the second Telugu entrepreneur to be elected as the head of the 52-year-old body. Surapaneni was elected unanimously at the first meeting of the IACC's newly-elected national governing board for 2020-2021. According to a statement, Surapaneni brings with him rich experience and knowledge in the Indo-US bilateral trade.

The 60-year-old Surapaneni is currently the managing director of Global Infovision Pvt Ltd. An expert in

Indo-US bilateral trade, he was the national Vice President of the IACC in 2018-2020. His association with the IACC over many years will help to lead the chamber in the direction of further improving the Indo-US business relationship, the statement said. Responding to his election, Surapaneni outlined his goals and priorities that include improved trade activity by continuously engaging the members of the chamber with various business activities and closely working with the government. He also stated that the chamber will maintain a good relationship with US consulates and their commercial attaches in India. □

MAHATMA GANDHI'S JOURNEY THROUGH EUROPE AND AFRICA IN THE SHAPING OF HIS PHILOSOPHY OF SWARAJ THROUGH SATYAGRAHA

✍ Dr. Ruchi Verma

This is the extended year of the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and several events and activities are being organized within and outside India to remember, highlight and disseminate the contributions of Gandhiji. The Antar-Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad (ARSP), an organization that has been dealing with diaspora for almost 50 years, also organized and participated in several events especially relating to Gandhiji's association with diaspora. The ARSP in collaboration with Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti (GSDS), New Delhi had also organised an international conference on "Mahatma Gandhi and Diaspora" in September, 2019.

As 150th Anniversary year is now approaching its conclusion, the ARSP and Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti jointly organized another international conference through virtual mode on "Mahatma Gandhi's journey through Europe and Africa in the shaping of his philosophy of Swaraj through Satyagraha", also often referred to as 'the making of the Mahatma' on 12 September, 2020. It may be recalled, Gandhiji spent several years of his initial life in South Africa where later he developed his philosophy and tools of non-violent civil disobedience, finally culminating in his well known philosophy of Satyagraha. The principles of Satyagraha were first practiced by Gandhiji for protecting the basic rights of the Indian community in South Africa, which later expanded more widely to the larger struggle for justice, equity and freedom, including the Indian independence movement.

The Chief Guest for the conference was Shri V Muraleedharan, Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs, Government of India. The conference had a very distinguished panel of speakers which included Ms. Ela Gandhi, a known Gandhian scholar from South Africa; Dr. Armoogum Parsuramen, Former Mauritian Minister of Education; Prof. Emeritus Satendra Nandan, Former Fijian Minister; Dr Rajendran T. Govender, Social Cohesion Advocate, Government of South Africa and Mr. Nirode Bramdaw, journalist and author, Durban.

From the ARSP, Shri Shyam Parande, Secretary General, chaired the inaugural session whereas Amb Mudgal, Chairperson DRRC, chaired the technical session and also introduced the theme of the conference developing the Gandhiji's experience from childhood in India; education in the UK and experience in South Africa leading to the core philosophy of Swaraj through Satyagraha. Amb. Virendra Gupta, President ARSP gave the opening statement, concentrating mostly on Gandhiji's life in South Africa including his close association with Indian diaspora. He also highlighted the rationale for Gandhiji's emphasis on non-violence and satyagraha and spelt out the step by step evolution of the universality of Gandhian philosophy. Shri Dipanker Shri Gyan, Director of GSDS especially emphasized on Gandhiji's concept of sarvodaya linking it to gram swarajya. Hon. Director of ARSP, Shri Narayan Kumar summed up the conference by again retracing the core values of ahimsa, truth in the genesis of the concept of satyagraha.

In his inaugural address, Hon'ble Minister described the values and principles which guided Gandhiji's journey through Europe and Africa in the development of his concepts of non-violent struggle culminating in a powerful comprehensive philosophy of satyagraha. The Hon'ble Minister recalled the acts of injustice of the colonial exploitation which compelled Gandhiji to look for solutions even beyond the sheer application of law. He emphasized that the Indian values of 'aparigraha' and 'sama-bhava' played a central role in the gandhian approach to fighting injustice and discrimination, culminating in the powerful campaign for 'swaraj through satyagraha'.

Ms. Ela Gandhi primarily highlighted Gandhiji's emphasis on free and critical thinking, secular values, encouragement of participation of women in decision-making and socio-economic justice. She also cautioned against creating misleading narratives based on incomplete understanding of gandhian philosophy.

Dr Parsuramen concentrated on

Gandhiji's calls and efforts for empowering the ordinary people. He recalled Gandhiji's advice for the indentured communities to send their children to schools and to take part in the political process. Gandhiji left a very deep impression on Indo-Mauritian leadership.

Prof. Nandan made an emotional appeal for better and comprehensive learning of gandhian life, as his philosophy was most aptly conveyed by his own experiences and experimentation with 'truth' as it evolved during the course of his stay in Europe, South Africa and beyond. Prof. Nandan pointed out that the salience of Gandhiji's message was the product of his own experimentation with the tools for finding answers to the complex challenges facing the humanity.

Dr Govender tried to establish similarities in philosophies of Gandhiji and Nelson Mandela in terms of commitment to truthful causes, empowering the disadvantaged, justice and equity in governance and individual sovereignty.

Mr Bramdaw highlighted Gandhiji's core contribution to South African liberation struggle specifically and mentioned his influence over African National Congress leadership. South African liberation leaders had been honoured by 3 noble peace prize winners, all of were influenced by Gandhiji- Albert Lutuli, Desmond Mpilo Tutu and Nelson Mandela.

There was a consensus for continuing discussion on the larger gandhian philosophy for carrying it to the younger generation, especially as non-violence remain the only hope for finding sustainable solutions to the contemporary challenges.

The Webinar was attended by the large and distinguished audience both from India and abroad.

The DRRC will bring out the proceedings of the conference, carrying the detailed messages of all the dignitaries, in the form of a book. □

WEBINAR ORGANIZED by ARSP, MEERUT CHAPTER

Current year happens to be the Birth Centenary Year of Late Shri Baleshwar Agrawal, Founder Secretary General of Antar-Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad. Various chapters of ARSP are celebrating this occasion by organizing online meetings/webinars on issues relating



to different countries that were close to the heart of late Baleshwar Agrawal ji.

Meerut Chapter of ARSP and Antar-Rashtriya Bharat Tibet Sahyog Samiti, Meerut organized a web goshthi, on the eve of seventieth anniversary of entry of Chinese army into sovereign state of Tibet, on October 6, 2020 on the topic, "Tibet: Issues & Their Impact on India". A large number of distinguished persons and eminent intellectuals attended the Web goshthi. Hon'ble Shri Karma Yeshi, Finance Minister of Central Tibetan Administration (Tibet Government in Exile); Prof. Kuldeep Agnihotri, Vice Chancellor of Central University Himachal Pradesh; Professor Anand Kumar (ex HOD of Sociology at JNU) and Shri Shyam Parande, Secretary General of ARSP addressed the Web goshthi. Amb. Virendra Gupta, President of ARSP presided and compared the Web goshthi.

Programme began with a video display of a melodious song by Tibetan Singer Pasang Dolma La, thanking Hind (India) for its help rendered to the Tibetans. Shri Anil Gupta, In charge of Meerut Chapter of ARSP introduced the subject. He gave a brief account of Tibetan history of past ten millennia and Indo-Tibetan relations during past two millennia. He

told that if the then Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru had helped Tibet during the entry of Chinese army into Tibet on October 7, 1950, China would have never come on the borders of India. He also referred to the 1904 treaty of British Indian authorities with the sovereign Tibetan govt. Even the treaty of 1906 between the British India and Chinese didn't mention Chinese suzerainty over Tibet. In the past Tibet had ruled over vast territories of China. Sinkiang had Hindu Buddhist culture.

