

Manyavar Saheb Kanshi Ram idea of strengthening Indian Democracy

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to identify and contextualise the idea of Manyavar Saheb Kanshi Ram in view of the overarching context of Indian democratic environment on historical perspective. The contribution of Manyavar Saheb Kanshi Ram to understand the complexities of Indian society and its democratic imperatives has acquired greater prominence in contemporary India. His ideas and works offer the propagandas of achievements and reflect solutions to several problems of India. It also examines the idea of strengthening the Indian democracy and real democratic identity on egalitarian ecology of Indian democracy in view of perspective of caste assertion among Dalits for social mobilization. This study is likely to be the tracing of the differentiation and nature of perception in view of Dalit perspective in modern Indian democracy and document the essence of caste and caste identity from view precepts of Dalits and marginalized section of the society in the ideas of both perception and thinking from below and apex as well making correlating the Indian democracy in lieu of relation between marginalized and strengthening view of the ideologies.

Key Words : Ambedkar, Kanshi Ram, Bahujan, Caste identity, Dalitness, Dalit assertion, Democracy, Economic, Emancipation, Ideology, Mobilization, Society

INTRODUCTION

Manyavar Saheb Kanshi Ram, tried not only as crusader against the caste system, but a valiant fighter for the cause of the downtrodden in India as well, but he is also considered to be an enigmatic statesman and national leader whose contribution in the form of the strengthening the Indian democracy will be cherished forever by posterity. In fact his fight for Dalit mobilization and as an emancipator of all those enslaved in the Indian society gave him a humanitarian recognition as a liberator of humanity from injustice, social and economic in the post-Ambedkar era as well. According to him, an ideal society should be mobile, should be full of channels for conveying a change taking place in one part to other parts. In an ideal society there should be many interests consciously communicated and shared. There should be

varied and free points of contact with other modes of association. In other words there should be social endosmosis. This is fraternity, which is only another name for democracy. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar what had conceptualized the democracy is not merely a form of government be the attitude of respect and reverence towards fellowmen as so for too (Ambedkar, 1979 and 2009).

The caliber of Manyavar Kanshi Ram to capture the state power used to call himself an opportunist being was contrary to Dr. Ambedkar who focuses on means while for Kanshi Ram it was the end which was most important for emancipation of Dalits as to accomplish his agenda, BSP Party made government with BJP three times and answered his critiques, argumentum that during that period the BSP had further strengthen its political agenda and increased its vote percentage from 10 to 20

per cent while the BJP only maintained its earlier vote percentage, to the charge of his being opportunistic, he replied that, he did not believe in the status quo but in continuously change his position. He left his family in 1960s and declared that the Bahujan of this country would be his family. He never wanted any post and never married for the cause of the people of this country.

Kanshi Ram was a sharp learner and understood well the contradictions of our society and different castes. He was simple in his approach and was never a rebel rouser in the public. He spoke from his heart and did not hide his personality behind the garb of artificial arguments and fictitious propaganda. His focus was more on the community and its empowerment through political action. In fact, the most positive aspect of Kanshi Ram was that he never ever believed in Brahmanical rituals and was totally committed to the cause of Dalit empowerment through political action. His experiments with the most marginalized communities in Uttar Pradesh (UP), is an example for other to follow.

Manyavar Saheb Kanshi Ram was practical one, as activist, organizer and leader can best be characterized by his drive to make our democracy more diverse and more responsive to Dalits and other unprivileged sections of society. It may be too early to fully assess his role and contribution; however, there is enough evidence to speculate about his legacy. Kanshi Ram fulfilled a vacant role in the long history of Dalit struggles that even B. R. Ambedkar was unable to fulfill. He successfully transformed Dalit society into a political force and thereby also fundamentally transformed the character of Indian politics. He not only raised the aspirations of Dalits to include the capture of political power but also demonstrated that this was possible through his leadership of the Bahujan Samaj Party. Kanshi Ram brought to fruition the unrealized vision of Ambedkar. However, in making this dream possible, Kanshi Ram made radical departures from our received understandings of the supposedly natural character, not just of Dalit, but of Indian politics. There is no doubt that Kanshi Ram was devised to be inspired by the idea of mobilizing the Indian society by Bahujan ideology.

