

The Chair

MDU paid rich tributes to a towering personality on his demise on 1 February, 2009 and established a *Chair* in his name to keep his memory living by documenting material relating to him and publishing it for general study and research. Chaudhry Ranbir Singh had earned this status by his relentless struggle as a parliamentarian, administrator and social activist of rare quality of his own embedded to the cause of down trodden, more so the struggling peasantry. Papers on his life and work published so far, in Hindi and English, by the Chair are eloquent testimony to a notable chapter of Haryana region on move.



चौधरी रणबीर सिंह शोध पीठ
महर्षि दयानन्द विश्वविद्यालय, रोहतक

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh

A Short Biography



Chaudhry Ranbir Singh Chair
Maharshi Dayanand University Rohtak

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh A Short Political Biography

The Book

It is a fascinating story of a turbulent time that gave shape to the inspiring personality who was too shy of self publicity that in contrast has come to be the hall-mark of present day electoral politics. He was a simple man with frugal habits but quite rich on morals and ethics in personal as well as social conduct.

Political biographies are always studies of personalities in context of a time and space. Short biographies are meant to summarise essentials for short readings. These can't replace the full stories. This Short Political Biography of Chaudhry Ranbir Singh is a study in summary of his personality as he emerged from embers of rural Haryana of his time and space. He was fortunate to be a scion of a simple peasant family of normal means but with high social reputation.

This book provides a timely reading, memorable quotes from the proceedings of Constituent Assembly and the Provisional Parliament in particular are helpful to know a valuable recent story to understand how the country has taken shape out of a long colonial past. The book demolishes many false notions that had taken wings about him in course of competitive politics in the state which Chaudhry Ranbir Singh never cared to meet at others level. Read on.....

A Short Political Biography

Understanding the Emergence of a Statesman

In Lieu of Introduction

In Lieu of Introduction

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh

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**Chaudhry Ranbir Singh Chair
Maharshi Dayanand University
Rohtak**

In Lieu of Introduction

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INTRODUCTION

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Prologue

It is the life story, in short, of Chaudhry Ranbir Singh and the times he responded to admirably. A sensitive man, he took events of his times in his own way with grit and conviction. He was a prominent freedom fighter from Haryana who contributed his creative best to make the socio-political life in the region rich and blooming tirelessly. Yes, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh represented the brightest traditions of freedom struggle with his roots in a peasant family. A simple soul he was who lived by his principles and cherished the values of his eminent forefathers. He worked devotedly to give shape to those aspirations so cherished in course of this long-drawn struggle.

There lived a peasant family of modest means in the heart of Rohtak district having a rich tradition of social standing. Its head, Chaudhry Matu Ram was a name in the area who had embraced the first stirrings of social and political change by the reformist movement of Arya Samaj and later given a thrust by Indian National Congress. Before him, his father Chaudhry Bakhtawar Singh was known as an amiable personality with compassionate approach to community affairs.

Chaudhry Matu Ram was soon recognised as a man of dedication to the social cause, his spirit infectitious and endearing. Later, one of his three sons, Ranbir Singh had

decided to carry on the task in the socio-political field and he did it with distinction.

Chaudhry Sahib not only carried on the rich legacy but also added a few pages to make it enduring. He enriched the family tradition and carried on the spirit of service, maintaining a high standard of social values.

With his demise at the ripe age of over 94 years a glorious chapter of struggle for national dignity came to close that was remarkable for its perseverance. The eminent freedom fighter and a great nationalist, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh closed his eyes for ever on 1st. February, 2009 with a record extra-ordinary of service to the nation and the region he was attached to physically and emotionally. When this brilliant head and the compassionate heart ceased to breath that day after remarkable innings to carry forward a rich legacy, he was the last surviving member of the Constituent Assembly of India.

While paying its deep respects on his death, the MDU, Rohtak had established this Chair in his memory to peep into his life and times so that the coming generations may benefit and remember this immortal son of the soil to take lessons for discharging their social obligation. A short political biography on him was need of the hour.

At the outset, Peeth underscores the dictum that a nation which tends to forget the pangs and tribulations of a period in slavery it had to suffer in history can not appreciate the value of freedom too for long; many may relish slavery instead for a smaller benefit in bargain and the

hard won independence is sure to slip by and lose its relevance consequently. Appreciation of gain goes in proportion to the loss suffered and the sacrifice made to recover it. And those who worked selflessly for the recovery of its self - both leaders as well as commoners deserve remembrance with gratitude of generations so that the true value of freedom could be appreciated for its future. The Peeth seeks to do its bit. Chaudhry Matu Ram and his son Ranbir Singh in the first instance deserve to be evaluated in their concrete perspective they worked. The endeavour to re-invent our past constantly has one such option to rely upon. It also is imperative that the nation remembers its brave sons in humble gratitude for the price they willingly paid for gaining freedom from an alien rule. It is due to them that we in a sense breathe free today.

Indians had to wage a long drawn struggle to recover its freedom against a marauding colonial power entrenched here for long, facing formidable odds. The struggle was unique in many respects and richly rewarding in experience.

The role of Haryana region in freedom struggle was unique, but hardly appreciated ever to the extent it deserves. It is a legacy of colonial period to belittle this area by ignoring its true place in history for obvious reason. Many other factors in the meantime have made this task of course correction daunting. Nevertheless, importance of bringing the heroic tale to the common man cannot be over emphasised for the future of coming generations. Recently though, some small steps have been taken to fill the gap. Still these remain rudimentary and insufficient.

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh lived a time of hectic social / political engagement during the freedom struggle and thereafter. He was one of the active members in the Constituent Assembly and other legislative bodies thereafter till he completed his term in Rajya Sabha in 1978. His contribution in these different houses reflects a definite political and economic thought to serve the common man working in the fields. He had a vision of his own and worked to translate it.

But he remained throughout much reticent and shy of self publicity. Bragging about one's own achievements was not the norm those days and he ignored even the narrations like other politicians did. For electoral politics he used to rely more on personal rapport with his electorate who reposed abiding faith in his sincerity of purpose. The name and fame of Chaudhry Matu Ram gave substance to his own rapport.

The Peeth initially had published a short life sketch of this stalwart in Hindi to fill a time gap, while his unpublished speeches in different legislative forums provided much needed material to know the man. In the mean time, many other publications on his life in Hindi and one in Urdu came out later for circulation. However, a need was felt to deal with his politics as well as philosophical approach to economic and social issues of life. A short biography for non-hindi readers was urgently needed before one on his life and work is undertaken. This short political biography intends to fill a gap in the light of a fascinating story of Indian freedom struggle.

in Lieu of Introduction

The life is what one interacts with nature in motion and attains characteristics while struggling with oneself in a given society around to contend with. To understand any individual the context is important to comprehend. The inspiring story of Chaudhry Ranbir Singh too can not be a divine mystery; it is an outcome of a sustained response. One can see it.

The persona of Chaudhry Ranbir Singh had uniqueness of the times that took him to the pages of history. Pursuant to the rule, history of the times shaped his character. His intervention was at local level, as it should be, while his vision was national with a broad rational frame, having a liberal democratic attitude to life. He inherited the baton of struggle in 1941 from the elderly hands of his father, Chaudhry Matu Ram who was deeply imbued by the appeal of Arya Samaj in Haryana region to start with.

Chaudhry Matu Ram in fact had worked up the land in rural Haryana that had paid an unusually heavy price for its role in the uprising of 1857 against foreign rule. To bring out the peasantry in struggle for freedom movement in the background of a brutal repression, unparalleled in civilised human history let loose by British rulers after the failed uprising against their regime, made the task daunting. The elder Chaudhry did his best to overcome odds with much verve where his son learnt the early lessons to take up the onerous task later with much courage and grit.

Imbued with such spirit, the veteran freedom fighter from Haryana with a rare feel of reality at the ground level, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh proved to be a rare voice to the

aspirations of rural India in different legislative forums he had the occasion to serve after independence from a Gandhian perspective with the flavour of a devout. The first such forum in this list was the Constituent Assembly where he baptised for his long innings in parliamentary career, till he bade adieu to this side of electoral politics in 1978 to devote energies in organisational and social activities for the remaining period of life. He remained member of seven different legislatures in his life time.

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was the child of a dark period in the history of India. That made him crave for the light. It was imperative for its future to take shape. It formed the rationale for its long-drawn struggle for freedom. Thanks for those who understood it in time and laboured hard to redeem it.

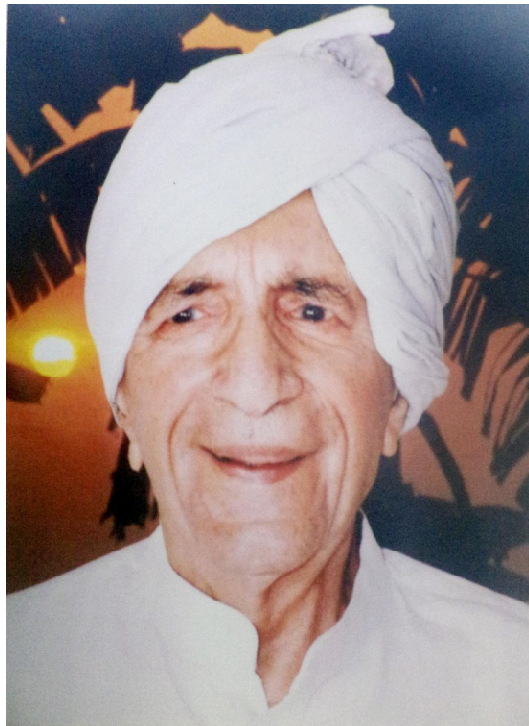
This nation had experienced a long spell of dehumanising slavery at the hands of a marauding foreign power, which was as cunning as a company of trade would be and as ruthless as an alien power could turn on a mission of plunder with no hands barred. This rule had thwarted for almost three hundred years the normal growth of a vibrant nation on move and worked deliberately to upset its course in history to the one that rings disaster for its calibre. Its population was turned docile, its valour used to conquer other nations, its land made barren and natural resources plundered to serve the interest of imperial power.

India cannot forget this period of agony it had suffered at the hands of its colonial masters who pushed it

several legions back lest the spirit to dash ahead is marred or slackened in the process. Chaudhry Sahib imbibed this spirit of struggle and inherited such a legacy that was rich in content and spirit, which he faithfully translated into a creative venture throughout his life. He did not look back and allowed none others to colour his judgement on this account however so close.

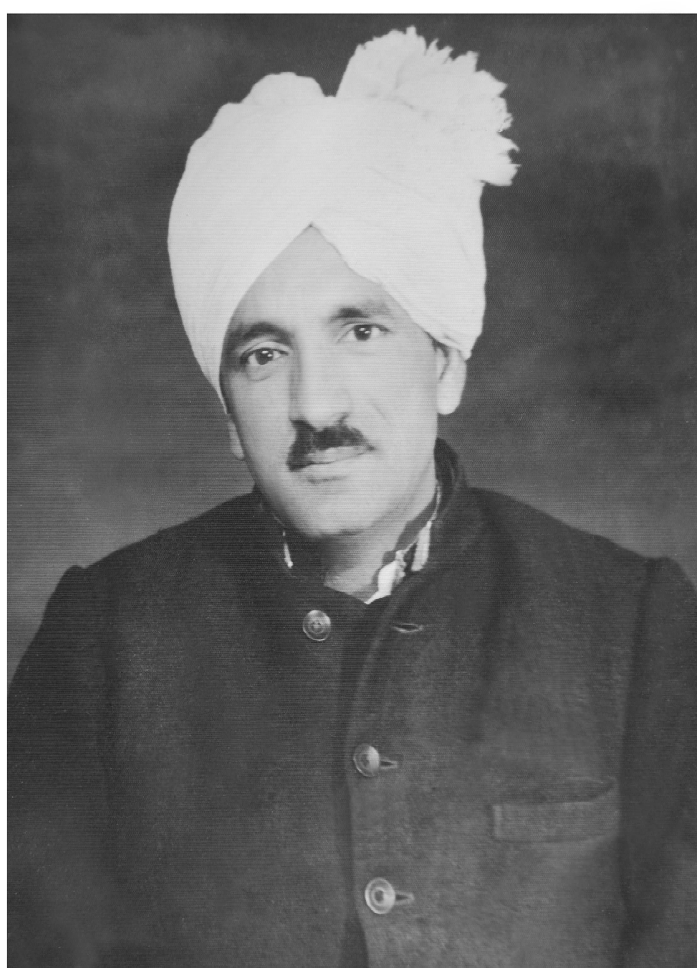
In the following pages, it is not a biography in the usual sense. Story of life and times in the usual sense of biography may await a while. Presently, it is a narration more of those unusual times with proper appreciation that had given shape to an unusual personality while responding to those events of his times, which reflects his honesty of purpose and high sense of social obligation. That was his greatness; that constantly invites a sense of gratitude from coming generations to one of their prominent elders whose life struggle may work as a light-house for grooming its present and assuring its future.

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh
Short Biography



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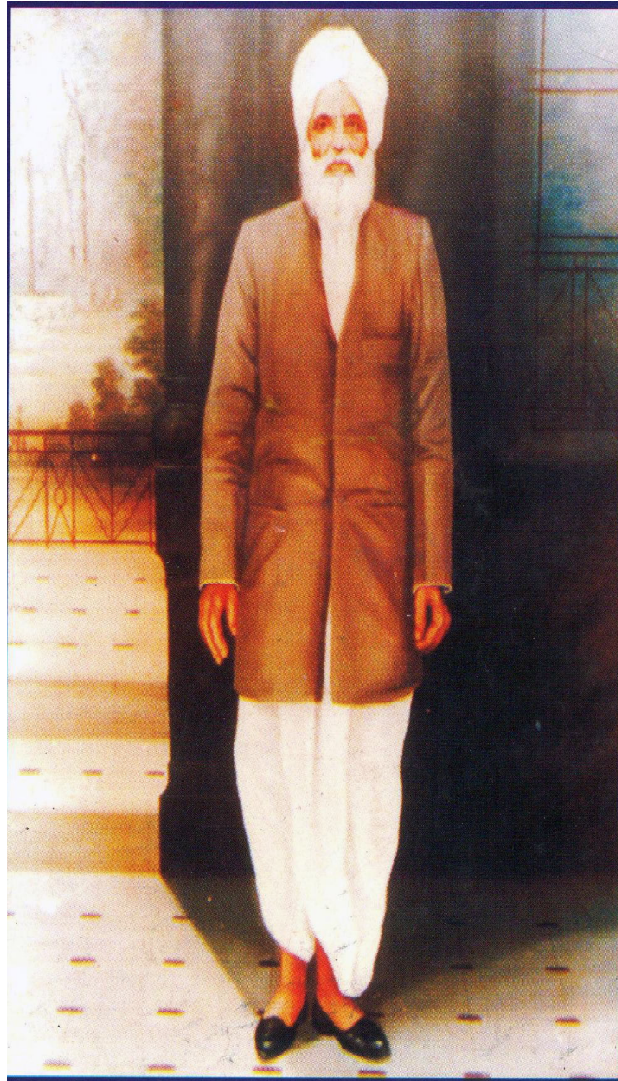
In Lieu of Introduction



1914 - 2009

In Lieu of Introduction

The --- Family ---



Chaudhry Matu Ram

A PEASANT FAMILY from Rohtak district did attract attention both of its admirers and adversaries alike that had plunged whole heartedly in the freedom struggle at the call of times. Chaudhry Matu Ram had inherited a social standing from his grandfather Chaudhry Hardhan Singh and father Zaildar Bakhtawar Singh. He was to carry on the legacy at a young age after the sad demise of his father due to an unseemly mishap. He, in addition, had embraced the first stirrings of freedom movement and later his three sons dutifully imbibed the values of obligation to society. One of them, Ranbir Singh born third in line after an elder brother and a sister to the family of *Zaildar* Matu Ram Arya on 26.11.1914 was known later as Ranbir Singh Chaudhry on the register of Constituent Assembly of India. As a young man he had decided to carry on the bequeathed socio-political task and he did it admirably.