Shri Shyam Parande gave a brief introduction of ARSP and Late Shri Baleshwar Agrawal who had strong affinity towards Tibet. Dr. D.K. Paul, President of ARBTSS gave a brief account of ARBTSS.

In his power point presentation Shri Vijay Kranti presented various dimensions of Tibetan issue. With the help of Pictures, maps and charts he cautioned the country that the problem of Tibet is essentially security issue of India. China has rapidly changed the demographic composition of Tibet and settled a large number of Chinese of Han clan far in excess of native Tibetans. China has also built many dams for diverting the course of several rivers originating from Tibet and flowing through India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan. These

dams can be used in times of standoffs as water bombs endangering security of many countries of the region. They are developing Tibet as a launching pad against India.

Prof. Anand Kumar, another expert on Tibet, called for raising

awareness about Tibet and its security implications for India. He expressed his dismay over ignorance about Tibet even among most of our elected representatives.

Professor Kuldeep Agnihotri gave a vivid account of the Tibetan problem and highlighted the sacrifice of Nyma Tenzin, a Tibetan jawan of ITBP, who laid his life defending India against Chinese incursion during recent Galvan skirmishes.

Tibetan Finance Minister Hon'ble Shri Karma Yeshi spoke about the present position of some 150 thousand Tibetan refugees living in different countries out of whom two thirds are living in India. He thanked Indian government and people for the help and support extended to them during past six decades in preserving the Tibetan language, culture and traditions.

Amb. Virendra Gupta, in his presidential address, spoke about his meetings with H.H. Dalai Lama. During question answer round, the issue of the autonomy of Tibet under the Chinese constitution was raised.

Prof. S.N.Gupta of ARSP Noida chapter proposed a vote of thanks. □

SEWA INTERNATIONAL DONATES \$1 Million Worth of Supplies to Coronavirus–Affected Families and Wildfire Victims in Northern California

Since the pandemic started in March 2020, Sewa International Bay Area Chapter has served approximately 20,000 families across Northern California by distributing essential supplies such as fresh fruits, vegetables, milk, and groceries valued



around one million dollars, and given away \$300,000 to 300 families affected by the pandemic.

Sewa volunteers have distributed more than 200,000 pounds of essential items to vulnerable populations by organizing donation drives and give-away events in cities across the Bay Area, including San Jose, Santa Clara, Sunnyvale, Hayward, Livermore, Concow, Oroville, and Santa Cruz. Over the past six months, 90 Sewa volunteers have spent 15,000 hours serving people affected by the pandemic and California wildfires.

“Our volunteers have been working hard to support and help families across the Bay Area that have suffered innumerable losses through the recent unforeseen events. Many of the families being helped have been hit doubly hard: quite a few are currently living in their cars or in tents because their homes were destroyed in the wildfire that hit the area hard in November 2018, and now, to make

matters even worse, many have lost their jobs because of the pandemic,” said Sewa International Bay Area Chapter Coordinator, Guru Prasad.

Upcoming Event on October 3:

“Sewa will be conducting a donation drive On October 3, 2020, to help more than 200 families affected by the pandemic and the wildfires in Santa Clara. Sanitizers and other hygiene products along with more than 200 boxes of fruits and vegetables will be distributed on that day,” Guruprasad said.

Providing details of the help Sewa International has provided, Guruprasad said, “food, essential supplies, and monetary donations have been distributed to individuals of all ages and ethnic, religious and national backgrounds. About 42 percent of it has been given to low-income families, 25 percent to the homeless, 12 percent to seniors, 10 percent to wildfire victims, five percent

each to poor children and first responders such as firefighters”.

Guruprasad thanked Sewa International's partner organizations for joining hands by volunteering, donating, and distributing valuable supplies. Barbara Halliday, Mayor of the City

of Hayward, expressed her gratitude to Sewa International: “There is a lot of need in general..., and we have a lot of really good organizations ready to help, and it means so much that we are saving families.”

Ron Broomfield, Warden at the San Quentin State Prison, stated in a recent letter: “This donation [of face masks, face shields, and hand sanitizers] will provide much-needed assistance to our staff. San Quentin is truly grateful to you for the donation.”

Recent Food Drives

Some of the food and essential items drives Sewa International has conducted in the Bay area recently include the following:

- 1) On Saturday, September 19, 2020, Sewa International, in collaboration with Tiny Pine Foundation and other partner organizations, donated one truckload of almost 5000 lbs. of



fresh fruits and other groceries, hygiene products, batteries, cleaning supplies, diapers, hot food, and gift cards for 700+ fire evacuees and needy families in Oroville, Butte County.

- 2) On Friday, September 18, 2020, in collaboration with HCCC Livermore Temple and Livermore School District, donated 200 boxes (4,000 lbs.) of canned groceries and fresh fruits and vegetables.
- 3) On Saturday, September 12, 2020, Sewa International volunteers, with the help of Santa Clara Council Member Raj Chahal, distributed almost 3000 lbs. of fresh fruits and vegetables among the underprivileged community within the City of Santa Clara.
- 4) On Saturday, September 12, 2020, Sewa donated one truckload of hygiene products, batteries, cleaning supplies, diapers, sleeping bags, tents, hot food, and 3000 lbs. of fresh fruits, produce, groceries, and gift cards for more than 500 fire evacuees and needy families in Marysville, Butte County along with Tiny Pine Foundations and several other partner organizations. It was a true act of "Together we serve better".

Since the start of the pandemic, Sewa International Bay Area Chapter has donated close to 100,000 KN95, N95, surgical masks, FEMA masks, and face shields to beneficiary institutes including the United States Postal Service, Valley Medical Center, Kaiser Permanente, San Ramon Police Department, City of Sunnyvale, and the City of Cupertino, San Quentin State Prison, and many others. The Bay Area Chapter has also played an instrumental role in helping stranded passengers and students. In addition,

Sewa International has provided or organized the following:

Financial Assistance: Almost \$300,000 have been donated to close to 700 households that include 238 children. These are deserving families who have been financially impacted and challenged by the COVID-19 situation in Santa Clara County. Gift cards were delivered to Hispanic/Latino, Asian, and African American families in suffering communities.

Sewa Helplines: Helplines have been set up all over the United States to help and support individuals in need during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Sewa International currently has 10 nationwide helplines for non-medical advice, VISA or travel-related questions and food deliveries. Sewa Bay Area has helped stranded travelers in arranging their travel back home and find temporary housing until getting a flight back home.

Northern California fire victims' relief work: Sewa International has been instrumental in distributing food and essential items to victims of the fire who are now sheltered in evacuation centers since the start of lightning fires in August. Distributions were made at the following shelters: Salvation Army shelters, Motel 6, Comfort Inn in Vallerio Butano Canyon Fires, Half Moon Bay, and around Santa Cruz and Pescadero, Napa Valley, Vallejo. Other donation events planned include the distribution of medicines, batteries, food, sleeping bags, and household essentials to families affected by recent lightning fires.

Our Local Partners : With more than 2500 volunteers across 43 chapters and in collaboration with over 800 organizations across the country, Sewa International has committed to supporting all essential workers and service industries in these trying

times. Through this extensive nationwide network of hardworking volunteers, Sewa International has donated close to 700,000 masks, 1,000 liters of sanitizer, 63,000 hot meals, and over \$100,000 to food pantries during this COVID-19 crisis.

About Sewa International

Sewa International, a leading Hindu faith-based Indian American nonprofit organization, has extensive experience in disaster rescue, relief, and rehabilitation operations having responded to 24 disasters in the US and abroad. In 2017, after Hurricane Harvey struck the Houston area, Sewa volunteers helped in the rescue of nearly 700 people and have served thousands of affected families since then through their case management service. Sewa raised over \$3 million for Hurricane Harvey recovery, Sewa continues to rebuild homes and greenhouses that serve as a means of livelihood. Sewa International has also rendered relief in the wake of Hurricane Maria in 2018 and Hurricane Imelda in 2019. Sewa teams in the San Francisco Bay Area continue to build and donate tiny homes for those rendered homeless in the California Camp Fire of November 2018.