Manyavar Saheb Kanshi Ram chose to be pragmatic in his attempt to politically empower Dalits. He was unmindful of the means of acquiring political power, emphasizing the end that is the attainment of political power. If he was criticized for his 'opportunism' he used to immediately reply that if Brahmins can become

influential by being opportunistic then Dalits too could use opportunism to empower themselves. Kanshi Ram believed that until a casteless society was formed it was necessary for Dalits to strategically use their caste as a tool in their own emancipation and to dethrone Brahmanism. Kanshi Ram favoured the awakening of Dalit and backward identities in order to link these with the Bahujan movement. Kanshi Ram transformed Ambedkar's slogan, abolish the caste system propagated in his book, *Annihilation of Caste* into promote the caste system to mobilize Dalit towards the restoration of their caste identity and self-esteem as well.

The purpose of research paper is to focus on the ideologies of Manyavar Saheb Kanshi Ram with special reference to the differentiating role of his in the due mobilization of the being conceptualized to be as so-called debrahmanized Indian society and in strengthening the Dalit and Bahujan from below to the level up to which being has assumed as in referential to the modest of the Indian society rather than the humiliation which have to be the leveled up to the strengthening of dignitaries as what a person in society have to be assumed as well. It will explore the actual theme of praxis change in the ideology, how Dr. B. R. Ambedkar were to be considered in somehow ways reflective over to the views of Manyavar Saheb Kanshi Ram having the fact that this research will provide the knowledge about reasons how Manyavar Kanshi Ram being were brought the differentiate changes in some thought of the perception in democratic agendas and projecting of it in the consolidation and strengthening and stretching the idea of the democracy in the Indian society as well.

Dalit vision of consciousness in perspective of Historical Background :

The Dalit consciences and the determination towards the social emancipation and assertion actually had grown being out from the roots of the Bhakti movement's saints as from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century as especially in the eastern Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Punjab. The saint Kabir, Ravidas and Shiv Narayan and in the early nineteenth century, Guru Ghasidas railed against the caste system and spoke about the equality of all human beings. Through the Kabir Panth, the Ravidasia Panth, the Shivnarayani Panth and the Satnami Panth founded by them, their message spread far and wide to the lower section of the society as well as likely the downtrodden and underprivileged and dalits as so for. Subsequently,

the spread of anti-Brahmanism that crystallized as the non-Brahman movement of the nineteenth century across India served to sharpen Dalit consciousness. The movement was an organized uprising, challenging Brahman supremacy and hegemony, against caste-based discrimination and brutalities. In Maharashtra, where it first emerged, this movement, essentially for social reform, was spearheaded by the social revolutionary Jyotiba Phuley. His vision galvanized and invigorated the Dalit movement deeply.

There might it supposed to be that by the some considerate of Indian historian that 'The British Raj' proved to be a blessing for the Dalits. The introduction of compulsory education and recruitment in the army provided them an opportunity to break the caste chains and move up. Dalits began to assert and organize themselves systematically from the late nineteenth century. By the 1920s, various sections of the Dalits were up in arms and the movement started gathering momentum. These pioneering anti-caste movements that took the path of social reform fed this Dalit assertiveness. The revolt against the Brahman dominance in Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra provided an important impetus to the Dalit movement.

Jyotiba Phuley, himself a non-Brahman, made the Dalits, the marginalized and the downtrodden, conscious of their rights and needs. He kindled the fire of cultural freedom in them. As a pioneer of Dalit revolt, he was the first Hindu to start a school for the untouchables in 1882 in Poona (Pune), the citadel of Brahman orthodoxy in Maharashtra. They had unhindered and free access to a water tank outside his house. In 1873, he set up the Satya Shodhak Samaj, to liberate the non-Brahmans (low castes) from the stranglehold of the Brahmans, Purohits (priests) and the rich. He also fought for equal rights for the peasants, promoted the education of the lowest of the low and, asserting the equality between men and women, wanted to eradicate gender discrimination. Equality and rationality marked his vision of a cultural revolution. He became one of the three mentors of Ambedkar, besides the Buddha and Kabir.