The first and the most abiding University for a growing child Ranbir was to be his family that remained the hub of social/political activities with his father as a guiding spirit having strong Arya Samajist convictions. It shaped his ethical/ moral fabric that he carried throughout, tempered duly later by Gandhian thought in freedom struggle. It was a turbulent period when famished peasantry was panting for breath due to extremely harsh conditions it was made to survive with for its bold stand against British expropriation. Haryana region had its doze to the full.

Ranbir Singh ji was the second son of Chaudhry Matu Ram, born on 26 November, 1914, junior by ten years to the first. His mother Smt. Mam Kaur and father Chaudhry Matu Ram were peers to him to emulate. Elder brother and a sister gave him caring company in a happy family joined by another brother ten years later in 1924. When Ranbir Singh came on the scene Chaudhry Matu Ram was a prominent figure of Arya Samaj movement and Indian National Congress in the area widely known for his forthright views and untiring spirit for social reforms. He had deep roots in the peasant community for his amiable and helpful nature.

This peasant family, though of modest means in village Sanghi of Rohtak district, was known for its untiring devotion to social/community cause for long. The village was vibrant and pulsating with counter-currents of the times. The grandfather of Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was a notable figure in the area. Stepping into the shoes of his prominent father Chaudhry Hardan, Chaudhry Bakhtawar Singh soon grew into a recognised personality of merit for his social activities.

Chaudhry Bakhtawar Singh, father to Chaudhry Matu Ram, was an intelligent man and gifted with high common sense, though he had no opportunity to get any formal education; he was a worldly wise man. He had a cool head and compassionate heart. A man of word, he was widely respected for his sterling qualities of character. In recognition of his growing social stature he was appointed Numbardar (1.11.1891), then as Senior Numbardar (16.6.1892) in the village and later as a Zaildar (6.11.1894).

When Chaudhry Bakhtawar Singh lost his precious life unexpectedly in a bizarre accident, his son Chaudhry Matu Ram showing exemplary maturity and compassion took it as such and moved ahead. Personal loss did not sway him at a young age to lose a balance between what is right for self and what is wrong for social values.

In 1895, the district revenue officer was on his routine visit to Sanghi and had called Zaildar Sahib to discuss about some affairs concerning his department. Reaching the canal rest house, Chaudhry Bakhtawar Singh sent a word of his arrival and shared a puff or two at the hookah with some villagers in the verandah. The policeman on duty was also at hookah with his musket. Inadvertently his hand struck the trigger and the bullet hit Zaildar Sahib fatally.

Loosing his father at this age, Chaudhry Matu Ram had to shoulder family responsibilities like a grown elder. Later, he was also made Numbardar, Senior Numbardar and Zaildar due to his immense popularity and social standing, though he was a pioneer of Arya Samaj movement and a known figure of Indian National Congress in the district that the establishment suspected highly.

The British rulers were generally quite apprehensive of Arya Samaj activities in Punjab for fomenting nationalist feelings. When Sardar Ajit Singh, along with Lala Lajpat Rai was actively organising peasantry during 1905-07 the apprehension grew doubly sharp. This brought the matters to the utter dislike of the British establishment and it frowned up on him quite harshly.

For his collaboration with Sardar Ajit Singh in organising the peasant movement at a time that coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of mass revolt of 1857 against British rule and his activities in Arya Samaj, Chaudhry

Matu Ram became a sore personality with the British and later was stripped off his Zaildari. But it did not deter him in pursuing his goal. He moved with more vigour in his activities despite displeasure shown by the establishment. He earned unflinching respect of the people for his steadfastness and consistency for social cause.

Chaudhry Matu Ram had imbibed the message of Arya Samaj well and understood the importance of its approach to social reforms. He moved with zeal for wiping out prevailing superstitions in the society and fought courageously for his convictions. He convinced others too for the abolition of untouchability and organised mass feasting (Sehbhoj) with Harijans to throw in his weight in their favour. Sense of oneness grew stronger. His standing in the society soared, though there were forces who did their best to punish him for his reforms.

Chaudhry Matu Ram could get formal education barely though up to vernacular, he soon realised the importance of education and took strides fast for its spread in the area along with his compatriots. His cousin, Dr. Ramji Lal was a Physician of repute and worked closely with him to advance the cause of social activities, especially in the field of education.

Perhaps a rare feat in those days for girl education, Chaudhry Matu Ram got his daughter admitted in the school for others to emulate. He prevailed upon his fellow villagers to start a school for girls too. His eldest son, Balbir Singh (1904-1978) became a Dental Doctor and Chaudhry Ranbir Singh (1914-2009) was a Graduate from the reputed Ramjas College, Delhi while the youngest, Chaudhry Fateh Singh (1924-2003) joined the Army services after passing his F.A. examination who later settled at Badripur-Bazpur

in district Nainital(now Udham Singh Nagar in Uttra Khand) to become a progressive farmer of note. The sister, Chandrawati (1912-2003), elder to Ranbir Singh ji, remained a pious lady with deep religious bent through out.

The family soon attracted attention of one and all for guidance and help. It became a centre of social activities in the area with a wide range of concern. Like Chaudhry Matu Ram, Smt. Mam Kaur was a legendary figure for her helping hand and compassionate mind that made it virtually a couple of virtue. Mam Kaur became a mother figure with a caring concern for the ill around and was never found wanting in the endeavour. All the day around, she was a good host of repute to one and all. As a child, Ranbir got nurturing in this nursery with mother and father around. He later was admitted for his first formal schooling in the village primary school nearby.

Those days Arya Samaj had two distinct sections on the question of education: one was running formal educational institutions keeping an eye on the employability of students while the other was for traditional education and was running *Gurukuls* to spread education with *Vedic* slant. Arya Samaj was also preaching for girl education. Separate *Gurukuls* for girls were also established at several places. The emphasis in *Gurukuls* was on moral and religious teachings with spartan life style, cultivating due respect for physical labour. *Gurukuls* survived on public donations. Chaudhry Matu Ram had good relations with both the sections of Arya Samaj for educational activities and used to help both.

Bhagat Phool Singh, a family friend, was running a *Gurukul* at Bhainswal village and persuaded Chaudhry Matu Ram to get him *Gurukul* education. Later, the boy

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got admission to Vaish High School at Rohtak and passed his matriculation examination in the year 1933. In between, he had to keep off studies at Bhainswal for ill health there. After passing his F.A. from Government College, Rohtak he moved to the famous Ramjus College at Delhi for his graduation studies. He was good at sports too.

Another dimension for Chaudhry Matu Ram opened when community leaders met in a Maha-Panchayat at village Barona in Rohtak district (now Sonapat) on 7 March, 1911 to deliberate on issues the community was facing then. It was crying for change; some social maladies were plaguing it and it looked for reforms. It was an internal urge of the community to move ahead. The Maha-Panchayat was attended by 50,000 elders of the community and Chaudhry Matu Ram was one of its leading lights, representing Hooda Khap. Out of 28 resolutions the Maha-Panchayat adopted, the first stressed the need for spreading education in the area. The Maha-Panchayat proved to be a harbinger of change and opened a new vista of social activism.

Chaudhry Matu Ram, along with his compatriots, moved with exceptional zeal to get these resolutions implemented in earnest. Spreading of education became the creed. There came a famous educational institute of Rohtak by this effort. It started as a small effort in a rented accommodation in the city in the year 1913 as Jat Anglo-Sanskrit School with Chaudhry Matu Ram as its founding President/Manager and Chaudhry Chhotu Ram as the Secretary. Chaudhry Baldev Singh was the Headmaster of the school for a long time. It won a wide range of support from the community and the school soon flowered into a known institution in the area around.

The Tribune.

Saturday, February 19, 1921.

5

MAHATMA GANDHI'S TOUR. MEETINGS AT KALANAUR AND ROHTAK. LALA SHAM LAL SUSPENDS PRACTICE.

*wire from the Secretary, Rohtak
Congress Committee.*

Rohtak, Feb. 17.

Mahatma Gandhi and party left Bhiwani yesterday morning by motor and on their way stopped at Rohtak for an hour to address a meeting at Kalanaur. The audience was more than five thousand. Maulana Abul Kalam explained the Khilafat question.

Mahatmaji pointed that he wanted three things from the people, if they wanted *Swarajya* before the next September:—Non-violent non-co-operation with the Government, co-operation with our own people; and funds to carry on the work. He told the people to take to the spinning wheel and boycott foreign goods.

Lala Lajpat Rai then requested the people to give up recruiting and appealed to the Jats and Mahomedans not to become instruments in enslaving other nations.

AT ROHTAK.

The party arrived at Rohtak at about 12 noon. The first function was to visit to the Jat School, which had been lately nationalized. A vast multitude had assembled there. Short speeches were delivered and the foundation stone of the Vaishya High School was laid and a meeting was held. Then Mahatmaji went to the ladies' meeting and addressed them.

The party then went to the Conference. The same resolutions which were passed at Bhiwani were passed unanimously; and the meeting was addressed by all the leaders. More than 25 thousand people attended. Chowdhry Matu Ram presided. The whole audience received with applause the announcement of L. Sham Lal, the leading local Vakil, that he suspended his practice for one year from the 1st March. The Headmaster, Gur High School declared that he had resolved to give up his present post and no more employ himself in any Government or aided schools. Great enthusiasm prevailed throughout the day; and the Haryana Rural Conference, which began its sitting at Bhiwani, was brought to a close at Rohtak. Amidat shahis of *Banemansram* and *Ahik-Akbar*, Mahatmaji, Lajji and Maulanaji left for Lahore in the evening.

Chowdhry Matu Ram presided the conference addressed by Mahatma Gandhi at Rohtak

More than 25 thousands people attended

However, differences grew later on the question of support to the freedom struggle. Non-cooperation movement was in the ferment around. It had spread the message of freedom struggle. Gandhi ji was on the move. His appeal was gathering momentum. Chaudhry Matu Ram and Chaudhry Baldev Singh stood for supporting non-cooperation movement started under his leadership, while Chaudhry Chhotu Ram was opposed to it. The school led by Chaudhry Matu Ram withdrew affiliation with the government and Chaudhry Chhotu Ram consequently started another parallel school with blessings from the *Raj*. This gave him a slight edge in support. A few years later, however, respecting the concern of the community both the schools combined together in the interest of education to become an institution of repute. Both the teams merged and worked for the benefit of the community to advance the cause of education.

The same institution is now a notable feature in the city's landscape catering to thousands of students of various streams having a sprawling campus of its own. Its alumini includes reputed educationists, jurists, engineers, social scientists, high ranking Army men and bureaucrats.

Gandhiji had come to Rohtak on 16th February, 1921 in pursuit of his non-cooperation movement, visited this school and showered praise for their enthusiasm. The same day he addressed another big gathering of around 25000 people in attendance. Chaudhry Matu Ram presided over the meeting.

On 5 February, 1922 Gandhiji withdrew the non-cooperation movement. This had disappointed the people and Congress party was not in a good shape to face the impending District Board elections. Chaudhry Matu Ram

worked hard to revive the old spirit in the organisation and it won many seats in the Board, including Chaudhry Matu Ram. Soon thereafter elections to Central and provincial legislatures were held in 1923. The Congress Party was divided over this issue; one section was opposed to participation while the other favoured participation in the election. As a result, a group within Congress party came forward as Swaraj Party led by Pt. Moti Lal Nehru that went for elections. In Haryana most of the Congressmen joined it, including Chaudhry Matu Ram.

In this election, Chaudhry Sahib was nominated to contest from North-West Rohtak Rural Constituency for Punjab Legislative Council. Ch. Lal Chand of Unionist Party won from this seat and became a Minister in Punjab Cabinet. The election was, however, challenged through an election petition in Punjab High Court, Lahore by Chaudhry Matu Ram for use of improper practices. In a scathing verdict by M.V. Bhide, M.M. Mackay and D.C. Ralli the election of Chaudhry Lal Chand was set aside, disqualifying him, for using improper practices, levying a cost of Rs 3000. He lost his seat in the Cabinet.

Though the judgement was explicit that "the Petitioner had to fight this case against great odds", Chaudhry Matu Ram again displayed his grit of purpose and never recovered the amount awarded to him as cost to assert his rightfulness but with no malice towards the respondent.

With such an atmosphere around, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh grew to take up the challenges of a life full of struggle and influenced the next line of generation to keep the flag flying high with a system of social and moral values better than anything else to crave for. That made a difference.

Chaudhry Matu Ram and his wife Mam Kaur had nurtured the family on certain virtues and groomed them as best as they could for future responsibilities with the family spirit intact. The family of Hooda's at village Sanghi is now known for its tradition of social values so nurtured by Chaudhry Ranbir Singh to a new height.

The family life of Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was full of harmony and bliss. He had a happy married life. Chaudhry Sahib was married to Smt. Hardei from Dumerkha in 1937 and was blessed with five sons, namely Partap Singh, Inder Singh, Joginder Singh, Bhupinder Singh and Dharmender Singh.