Among its other accolades, Sewa International has been recognized by Charity Navigator – the premier nonprofit rating agency – as the number five among the "10 Highly Rated Charities Relying on Private Contributions." Sewa has for the last three years continuously scored the topmost-rated 4-star from Charity Navigator and has earned perfect scores for its Financial Health and Accountability & Transparency.

For more information on Sewa International and its activities, please visit www.sewausa.org. □

Hindi Divas 2020

KNOW WHY WE CELEBRATE THE HINDI DAY ON 14 SEPTEMBER

Hindi Divas is celebrated on the 14th of September, to commemorate the adoption of Hindi in Devanagari script, with international form of Indian numerals, as the official language of the Union of India.

It was due to the persistent efforts of Beohar Rajendra Simha along with Dr Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, Kaka Kalelkar, Maithili Sharan Gupta and Seth Govind Das for several years, that Hindi was adopted as the official language by the Constituent Assembly of India on the very 50th birthday of Beohar Rajendra Simha on the 14th of September 1949. This provision is contained in the Constitution of India that came into force on the 26th of January 1950. Under Article 343 of the Constitution, Hindi in Devanagari script, with international form of Indian numerals, is the official language of the Union of India.

Every year the day is celebrated by giving out awards by the President of India in different categories for excellence in different fields pertaining to Hindi. Schools and other educational institutions and government organisations also celebrate the day with carrying out various events and programmes.

Along with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, many eminent personalities extended their wishes on the day. PM Modi took to twitter to wish the countrymen. He wrote, "Wish you all the very best on Hindi Day. My hearty congratulations to all the linguists who



contributed to the development of Hindi on this occasion."

The increasing popularity of Hindi is one of the prime reasons that Hindi became the 3rd most spoken

language of the world in 2019 with 615 million speakers. The 22nd edition of the world language database Ethnologue stated English at the top of the list with 1,132 million speakers. Chinese Mandarin is at the second position with 1,117 million speakers.

Apart from India, there is a significant number of Hindi speakers in all countries like Nepal, Mauritius, Fiji, Suriname, Uganda, Pakistan, Bangladesh, South Africa, and Canada. People of England, America, and Central Asia also understand the language to a large extent. □

BHANU ATHAIYA, INDIA'S FIRST OSCAR WINNER, PASSES AWAY



Bhanu Rajopadhye Athaiya, a colossus of costume design who became India's first Oscar winner for her work in Richard Attenborough's, Gandhi (1982), and whose chic couture in blockbusters like

Waqt (1965) blazed fashion trends, passed away in Mumbai on 15th October 2020. She was 91.

Her daughter Radhika Gupta told TOI on phone that Athaiya died in her sleep. "In 2012, she was diagnosed with a brain tumour. She had been bedridden since 2016 when her right side got paralysed," she said. She was cremated at Chandanwadi in South Mumbai.

In the foreword to her autobiography, The Art of Costume Design (2010), Attenborough described her as "the revered doyenne of costume designers." It took me "17 long years to set up Gandhi, my dream film" and just 15 minutes to make up my mind that Bhanu Athaiya was the right person (for the job)," he wrote. The Kolhapur-born costume designer's career, spanning 56 years and over 100 films, reads like a catalogue of Bollywood's best and biggest: Shri 420, Sahib Biwi aur Ghulam, Sangam, Guide, Waqt, Ek Duuje Ke Liye, Nikaah, Lagaan.

Athaiya's work reflects her versatility, her ability to painstakingly authenticate any period or people. For Lagaan, she framed the 19th century colonial India's look. Always eager to learn and forever inquisitive, she was dedicated to her work. □

RETURN LOOTED ART TO FORMER COLONIES, DUTCH COMMITTEE TELLS GOVERNMENT

The Netherlands should show "a willingness to return" items taken without consent, a report said. But past experience shows the path from recommending restitution to actual return can be a long one.



The Great Hall of the Tropenmuseum, which houses collections about world cultures, in Amsterdam.

The Netherlands should return looted art to its former colonies: That's the official recommendation of an advisory committee to the Dutch government.

After a year of research, including interviews with people in former Dutch colonies such as Indonesia, Suriname and several Caribbean islands, the committee released its report in Amsterdam on Wednesday.

The decision on whether to return an object, however, would ultimately rest with the Dutch government, and after a similar recommendation was made in France in 2018, only a single object has since been given back.

"The principle is fantastic," said Jos van Beurden, an independent researcher who has specialized in restitution since the 1990s, of the Dutch decision. "But I'm worried about the execution."

The lawyer and human rights activist

Lilian Gonçalves-Ho Kang You, who led the committee in the Netherlands, said in an interview that the government should acknowledge the injustices of colonialism and be willing to return objects without conditions if it can be proven that they were acquired involuntarily, and if their countries of origin ask for them.

The report calls for the creation of a body of experts to investigate objects' provenance when requests are made, and a publicly accessible national database of all the colonial collections in Dutch museums.

Ingrid van Engelshoven, the Dutch minister of education, culture and science, who commissioned the report, said in an emailed statement that it offered "clear starting points for a new way to handle colonial collections." She said she would present draft legislation based on the advice in early 2021.

The Netherlands owns hundreds of

thousands of objects that were acquired during the country's colonial history. But the exact number is unknown.

Creating a database and researching the background of all these objects would be a huge undertaking, according to Mr. van Beurden.

Recent experience in France shows that when it comes to restitution, the path from ideas to action can be a long and winding one.

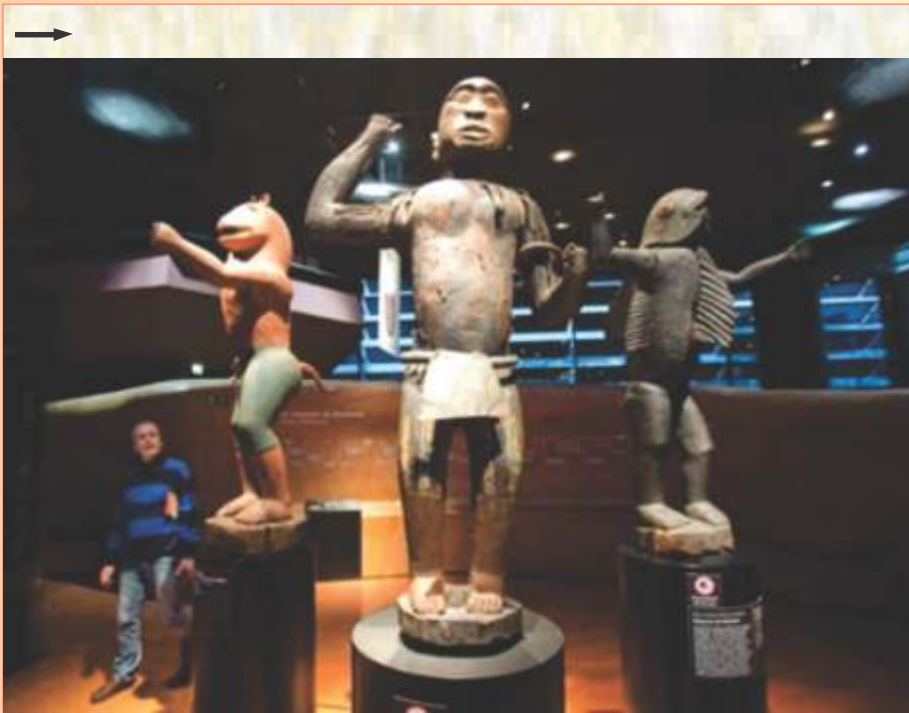
After a high-profile 2017 speech in which President Emmanuel Macron promised to return much of Africa's heritage, he commissioned a report from two academics who said that items brought to French museums without the permission of their countries of origin should be returned, if they were requested.