Such a change was needed, Phuley pointed out, because the very concept of a nation was getting eroded when its citizens were discriminated against on the basis of caste, of lowly birth. An alternative culture that would emerge as mass culture was necessary. It is another matter that Phuley's attempt at propounding such an alternative by way of a non-Aryan universalistic religion

could not gain roots and his voice was not effective beyond Poona, nor did the Dalits gain concretely from his movement. But his message was clear.

After Phuley's death in 1890, his followers carried his movement to the remotest parts of Maharashtra. Shahuji Maharaj was one such social reformer. He became the ruler of Kolhapur on 2nd April, 1894 and supported Phuley's movement. Fighting for the emancipation of the untouchables all his life, he established schools, colleges and hostels for the Dalit and backward castes. This earned him the stir of the upper-caste people. But determined to fight against oppression, he launched a movement for spreading equality. So strongly was he influenced by the works of Phuley that in 1911, he became a patron of the Satya Shodhak Samaj that his mentor had set up. Latter this, movement was being set for the continually and conceptualized by the Bahujan leaders time to time as so for like Chhatrapati Shahu ji Maharaj as long as gradually reaching out to the rising and vision of laid movement up to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar had so far in pre independence era and later the movement had reached to the conceptualization at the apex of Bahujan laid movement in the vision and leadership of Manyavar Saheb Kanshi Ram as so for and further conceptualizing the political leadership in shaping of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) as so far as to attain political democracy in India.

Manyavar Saheb Kanshi Ram stint with the Republican Party of India (RPI), as being what to be considered have seen, was an important learning experience. The lessons he gained, become the impulse for the ideology of the BAMCEF and DS4 and subsequently a book, he penned in 1982 called the 'Chamcha Age: An Era of the Stooges'. The book becomes the ideological foundation for the BSP which was to form latter. Not just a critique of the Dalit Movement till then. The book by implication also brought to the fore, Kanshi Ram's fresh take on Ambedkar's ideas.

Chamcha Age was the scathing attack on the schedule caste politician who had sold out their community's interest in favour of personal advancements. According to Kanshi Ram these were Chamchas created by the mainstream politics parties to oppose and competed with the genuine champions of the Dalit cause. all Dalit leader including old timer Jagjivan Ram and Kanshi Ram contemporary, Ram Vilash Paswan were encompassed within this definition of the Chamcha in a

addition to find out the various kind of the Chamcha, the outlined the plan for future action, both short term and long term to challenge the caste system.

Kanshi Ram social change and economic empowerment programs acted as magnets, serving to attract to the BSP, all those Dalits who had been seeking self respects and economic betterments. These organizational strategies and methods certainly swelled the numbers to the BSP supporters in UP, as the party too shape there. The electoral politics of the BSP as it grew in stature over the years as well as the politics and internal differences that developed within the party need to be understood for appreciating its role in rising power of the Dalits.

Kanshi Ram reinvented Ambedkar in his own way, through Bahujan politics, much to the dismay of Ambedkarites, who did not agree with him. Gradually but surely, before the 1980s, Ambedkar had been relegated to the margins of the political discourse in independent India. But Dalit discourse and Dalit culture with its own set of metaphor and symbols, introduced by the Manyavar Saheb Kanshi Ram changed the pivotal of the Indian politics as well. They brought back to the Ambedkar into the consciousness of the people and he also examined this discourse that was being employed to bring marginalized section groups together politically and culturally under the banner of Bahujan and thus the BSP.

Manyavar Kanshi Ram ideas on economic democracy :

Manyavar Saheb Kanshi Ram, overall on these matters, used to say and cited at that time in his speeches, as in the following manners that we have not received yet today, now still today we have not occupied the economic freedom what Dr. B. R. Ambedkar had to, had hypothesized during the formation of the Indian constitution. Although, we might be satisfied in the national scenario through our achievements and progress and developments, but this likely to be considered as being called not more than that of the generalized development. Since the inequalities have increased too along with the developments. The poorest remained as what he had, richest has become more richened. The land reforms are being not completed still away, and supposed to be these being completed in course of without hesitantly as well. But these functions would not be completed, until the majorities will be ruled by the minorities as well.