The eldest one, late Capt. Partap Singh had served in the Army and participated in action during 1965 war with Pakistan with honour, while Ch. Inder Singh, and late Ch. Joginder Singh looked after the family farm becoming prominent farmers at Badripur in Uttra Khand, Chaudhry Bhupinder Singh Hooda is currently the Chief Minister in Haryana for a consecutive second term, while the youngest, Dharmender Singh Hooda is the musing scion of the house at Rohtak that makes the family a happy one. His grandson, Deepender Singh Hooda represents Rohtak constituency now in the Lok Sabha for the second term, entering the house in the year 2005 for the first time.

The eldest of the brothers, Dr. Balbir Singh had three sons and a daughter, namely, late Ch. Lekh Raj, late Hans Raj, Kuldip Singh and Smt. Bimla who is the eldest among his children. Kuldip Singh is a farmer and later became Numberdar in Sanghi.

The youngest of three brothers, Chaudhry Fateh Singh was blessed with three sons and four daughters, namely, late Rajbir Singh who had retired as Executive

Engineer, late Dharambir Singh and Kulbeer Singh who has taken up farming after his studies. The late Sneh Lata was a noted Doctor in Rammanohar Lohia Hospital, New Delhi while Dr. Pushp Lata, Dr. Prem Lata and Dr. Samita Lata are academics.

The

Times

The advent of British traders in India was the background of a much more turbulent period in the history of this nation that had its own aspirations for an honourable existence and signalled a rupture with its past. In a way, it had begun a new march in history. The colonial period intervened with disastrous effect that had formed the basis for the mass rebellion of 1857 against British rule which had consolidated here after the Battle of Plassey in June, 1757. The colonial slavery had blunted its natural growth while its self was lost for almost two hundred years. A cunning trader's class with an alien culture was out to turn this land barren by relentless expropriation and with gun powder subdue the population. It was made to survive under an alien culture and mode of governance with debilitating effect to its mores; community way of existence was replaced by the self-seeking individual. India was taken in for a ride for its simplicity and sense of hospitality.

The foreign trading company had arrived at its shores to test the waters for a grab and it manipulated power with gun-powder, deceit and deception. East India Company became the first British agency of this haul. To keep its grip, the foreigners changed the whole texture, culture and governance of this nation having its own rich tradition with a new set of ground rules, jurisprudence, land relations, revenue system and education mode of a marauding culture to suit colonial interests. It was not their country; they were here for imperial possession to expropriate and transplant its culture on the defeated. They

were traders, tuned to cunningness and smartness of one on prowl. Later events proved beyond reasonable doubt that it produced revulsion among its victims.

The British ruled over this country for more than two hundred years with exceptional zeal and grit as its sole arbiter till the middle of twentieth century when the nation was up in protest. The prize was too good to leave it with humour. The rule was a combination of brute force of a brigand in haste and skills of a trader out to make money by loot. Precisely, these two intoxicating ingredients of British politics in India lasted two centuries of ruin this nation suffered from.

The cleverness of a trader is the school in remarkable sophistry, cheating and scheming. In the home of a simple hearted peasantry it was china bull raging with deadly horns. The trader had a game to play for the grab. Other things followed. The British were not found wanting : starting from its social structure to its culture and system of governance were forced to shut shop. For colonial reasons, this nation was made to crawl on its stomach and turned into a habitual crouch.

The first casualty was its thinking faculty that was overhauled to be worth of a grafted structure. The second was the land relations that were tailored for individual ownership and a permanent source of revenue while the third was the native system of self-governance that was replaced by an alien system of a highly centralised mode of colonial administration with a hard core bureaucracy to over awe the once defiant peasantry and created a class of landlord ever faithful to the *Raj* as middlemen to fleece the working population and please the benefactor.

Over time, these changes brought disaster to the lives of common people. Famines and draught started visiting regularly that ruined Indian agriculture with starvation lurking year around while high incidence of land revenue continued unabated despite continued crop failures. Such ruinous policies had formed the background that paved way to the mass rebellion of 1857. Indian sub-continent suffered slavery for a long period in its history at the hands of this class of desperate traders with a new set of values and a state structure totally foreign to the ethos of this country.

Indian sub-continent had to bear a long period of foreign rule and paid quite a heavy price. The East India Company consolidated its *Raj* here for colonial possession after its contrived victory in the Battle of Plassey on 23rd June, 1757 and employed means all fair and foul to keep its bastion to the last in its quest for imperial interests. For this, soon they earned a chain of revolts all around. Tribal areas gave a dogged fight and never accepted the slavery lying down. However, a pan-Indian challenge from the people came in the revolt of 1857 that ultimately paved way for a direct crown rule by Britain.

This war against colonial rule in 1857, in effect, gave a national perspective to the natives in defeat for a future victory, though the British did everything in their power to keep the country divided on religious, caste and regional levels. Communal riots were fanned. Separatism was emphasized. The purpose was to create the impression in the minds that the scheme of self-governance for India was an impossibility to succeed. It was a daunting task indeed for the freedom movement to keep national unity in diversity and simultaneously provide a challenge to the foreign rulers to quit.

Britain, however, terrorised India and at the same time took extra-ordinary pains to subvert its ethos and pervert the spirit of right and wrong. It bled this country white so that Britain could prosper and attain commanding heights as an imperial power in the world. It laboriously chiselled a new tool in education system to insulate their regime and shifted the blame for misery here on Indians themselves. Shortly after, a good section of educated class started praising the marauder for his benevolence to make India modern and did what was desired of it to do for small gains.

The victims, however, were not amused and refused to remain docile forever. Despite tactical change of direct crown rule in 1858 and despite the terrifying grip of the state that came in existence thereafter coupled with policies of 'rod and carrot' to tame Indians, revolts at one place or the other continued. The urge for freedom started asserting again and again with varying degree of force.

There were coherent reasons for Indians to fight against these colonialists. The crown rule proved no less ruthless in oppression and imperial expropriation in draining out resources from here; rather the pace doubled up.

Firstly, subsistence became tortuous and slavery to the *Raj* degrading where human dignity was the victim while state taxes were unbearable. Between the years 1932 to 1941, on average, 62 lakh people died of poverty every year. In India population increased by 18.9% between 1870 to 1910 while England recorded an increase of 58%, Holland 62%, Germany 59%, Russia 45.4% and Belgium 47.8%, to name a few. The Famine Commission of 1945 accepted that England has recorded double the increase in population during last 60 years than India. And during this period, it is England that prospered to new heights

while India steeped in dire poverty further, despite Malthus. Another official data shows that India recorded an increase of agricultural production by 19 % while increase in population was 9.3 % during 1891 to 1921. The average increase in agricultural production was 30% while increase in population was recorded 19% during three decades from the year 1900 to 1930. (Refer: Prof. P. Thomson replying to those who were clamouring about 'raining of children' in India, writing in *The Times*, London, 24.10.1935)

People were starving to death in great numbers, while the export of food grains from India increased many fold. In 1914 the increase was twenty two times over 1901. It was worth 3.8 million sterling pounds in 1858, 7.9 million in 1877, 9.3 million in 1901 and 19.3 million sterling pounds by 1914. Land revenue increased to 1470000 pounds in the first year of company's rule from 817000 pounds previously. In 1771-72 it was 2341000 pounds and in 1793 it increased to 3400000 pounds. Sir George Lewis, while addressing the House of Commons on 12 February, 1858 said: I can very confidently say that no civilised government on earth has ever been more corrupt, brute and rapacious than the government of East India Company during 1765 to 1784.

To face such a rule and its increasing onslaught, people rebelled. The revolt of 1857 was an expression of deep seated anger born out of all around onslaught on the body polity of this nation. People did not stop at its defeat, neither there seems to be a break of any substantial character, despite brutal repression that followed. Reasons that gave rise to the revolt in 1857 remained present to provide fuel for any future turmoil.

The British were happy to term the revolt in 1857 as a mere 'sepoy' mutiny, while some depicted it as a revolt of conservative and feudal forces for serving their own agendas. A third stream describes it as '*Jan Kranti*.' Marx said it was the 'First War of Independence', despite the fact that none talked about any second war of independence in India thereafter! It remained almost a continuous struggle till the colonisers left India in 1947. The real reasons behind this rebellion were buried deep to obscure the nature of the colonial rule by writing deceitful accounts for history. The academic world still revels with this sponsored game in intellectual dishonesty.

The Indian freedom movement in its later phases encompassed mainly three streams each having its own history of emergence with specific conditions. In response to state oppression let loose after 1857 and partition of Bengal, terrorists' movement started operating underground from various centres in the country as well as in various centres in south East Asian countries as well to terrorise the Britishers for their crime against Indians. A bit later, the Indian National Congress came on the scene more as a safety valve initially to channelise the serious mass discontentment that arose due to the economic distress that developed later into a mass movement against this rule. Soon, a revolutionary stream came up with specific ideological backup, largely supported by the organised labour and peasant struggles.

Punjab was also in ferment. Peasantry was in deep trouble on many accounts. The government was determined to implement certain legislations like the Land Alienation and Colonisation Acts that peasantry in the region did not appreciate. With help from Lala Lajpat Rai,

the fiery Sardar Ajit Singh was able to harness this segment of population against the British. The Government did not lose time and ousted both of them to Mandalay.

The movement during this upsurge of 1905-07 was remarkably successful to rouse the peasantry out of passiveness. Sardar Ajit Singh found in Chaudhry Matu Ram of Sanghi a ready soldier when he visited his family friend and toured some villages around Rohtak for taking the message to rural belt. It was a time when colonial Government was very apprehensive of Arya Samaj for its activities over this vast land. Coming out of Mandalay incarnation, Sardar Ajit Singh went underground and crossed the borders to organise support for the struggle outside along with Sufi Amba Prashad, returning to his native land only in 1947. His nephew, Sardar Bhagat Singh, born in 1907, took over the task in his absence with remarkable dexterity and persistence till he attained martyrdom on 23 March, 1931. This roused the Nation in protest and gave an unprecedented impetus to the movement.

The Punjab peasantry largely, thereafter, remained a part of the freedom movement, barring landlords who were beneficiaries of the *Raj*. In Haryana region the efforts by such stalwarts as Chaudhry Matu Ram and Dr. Ramji Lal along with few other friends, were made to mobilise a good chunk of peasantry in support of the struggle against heavy odds.

With arrival of Gandhi on the scene, there was a perceptible change in the strategic struggles and tactical forms of movement; on arrival from South Africa, he understood the grim task and did his best in the circumstances. The *Jalianwala Bag* massacre at Amritsar defined the very tenor of struggle and changed its

discourse. Non-cooperation and individual *satyagraha* as forms of mass mobilisation were utilised by the Congress, while Quit India movement took the struggle to new heights of resistance to break the will of British rulers. The temperature turned too hot for them to stay any longer.

The period of 1942-45 was a time of great trial. The peasantry was overtaken by famine and ruin. People died like flies in Bengal and some other provinces. In August 1942, a ruthless attack was launched by the British. The Government arrested Congress leaders. Country's economy was in shambles. The corrupt bureaucracy played havoc with lives of the people. Such was the condition in the country that had created a ground to be free from an adamant and scheming colonial power. One thing is beyond dispute: India survived. Reasons are many. A terrorised nation again rose to its feet with a vow to be free.

It may be underlined that Haryana region had suffered worst at the hands of British rulers for its robust sense of freedom, uncompromising valour and grit it had earned from its avocation in agricultural and pastoral background of a secular living, imbued habitually with a strong sense of justice born out of a democratic conduct in self-rule. The mass uprising in 1857 symbolised this character in abundance and failure of this struggle had invited an unprecedented butchery of this spirit. Its social fabric was sought to be torn asunder. The land was either occupied or turned barren, its people were left to serve as menials or its foot soldiers to fight colonial wars in distant lands. The region in particular was bled white for its 'crime' to fight for independence; it however rose again by first decade of twentieth century in anger and determination to challenge the supremacy of these masters and a good number joined the ranks of freedom fighters.

Chaudhry Matu Ram was one of the early leaders of Congress Party who kept the flame of freedom movement burning in rural areas at a time when peasantry was virtually won over by the party in power sitting to the right side of British administration; it had a claim of defending the interests of debt-ridden peasantry. Chaudhry Chotu Ram, also from Rohtak district, was a powerful minister in the cabinet and enjoyed wide support from peasantry. He had parted company with the Congress Party and became a leading figure of the ruling Unionist Party.

Peasantry here was hard pressed. It was in trouble for its sense of fairness when the administration was bent to make farming unviable, as a measure to punish Haryana for its leading role against the British in 1857 uprising. The area was visited by repeated famines and it was converted into a recruiting ground for British military forces in quest of expeditions abroad and police establishment inside. The area was in virtual ruin with agricultural land mortgaged against unpaid loans on usury interest.

At such a difficult juncture in the life of peasantry, Chaudhry Matu Ram along with his many friends worked hard to advance the cause of struggle and awaken the farming community too to the movement ahead. This area thereafter never proved wanting in various struggles launched by the Congress party to further the cause of freedom. Despite the transitory role of Unionist party during this phase, the zeal for freedom from British subjugation, did not die in the region and rural areas too reverberated with songs of liberation, thanks to stalwarts like Chaudhry Matu Ram and later his son, Ranbir Singh. As a result, there was a good comparable number of Satyagrahies in non-cooperation and quit India movements in the area.

The freedom struggle in the areas that constitute the state of Haryana today had two variants; the first is the freedom movement proper fighting directly against the British rule and the *Praja Mandal* movement in those areas that had formed part of princely states during that period. The field proper where Chaudhry Ranbir Singh got involved was under direct British rule, though adjacent areas of *Praja Mandal* movement were not beyond his radar, being culturally a wholesome region. He worked in both.

Britain was determined to do everything possible to keep this sub-continent in possession; it terrorised India and at the same time took steps to subvert the movement adopting a policy of divide and rule. To a large extent the game worked and the country could not be kept united against the persistent demand of Pakistan. It paid a heavy price in blood and tears. The foreign rule ended, though, with lessons for the future to guard against.

The country stood ruined and blood-soaked. Its economy was in shambles; it was made to serve British imperial interests in the Second World War as in the First World War in both financial and physical terms where thousands and thousands Indian soldiers laid down their lives for the sake of Britain, while it remained busy in playing divisive games in this country to thwart the freedom struggle and communal frenzy was inflamed to its worst. Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was deeply concerned at the turn of such events and worked tirelessly to restore peace. He sought the help of Gandhi ji, who visited important places, including Rohtak. Many precious lives were saved and Mewat area responded to appeals of sanity.

With this background, a different perspective altogether emerged after the country attained freedom in 1947.

A free nation started taking shape, with lacerating wounds of contrived partition; as if again punished for its urge to be free by the departing trader-cum-ruler. The nation rejoiced to be free again, but with deep pangs of a new birth.