Since 2018, when the report was released, only 27 restitutions have been announced, and only one object, a traditional sword from Senegal, has been returned.

Delays like this have frustrated restitution advocates. Earlier this year, a Congolese activist tried to remove artifacts from African collections at museums in Paris, Marseilles and the Netherlands.

In a live-streamed speech before seizing a funerary post at the Quai Branly Museum in Paris, the activist, Mwazulu Diyabanza, said he had "come to claim back the stolen property of Africa, property that was stolen under colonialism."

On 6 October 2020, France's National Assembly passed a bill that would allow the official restitution of the 27 items, including 26 which would be returned to Benin, within the next year.



France's National Assembly on Tuesday approved legislation to allow the restitution of items from the Quai Branly Museum to Benin.

The bill now has to be considered by the French Senate.

Bénédicte Savoy, one of the authors of the French report, said in an interview that the bill, which was passed unanimously, proved that France now positively welcomed the restitution debate. Tuesday's vote would set a

useful precedent for future restitutions, she added.

"Perhaps the steps are small, but it seems to me that they are symbolically big," she said.

Ms. Savoy said that the Dutch report was the "logical continuation" of the

Netherlands' longtime dialogue with its former colonies regarding potential restitutions. "It seems to me that the debate is less tense in the Netherlands than in France," she said, adding that she expected the Dutch government to adopt the report's recommendations.

The report also addresses objects in Dutch museums that came from countries colonized by other European powers: The committee said a decision about returning those should be made on "the basis of reasonableness and fairness, and on the basis of a balance of interests." Ms. Gonçalves, the committee chair, said that international relations could be a factor in these decisions, whereas the report recommended unconditional return to former colonies of the Netherlands.

But wherever the objects were from, Ms. Gonçalves said, the Dutch government should act to right the wrongs of colonialism. "The main principle remains the same: What was stolen should be returned." □

SEVEN INDIAN-AMERICANS IN FORBES LIST OF RICHEST PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES

The Forbes list of richest people in the United States has seven Indian-Americans, namely, Cyber Security firm ZScaler CEO Jay Chaudhry, Founder and Chairman of Symphony Technology Group Romesh Wadhvani, cofounder and CEO of online home goods retailer Wayfair Niraj Shah, Silicon Valley venture capital firm Khosla Ventures founder Vinod Khosla, Managing Partner of

Sherpalo Ventures Kavitar Ram Shriram, Airline veteran Rakesh Gangwal and Workday CEO and Cofounder Aneel Bhusri.

Chaudhry 61, who is ranked 85th on the list with a net worth of USD 6.9 billion. Wadhvani, 73 has been ranked 238th on the list and has a net worth of USD 3.4 billion. On the 299th spot is Shah, 46, who has a net worth

of USD 2.8 billion. Khosla, 65 is ranked 353rd with a net worth of USD 2.4 billion. On the 359th spot is Shriram, 63, who has a net worth of USD 2.3 billion. Gangwal, 67 is ranked 359th on the list and has a net worth of USD 2.3 billion. On the 359th spot is Bhusri with a net worth of USD 2.3 billion. □

SIX INDIAN-AMERICAN CONTESTANTS IN THE 2020 MISS WORLD AMERICA PAGEANT

The 2020 Miss World America pageant will see as many as six Indian-Americans contesting. This year's event will be held in the form of a series of virtual web casts in combination with online submissions due to the coronavirus pandemic. **Serene Singh (Colorado), Radhika**

Shah (Nevada), Manju Bangalore (Oregon), Manya Saaraswat (Pennsylvania), Shree Saini (Washington) and Mangala Chava (West Virginia) are the six Indian-Americans contesting for 2020 Miss World America pageant.

According to the pageant website, all contestants will participate in real-time preliminary competitions, receive camera time in front of a live audience and judges; they will also interact with viewers, and rehearse and collaborate with each other. □

PM Modi DELIVERS VIRTUAL SPEECH AT UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually addressed the annual UN General Assembly on Saturday. He addressed the 75th session of the UNGA in Hindi.



against enemies of humanity, including terrorism."

"We are moving ahead with phase three clinical trials in India and in our neighbourhood. India will also help all the countries in enhancing their cold chain and storage capacities for the delivery of vaccines".

In his pre-recorded video statement to the landmark General Debate of the 75th session of the UNGA, Mr. Modi said the stability in the United Nations and empowerment of the world body are essential for the welfare of the world.

as share its own experiences with the world, he adds.

'Any gesture of friendship by India towards one country is not directed against any third country'

He questioned for how long will India, the world's largest democracy and home to 1.3 billion people, be kept out of the decision-making structures of the United Nations, asserting that reform in the responses, processes and in the very character of the global body is the "need of the hour."

'Moving forward with a vision of self-reliant India'

"We are moving forward with a vision of 'self-reliant India' that will also be a force multiplier for the global economy, says Mr. Modi.

"Any gesture of friendship by India towards one country is not directed against any third country," the PM says. "When India strengthens its development partnership, it is not with any mala fide intent of making others dependent or hapless."

'India will not hesitate in raising voice against enemies of humanity'

India will help world with vaccine production: Modi

'Reform of United Nations is the need of the hour'

India will not hesitate in raising its voice against enemies of humanity, including terrorism, says Mr. Modi.

"India's vaccine production, delivery capacity will be used to help humanity in fighting COVID-19," Mr. Modi says.

Reform of United Nations is the need of the hour, says the Prime Minister. "For how long will India be kept out of the decision-making structures of UN," he asks. □

In its journey towards progress, India wants to learn from the world as well

"India will always speak in support of peace, security and prosperity. India will not hesitate in raising its voice

(With inputs from PTI)

VAIBHAV Summit 2020: TRUE 'SANGAM' OR CONFLUENCE of GREAT MINDS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Vaishvik Bhartiya Vaigyanik (VAIBHAV) Summit on 2nd October, 2020 through video conferencing. The summit aims to bring overseas and resident Indian researchers and academics under a common platform.

and science and technology (S&T) base in India for global development."

the expertise and knowledge of global Indian researchers for addressing emerging challenges for universal development.

A statement from the Prime Minister's Office read, "The aim of the summit is to bring Indian-origin luminaries in academic institutes and research organisations across the world and resident counterparts on a single platform to debate upon collaboration mechanisms to strengthen academic

The summit is being organised by around 200 academic institutes and S&T departments, led by the Principal scientific advisor, Government of India. The deliberations are being held from 3rd October to 25th October 2020, with consolidation of outcomes on 28th October. The summit concludes on the occasion of Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel Jayanti i.e. 31st October 2020.

The Prime Minister said that the government has taken numerous measures to boost scientific research and innovation adding that science is at the core of the efforts towards socio-economic change.

The aim of the summit is to bring out a comprehensive roadmap leveraging

PM Modi also said that 'VAIBHAV Summit' celebrates science and innovation from India and the world. He called it a true 'sangam' or confluence of great minds. □

ROMANI LANGUAGE

EXAMINING THE AFFINITY OF ROMANI CHIB WITH INDIAN LANGUAGES

✍ Md. Zameer Anwar

Romani Chib (language) may be defined as a heterogeneous cluster of various dialect groups. Scattered in different countries and living in close-knit communities, distant Romani groups speak distinct forms of Romani language, use different expressions and phrases and even their accents and words vary. Despite these differences, all different dialects of Roma are akin and understood by most of Roma while interacting in their native tongues.