Manyavar Saheb Kanshi Ram, in views over the

question of the economic issues, we conclusively supposed to be concise that, economicity is that principle order through which a person is likely to get livelihood and prestige in the society and the society would likely to get the dynamicity through this medium as well. Mostly the Dalits, there have no land on its own; many of them really, are landless labour as well.

Due to which Manyavar Saheb Kanshi Ram used to say that, there are about the almost seventy five (75) percent peoples of the rural population, who belong to the communities of the Schedule caste, schedule tribes and others backward caste. They are most of the deprived and dependent of nature of concern. Most of them have only the nothing else, except the body as the personal properties as well. About the mostly above the margin of 50 percent are being the landless and have no land on its own, and are the only labourers as well. These are called to be the crop share holder (Bataidar) in the northern parts region of the India. In others words these are dependent over those who have the lands in the records in only of the offices as so far, the people are to be dependent totally, on due mercy of such peoples as well. Most of the people, of them, become to be the prey of the money lenders in due interest of money as so far, due to being not availability of the remunerative and welfare schemes by the governments and are remained to be the debt of money lenders as well. Rest of the people of the margin, 25 percent of the rural Dalits who have their lands on its own, these are the land owner of the enumerative holdings, because of the small and marginal formers and the plight of these formers is not to be called the most affirmative one, in due comparison of the landless formers as well being provided that in wholesome the situational condition of these farmers is could not be called more better than the landless formers one.

Manyavar Saheb Kanshi Ram ideastic vision of strengthening Indian Democracy:

There has supposed to be tried to expose, how the work culture and canvassing agendas and missionary carnivals had been organized in conceptualized by him in due references of the awakening of the Dalit Bahujan in post-Ambedkar era to be combated the Dalit segregation amongst the Dalit society and mobilizing the Dalit and Bahujans toward the Dalit identity and assertion as well. There had used been so many agendas and strategies in mobilization of the Dalit society to be carrying out the society in this stage as so far. Now the present, Kanshi

Ram is much venerated one amongst the Dalit society as well. His role and contribution in strengthening the idea of Indian democracy through the stimulation of stretching the ideology of Bahujan, gave new paradigm to the Indian politics as so far through the awakening them toward Dalit assertion and mobilization of the underprivileged, marginalized and downtrodden peoples of the society of Dalits as well.

There had to be the claimed been done intensively, by Manyavar Saheb Kanshi Ram that, the establishments and the movement being run by him in anyhow is pre-sponsored vision and mission that was being carried out and laid down by the Dr. Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar in combating the segregation and asserting the Dalit society to be assertive revolutionary, there now we are the only had trying been to be propelling the enhancement to the society as so far. He also claimed that his movement which is being laid by him now is in the view of the nature and customary vision and temptations that had the ideated epilogue conception of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar as well. How and which type the nature of thinking he had about the Indian society of Dalits as well.

Kanshi Ram's mission was aimed at expanding the consciousness of dignity and emancipation among the Dalits and the marginalized section of the society all over the country and also around the world. He did not consider the struggle of the Dalits as a local or national one but as an international struggle of the oppressed. That is why he expanded his activities to all corners of the country. In the northeast he visited Manipur, Imphal, Siliguri, etc. At the level of international, he visited Japan to attend the first International Conference against Discrimination, a conference against inequality, organized by the Buraku Liberation Research Institute (BLRI) in December 1982 in Osaka. He described his experience thus: 'I contributed to making the conference a success in various ways throughout the week that I was there. While returning to India I was fully satisfied that this first international conference against discrimination would culminate in bringing equality all over the world. I want that the second conference be held in India.' This types of such vision what Manyavar Saheb Kanshi Ram had possessed which made to be called him the messiah of the Dalits and marginalized section of the society as well.