By then the new nation was a deeply divided house of divergent interests, which had been created here by foreign rulers with an alien motive of expropriation permeating all fields around, which had seeped down to its bones. The long period of slavery with its state structure that suited an exploitative regime had worked over time to demolish a nation of just social order with a deep sense of justice and peace. When the newly formed Constituent Assembly sat down to gather pieces together and chart out course for the future it was a divided chamber of divergent interests working beneath its mandate. Deliberations in its chamber started reflecting this ground reality of divergent views from the beginning. It was a clash for taking over the free country to a goal of choices.

The new Constitution of India that emerged after a labour of 2 years, 11 months and 17 days with 165 formal sittings (114 sittings for consideration of the draft) in 11 sessions of the house was a document though of compromises, still it has a preference of its own. The clash thus continued in the later forums for getting due space for these interests. The deliberations in the Provisional Parliament that took over legislative business for an interim period till a new house was elected in 1952 under the new Constitution is testimony of this ground reality where Chaudhry Ranbir Singh persistently took cudgels on behalf of rural India with rare courage of conviction.

The Struggle

4

The Struggle

As is evident from narration in preceding pages, the dominant feature of colonial period in Indian history was defined by two major contending political streams between opposite forces: British capital was out to perpetuate its rule over this vast bastion of untapped wealth as long as possible, while Indians were determined to reclaim their abode for self and live with dignity as free citizens. The misery of the common man was appalling and deprivation agonising. Haryana region had lost its spirit under a brute regime. Enough was enough. Challenge to this abnormality was on the rise. Accumulated anger against oppressive rule was bursting at seams.

The British colonial empire in India was constituted of two separate spheres of its authority; the British India and of the Princely States. The British India was divided into Provinces, directly governed by the British. The princely States were ruled by the local potentates under the protection of the Paramountcy that was determined by the manner in which the British and supremacy were exercised in the States. The national movement in Princely States took birth in the wake of resurgence against colonial rule by the end of nineteenth century, gaining inspiration from reformatory movements.

The Indian National Congress limited its activities to British India. The All India States People's Conference was established in the year 1927 to work in princely states, which achieved a measure of coordination between the national

movement in the British Indian Provinces and these States. The States people's movement aimed to end the British rule as well as secure their deliverance from the political/administrative absolutism the Princes represented under the protection of the alien rule, which they served. It opposed the transfer of power to the Princes and visualised a federal India in which the people represented their States and not the Princes as was ordained by the Government of India Act, 1947 enacted by the British Parliament for the transfer of power. It thus had a wider ideological orientation than other formations.

The sense of slavery and humiliation the country went through a long period of exploitation and hunger for the enrichment of England at the cost of Indian lives brought a radical turn when partition of Bengal was made effectual. A strong anarchist movement took shape within and outside the country to terrorise the British in reverse that caught the imagination of wider section of people even in Princely States.

A new perspective had emerged for India after the country attained freedom in 1947. As a free nation it started taking shape afresh of its own. The nation was happy to be free again, though with deep pangs of a new birth with two nations out of one accompanied by a myriad of uncalled problems at hand for urgent attention requiring huge resources. And resources were scarce. The British had left this country with war time loan, which it was made to bear the cost of a war that it had fought for them without consent of the ruled.

Secondly, the new Indian Union was a deeply divided house of divergent interests; inheriting a deep seeded tendency of expropriation with the good wishes of state

establishment permeating all fields around at one hand, while, on the other, there was mass of the people who had tasted ruin and injustice during foreign rule. Rural India, which was plundered to its bones, had a dream to fulfil in a free country of vast possibilities.

There remained, however, a large grey area in between the possibilities: the counter legacy of ruling establishment born of a long period of colonial possession with its state structure that suited an exploitative regime was available at hand to those aspirants who had thrived by standing to the side of the alien rule and could manipulate the new project with all the paraphernalia available intact for such a project.

It was the balance sheet when the newly formed Constituent Assembly for India sat down to shift pieces together and chart out future course for the nation. When the Constituent Assembly started its task with the first meeting on 9 December 1946, both the underlying possibilities were available to occur: powerful forces were out to grab levers of state for the big kill with expertise to handle the state structure to its advantage, while there was an opportunity for the deprived lot to assert and chart out a fresh path for a just order that could inspire the nation to achieve new heights after independence.

Among the stalwarts of freedom movement represented in the Constituent Assembly two divergent opinions on the future course emerged: one was for a centralised polity with rapid strides in industrial mode of development while another section swore by Gandhian solution in Gram Swaraj with stress on cottage industries for economic resurgence. Both had definite opinions of their own. There was another stream in the second, which laid

emphasis on agriculture to save the hungry nation and advance development on its own strength.

While the first was firmly for Westminster form of government with representative democracy at its core, the other was for Panchayati system of governance, called popularly as Little Republics as participative democracy in its past history. Chaudhry Ranbir Singh, as a member of the House, also made his choice based more on the legacy of freedom movement. Upbringing in the milieu of a peasant family also seems to have played its role in shaping his decision on this account.

The deliberations in Constituent Assembly reflected this ground reality of divergent interests. It was a clash of different views for taking the free country to a goal of choices and many stuck to the last despite efforts for compromises. A few excerpts will prove fruitful to understand the issues:

The Constituent Assembly of India

On behalf of the Assembly, its Drafting Committee dealt with and decided essential issues before it prepared the first draft of the Constitution which was put in public domain on 21 February 1948 soliciting their observations and suggestions. Later, when the final edited Draft was placed before the Constituent Assembly by the Law Minister for consideration on 4 November 1948 it was a divided house on some essential features with definite opinions on the future course the country should take. Dealing with criticism that the first draft elicited from various quarters of his proposals, the Law minister, *inter alia*, sought to clarify that:

(1) the proposed Constitution envisages parliamentary democracy as its form of governance, on British model

(2) the proposed Constitution is a dual polity with a single citizenship, it is a single frame from which neither the Union nor the states can get out; a hybrid of unitary and federal form with a tilt to the unitary i.e. unitary in substance and federal in shape. In substance, he pitched for a unitary form of governance with the *individual* as its basic unit rather than the *family* and *village community*.

That the Draft Constitution has adopted a good part of provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935 was one of major accusations. Objection was that the pre-Independence frame was retained. Meeting the criticism that half of it has been copied from this Act of 1935 and very little of it can claim originality, the Law Minister countered by asking 'whether there can be anything new in a Constitution framed at this hour in the history of the world'. He explained: 'More than hundred years have rolled over when the first written Constitution was drafted. What the scope of a Constitution should be has long been settled.' About the Act of 1935 by the British he said that 'I make no apologies. There is nothing to be ashamed of in borrowing.' Again, he said that 'it is wiser not to trust the Legislature to prescribe forms of administration and justified incorporating them in the Constitution.'

Turning to the more substantial question of self-governance (Swaraj) that had vertically divided the house into two divergent sets of opinion and bothered many stalwarts of the freedom struggle, the Law Minister said that:

'no part of it (draft Constitution) represents the ancient polity of India. There were people who desired that instead of incorporating Western theories the new

Constitution should have been raised and built upon village Panchayats and District Panchayats. There are others who have taken a more extreme view. They do not want any Central or Provincial Governments. They just want India to contain so many village Governments. The love of the intellectual Indians for the village community is of course infinite, if not pathetic.'

'... The existence of these village communities each one forming a separate little State in itself has, according to Metcalf, contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the people of India, through all the revolutions and changes which they have suffered, and is in a high degree conducive to their happiness and to the enjoyment of a great portion of the freedom and independence. No doubt the village communities have lasted where nothing else lasts. But those who take pride in the village communities do not care to consider that little part they have played in the affairs and the destiny of the country, and why?'

'.....I hold that these village republics have been the ruination of India. I am therefore surprised that those who condemn Provincialism and Communalism should come forward as champions of the village. What is the village but a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow-mindedness and communalism?' Concluding the argument on behalf of the government, the Law Minister declared that: '*I am glad that the Draft Constitution has discarded the village and adopted the individual as its unit*' of governance (emphasis added). (p.38-9, CA Debates, Book 2, Vol.VII, LS Secretariat, 2009)

This unexpected and quite bland declaration evoked equally sharp but balanced and dignified reaction from

many members. The house stood divided between those who were for rural community and its system of self governance duly subscribed by Gandhi ji during freedom struggle as Little Republics with 'India as a federation of seven lakh Little Republics' and those who saw future in the Western mode of governance. The declaration of the Law Minister disappointed many and inflamed a row between the two sides.

One member, Gokalbhai Bhatt retorted: 'I was grieved to find that our great Pandit with all his knowledge of Sanskrit and politics, has opposed the system of Village Panchayats in this way. If the village is to be discarded, someone can also boldly demand that this Constitution be discardedOtherwise, we would be rearing this great building on a foundation of sand....' Another member, Damodar Swarup Seth (UP-General) immediately on 5.11.1948 argued with equal sharpness and said: Our Indian Republic should have been a Union, a union of small autonomous republics....Had there been such autonomous republics, neither the question of linguistic provinces nor of communal majorities or minorities or of backward classes would have arisen.Therefore, Sir, I want that this House should seriously consider these matters. Shri Ramanarayan (Bihar) ..I say emphatically that the Constitution is not what is wanted by the country. I am inclined to say that it is better to be ruled by devils than by an army of ministers and secretaries, etc. I want power to go direct to the villages. It is not enough that they should vote, they must be made to take interest in day to day administration of the country.

Shri P.S. Deshmukh (CP and Berar) said:...after all this is a country of agriculturists. The peasants and the

labourers should have a larger share and the most dominating in the government. They should have been made to feel that they are the real masters of this biggest nation on earth. I do not share the view that past or ancient civilisation is not worth utilising for the future building up of the Indian nation. I hope the Honourable Doctor....has not been able to frame a Constitution more akin to the genius of the Indian people. Shri A.C. Guha (West Bengal) opined that the village should be the real basis of the machinery.

Many other members contested the very contention regarding ruination of India so expressed about Indian village community and its past. B.P. Jhunjhunwala said: 'It is not the village republics who have brought about the ruination of the country, but it is the other way around. It is the Centre under British rule which has brought about the ruination of the villages. T. Prakashan said: That is the (abominal) condition to which we have been reduced, after the village panchayats have been exhausted on account of the oppression of the various foreign rulers. Still inspite of all that had been done for their suppression, they have survived... Therefore, village Panchayat is not to be condemned on that basis.....the British system drowned us and suppressed the country and made the people utterly helpless.'

The perception about the village life, on the basis of which the Draft got its shape, was ascribed by the critics to the attitude which 'was typical of the urban highbrow' as said by another member, H.V. Kamath in the House. Again a member, K. Hanumanthaiya lamented: We wanted the music of Veena or Sitar, but here we have the music of an English Band. That was because our Constitution-makers

were educated that way. I do not blame them; rather I would blame those people, or those of us, who entrusted them with this kind of work. If that is going to be our attitude towards the village folks, I can say, God save us.'

Shri K. Santhanam (Madras) said: I do not agree with the condemnation of the village Panchayats...I think ...they have preserved Indian life and but for them India will be a chaos....their existence may have to be recognised in the Constitution, for in the long run local autonomy for each village must constitute the basic framework for the future freedom of this country. Prof. Sibban Lal Saksena too held a different view from what has been expressed on behalf of the Drafting Committee. He said: 'I am certain that a very large majority of the House do not agree with this view of village republics (as described by the Law Minister). As one who has done work in the villages and has experience of the working of Congress village Panchayats for the last twenty five years, I can say that this picture is purely imaginary. It is entirely wrong picture. I personally feel that, if we bring these village Panchayats all the light and all the knowledge which the country and the world have gathered, they will become the most potent forces for holding the country together and for its progress towards the ideal of Ram Rajya. In fact, the Soviet Constitution is based on village units, village Soviets as they are called. I feel personally that these village republics can become models of good self-government. I think that the Constitution should provide for the establishment of village republics.' At this, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru assured that today especially when the world is in turmoil and we are passing through a very swift period of transition, what we may do today may not be wholly applicable tomorrow.

As a compromise, Article 31- A (later renumbered to 40) in the Constitution was introduced by Santhanam and accepted by the law Minister 'because this gives opportunity to the people of every province and whole of India to go to this basis and work up the whole thing without interrupting the progress of the Constitution at this stage'. Still, T. Prakasam has to say that a very serious flaw was created by not making the village republic or the village unit as the real basis of the Constitution. This is not a thing which should be looked upon with contempt, having forgotten our history and the history of the world. This is not a favour that we bestow upon our people by reviving these republics.

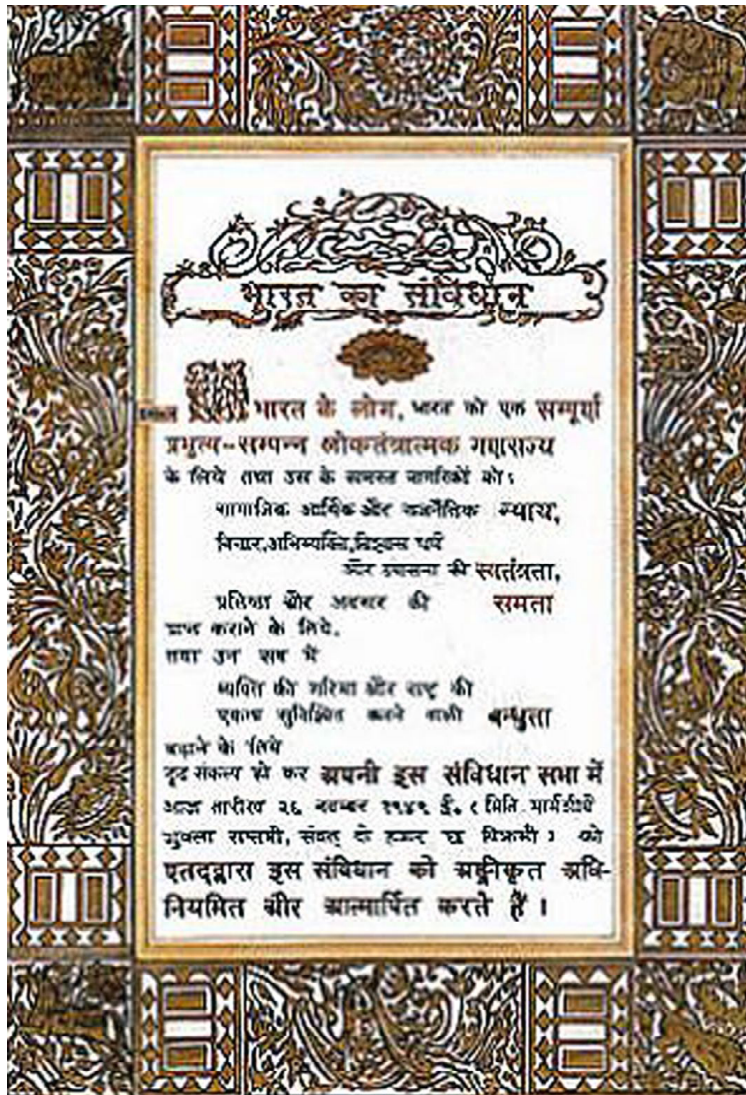
Seth Govind Das (CP and Berar) said: Ours is an ancient, a very ancient country and the village has had always an important position here...that even legends contained in most ancient books the Upanishads there are descriptions of villages....even during the Muslim rule villages were considered of primary importance. It was during British regime that villages fell into neglect and lost their importance....There was reason for this. The British Raj in India was based on the support of a handful of people. During this regime provinces, districts, tehsils, and such other units were formed and so were formed the Talukdars, Zamindars. The British rule lasted here for so many years only on account of these few people...it would be a great pity if we make no mention of our villages in the Constitution.