Examining the relationship between Romani and Indian languages, we take in account the initial references to comparative analysis of grammar and vocabulary of Romani with Indian languages by Johann Christian Christoph Rüdiger, professor at the German university of Halle, who attested the origin of Romani back to languages of East India in 1782. He concluded that the language of the Roma and Indians are the same and Roma together with the Indians constitute one people. Notwithstanding, **Studies on the Tchinghianes or Bohemians of the Ottoman Empire**, published by Alexandre G. Paspatis in 1870, is another finest study on Romani language which dispels the speculation about its lineage. That lets on that Romani language is a member of the Indo-Aryan language family, especially intrinsically linked with the Sanskrit.

India origin of Roma was settled to a great extent through empirically analyzing Romani language, and contrasting commonalities and parallels between Romani and Sanskrit, Prakrit, Dardic and other new Indian languages including Rajasthani, Bhojpuri, Braj Bhasha (a member of Western Hindi language, connected to Agra-Mathura-Firozabad, Aligarh) Awadhi Language (a member of Eastern Hindi language, connected to Ayodhya). Sir Ralph Turner intimated the close connection of Romani with Braj Hindi.

August Pott carried out the comparative study of Romani grammar and vocabularies (1844–5), he was able to draw on numerous descriptive sources in order to represent the diversity of European Romani dialects. Pott is usually referred to as the father of modern Romani linguistics, having established the historical and structural coherence of the language and noted that Romani is most closely related to Sindhi/Punjabi.

G. A. Zograf (1976) concluded after the detailed analysis of the morphological structure of the New Indo-Aryan languages that Romani chib bears close affinity with. Modern linguists such as Hancock (2002), Acton (2005) and Matras (2002) accept that Romani language is offshoot of Indian languages.

John Sampson suggested the single migration of Roma on the basis of linguistic evidence with the help of comparison of the phonetics of Romani and Indian languages, through which he attempted to show crystal clear relation amongst Romani, Domari and Lomavren. His work "The Dialect of Welsh Gypsies, 1926", published in Journal of Gypsy Lore Society, proposed the Romani monogenesis theory, (It means Romani is related only to North Western Indic language- Dardic) that was instantaneously challenged by Sir Ralph Turner, argued that the single origin of Domari and Roma is not plausible and linguistic ancestors of each pertain to different groups of Indian dialects.

Upholding the argument of Turner, Dr. Ian Hancock- linguistic of Romani origin through the linguistic analysis asserted that Romani and Domari are apparently distinctive owing to the presence of third neuter gender in Domari that is closely identical to central Prakrit dialects than the dialects of north western India. The basic vocabulary in Romani language in all its variants contains Indian root. But, most of the Romani words are of Sanskrit origin. According to Prof. Marcel COURTHIADE- linguistic, Romani language encompasses vocabularies with about 900 Indian roots, 220 Greek, 30 Armenian and 60 Persian (all of them incorporated in





Asia Minor) but subsequently enriched with new words of Slavic, Romanian and Hungarian origin.

The relation between the inflectional morphology of Romani and of Sanskrit is explicitly clear, if it is compared, for examples; endings of their verbs, or declension of nouns, or suffixes which are added to Adjectives, Adverbs and Participles. It has also been recently suggested that Romani has shared with modern Indian languages because of various characteristics of formation of words and grammatical outfits, viz. the way interrogative and personal pronouns ('kon' who, 'kaj' where, 'kana' when) have evolved. The use of Article 'The' o for masculine, i/e for feminine, or o/e for plural, for example; 'o bakr' the goat, 'e

bakre' the goats, as well as the formation of abstract nouns by adding suffixes like ben and pen for example; Khetanipen or Khetaniben – community, taco-true, taciben – truth. All these features along with others ascertain the relation with modern Indian languages. Phonological analysis too reveals phonetic similarities between Romani and Indian languages. There are distinctive sounds and letters which are only found in Indian languages and Romani.

All Romani dialects have systems of vowels and consonants that are clearly derived from Sanskrit. Romani contains a grammatical system analogous to that of the modern Indian languages. It has two numbers, two

genders, three moods, three cases (subject, oblique, and vocative), three persons, and five tenses (present, imperfect, perfect, pluperfect, and future, clubbed into two aspectual conjugations, the “present” and the “perfective”). The pattern of sentences of Romani is identical to that of Indian languages, for example:

- Amaro Kako prastal -Our uncle runs/is running
- Amaro kako parvarel e bakria : our uncle feeds / is feeding the she goat.
- dev na marri - God not die.
- Manusch na lek schiuta - Man not long live.

There is lexical comparison between Romani and Neo-Indic languages in order to demonstrate similarities;

Romani	Indian Languages	English	Romani	Indian Languages	English
Churi	छुरी	Knife	Sunel	सुनना	To hear
Macho	माछओ	Fish	Daravel	डरना	To scare
Rich	रिछ	Bear	Barăkăr	बड़ा करना	To enlarge
La3	लाज	Shame	Lolo	लाल	Red
Talo	तालाब	Pond	Daral	डरना	scared
Derav	दरिया	Sea	Andre	अन्दर	Inside
3anel	जानना	To know	Barabar	बराबर	Equal
Puchel	पुछना	To ask	Kalo	काला	Black
Dikhel	देखना	To see	Berś	वर्ष	Year
Phirel	फिरना/ घूमना	To walk	Biav	विवाह	Wedding

It is de facto, ascertaining the right history of Roma community lies in the study of its language; unquestionably linguistic evidences substantiate Indian origin as well as findings of the study mark evolution and changes which took place in the Romani language in terms of syntactical typology and grammatical apparatus over the time during their migrations to various countries and states. Nonetheless, the overwhelming majority have preserved their mother tongue well except some clans especially in Iberian Peninsula who lost it as consequences of the Inquisition which forced them to use the Castilian language, to embrace Christian names, and adopt Christianity. □

THEIR MAJESTIES ON ROYAL TOUR TO SOUTH DISTRICTS OF BHUTAN

His Majesty The King and His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo are both on Royal Tours to different parts of southern Bhutan, to encourage the people and motivate them to remain resilient, as we continue to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

His Majesty The King arrived in Jomotshangkha from Samdrup Jongkhar on 1 October. His Majesty met with frontline workers, COVID-19 task force members, and students along the way during the tour. His Majesty is accompanied by His Royal Highness the Gyaltshab, the Prime Minister, and Chairperson of the National Council.



His Majesty the Fourth Gyalpo visited Tsirang and Gelephu, as part of a special Royal Tour. His Majesty is accompanied by His Royal Highness Prince Jigyel Ugyen Wangchuck.

His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo expressed appreciation to the frontline

workers for their hard work so far. His Majesty granted Audiences to DeSuups, armed forces personnel, COVID-19 Task force, and students of Gelephu High School earlier this week. While in Gelephu, His Majesty also visited the Gelephu town, hospital, the identified Mini Dry Port, and the Gyalsung Training Centre site

in Tareythang. In Tsirang, His Majesty visited the hospital and town.

His Majesty The King and His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo are both deeply concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on the people, especially those at high-risk areas. □

BHUTAN AT 75TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

In the first virtual participation in this year's General Assembly, Prime Minister Dr Lotay Tshering congratulated the United Nations for touching the 75-year milestone.

"This is a significant milestone for every individual and every nation associated with the UN for the last 75 years," he said. "If not for COVID-19, this event is worthy of a festivity."

Lyonchhen said the theme to commit to multilateralism this year was timely and appropriate.

"If we don't strategise and if we don't act together, COVID-19 and future COVIDs will turnaround the human developments and achievements by decades. And for the poorer countries, it will be almost irreversible."

Prime Minister Dr. Lotay Tshering also participated in the UN Secretary General's High-Level Roundtable on Climate Action on 24th September during which Lyonchhen said while the world is discussing climate plans and laws today, Bhutan embarked on this journey decades ago. Prime Minister

Dr. Lotay Tshering joined the high-level panel upon the personal invitation of the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres.