Manyavar Saheb Kanshi Ram ideastic role on democracy :

Kanshi Ram was a true visionary who reinvented

the ideological baggage that he inherited from Ambedkar. He was not afraid of redrawing and rethinking the nature and character of Dalit politics to take corrective measures on the way to achieving political power. Ambedkar initiated the movements and mobilizations for Dalit emancipation in western India and Manyavar Kanshi Ram led the Bahujan movement in north and central India. The Bahujan movement, as reflected in the formation of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and its noteworthy success in previous elections in Uttar Pradesh, is most of the time understood as merely an extension of Ambedkar ideas and politics. We usually do not pay attention to the underlying variations and differences of the perceptions, visions and strategies in the ideas and political actions of Dr. Ambedkar and Kanshi Ram. During the 1980s, when Kanshi Ram was sowing the seeds of BSP politics in Uttar Pradesh, he too associated himself with Ambedkar articulation. Both were of the view that political power is the master key through which one can open all the doors of progress and recognition, and to achieve this, it was very important for the Dalits to unite.

Manyavar Kanshi Ram a leader despite the fact that the leader himself never liked the term Dalit in his entire life. According to Kanshi Ram, as he had writes, Ambedkar called the politics of emancipation of marginalized groups Dalit movement while Kanshi Ram preferred term it the Bahujan movement avoiding the use of the word Dalit. The journey of Kanshi Ram, from a Ramdasia family in Punjab to Poona, as a research assistant in Explosive Research and Development Laboratory in 1958 does not stop here. Rather it was the land of Ambedkar where he started his political expedition. Author himself writes that later when he was working in Poona, Kanshi Ram saw and understood the plight of Dalits in India, which awakened in him the recognition of his own Dalit Identity. From then he started travelling the entire country with bicycle to comprehend and mobilize the subjugated people of this country. He not only passed from Kanyakumari to Kashmir but also paved his visit to the North. It would be interesting to see the sacrifices of conventional political parties and their leaders in comparison to the sacrifice of Manyavar Kanshi Ram. The most fascinating and provoking facet is the ideological divergence between Dr. Ambedkar and Kanshi Ram's Politics and philosophy. Manyavar Kanshi Ram was the true follower of his predecessor but he devised his own stratagem and philosophy on the basis of his own pan Indian experience. He thoroughly read

Ambedkar but in his political formulations he made the political statement of Ambedkar political power as the master key his most important schema.

In his schema of seeking power Manyavar Kanshi Ram being seemed to be against annihilation of caste as, transformed the slogan abolish caste system into promote caste system to mobilize Dalit for the restoration of their caste identity and self-esteem. Ethics and morality, conversion to Buddhism, separate electorate and reservation were the few areas where Kanshi Ram was not only against Ambedkar but also very innovative in defining the Dalits and their identity. He wanted to change the psyche of Dalits from very humble support seeking Dalits to a very assertive and helping to others. Manyavar Kanshi Ram idea was to transform society into a Samatamulak (egalitarian) society, with each caste seen as equal and having its own caste identity, and this was the philosophical underpinning of BSP. In short, the vertical pyramid structure of caste system should be drawn in horizontal line. So he came up with concept of politicizing the caste consciousness of marginalized communities .Manyavar Kanshi Ram did not only offer the fearless critique to mainstream political formulations but he also not spare the Dalits leadership. He lamented in his only and famous book “The Chamcha Age: An Era of Stooges”. According to Manyavar Saheb Kanshi Ram, these were the Chamchas (stooges or agents) created by mainstream political parties to oppose and compete with the genuine champions of the Dalits cause.

Kanshi Ram viewed caste as a double-edged sword and he wanted to use it in a way that benefited the Bahujans but destroyed Brahminical hegemony. He wanted to rouse the consciousness of the Dalit and backward classes and believed in associating them with Bahujan society. However, he disagreed with Ambedkar’s demand for a separate electorate for Dalits even though, like Ambedkar, he too wanted Dalits to attain respectability and glory in mainstream society. Kanshi Ram’s idea was to transform society into a Samatamulak (egalitarian) society with all castes seen as equal and each having its own caste identity. This dream of a Samatamulak society was the philosophical underpinning of the BSP. Kanshi Ram’s and by consequence of the BSP ideology was based on Ambedkar’s theory of the origin of the Dalits (arising from an Aryan and Non-Aryan difference). But crucially, Ambedkar had refused to accept Manu as the founder of the caste system in India while Kanshi Ram gave Indian politics the new concept of Manuvad

(conceptual ideology of Manu). Kanshi Ram always kept in mind Ambedkar’s motto that political power was the master-key for Dalit liberation and that acquiring this master-key should be the Dalit war-strategy. But he used to say that Ambedkar learnt from books while he had learnt from his own life and people. He further said he used to gather books; I tried to collect people.