Despite this, Shri K. Hanumanthaiya rose on 17.11.1949 at the third reading to say: Sir, it is now nearly three years since this Assembly first met ...we are at the end of our labours. Today after having had a full picture of

the Constitution, I for one feel that I cannot make up my mind wholly to appreciate and welcome this Constitution....there are ...features of the Constitution that may not come up to the expectations of many people....we wanted the music of *Veena* or *Sitar*, but here we have the music of an English Band...Here is a Constitution which we call democratic, but democracy is centred in Delhi...Though our Constitution-makers have not adopted the course of decentralization, still I have faith in the people of India. They will be able to assert themselves in times to come and make this democracy work equitably....and rectify matters in times to come. K.T. Shah replied to those who pleaded that people should be educated enough first before democracy or responsibilities are given to them that by this logic there could have been no free India from British rule who were adamant to lord over India with the same illogic.

Seth Damodar Swarup said: In the circumstanceseven though this Constitution may be the biggest and bulkiest Constitution in the world, may even be the most detailed one, it may be heaven for the lawyers, it may be even be the Magna Charta for the capitalists of India, but so far as the poor and the tens of millions of toiling, starving and naked masses of India are concerned, there is nothing in it for them. Shankarrao Deo (Bombay) said: It seems as if we have not left anything to the future, we have tried to create a straight jacket in which this nation must grow.

Such was the context and the mood when, member after member, expressed themselves on the issues in the Constituent Assembly as the only authentic forum left for national consent but it stood seriously divided on fundamental issues of governance and social structure.



The first issue, the primary one after recouping its independence as a nation, the newly formed Constituent Assembly was called upon to decide concerned about the path it has to take for development in the given situation. Other issues were peripheral and subsidiary to the first, like form of governance and the method to keep the citizens glued to the laws so ordained. The leadership opted for the industrial mode with urbanisation as its consequence which the Assembly duly endorsed it despite serious reservations expressed by a good section of members. All other decisions in the Constituent Assembly follow the option on the first and primary issue so adopted.

The new Constitution of India that had emerged after a labour of 2 years, 11 months and 17 days with 165 formal sittings (114 for consideration of Draft Constitution alone) in 11 sessions of the house, was a document of compromises on peripheral issues. Still it has a preference of its own with high hopes of deliverance.

The new Constitution was adopted on 26 November, 1949 (incidentally the 35th birth day of Chaudhry Ranbir Singh who was one of its members) with few provisions in operation immediately, while it came into full use since 26 January 1950, delineating a tryst with destiny.

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was one who had to define his own role. In fact this Assembly shaped the emergence of this young man and gave him his place. He did not fail Rural India in general and Haryana in particular for giving strong voice to its aspirations without consideration of self. How he fared in the Constituent Assembly and other legislative forums he was called upon to represent his basic constituency will be a fruitful lesson.

A voice for rural India

In between different jail terms, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was always active in political activities, mainly aimed to draw rural population to the freedom struggle, along with other social-educational pursuits he devoted to. It was a difficult period for such an endeavour in Haryana region at that time. His consistent efforts made a mark. He was recognised as a person of grit and integrity, while the administration took him to be a dangerous element. He was let off from the jails much after others on December 18, 1945 while the election process was on for elections to State Assembly where he could not be nominated as he was in the jail.

Out of British jails and free from other restrictions as a 'dangerous' activist, in recognition of his devotion to the national cause and his unquestioned integrity, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was elected to the highest Constitutional and Legislative body of the nation on 10th July 1947 when he was just over 32 years of age. He took the oath on 14th July 1947 and started learning in earnest the niceties of a legislature faced with a historical mission. He was aware of his responsibility and did his best to remain true to the task at such a crucial moment in the life of a nation. He learnt his job and prepared himself for the duty. When he had joined the ranks the first draft of the Constitution was already in the public domain.

Baptised in the art of handling issues at hand, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh took the reality of a divided house into account and decided his place when the Draft Constitution was presented for consideration in the house on 4 November 1948. The raging debate on this draft was in

full furry when on 6 November 1948 Chaudhry Ranbir Singh arose to state his side in his own style. While pleading for decentralisation of power, he said, among other things, unambiguously:

'I would not like to go deep into the question of centralisation and decentralisation of power, but I would like to draw the attention of the House to one matter. Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, always taught us that whether in the political or in the economic sphere decentralisation engenders a power which is, much greater than other kinds of power. Besides, there are other reasons also for this view. I am a villager, born and bred in a farmer's house. Naturally, I have imbibed its culture. I love it. All the problems connected with it fill my mind. I think that in building the country the villagers should have their influence in every sphere.'

He stood by decentralised polity for India and stated it clearly. In fact he was influenced by legacy of the freedom struggle on this question more than anything else and espoused its cause at the most critical juncture without any hesitation or calculation for personal equation. This trait of his character took him rightly to the level of statesmanship.

When he stated that '*I am a villager, born and bred in a farmer's house. Naturally, I have imbibed its culture. I love it. All the problems connected with it fill my mind. I think that in building the country the villagers should have their influence in every sphere,*' he was forthright in choosing his space and gave loud voice to the mute, remaining true to the legacy again of the freedom struggle.

On the same day, in course of his maiden speech

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh pleaded for establishing a truly secular state, and a classless society. He argued for the poor and asked for the backward people, the manual labour, the peasants and the wage-earners to get special care. He called upon to adopt a resolution like this: "In discharge of the primary duty of the state to provide adequate food, water and clothing to the nationals and improve their standard of living the state shall endeavour-

(a) as soon as possible to undertake the execution of irrigation and hydro-electric projects in harnessing rivers and construction of dams and adopt means of increasing productions of food and fodder

(b) to preserve, project and improve the useful breeds of cattle and ban the slaughter of useful cattle, specially milch and draught cattle and the young stocks."

On 2 December, 1948, he pleaded for making small land holdings of the peasants inalienable and moved a resolution for the purpose:

That the following new clauses (7) and (8) be added to Article 13 :

(7) Nothing in sub-clauses (d), (e) and (f) of the said clause shall affect the operation of any existing law or prevent the state from making any law imposing restrictions on non-agriculturists to acquire and hold agricultural land, for the protection of the interests of the tillers of the soil or the peasantry.

(8) Nothing in sub-section (d), (e) and (f) of the said clause shall prevent the state from making laws to declare the minimum of conomic holdings of land inalienable.

In affirming his belief *'that in building the country villagers should have their influence in every sphere'* Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was exhibiting his extra-ordinary sense of economic reality of the time and said it loudly with a feel of the national pulse. He realised the importance of agriculture to make national economy sound and raised his voice against the discrimination with rural India in general and peasantry in particular. Once he said:

'Today there is not a single pie of the income of the peasant who earns it by his sweat and blood, which is not taxed. If he cultivates even a single bigha of land he has to pay a tax on it. As compared to this even a income of two thousand rupees of other people of India is not taxed. This is a great injustice to the peasant, particularly in a country where they dominate and have a large population. It should rather be considered how the continuation of this injustice in a country of peasants would look like? Therefore, I want that the provincial governments should realise land revenue on the same basis as the income tax, for this purpose their finances should be strengthened'.

When Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was raising this question in the Constituent Assembly of taxing the peasantry so extensively, he was protesting against the British practice that had ruined Indian peasantry by invoking settlement policy on land revenue instead of a fixed ratio of share in the produce rulers used to get instead. This native past practice of tax in kind, one-sixth of the produce in fact had insured peasantry from ruin if the crops failed it due to vagaries of weather. The ruler of the time was supposed to have an equal share in the pain or bounty of the peasantry. The British rulers changed it upside down. As colonialists they were least bothered about

the fate of Indian peasants when there was crop failure.

Again, speaking in the C. Assembly On 23rd. November, 1948 he moved a motion thus:

“That after the Article 34, the following new Article 34A be added:-

‘34A. (a) The state shall endeavour to secure by suitable legislation or economic organisation or in any other way the minimum economic price of the agricultural produce so that there is stability in the life of agriculturalist.

(b) The state shall give material assistance to national co-operative organisations of the producers and consumers.

(c) Agricultural insurance shall be regulated by special legislation

(d) Usury in every form is prohibited.

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was very emphatic that government policies in independent India to favour traders and middlemen at the cost of producers are ruinous to agricultural economy and neither beneficial to consumers. When *Gur* and other food crops like *gram* fetch a fraction of a price to the peasants in the producing areas, these are selling at eight or ten times of this price at Bombay, Madras and Calcutta, he cited and asked how such skewed policies can be beneficial to majority of the population that is labouring hard to produce crops? On March 16, 1948 participating in the debate on General Budget he said:

A villager, who owns neither a car nor any newspaper, has too feeble a voice to make himself heard through the press.....the price of *Gur* in this season has fallen from

rupees 24 to rupees 4 per maund. As soon as sugar was decontrolled all sugar producers who are rich men joined hands and its price has gone up instead of coming down. In comparison, prices of *Gur* has fallen down to one sixth.

On 24th November, 1949 he took the floor of the Assembly when it was in the last phase to finalise the Constitution, to make a last appeal and said:

Mr. President, the interests that I represent here, that is, the landed peasantry has been, I am sorry, given a set back under this Constitution. The peasant could obtain economic independence only if the principle could be accepted that he should not be forced to sell his produce below cost. Had we accepted this in the Constitution and made such a provision, we could have saved him from economic exploitation....I request you not to create conditions under which a person who has not been connected with land may be able to acquire it. If that happens, there would, undoubtedly, be looting and robberies and the advantages accruing from zamindari abolition would be nullified.

The clash continued in the later forums for getting due space for these interests. When Constituent Assembly finished its task and converted itself into Provisional Parliament to legislate for the interim period, Chaudhry Sahib took cudgels on behalf of rural India with rare courage of conviction. In its very first sitting on February 1, 1950, it was Chaudhry Ranbir Singh who had chosen to put forth one fundamental truism about the peasantry as a class. Speaking on the motion of thanks to the President for his address, while pleading for due attention and encouragement to the peasantry, he emphasised one basic truth about social sciences and said:

'...the cultivators, who have their own lands ...neither

rob others, nor like others to rob them' (emphasis added).

While stating this at that point of time, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh emphasised the essence, the characteristics of the occupation of a peasant in its pristine best and speaking like a statesman placed himself in favour of justice and against the concept of exploitation that goes with many other professions than agriculture. He stood for cultivators here and not for landlords of the classical variety who he fought against in different forums, including legislatures.

Only a person embedded to the cause of peasantry can give voice to it before those who have drifted towards a different path that ignores rural India. Later, he followed it doggedly with much determination throughout the term in the Provisional Parliament on occasions more than one and became truly a strong voice for rural India that went well recognised by one and all in the Parliament. As he aptly said once: *others talked in legislatures from the experience of others, I had decided to say what I had experienced myself.*

It is by now clear that the thrust of analysis Chaudhry Sahib so presented on this question remained completely unheeded and the country had to pay for it dearly with the result that cultivators in due course became paupers while professions that swindle others thrive.

He had narrated a universal truth in economy, though not recognised so far by academia having a different lineage than agriculture. Chaudhry Ranbir Singh underscored this truth of the basic economy that was prevalent in India since ages. He understood this fact of peasant life from his personal experience at the grass root level and gave voice to it at the appropriate time. That was his wisdom.

His effort was unique in the sense that the economic philosophy underlying this analysis was hardly ever appreciated and went unheeded. Chaudhry Sahib felt deep agony when peasants were discriminated against. Once, he referred to the discriminatory attitude of public sector Banks in not advancing loans to peasants on flimsy grounds like non-recovery. He lambasted it with his irrefutable logic and candour. On November 21, 1950 he said:

‘A man who has such a big security to offer as land and when there is no problem in recovery, he is still considered not fit to take loan. You should lend loan not only to the need of cultivators but also in the interest of the nation. By not lending money to him, you can’t protect the country from the financial difficulties, nor may protect the national interests.’

The level of discrimination that rural India suffered even after gaining independence from British rule pained him much and he unhesitatingly gave strong voice against it.

At that time there was a move to put restrictions on hoarding grains so that essential supplies keep flowing with a penalising clause therein. Chaudhry Sahib was quick to point out the discrimination between the position of a trader and that of a peasant who has to keep food-grains he has produced for the use of his family and the domesticated animals till the next crop is available. See what he said in the debate on September 14, 1950:

“I was saying that the hon. Minister himself told me that an agriculturist or a producer has the right to keep 25 maunds of gram with him. I would like to bring to the notice of the House what the position is in my district: there the people are not interested in keeping unnecessary grain

with them but they do deserve to keep with them as much grain as they require (for personal use)...Gram is a thing without which he cannot pull on in our area, where frequently there is a famine. I do not hesitate to say that the hon. Minister has not been able to produce confidence among the agriculturists that he will be able to supply gram after a year, even if the gram crop next year fails, otherwise what will be the result?

An agriculturist requires as much as 72 maunds of gram in a year for the consumption of his family and animals....The only quantity that he can keep with him now is 25 maunds (under the enforced law)...75 per cent of the agriculturists can be sent to prison for seven years.In my district alone 18,000 cases have been instituted under this Act.When I went to my district recently the people there told me that several producers of gram have been arrested and the surplus gram taken away. There are many people on our side who think that this House is interested only in particular sections of the people and that they are going on in a way as if others do not exist. There is discriminationunder the clause as it stands. A man hoarding cloth will be sentenced for three years whereas a man who happens to possess his own grain, harvested from his own field after hard labour and investment will be sentenced for seven years (for the same crime of hoarding). The man who is dealing in cloth has earned lakhs of rupees: he has a bungalow, cars and many other amenities: whereas the agriculturist has to work hard to enable him to make both ends meet. I would ask the hon. Minister to think of the cumulative effect on the producer, not that I want the producers to be exempted altogether; rather I want to be fair to him."