"Under the leadership and guidance of our Monarchs, Bhutan has always accorded high importance to preserving our natural heritage," he said. "Our constitution mandates that we must maintain 60 percent forest cover at all times and maintain inter-generational equity of natural resources."



→

The Prime Minister highlighted the developmental philosophy of Gross National Happiness that moulded coexistence with nature, as well as instilled values to live not just for oneself but for everyone in the surrounding.

For the same reason, he said Bhutan's fight against COVID-19 has been a success so far. However, impacts of climate change, aggravated by burdens of the pandemic, was real.

Joining other world leaders, Prime Minister Dr Lotay Tshering pledged to reverse nature loss by 2030 at the United Nation's Leaders event for Nature and People.



“Bhutan was always guided by farsighted conservation visions of our Kings,” he said. “That is why our biodiversity and natural heritage are pristine and intact today.”

He said Bhutan welcomes the global agenda that will set nature on a path to recovery.

“Let us help heal our planet before it is too late. We owe this to our children,” he said.

At the virtual plenary segment of the United Nations Summit on Biodiversity, Prime Minister Dr Lotay Tshering applauded countries and organisations who have come forward

with major climate pledges this year.

The prime minister shared that for decades, Bhutan has embarked on the journey of environmental conservation and has programs to further take it forward.

“The world today is deliberating about climate plans, laws and concepts. But Bhutan embarked on this journey decades ago,” He said. “...our only source of energy is hydropower, which is renewable. We also have solar and wind powers to add on. We have initiated programs to replace fossil fuel with electric cars, starting with public transportation.

He highlighted that climate change and COVID-19 pandemic are outcomes of our exploitation of nature, and so we must come forward and work together.

“Effects of COVID-19 are more immediate and therefore, our responses are also quick and visible. Climate change is more gradual but if we fail to acknowledge its impact, the consequences will be far more devastating... Which is why I welcome the development of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to be adopted next year. I see it as a new milestone to reset our relationships with nature.” □

DAYS TO REMEMBER

in November, 2020

November 09 : Cambodia - Independence Day

November 10 : World Science Day

November 11 : Poland- Independence Day

November 14 : Children's Day

November 15 : Amavasya ●

November 15 : Belgium - Kings Day

November 15 : Brazil - Republic Day

November 16 : National Press Day

November 18 : Oman- National Day

November 20 : Universal Children's Day

November 21 : World Television Day

November 25 : Suriname - National Day

November 30 : Kartik Purnima ●

बदलते भारतीय समाज में स्त्री, सामाजिक समरसता, नारी सशक्तीकरण और अपराध

✍ सुनील श्रीवास्तव

भारत का समाज हर दौर में विविध इंसानी रंगों और खुशबुओं से भरा रहा है। अनेक संघर्षों के बावजूद, विविधता में एकता का संगीत इसने हर दौर में जगाया है। मनुष्य की यादों में इतिहास की सुबह होने से भी पहले, पश्चिमी अफ्रीका से होमोइरेक्टस कबीलों और उत्तरी यूरोप से नियंडरथल प्रजातियों के आपसी मिलन के निशान आज के अरब से लेकर ईरान, अफगानिस्तान और सप्तसिंधु तक फैले हैं। आदिम समय से इस एकता के राग-रंग तक आने में इन अलग-अलग नृजातियों ने अनेक जातीय संघर्षों के शिलालेख जनमानस की यादों में थाप कर रखे हैं।

इस पट्टी में इस मिश्रित कबीलों के आबाद हो जाने के बाद हजारों वर्ष लंबी गुमशुदा रात के बीत जाने पर जब सभ्यता और संस्कृति की सुबह हुई, तब हमारे इन मिश्रित पूर्वजों ने खुद को इसी भूमि के मूल निवासी की पहचान दी। इसी दौर में नृजातीय विविधता में भौगोलिक अलगाव वाले अलग-अलग रूप-रंग भी शामिल हुए। सरस्वती और दृषद्वती नदियों के बीच विशाल मैदानों में फैले 'ब्रह्मवर्त' में इस विशाल मानव-समाज में गंधार (आज के अफगानिस्तान) के नृत्य-गान प्रवीण गंधर्व, चीन के लघुकाय वणिक यक्ष, नेपाल-भूटान की हिमालयी घाटियों के अति शारीरिक कौशल-संपन्न किन्नर, उत्तर-पूर्वी नगों-पर्वतों के निवासी नाग, और सुदूर दक्षिण के वनों में निवास करने वाले वानर भी घुलने-मिलने लगे। नीचे गंगा के मैदानों में आर्यावर्त के साम्राज्यों के बसने से बहुत पहले, सरस्वती नदी के तटों पर ब्रह्मवर्त में सामूहिक खेती, और समाज में उपज के समान बँटवारे के रूप में होने वाले यज्ञ में लगे हुए वैदिक समाज ने अनेक विविधताओं के बावजूद एक गान-एक पान की जीवनशैली की खुशबू दूर दूर तक फैलाई। अनेक जातीय संघर्षों, युद्धों, परस्पर हिंसा, ध्वंस के बाद इन सबसे छन कर उनके फिर आपस में घुल-मिल जाने की, और अलग-अलग जातियों के मिले-जुले परिवारों और संस्कारों की, व समाज में हर वर्ग के मनुष्य की समानता की कहानियों से पूरा वैदिक साहित्य भरा हुआ है।

लगभग छह हजार से चार हजार वर्ष ईसापूर्व के वेदों में दो प्रमुख नृजाति-समाजों का उल्लेख है— इंद्र के नेतृत्व में देवों का समाज और पुलोमा के नेतृत्व में दानवों या दैत्यों का समाज। दोनों ही समाजों में स्त्री का अद्भुत और उन्मुक्त रूप मिलता है। अनेक जगहों पर स्त्री ही उनके सामाजिक एकीकरण का प्रमुख आधार है। आपसी नृजातीय संघर्ष में इंद्र ने पुलोमा दैत्य का वध कर दिया। लेकिन पुलोमा की पुत्री पौलोमी पिता के हत्यारे इंद्र पर ही आसक्त हुई, उससे विवाह किया, शची और इन्द्राणी बनी, वेद की मंत्रद्रष्टा बनी। यह दो बिल्कुल अलग प्रजातियों का पहला मिलन है। लगभग तीन हजार वर्ष ईसापूर्व की महाभारत-कालीन द्रौपदी इसी पौलोमी का अंशावतार या वंशज है। इसी इंद्र-शची की पुत्री जयन्ती ने दैत्यगुरु शुक्राचार्य की तपस्या को भंग किया और उनके सहवास से अपनी पुत्री देवयानी को जन्म दिया। इस रूप में पिता का कार्य पूर्ण कर वह वापस इन्द्रलोक भी लौट आई। ये उस समाज में कुछ निर्धारित वर्षों के लिए एग्रीमेंट पर हुए विवाहों के उदाहरण हैं।

नर-नारायण ने उरु अर्थात् जंघे से पैदा की उर्वशी, यह गोद लेने का सबसे प्राचीन उदाहरण है। उसे इंद्र को भेंट किया। लेकिन इंद्र की भार्या उर्वशी मित्र नामक देव के चमकते हुए रूप पर मोहित हो गई। इतना ही नहीं, मित्रदेव से मिलन के लिए जाते समय आकाश-मार्ग में ही मुलाकात हो गई वरुण से, तो वरुण के लिए एक नया सम्मोहन मन में हिलोरे लेने लगा। अगस्त्य और वशिष्ठ