The propaganda of Kanshi Ram was not merely of mobilization and criticism of Manuvadis lobby and its stooges but he also devised many strategies to dig out the affirmative plan of action pertaining to Dalits and subaltern classes being used as political resources to instill the confidence among wretched masses. Along with these he also instructed to collect information from the various castes about their caste history, caste heroes, and their sect (Panth) Gurus like Saint Ravi Das, Saint Kabir and Swami Narayan. It is interesting to see that how those castes which were once the untouchable, unspeakable and un-see-able have now become the tools to capture the state power that reminds of Mao-Tse Tung of China wherein he used his vast population as a positive tool to mobilize against the imperialist power to make a poor China into a hunger free China.

In his speeches, Kanshi Ram always asserted that the sapling of Dalit politics originated in Maharashtra but it grew and was nurtured in the soil of Uttar Pradesh. Ambedkar called the politics of emancipation of marginalized groups the Dalit movement while Kanshi Ram preferred to term it the Bahujan movement. He usually avoided using the word Dalit and said that Dalits have to give up their attitude of crying, begging and demanding. He said they have to become very strong and emancipate themselves from the vicious circle of Dalitness (being a sense of Dalit) so that they could be charitable to others instead of demanding charity.

Ambedkar associated the emancipation of Dalits with their religious emancipation and because of this he quit the Hindu religion and embraced Buddhism on 14 October 1956. On the contrary, Kanshi Ram said religious emancipation is only possible through political liberation. They were willing to convert to Buddhism only when the Bahujans acquire power in the government. That is why in spite of using the symbols of Buddha in their politics; Kanshi Ram did not convert to Buddhism. One of the important reasons behind this was also that most of the rural Dalits of Uttar Pradesh are associated with medieval sects (Bhaktikaleen) such as the Ravidas Panth, Kabir Panth, and Shiv Narayani. The people of these sects

believe in creating a space for themselves while residing in the cultural milieu of Hindu society. They will not be able to associate themselves with Buddhism. Somewhere Manyavar Kanshi Ram used to fear that this can spread discontentment among rural Dalits

Conclusion :

As in views of concern, Dr. Ambedkar tried to provide an ethical context to the politics of Dalits liberation; for him morality was more important for the attainment of political goals on the other hand however, Kanshi Ram, in his political experiment, did not pay much heed to the means of acquiring a political regime but laid more emphasis on the end the attainment of political power. For him the end justified the means as so for.

This paper thus, in above concern of views does not envisages intensification of view as of rather than in suggesting the fact that the views of Manyavar Saheb Kanshi Ram over the democracy and the strengthening of it to the ground level of marginalised group of society had to be awaited in lieu of emaciation and assertion among the untouchables as so for in somehow but not at least as on caste and its perception to the annihilation of caste in Indian society as well. But it does suggest the fact that the ideologue views of Manyavar Saheb Kanshi Ram holds remarkable congruential views on the sensitivity of caste and its perception in modern Indian society in associating the concern about to the due strengthening of the Indian democracy via inclusiveness of Dalits and Bahujan in the legislation through the participatory (Bhagedari) theory of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) as being open to all groups as of likely backward and minority as thereto. Manyavar Kanshi Ram at any stage either it be the state of mobilisation of Bahujan society or it be might, the propaganda of strategy of exposing the party base at ground level of society, as on at both too, hold similar views on genesis and development of caste since long as earlier times in Indian history disseminating the foundation of democracy and deprivation of its due to the more inclusiveness of caste dominance and its hijacking over the Dalits and Bahujan as well. Manyavar Saheb Kanshi Ram differentiation of views on concern to that of inversely proportionate as Dr. Ambedkar applied the instrumentalism of *means* while Manyavar Kanshi Ram are supposed to be, being opted the path of intra inclusiveness of social framework infrastructure among Dalits as *ends* and also Dalits were being mobilized by due efforts of Manyavar Kanshi Ram

in Indian ecology of tradition society in post-dependence era which was being propelled by inspirational series led by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in Pre-Independence era in strengthening the society as well as Indian democracy.

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