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh firmly stood by a promise made during freedom struggle about land reforms to demolish landlordism as a comprador class that British had patronised to the detriment of emerging land relations in the country. He raised his voice against eviction of tenants by vested interests in collaboration with corrupt officialdom and cautioned against the indiscriminate use of land acquisition power with the government giving rise to the grave problem of rehabilitation. Speaking on the Reserve Bank of India (Amendment) Bill on November 21, 1950, he gave a body blow to an emerging elite class of economists when he said:

‘I do not claim myself to be an expert on Finance, but I cannot help saying that those in this House who claim to themselves to be experts on finance, in my opinion, are not experts for this country. They can be financial experts for those countries where the industries play an important place in the economic life. But in a country where agriculture has greater importance, they cannot be more successful. I think that the greatest reason why the economic order of this country is not stable is because those who consider themselves to be financial experts, in reality, are fit to be financial experts for industrial countries only. They are not experts for agricultural countries.’

So sharp and so thruthful. Can anyone other than Chaudhry Ranbir Singh place the issue so candidly as he did on the path this country need to take at such a crucial moment in its history? How right he was in 1950. There cannot be two opinions on this aspect of his warning about what he said, as above, in the year 1950 when the country was just taking first steps in its zest for quick march to development with little financial support from others to

rely upon. It was a world that was grappling with the destruction and ruin of the Second World War. He sensed the danger too quick on this account and almost proved to be prophetic.

In pursuit of the decision concerning the path of development, when the old bureaucratic structure started playing foul against common people right in the beginning of its journey after independence, he lamented the colonial mindset of this machinery and called for overhauling it. In Provisional Parliament at many occasions he was critical of the preferential policy of the government towards urban sector at the cost of rural areas. His pronounced preference for rural population and other weaker sections became a known fact of parliamentary life at that time.

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh held a strong opinion about the wage structure and pleaded for 80% of the population. On April 14, 1951 he said:

'I fail to understand the anomaly that if a mill-worker or an agricultural labourer demands his wages, for which of course he is fully entitled, it is not supposed to accentuate inflation in the country, while if the one who gets his income and earns his livelihood by the sweat of his brow and who toils in the field in biting cold and scorching heat of winter and summer, demands his due for his investment and his labour, the educated class of the country thinks it is a step towards inflation.. Whatever they think right is taken as right, whether it is right or not for the country nobody cares. I think the best policy is that which ensures proper wages to the 80 per cent of population of the country. This cannot be in any way inflationary or harmful for the country.'

The issue of justifiable wage to those who labour was a courageous act on his part in the given situation. He did it.

When there was a proposal to lay down educational qualification for being a parliamentarian or a legislator through law, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh sensed a danger in the move to debar a majority of the population living in rural India. He differentiated between a lettered man and the wise. Intervening in the debate on April 4, 1950, he argued that unlettered persons are not necessarily unwise:

‘I can say that there are many people and I have seen in my own Province that for ten or fifteen years there have been Chief Ministers who were neither Matriculates nor as far as I know they had read in any school or college. I can mention the name of Sir Sikandar Hayyat Khan. I have seen many other Chief Ministers in other Provinces who were neither law Graduates nor Graduates of medicine...I have seen many other friends who had.....administered the country better than those people who were degree- holders, So far as originality of thinking goes, I can cite one example of Kabir who is well known over the whole country. My friend Mr. Hussain Imam wanted to know what the illiterate people have given to the country. I can tell the House what the illiterate people have given to this country.’

The day was saved for unlettered mass of the Indian population who was sought to be debarred from political process itself when the educated class was out to reserve democracy for itself by law and turn it into the rule of an aristocracy with the flair of a philosophical creed. Though he was a graduate himself at the time and one among the educated class, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh stood strongly by the side of a social truth, despite his position to gain

personal advantage out of a law. He intervened at a crucial stage to keep the essence of democracy preserved lest it slipped into elitism through legislation instead.

The deliberations in the Provisional Parliament that took over legislative business for an interim period till a new house was elected in 1952 under the new Constitution is testimony of this ground reality where Chaudhry Ranbir Singh took cudgels on behalf of rural India with rare courage of conviction. Similarly, in Haryana Assembly and later in Rajya Sabha he was forthright and fearless in expressing his opinion on questions that related to the deprived sections of society, including the toiling peasantry.

The Person

5

The Person

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh had a legacy to carry forward and he decided not to shirk his responsibility to the family, community and the nation. He knew well what he has embarked upon. The choice was conscious and deliberate. It came to him naturally. The environment was so conducive for him to be so. Self and the social requirements stood merged together to answer the call of times. The domineering politics then was for sacrifice with no mind for troubles in the way. His personality grew with this sharp sense of social obligation.

He had strong peasant characteristics inherited from the family of honest labour and had entered political turmoil after graduation in defence of national honour. He never made politics a profession for earning bread or making a fortune. He earned his bread from farming even when he had earned a good standing for himself in the political arena. He had no inclination to use it for earning his bread. When India became free he was deep in the midst of political churning and remained so after coming out of jail in December, 1946. It was a hectic period in the life of the nation and he had no time for personal pursuits, except the duty in politics during this period.

Born in a modest peasant family of repute, at village Sanghi in Rohtak district, Ranbir Singh ji had inherited an inspiring legacy of social-cultural and political awakening in the midst of stirrings against a marauding colonial power. His father was a pioneer of social reform and

community service, duly inspired by the teachings of Arya Samaj led by Swami Dayanand Saraswati, while simultaneously he carried the message of Indian National Congress far and wide that was slowly emerging as a platform of struggle for self rule. A renowned name for homely hospitality and simplicity of a dedicated peasant, house of Hooda's at Sanghi had become the hub of social service, religiosity and political awakening.

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was the child of a dark period in the history of India. That made him to crave for the light. This nation in turmoil searching for light had experienced a long spell of darkness at the hands of a marauding foreign power, which was as cunning as a company of trade would be and as ruthless as an alien power can remain on a mission of plunder with no hands barred. Colonial rule had thwarted for almost three hundred years the normal growth of a vibrant nation on move and worked deliberately to misdirect its course in history to the one that rings disaster for its calibre.

With blessings from his ailing father, Ranbir Singh participated in the Individual Satyagraha and the Quit India Movement with single minded determination and remarkable zeal having Gandhian sense of discipline. From Haryana 541 persons volunteered to offer arrest in Individual Satyagraha. The highest number, 236 was from Rohtak district as compared to whole of Punjab. Ranbir Singhji was one of them.

On 5th April, 1941 he was allowed by the Party to court arrest in the Satyagraha movement and was released on 24th December, 1941. His ailing father expired on 14th July, 1942. Again he was arrested on 24th. December, 1942. Finally he was released from Jail on 18th December, 1945.

He was arrested four times and suffered three and half year's rigorous imprisonment in eight different jails and two years of 'detention' in his village. He was in various British Jails of Rohtak, Hissar, Ambala, Ferozepur, Borstal Jail Lahore, Central Jail, Lahore, Multan and Sialkot. Last four jails are located now in present day Pakistan.

The veteran freedom fighter from Haryana with a rare feel of reality at the ground level, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was a powerful voice of rural India after independence from a Gandhian perspective with the flavour of a devout. He lent his strength to the aspirations of rural India with vigour and verve. He was known for his down-to-earth approach to problems.

The first such forum was the Constituent Assembly where he got baptised for his long innings in parliamentary career where rural India found a powerful place. Later, Parliament and state legislatures of Punjab and Haryana saw him sweating for their cause relentlessly. He had entered the highest forum of Constituent Assembly on 14th July, 1947 at just over 32 years. The term in the Constituent Assembly was his formative period for a parliamentary life. Two and half years in the Constituent Assembly from July 1947 to the end of 1949 provided essence to Chaudhry Ranbir Singh for his political role and an excellent opportunity to hone his skills in parliamentary practice with grit and confidence at a young age.

The Constituent Assembly and Constituent Assembly (Legislative) were his first public forums after the nation was free from foreign rule where his personality was to bloom. He utilised every ounce of his energy to propound in these houses what according to his view was essential to champion the cause in favour of the downtrodden.

Later, in different houses like Provisional Parliament to First Lok Sabha (1952-57), Second Lok Sabha (1957-62) Punjab Legislative Assembly (1962-1966), Haryana Legislative Assembly (1966-67), Haryana Legislative Assembly (1968-72) and Rajya Sabha (1972-78) Chaudhry Sahib remained steadfast to his convictions on basic questions that affected the cause dear to him. His stint as Minister for Irrigation and Power (IPM), later for Public Works (PWM) in Punjab and Haryana Cabinets was an elaborate testimony of his untiring devotion to duty.

His maiden speech in the Constituent Assembly on 6th November, 1948 turned out to be a piece introductory to his persona in his raw style and simple terms, devoid of elitist jargons. He took the floor that day and expressed freely on the issues he wanted to pinpoint. The Provisional Parliament that functioned with effect from 1950 to the beginning of 1952 was to prove a virtual battle ground for him in the interest of the cause dear to his head and heart.

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh had developed a definite view about how the new nation needs to move ahead to come out of misery and poverty. He opposed policies past and present that discriminate against rural India and more so against agriculture and animal husbandry.

Pride of rural ancestry

On November 6, 1948 when the raging debate was in full furry on the future course this country was to take with a Constitution presented two days earlier by the Law Minister on November 4, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh arose to state his side on various issues of importance. While pleading for decentralisation of power whether it is in political or the economic sphere, he unambiguously

expressed his sense of pride being born and bred in a farmer's home and opined his belief that in building the country the villagers should have their influence.

Stating a fact like this was not a bragging from a rural uncouth, an emotional outburst from a Haryanvi Jat, but a diplomatic style of affirmation regarding a choice he had made in the power game that broke out on the question of a path the country was likely to take. Later, when he followed it in the Provisional Parliament asserting on 1st February, 1950, he was articulate to state his mind that '...the cultivators, who have their own lands ...neither rob others, nor like others to rob them.'

It was Chaudhry Ranbir Singh who with brilliant candour stood by those who did not have the opportunity to get education in colleges and universities, proclaiming that they cannot be deprived of their political rights on this account. He was forthright not to minimise the intelligence of a common man even in matters of administration, no matter if one is lettered or not and bantered those who questioned the very contribution of un-lettered citizens to the nation.

Imbued with the legacy of freedom movement, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh firmly stood by its prominent slogan of land to the tiller and land reforms to demolish landlordism. Speaking on the Reserve Bank of India (Amendment) Bill on November 21, 1950, he gave a body blow to an emerging elite class of economists and opined that those who claim themselves to be experts on finance, in my opinion, are not experts for this county. ... in reality, are fit to be financial experts for industrial countries only. They are not experts for agricultural countries.'

How right he was in 1950. There cannot be two opinions about what he said, as above, in the year 1950 when the country was just taking first steps in its zest for quick march to development. Similarly he was for parity in wages and lambasted sham economists who claimed that raise in wages will add to inflation.

There is another instance when Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was at his best to talk straight on conviction about his attachment to rural ethos. His intervention on 22 September, 1951 in the ongoing debate on *Hindu Code Bill* introduced in the Provisional Parliament was combative, bold and incisive. Supporting amendments No. 288 and 420 from Bhatt and Pt. Thakur Das Bhargav respectively he, *inter alia*, said:

It was taken that the (Hindu Code) bill intends to usher in reforms in the country and remove outdated customs from the society. But it should be taken into account as to how many people it is going to affect. I myself consider this as an unauthorised effort to forcefully trap those people into the net by back door through this bill who so far were not covered by the Hindu code. On an interruption from a member, Mr. Shukla, he countered by asking whether any one from Punjab belonging to Hindu, Sikh or Muslim religion has ever asked for abolishing their customary law and to be covered by Law of Manu or Yagyavalkya or any other law in its place?

Chaudhry Ranbir continued to say: 'the object of Hindu code Bill should have been to cover those who are under its sway.it is not a question that affects one religion or the other, the question relates to the customary law....I want to tell Doctor Sahib that at a time when whole society was under the spell of Brahmanic (sanatanic)

rituals the martial community of Punjab to which I and Maan Sahib belong never submitted to such prescriptions.....Though belonging to Hindu religion, we were never regulated by Hindu Code. It was never applicable to us.your view to enslave mentally through back door those who were so far not under your sway, I have every doubt in its success..... You propose to enact the bill for both (cities and villages) on the premise that there is not much difference of customs and traditions of both.....I say enacting this law will be a great injustice to the village people'.(free translation from Hindi)

He shifted to state Assembly of Punjab in 1962 elections from Kalanaur Assembly constituency in Rohtak district of Haryana region and joined the state Cabinet as Irrigation and Power Minister to continue his crusade to help agriculture to flourish. He was a man in hurry to initiate and complete irrigation projects under his charge.

He understood well the importance of irrigation and drainage network for the growth of agriculture and did his best as minister in charge. His heart was with Bhakhra Dam to which he had given voice in the Constituent Assembly too and pleaded repeatedly at every available forum for its early completion thereafter. It was during his tenure that this Multi-purpose irrigation project got completed and dedicated to the nation by Prime Minister Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru on 23 October, 1963. Later, he was very keen about taming waters from Jamuna, its tributaries and proposed a Dam at Kishau.

When a separate state of Haryana was carved out on November 1, 1966, he became a legislator of its Assembly joining the Cabinet as Public Works and Health Minister till fresh elections were held in 1967. He, for the first time,

became a victim of hectic manipulations to keep him off power and lost this election, but was elected again to the Assembly in 1968 in a mid-term poll.

On 10 April, 1972 he was in Rajya Sabha. His brief was the same as in the past. His thrust was against discrimination between cities and villages. Once in a debate in the house he cited that 13 per cent allocation of funds for agriculture and 7 per cent for irrigation is made in the fifth Five Year Plan while 24 per cent is allocated for industries. If agriculture is the backbone of our economy, why is this sector given less weightage, he asked? This exposes our defective planning and fault-lines, he opined. He saw for alleviation of poverty through development of village economy.

The then Minister for Home Affairs, Ramniwas Mirdha complimented members for useful contributions in the debate. He said: Sir, I have carefully listened with great care the speeches of the Honourable members today....The speech of Chaudhry Ranbir Singh gave the most devastating reply to some of the arguments advanced during the course of debate. Similarly, on 7 November, 1974 Deputy Minister for Finance commented on his marshalling facts: Sir, first I want to congratulate honourable member. He referred to Reserve Bank of India. He keeps so much reserve of information in his mind that he adds to the benefit of the house at times.