इसी उर्वशी के पुत्र हैं, लेकिन इनके पिता मित्र और वरुण में से कौन हैं— वे दोनों ही पिता हैं। इसलिए वे मैत्रवरुण कहलाए। वहाँ से ले कर महाभारत-काल तक अनेक समाजों में व्यक्तियों के नाम सिर्फ उनकी माताओं के नाम पर हैं— राधेय, कौंतेय, गंगापुत्र आदि। उर्वशी के मुक्त और स्वाधीन प्रेम की कथा यहाँ नहीं रुकती। देवलोको में लक्ष्मी-स्वयंवर नाटक के दौरान नारद-इन्द्र को पुरुरवा के बारे में बातें करते सुन कर उर्वशी की स्त्रीसुलभ संवेदना फूट पड़ी पुरुरवा के लिए। बाद में, पुरुरवा से गहरा अनुराग होने पर भी उनके प्रेम के लिए तीन शर्तें रखीं, और शर्त टूटने पर उसी अनुराग के केन्द्र पुरुरवा को दुःख से मूर्च्छित छोड़ कर अनासक्त भाव से चली गई।

उस आदिम समय के किसी-किसी समाज में स्त्री का प्रेम इतना मुक्त है कि वह समाज द्वारा वर्जित प्रेम के विषय में मौलिक प्रश्न उठा सकती है। अथर्व वेद के अठारहवें कांड के प्रथम सूक्त में यमी का प्रसंग है। कश्यप-अदिति के पुत्र विवस्वान की भार्या शरण्यु से इसका जन्म हुआ, जुड़वां भाई यम के साथ-साथ। एक दिन, वन-भ्रमण के समय यमी को अपने ही भाई यम के प्रति आसक्ति हुई और उस से प्रणय-निवेदन कर बैठी। यम से यमी का वह मौलिक प्रश्नोत्तर से भरा हुआ सम्वाद इस सूक्त में है। यमुना यमी का ही रूप है। भाई-बहन में अटूट प्रेम के लिए कार्तिक शुक्ल द्वितीया (भाई दूज) को भाई-बहन द्वारा यमुना में एक साथ स्नान की परंपरा इसी की याद को सँजोए हुए है। यह नैसर्गिक धारा में बहते हुए वैदिक समाज में इन प्रश्नों के माध्यम से सामाजिक नियमों की स्थापना का, और कुछ संबंधों के चारों ओर वर्जना की दीवारों के शुरुआती निर्माण का क्रांतिक समय है।

बदलते हुए समाज में जब पुरुष वर्चस्व सर उठाने लगा, तब प्रेम की यह उन्मुक्तता पुरुष के व्यवहार में भी आई। उर्वशी के ही पुत्र हैं वशिष्ठ। वशिष्ठ के पुत्र पराशर ज्योतिष और आयुर्वेद के आद्य प्रवर्तक हुए। इनकी कथा महाभारत-काल को छूती है। मंद समीर में नाव पर नदी पार करते हुए नाव खेने वाली मछुआरे की बेटी मत्स्यगंधा के रूप-लावण्य पर मूग्ध हो कर ऋषि पराशर उससे वहीं रति की याचना कर बैठे। रतिम् देहि। नदी के एकांत द्वीप में उन दोनों के वर्ष भर समागम के बाद व्यास का जन्म हुआ। व्यास के जन्म के साथ जुड़े द्वीप के इस प्रसंग को संसार ने उनके (द्वैपायन) व्यास नाम के रूप में समादरपूर्वक याद रखा। पराशर के साथ एक वर्ष के घनिष्ठ सहवास के बाद भी मत्स्यगंधा अक्षत-यौवना की तरह आदरणीय बनी रही। यह मत्स्यगंधा ही कुरु राजवंश में विवाह के बाद सत्यवती कहलाई, जो कुरुवंश के महान शांतनु की पत्नी और पांडवों-कौरवों की मातामही बनी। पांडवों के पिता पांडु की पत्नी कुंती का भागवत में कृष्णभक्तियोग की प्रवर्तिनी की तरह उल्लेख है। उस समाज में स्त्री की स्वायत्तता सर्वमान्य थी। ऋषि दुर्वासा से प्राप्त मन्त्र से, अर्थात् उनकी कृपा और संरक्षण के अधीन, कुंती को किसी भी देव का आवाहन कर उससे पुत्र प्राप्त करने का सामाजिक अनुमोदन था। इस प्रकार उसने विवाह के पूर्व ही सूर्य के समागम से कर्ण को जन्म दिया। विवाह के बाद भी पति की सहमति से, धर्मराज के संसर्ग से युधिष्ठिर को, वायु से भीम को और इन्द्र से अर्जुन को पुत्ररूप में प्राप्त किया। ये सभी पुत्र उस समाज के यशस्वी व्यक्ति बने। कुंती आदर्श पत्नी के रूप में भारतीय स्त्रियों में अत्यंत आदरपूर्वक याद की जाती है।

वैदिक काल और महाभारत युग से नीचे उतर कर ज्ञात इतिहास के उषाकाल में हम देखते हैं कि एक प्रमुख राजवंश, मौर्य राजवंश, का नाम ही मुरा नामक दासी के नाम पर है।

समाज की समरसता में समाज के अंतिम व्यक्ति के भी शामिल होने के अनेक उदाहरण हैं। गुप्त राजवंश के दौर की अनेक कृतियों में यह दिखाई देता है। 'मृच्छकटिकम्' नाटक में गणिका, गरीब ब्राह्मण, दासी, नाई जैसे लोग अधिनायकवादी राजा की सत्ता को पलट कर गणराज्य प्रणाली का राज्य स्थापित करते हैं, और एक ग्वाले (आर्यक) को राजा बना देते हैं। इस समाज में नृत्य-संगीत में प्रवीण गणिका का विशेष आदर है। वह गृहस्थी और प्रेम की अधिकारिणी है।

भारत और उसके पड़ोस में राजतंत्र के विकास के दौर में विदेशी आक्रमणों की लंबी श्रृंखला है, लेकिन स्त्री के प्रति हिंसा और अपराध के कोई उदाहरण नहीं हैं। सिक्ंदर के व शकों के आक्रमण, तिब्बत के यूची कबीले के लड़ाकू कुषाणों के आक्रमण, कनिष्क के व हूणों के राज्यकाल में और नेपालवंशी शाक्यों के राज्यकाल में भी बलात्कार शब्द भारत के लिए अनजाना बना रहा।

इतिहास में बलात्कार और स्त्री के प्रति अपराध के चीखते हुए उदाहरण मध्यकालीन भारत में विदेशी आक्रमणों के साथ मिलने शुरू होते हैं। 711 ईस्वी में मुहम्मद बिन कासिम द्वारा सिंध पर हमला कर राजा दाहिर को हराने के बाद उसकी दोनों बेटियों को यौनदासियों के रूप में खलीफा को तोहफे में भेजने, महमूद गजनवी के आक्रमण के बाद हजारों भारतीय स्त्रियों को अफगानिस्तान के बाजारों में यौन-दासियों की तरह बेचने से ले कर औरंगजेब तक के समय का समाज बलात्कार व स्त्रियों के प्रति किये गए अन्य अपराधों के जिक्र से भरा है। भारत के इतिहास में पहली बार स्त्री दोगम दर्जे की नागरिक बनी, और स्त्री के प्रति इन्हीं अपराधों और हिंसा की प्रतिक्रिया ने भारत के व्यापक समाज में बाल-विवाह, पर्दा-प्रथा व सती-प्रथा जैसी सामाजिक कुश्रितियों को जन्म दिया।

आधुनिक भारत में 17वीं शताब्दी के प्रारंभ से लेकर 1947 तक ब्रिटिश शासनकाल में आम जनता के दमन के अनेक उदाहरण हैं लेकिन इसके बरक्स नारी-सम्मान की पुनरस्थापना के प्रयास भी हैं, जिनके फलस्वरूप बाल-विवाह, सती-प्रथा जैसी कुश्रितियों का अंत हुआ। आजादी के आंदोलन और भारत विभाजन से जुड़े दंगों में लाखों महिलाओं का बलात्कार या अपहरण हुआ। हाल के वर्ष 1990 और उसके कुछ वर्षों में कश्मीर से लाखों हिंदुओं का विस्थापन हुआ और उनकी महिलाओं पर असहनीय जुल्म हुए।

आज के भारत में सामाजिक परतों के अंदर दृष्टि डालें तो हर तरफ अनेक तरह के अलगाव, समरसता (हार्मनी) की टूटन, परस्पर क्षोभ और विद्वेष, जातीय हिंसा की तल्ख यादें आर्थिक विषमताओं और अवसर की असमानताओं से उपजे असंतोष की झलक मिलती है। आज के समय में अधिकांश फिल्म और सोशल मीडिया भी विकृत मानसिकता और जीवनशैली को ही एक वीभत्स और स्वैर कल्पना की भूखी पीढ़ी के सामने परोस रहा है। मनोवैज्ञानिक रूप में देखें तो हाल की शताब्दियों में पुरुष वर्चस्व वाले समाजों में स्त्री के प्रति किए गए अपराध और हिंसा के वीभत्स चित्रों के अतीत ने पुरुष के विशुद्ध मानस को अपनी गिरफ्त में कर रखा है।

सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक और शैक्षिक स्तर पर समाज के पुनर्निर्माण के, और समाज में फिर से समरसता की स्थापना के प्रयासों में स्त्री की इस ऐतिहासिक यात्रा को पूरी तरह ध्यान में रखना बहुत आवश्यक है। □

आगरा के हिंदी संस्थान में 83 विदेशी छात्रों का दाखिला

केन्द्रीय हिंदी संस्थान में हिंदी का अध्ययन करने के लिए विदेशी छात्रों की प्रवेश प्रक्रिया पूरी कर ली गई है। 100 सीटों के लिए 22 देशों के 83 छात्रों ने दाखिला लिया है। खास बात यह है कि इस साल तीन नए देशों से भी स्टूडेंट्स ने दाखिला लिया है। वहीं, भारत और चीन के बीच विवाद के बावजूद 6 चीनी छात्रों को दाखिला दिया गया है। मीडिया रिपोर्ट्स के मुताबिक बीते मंगलवार को दिल्ली में हुई प्रवेश समिति की बैठक में यह निर्णय लिया गया है कि कोर्स को 30 फीसदी कम करते हुए दिसम्बर तक ऑनलाइन कक्षाएं ही संचालित की जाएंगी। भारत-चीन में बढ़ते तनाव के बाद चीनी विद्यार्थियों

को प्रवेश देने के मामले पर शिक्षा और विदेश मंत्रालय विचार कर रहा था। मंगलवार को दिल्ली में हुई बैठक में दोनों मंत्रालयों से चीनी विद्यार्थियों को प्रवेश देने के मामले पर हरी झंडी मिल गई। चीन से छह विद्यार्थियों ने आवेदन किया था।

अक्टूबर से ऑनलाइन कक्षाएँ

तय किया गया है कि अक्टूबर से दिसम्बर तक ऑनलाइन कक्षाएं चलाई जाएंगी। कोरोना का प्रकोप कम हुआ, तो जनवरी से ऑफलाइन कक्षाएं शुरू होंगी। प्रवेश समिति की बैठक में यह भी तय हुआ कि अगर किसी देश से आवेदन प्राप्त होता है,

तो निदेशक का निर्णय मान्य होगा।

इन देशों के आए हैं छात्र

बुल्गारिया से दो, चीन से छह, कोस्टा रिका से चार, इजिप्ट से दो, फिजी से एक, गुयाना से तीन, हंगरी से एक, आयरलैंड से एक, जापान से दो, कजाकिस्तान से एक, मंगोलिया से चार, मोरक्को से एक, म्यांमार से चार, पेरू से एक, पोलैंड से एक, रोमानिया से दो, रूस से 11, साउथ कोरिया से एक, श्रीलंका से 10, तजाकिस्तान से 11, उजबेकिस्तान से एक और थाईलैंड से 13 छात्रों ने दाखिला लिया है। □

भारतीय-अमरीकियों ने कोविड-19 के बीच अमेरिका में 15,000 परिवारों की मदद की

कोविड-19 में जरूरतमंद लोगों को किराने का सामान और खाना उपलब्ध कराने के लिए वाशिंगटन डीसी (अमेरिका) में भारतीय-अमरीकी समुदाय की एक पहल ने 15000 से अधिक परिवारों की मदद की है। समुदाय के एक सदस्य ने बताया, 'यह प्रयास बताता है कि यह सेवा करने वाला समुदाय है, दूसरों की मदद करना स्वयंसेवकों को एक बड़ी उपलब्धि जैसा महसूस कराता है'। □

भारत बना संयुक्त राष्ट्र की संस्था का सदस्य, सीट पाने में नाकाम रहा चीन

संयुक्त राष्ट्र में भारत के स्थायी प्रतिनिधि टी. एस. तिरूमूर्ति ने बताया कि भारत संयुक्त राष्ट्र आर्थिक एवं सामाजिक परिषद (ECOSOC) की महिलाओं की स्थिति पर आयोग का सदस्य बन गया है। भारत, चीन और अफगानिस्तान ने चुनाव लड़ा था लेकिन चीन कोई सीट पाने में नाकाम रहा। तिरूमूर्ति ने कहा, 'यह महिला सशक्तीकरण को बढ़ावा देने की हमारी प्रतिबद्धता को दर्शाता है'। □

एक महान नेता और वफादार दोस्त को बहुत शुभकामनाएं : पीएम मोदी के 70वें जन्मदिन पर ट्रंप

प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी के 70वें जन्मदिन पर अमरीकी राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप ने उन्हें बधाई दी है। इस साल फरवरी में भारत दौरे की प्रधानमंत्री मोदी के साथ तस्वीर ट्वीट कर ट्रंप ने लिखा, 'एक महान नेता और वफादार दोस्त को बहुत शुभकामनाएं!' इससे पहले रूसी राष्ट्रपति व्लादिमिर पुतिन समेत दुनिया के कई नेताओं ने प्रधानमंत्री को बधाई दी थी। □

शहीद भारतीय-अमरीकी पुलिसकर्मी के नाम पर डाकघर का नाम रखने के लिए यूएस में बिल पास

अमेरिका के हाउस ऑफ रिप्रेजेंटेटिव्स ने पिछले साल शहीद हुए भारतीय-अमरीकी पुलिसकर्मी संदीप सिंह धालीवाल के नाम पर ह्यूस्टन के एक डाकघर का नामकरण करने के लिए एक बिल पास किया है। बिल पूरे टेक्सास प्रतिनिधिमंडल द्वारा सह-प्रायोजित था। धालीवाल टेक्सास के पहले भारतीय-अमरीकी थे जिन्होंने धार्मिक मान्यताओं (पगड़ी और दाढ़ी) के साथ पुलिस अधिकारी के रूप में काम किया। □

श्रद्धांजलि



28 अगस्त, 1938-25 सितम्बर, 2020

अंतर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद, हाफुड़ शाखा, के वरिष्ठतम सदस्य श्री श्रीनारायण सिंहल जी का दिनांक 25 सितम्बर, 2020 को निधन हो गया। वे मृदुभाषी, अत्यन्त संवेदनशील, दयालु और सामाजिक एवं धार्मिक कार्यों के सहायक थे। उन्होंने अपने परिवार के साथ रायजादा रामगोपाल धर्मार्थ ट्रस्ट का गठन किया। श्री श्रीनारायण सिंहल जी का सम्पूर्ण जीवन मन, कर्म व वचन से समाज को समर्पित रहा है।

अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद की ओर से दिवंगत आत्मा को श्रद्धांजलि। □