On 24 March, 1975 the house was debating the Appropriation Bill. Hearing Chaudhry Ranbir Singh Shri M G Gore commented: we have heard a wonderful speech on the appropriation Bill. On 25 July, 1975 there was heated debate of Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities (Amendment) Bill. Chaudhry

Sahib referred some instances and asked to confiscate property got from illegal means. While replying to the debate, the then MOS Finance (Now Rashtrapati) Pranab Mukherjee said: "I am grateful to the Honourable Member for his forceful arguments.....I would look into it regarding attachment of property or confiscation.

When Congress was in opposition, once he took Janta Party government head-long in Rajya Sabha over its claim to work for down-trodden. He said:

"You could be honest about the intention to improve the lot of peasants and labourers, but the fact remains that they were skinned earlier and shall continue to be skinned even now. The main difference is that previously it was a slow process that left some room for reprieve. Now, it is going to be quick and ruthless process, which will leave them deprived of their dues and bleeding".

For the infant state of Haryana, he mustered help to his level best while serving in this house. He pursued the completion of relaying the Panipat-Rohtak Railway line again in Rajya Sabha. He had realised the importance of broad gauge conversion for better railway connectivity between Rohtak-Bhiwani-Sirsa and vitually pestered the Railway Minister for its early execution.

His tenure as legislator and later during a stint in Rajya Sabha in 1972 till his term was complete in 1978 marvel as a period when he was at his best to champion the cause so dear to him. Once he was termed as a leader in opposition by his own party colleagues watching him hammering issues of public interest. Once, the irrepressible Bhupesh Gupta of CPI in Rajya Sabha commented about him: Sole

speaker of Congress now a days. Go on..' He was difficult to be suppressed.

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was elected deputy leader of the Congress party during 1977-78 in Rajya Sabha where Smt. Indira Gandhi was the leader. Ruling Janata party leaders termed him as the only opposition voice in the house at that time. He was such a stickler to democratic traditions in parliamentary practices!

He was never found wanting in pleading for the down-trodden with devotion of a devout, whether the issues were related to Harijans, backward communities, the freedom fighters or to the rural economy. The wide spectrum of subjects he dealt with in his maiden speech on November 6, 1948 during the debates in the Constituent Assembly from the question of national language to Cow protection, Price rise, inflation, the development of rural economy etc tell an interesting tale of his varied concerns.

He pleaded for ensuring the secular character of the India polity and argued for the adoption of Hindi as the National Language as English was the language of the elite. He proposed that the reservation should be on the class basis. He was against reservation on the basis of religion as it would kill the basic idea of a secular State that India had aspired to become during the freedom movement. However, he did plead for the reservation on demographic basis for the rural people who had been lagging far behind than urban brothers.

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh had gone to the extent of arguing that if villages die, India would not be able to survive in dignity. He also stood for Cow Protection and Prevention of slaughter of certain animals and strongly

advocated for these step in the Constituent Assembly. He advocated that the families from rural background should be given ample support for education of their children, while supported the idea that there should be restrictions on the purchase of land by non-tillers. Giving land to non-tillers will only add to the Zamindari system that India was trying to abolish, he argued.

His advocacy for peasantry and his passionate plea on the question of adequate wage for agriculture labour, as he did on April 14, 1951, cannot be attributed to his peasant background alone. The peasant question had remained the agenda of the freedom movement for long. When he raised the issues relating to the welfare of peasantry it reflects that legacy of freedom struggle.

The above narration, in brief, on the speeches that Chaudhry Ranbir Singh had made in the Constituent Assembly of India, Lok Sabha, Rajay Sabha and in different State Legislatures later underlines the fact that he had been strongly influenced by the legacy of freedom movement on vital issues of people's interest.

Formation of Haryana State

After Independence, it was Chaudhry Ranbir Singh who had first raised the vocie for creation of a separate Haryana state and logically countered those who were opposing its formation. While speaking in the Constituent Assembly on November 18, 1948 itself and again in Provisional Parliament he advanced reasons for a separate state of Haryana.

On 23rd September, 1965 the Minister of Home Affairs announced a decision in Lok Sabha to set up a Committee of the Cabinet consisting of Shrimati Indira

Gandhi, Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Shri Y.B. Chavan, Minister of Defence and Shri Mahavir Tyagi, Minister of Rehabilitation and requested the presiding officers of both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha to appoint a joint Parliamentary Committee to be presided over by the Speaker of Lok Sabha, Sardar Hukam Singh on the question relating to the agitation for the formation of Punjabi Suba.

The Parliamentary Committee was notified on 28th September, 1965 that had invited public bodies, organisations, associations, or individuals for submission of written memorandums and/or oral evidence before it on the question. Due to changes in the central Cabinet due to sudden death of Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri this Cabinet Committees ceased to exist. The Parliamentary Committee adopted its report on 15th March, 1966. In its report (para 41) the Committees said:

41. One of the Cabinet Ministers of the Punjab Government, who came from Haryana, and appeared before the Committee, also urged that there was great disparity in both regions in regard to irrigated land, distribution of fertilisers, electrification programmes and overall balanced regional development. In this connection he submitted to the Committee a statement showing the statistical data, region-wise, in Punjab based on Haryana Development Committee Report, 1966. This shows at a glance the comparative position of the Haryana Region *vis-a-vis* the non-Haryana Region and the Hill Region in various socio-economic fields. (see Append.II)

Later, his intervention as a Minister in joint Punjab had played a crucial role to tilt the balance for a decision in its formation. He was instrumental in convincing the Congress leadership, especially the Prime Minister Indira

Gandhi in 1966 for its formation. He was however, as much concerned about raising problems in legislatures at different times relating to other areas like Delhi, Maharashtra, PEPSU and Punjab alike. Haryana is now a flourishing state in the Indian Union.

Even a cursory glance over the political history of his life will reveal that the freedom movement shaped the personality of Chaudhry Ranbir Singh and had left a deep imprint on his life values. During this struggle he learnt from others, even from those who happen to sit at the lowest ladder. But he was not inclined to thrust upon his opinion on others. He respected the right of others to hold their view of things. The broad democratic spirit was ingrained so deep in his psyche that many took him weak and meek some times which he was not. For his way he was assertive with logic. He knew his job and never allowed others to take him for granted.

The heat from the struggle tempered him, like many other great personalities of this era, to social recognition in short time. He was an embodiment of virtue and human values with a clear heart of a saint. One could find him sharing moments of grief and joy with all; tales are plenty when he was with his known political adversaries in moments of grief. None was an enemy to him.

A stalwart of freedom struggle, the late Chaudhry Ranbir Singh (1914-2009) represents truly a generation that lived by values and principles of personal integrity and devotion to social cause led by a galaxy of leaders of his times. The legacy this generation leaves behind is a different trajectory to what the present young squad dreams by. Personal career did matter to the then young volunteers also, but of a different category altogether.

Nation and its cause were much dear to them and to be a free nation from a dehumanizing slavery was a charming goal to achieve. Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was a brilliant example of this category from rural Haryana of his time. Personal career was left behind by him to join the ranks of freedom struggle at the prime of his youth to court a different saga of untold sufferings in prisons and outside. He breathed his last (on 1st. February, 2009) with the same zeal for his ethical convictions.

The late Chaudhry was a great patriot, a veteran freedom fighter, an eminent social reformer and a notable parliamentarian from Haryana. He was a rare voice for rural India with passionate urge to stand by it.

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was elected to seven different houses in his span of political career. Apart from being a member of Constituent Assembly and the Provisional Central Legislative Assembly from 1950 to early 1952, he was a member of 1st and 2nd. Lok Sabha. Thereafter, he was elected to Punjab Legislative Assembly and Haryana Legislative Assembly. Again, in 1972 he was elected to Rajya Sabha for a term till 1978. When this term ended, he told about his mind not to aspire for any elected post further. Thereafter, he devoted to organizational affairs of Pradesh Congress and looked after social formations like Harijan Sewak Sangh, Backward Classes Sangh, Bharat Krishak Samaj etc. and All India Freedom Fighters Association.

His was a life of a saint in politics of values and principles steeped in the legacy of freedom struggle with secular democratic mind, spartan habits of taste and style and zeal of a missionary. He was truly a gem of a man and a staunch nationalist in outlook. A simple man with much more

simple and frugal habits of life style, he was a man extraordinary with values that are rare now in the changed political and social scenerio. He worked in an era of struggle for the nation to remain free with pride in its history and was much proud to remain a Gandhian in thought and practice. A man rooted to his grass roots, he never wavered from his moorings of head and heart.

A rare human being, he was.

Important dates in the life of Chaudhry Ranbir Singh

1914

26 November : Born, at village *Sanghi*, distt. Rohtak. (Mother Smt. Mama Kaur, Father Chaudhry Matu Ram. Brothers and sister:
: Dr. Balbir Singh, Smt. Chandrawati, Fateh Singh.)

1920

April : Joined Government Primary School, Sanghi.

1921

16 April : Mahatma Gandhi visited Rohtak.

1924

: Passed Primary School Exam.
July : Joined Gurukul, Bhainswal, distt. Rothak for further studies.

1928

: Left Gurukul, Bhainswal for health reasons.

1929

: Joined Vaish High School, Rohtak.
December : Went to Lahore with his elder brother to witness the historic Lahore session of AICC

1933

: Passed Matriculation Examination.
: Joined Government College, Rohtak for higher studies.

1935

: Passed F.Sc. Examination.

- : Joined Ramjas College, Delhi for further studies.
- 1937**
- November : Passed BA Examination.
- : Marriage with Smt. Hardei, d/o Chaudhry Hardwari Singh of village Dumarkha, Jind
- 1941**
- March : Joined Congress Party.
- 5 April : Offered *Satyagraha* during the Individual *Satyagraha* Movement; awarded one year's rigorous imprisonment (hereafter r.i.)
- 25 May : Released from jail at the behest of the Punjab High Court, Lahore, along with other prisoners.
- June : Again offered *Satyagraha*; awarded 4 months r.i.
- 24 September : Released from jail.
- 1942**
- 14 July : Father died.
- : Arrested during the wake of the Quit India Movement; tried in the local court; and jailed for 3 years.
- 1944**
- 24 July : Released from jail; put under 'house arrest'.
- September : Again arrested and sent to jail.
- 1945**
- 14 February : Released from jail, but put under 'house arrest'.
- : Arrested for disobedience of the 'detention' order.

- December : Elections to the Punjab Legislative Assembly announced.
- 12 December : Nominations for the coming elections to Punjab Legislative Assembly begin
- 18 December : Released from jail
- 1947**
- 10 July : Elected to the Constituent Assembly of India by the Punjab Legislative Assembly.
- 14 July : Presented Credentials and signed the Register as a member of the Constituent Assembly.
- 15 August : India became free.
: Worked hard to douse communal fire in his own district and Mewat.
: Accompanied Gandhiji during his Mewat peace tour.
- 1948**
- 30 January : Gandhiji shot dead; went to Delhi to have last *darshan* of the great man.
- 4 November : Draft Constitution presented for discussion.
- 6 November : Maiden Speech in the Constituent Assembly
- 1949**
- 26 March : Elected to Standing Committee for Ministry of Agriculture.
: Elected to Standing Committee for Rehabilitation.

- 1952** : Elected to 1st Lok Sabha from Rohtak constituency.
- 1957** : Elected to the 2nd Lok Sabha (Rtk)
- 1962** : Elected to Vidhan Sabha from Kalanaur constituency (Rohtak)
: Joined Kairon Ministry as IPM
: Bhakra Dam Project completed.
- 1963**
- 22 October : Bhakra Dam dedicated to the nation by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru.
- 1965-66** : Worked for formation of Haryana.
- 1966**
- 1 November : Haryana State came into being.
: Shifted to Haryana Legislative Assembly, joined as P.W.D. Minister in Haryana
- 1967** : Contested election for Haryana Legislative Assembly from Kalanaur Constituency but lost.
- 1968** : President's Rule in Haryana imposed.
: Elected to Haryana Vidhan Sabha from Kalanaur.
- 1972**
- 4 April : Elected to the Rajya Sabha
: Elected Deputy Leader of the

Congress Parliamentary Party (Mrs. Indira Gandhi was the Leader).

- : Formed Freedom Fighter's Association and Freedom Fighters Successor's Association along with his friends, Shri Sheelbhadra Yaji and N.G. Ranga. Mrs. Indira Gandhi agreed to give pensions to freedom fighters on their plea.

1977

- : Appointed as President, Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee for two year's term.

1978

- : Renounced electoral politics at the expiry of Rajya Sabha term; took to social work; worked as President, Harijan Sevak Sangh and became active in Backward Classes Federation, Bharat Krishak Samaj, etc.

2009

- 1 February : Passed away; Nation and the State mourn.
- 2 February : Cremation at *Smadhi Sthal*, Rohtak.
- 4 February : Ashes immersed in the Gobind Sagar, Bhakra and the Hathni Kund Barrage, Yamunanagar.
- 11 February : *Shraddhanjali Sabha* held at the Jat College grounds, Rothak.

Appendices

APPENDIX I

*[Anand Bhawan]
Allahabad,
17th February, 1957

Darling Papu,

This is just a very hurried line being written at the crack of dawn as I leave for Fatehpur. Shall not be back until midnight.

Every day's programme is like that. I am enclosing a copy of the schedule as far as it is complete.

Punjab was strenuous but most exhilarating too. I had a 100,000 people in Rohtak just for me – imagine that! The other meetings were good, though not as big and Chaudhary Ranbir Singh looked after me as if he were my grandmother!

It has suddenly become cold again – there was cold wave – and there is a chilly wind.

Much love,
Indu

* Letter from Indira Gandhi to her father.

APPENDIX II

(Vide para 41 of the Report)

*Study of Statistical data region-wise in Punjab

(Based on the Report of the Haryana Development Committee 1966)

Sr. No.	Item	Hill region	Non-Haryana	Haryana Region	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Population (in Lakhs)	24.29	103.51	75.27	203.07
2.	Area (in Sq. miles)	12437	18032	16835	47304
3.	Rural population percentage of total population of the region	89.9	75.3	82.8	.....
4.	Urban population percentage of total population of the region	10.1	24.7	17.2	.....
5.	Working population percentage of the total population of the region-				
	(i) Agriculture	29.5	17.5	26.8	.....
	(ii) Secondary and Tertiary sector	11.5	14.0	10.9	.....
6.	Gross area irrigated as percentage of the total cropped area	17	63	30	.....
7.	Percentage of electrified towns/villages to the total number in the region	19	29	18	.....
8.	Per capita consumption of electricity in the region	9	46	37	.....
9.	Number of registered factories per lakh of population in the region	6	36.5	14.9	.....
10.	Literates as percentage to the population in the region-				
	(i) Total	27.1	26.7	19.8	.....
	(ii) Female only	14.8	17.6	9.1	.....
11.	Region-wise budget allocation (in lakhs rupees) of breakable schemes-				
	(i) 1961-66	2145.6	5512.72	4363.33	12021.65
		(17.8%)	(45.9%)	(36.3%)	
	(a) 1963-64	283.82	1104.91	750.23	.96
		(13.3%)	(51.6%)	(35.1%)	

*Submitted to the Committee by Chaudhry Ranbir Singh, Minister, Public Works

Department, Punjab, on the 22nd February, 1966.

(b) 1964-65	361.49	1110.4	936.73	2408.62
	(15%)	(46.1%)	(38.9%)	
12. Net area sown (in lakh acres)	12.33	90.05	85.65	188.03
13. Net irrigated area (in lakh acres)	2.21	51.80	29.89	83.90
14. Cropped area (in lakh acres)	18.32	113.20	109.33	240.85
15. Percentage of area cultivated to the cultivable area	....	89.45	90.62	....
16. Percentage of double cropped area to net sown area	....	25.70	27.65	....
17. Area under food-grains and cash crops (in lakh acres) (total)	15.80	91.85	98.90	.....
(i) food-grains	14.78	72.15	86.82	....
(ii) Cash crops	1.02	19.70	12.08	.....
18. Number of agricultural electric connections	...	18272	9936	.....
19. Villages and towns electrified	767	3217	1175	5159
20. Energy sold in lakh K.Ws (1963-64)	216.86	5046.78	3013.13	8276.77
21. Cooperative credit as on 30-6-64-				
(i) Coop. Credit (in lakh rupees)	288.75	1121.08	460.63	1870.46
(ii) No. of agricultural workers (in lakhs)	7.16	18.14	20.11	45.41
(iii) Credit per agricultural worker (in rupees)	40.33	61.80	22.90	41.19
(iv) Total cropped area (in lakh acres)	18.32	113.21	109.32	240.85
(v) Cooperative credit per cropped acre (in rupees)	15.76	9.90	4.21	7.76
22. Consumption of fertilizer in tons-				
(i) 1956-57	3197	19994	6949	....
	(10.6%)	(66.3%)	(23.1%)	....
(ii) 1963-64	12794	120245	44416	....
(iii) 1964-65	20063	186639	75320	....
	(7.1%)	(66.2%)	(26.7%)	....
23. Agricultural machinery (1960-61)-				
(i) Plough	282000	1011424	657008	....
(ii) Tractors	170	4778	2918	....
(iii) Oil Engine Pumps	470	6500	1128	....
(iv) Electric pumps and Tubewells	1059	5980	1735	....

	(12.1%)	(68.1%)	(19.8%)	....
24. Yield per acre of Principal crops (in lbs) (1961-62 and 1963-64)-				
(i) Paddy	1246	1456	1586	....
(ii) Wheat	194.7	1705.3	1116	....
(iii) Maize	1244	1054	826	....
(iv) Jawar, Bajra and Barley	521	1556	312	....
(v) Gram	633	630	537	....
(vi) Cotton	134	262	253	....
(vii) Sugarcane	2076	2818	3337	....
(viii) Oil Seeds	310	590	534	....
25. Comparison of C.C.A. on Bhakra Canals-				
(i) 1919 Project	...	826.8	2362.1	3188.9
(ii) 1939-42 Project	...	913	2392.8	3305.8
(iii) 1946-Project	...	1423.1	1863.2	3286.3
(iv) 1948-Project	...	2207.8	2733.4	4941.2
26. Power Looms in the Decentralised Sector	...	9422	412	9834
27. Metalled roads (mileage) maintained by B. & R. and Local Bodies, per 100 Sq. miles-				
(i) 1950-51	2.8	9.5	7.0	6.8
(ii) 1963-64	5.6	19.5	17.8	15.2
28. Rail Mileage (in miles)-				
(i) Broad-gauge	60.6	1175.6	433.1	....
(ii) Metre-gauge	....	100.6	348.1	....
29. Total number of registered factories	145	3776	1124	5045
30. Number of registered working factories	121	3425	1032	4578
31. Average number of workers employed in working factories, as 31-12-1964	5815	102449	57788	166097
32. Small-scale units registered as on 31-12-1964	747	12839	4133	17719
	(4.2%)	(72.5%)	(23.3%)	....
33. Allocation of Scarce Commodity- (Steel black Sheets)	64	2152	764	2980
(ii) Allocation of pig iron (1964-65) in tons	65	43584	4891	48540
(iii) Annual allocation of Hard coke for 1964 in wagons	16	2881	725	3622

34. Milch animal population (1961 figure)-				
(i) Cows	1317	4788	3781	9886
(ii) Buffaloes	1424	6581	4759	12764
(iii) Cows per square mile	11	27	22	21
(iv) Buffaloes per sq. mile	11	36	28	27
35. Veterinary hospitals (1963-64)	47	166	112	385
36. Outlying dispensaries (1963-64)	43	187	92	322
37. Literacy-				
(i) Male	485006	1931926	1174245	3591177
(ii) Female	172804	833489	319926	1326219
38. Educational facilities-				
(i) School-going children in				
High Schools	45467	186459	143933	....
(ii) No. of institutions (High)	242	830	484	....
(iii) Technical Institutions :				
College-(i) No.	....	3	1	4
(ii) Seats	....	810	120	930
Polytechnics :				
(i) No.	4	8	6	18
(ii) Seats	390	1410	1015	2815
Industrial Training :				
(i) No.	7	25	17	49
(ii) Seats	2456	9520	7184	19160
39. Civil Hospitals	29	93	53	175
Dispensaries	90	245	149	485
No. of beds	2148	6852	3880	12880

Sd. RANBIR SINGH CHAUDHRY,
Minister, P.W.D.,
Government of Punjab.

A HISTORIC CASE

MATU RAM vs LAL CHAND, 1923

Chaudhry Matu Ram contested election to the Punjab Legislative Council in 1923. Chaudhry Lal Chand, his opponent, used unfair means and defeated him. Chaudhry Matu Ram successfully challenged the outcome of the contest in the Punjab High Court. The case being historic one is given below:

...In India no limit has yet been fixed for the expenses incurred by a candidate. The Commissioners in this case declined to declare the return of election expenses false in material particulars on the basis of one solitary item of fare paid for a motor car, when a sum of Rs. 80 was shown as spent on motor hire.

Amendment of petition so as to introduce fresh charges of the particular corrupt practice alleged is not permissible under the election rules.

Each case of personation amounts to a separate charge and even a single case is enough to void the election.

The value of finger print evidence for the purpose of identification and as a check on personation has been well established and such evidence may be taken to be infallible for all practical purposes.

The law of agency in election cases has for a period of many years been held... to go much further than the ordinary law of principal and agent. Various attempted definitions have been given of it, but none has been entirely successful; each case in that respect must stand upon its own ground and it really comes to this that the court must see what the relation of the person charged is from the facts of the case, and it is more a matter of inference from facts than anything that is capable of being expressed by positive law.

The question whether a particular person is, or is not, an agent of a candidate is to be decided upon facts and circumstances of each case. General canvassing for a candidate or general activity at an election including taking voters to the poll have been held to be sufficient to constitute agency.

Where there are three candidates at an election, the Petitioner cannot get the seat only because the successful candidate is unseated. The votes given to the successful candidate cannot be said to have been cast away, and it is not possible to say whether the Petitioner or the third candidate would have succeeded, if the Respondent, who is thus unseated was out of the field.

The charges of "corrupt practices" brought by the Petitioner against the Respondent were (1) Personation, (2) Undue Influence, (3) Treating and (4) Bribery. We consider it, however, unnecessary, to enter into any discussion of the evidence relating to these charges in view of the finding, which we have arrived at on the main charge of "personation" around which the real contest has centered in this case. Before proceeding to discuss this charge, however, we may also dispose off the question of the correctness of the return of election expenses of the Respondent. The return was found not to contain the hire paid for one motorcar. However, the item is small one. In

India, no limit has yet been fixed for the expenses incurred by a candidate. The Respondent has shown about Rs. 80 on account of motor hire in his return and we are not prepared to declare the return to be incorrect or false in material particulars on the basis of this solitary item.

We now proceed to discuss the charge of personation. The Petitioner relied on as many as 61 cases of "personation" in the first instance. The Petitioner applied subsequently to amend the list by introducing 11 more cases of personation, but the application was disallowed, as we were of opinion that the proposed amendment was not permissible under the rules and secondly that sufficient grounds had not, in any case, been made out for allowing the amendment.

The Petitioner confined himself to 33 cases of personation.

The Petitioner's allegation is that "personation" was systematically resorted to by the Respondent and his agents from the very outset to ensure his success. Whenever a voter was expected or found to be absent, efforts were made, as far as possible, to find some one to personate him and get a vote recorded in favour of the Respondent. It is alleged by the Petitioner that in each of the 33 cases referred to above, the "personation" was procured, "abetted", or "connived at", either by the Respondent himself or by persons who were his "agents" within the definition of that term in the Electoral rules and that consequently, the offence in each case falls within the above definition. According to Rule 44(b) of the Punjab Electoral Rules, "any corrupt practice" specified in part 1 of Schedule 5 of the rules is sufficient to render the election of the returned candidate void. It will thus appear that each of the 33 cases of "personation" relied upon by the Petitioner, in itself constitutes a separate charge, sufficient to void the election of the Respondent and will, therefore, have to be considered on its merits.

The evidence of the expert has afforded as a most useful test of the correctness or otherwise of the allegations of the Petitioner, in cases where the thumb impression on the counterfoils were clear enough for the purposes of comparison. The value of finger print evidence for the purposes of identification and as a check on personation has been now well established and such evidence may be taken to be infallible for all practical purposes (cf. Donough's *Circumstantial Evidence*, 2nd edition, pages 69-73; and Will's *Circumstantial Evidence*, 6th edition, pages 191 to 205). We may mention here that the expert examined in this case was an officer with more than twenty years' experience in his line. He has given his opinion with care and caution in each case and no attempt has been made to challenge its correctness.

After discussing the evidence, the learned Commissioners remarked:

"It will appear from the above that personation has been established in 23 cases out of 33 cases relied on by the Petitioner, and that in 8 out of the remaining cases, there are good grounds for suspecting that "personation" has taken place. We are inclined to think that personation would probably have been established in all the latter 8 cases, if the thumb impressions on the counterfoils had been properly taken.

In all the alleged cases of personation with the exception of two, the ballot papers showed that votes had been cast in favour of the Respondent. In two cases, however, the votes were found to be for the Petitioner and these two cases thus turn out to be instances of personation in favour of the Petitioner.

By whom was the personation procured? Before proceeding to discuss the evidence of the Petitioner on this point it will be useful to consider the general aspect of the question of agency in the present case. In view of the large

number of cases in which personation has been proved, there seems no room for doubt that it must have been procured by or at the instance of one or other of the parties to this case, or their agents. It is common knowledge that the average Indian villager is yet wholly apathetic about electoral privilege and will rarely take the trouble even to go to the polling station, unless begged on by agents of the candidates. There can be, therefore, no doubt that personation in the above instances, must have been procured either by the Respondent or his agents to ensure the Respondent's success at the poll (as alleged by the Petitioner), or by the Petitioner or his agents, with the ulterior object of defeating Respondent's election by an Election Petition (as contained on behalf of the Respondent). This was accepted as common ground by counsel for both parties. We look upon this as a crucial point in the case and the evidence of the parties will have to be weighed in the light of our finding thereon. If we find any reasonable grounds for suspecting that personation in these instances may have been procured by the Petitioner or his agents, the whole of the Petitioner's evidence must be looked upon with the greatest distrust. On the other hand, if we find good grounds for believing that personation has been procured in the interest of the Respondent, there is no reason why we should be disinclined to accept *prima facie* good evidence on behalf of the Petitioner, unless it is satisfactorily explained or rebutted by the Respondent.

Considering the number of proved and suspected cases of personation in favour of the Respondent, it seems to us extremely improbable that they could have been procured by the Petitioner or his agents. It is conceivable that an unscrupulous candidate, who has reason to apprehend defeat, may try to procure one or two cases of personation in favour of his rival, with a view to an Election Petition. But the ordinary instinct of a candidate would be

to secure votes in his favour and it cannot be believed that the Petitioner or his agents would have sacrificed so many votes merely with a view to filing an Election Petition. Personation in favour of the Respondent appears to have been procured from the very first day. On the first polling day, at Meham, there were 5 cases of personation in favour of the Respondent. The Petitioner's chances of success do not appear to have been so hopeless as to lead him or his agents to prepare for an Election Petition from the outset and that too by adding to the number of his rival. From the evidence on the record, it appears that the election was a keenly contested one, and although the Respondent secured a majority of over 400 votes at Sampla on the last day, the polling at the other stations was fairly even, the Petitioner securing a majority at some stations and the Respondents at others.

All the personation cases in dispute, except one, occurred on the first three polling days and a large number at Rohtak where the Respondent's position was apparently weak and the Petitioner got a majority of 119.

The matter had, on the other hand, a different aspect from the Respondent's standpoint. We have it on evidence that the Respondent had hopes of being appointed a Minister and that his partisans were also giving it out that he has a chance of becoming a minister. Leaving aside for the present the question of Respondent's own attitude, it seems quite likely that his partisans were anxious to secure his success at all costs, and some were unscrupulous enough to go to the length of procuring personation to ensure his majority. The systematic attempt to procure personation, which is indicated by the instances of personation at the different polling stations on different dates, is entirely consistent with and intelligible from the point of view of the Respondent and his party.

The manner in which the Petitioner presented his case with respect to the instances of personation, the great difficulty he has experienced in securing the attendance of the majority of his witnesses and the attitude and the character of the evidence of these witnesses in court, seem to preclude the possibility of the instances of personation having been procured by or in the interests of the Petitioner. The Petitioner relied upon 61 instances of personation at first, but in about 28 instances it was discovered by reference to the marked electoral roll that no votes had been recorded at all in the names of the persons alleged to have been personated. Now, if the Petitioner of his partisans had been responsible for procuring personation, the Petitioner could not have been expected to rely on cases, where no votes had been cast at all in favour of any candidate. Nor could he have been uncertain as to who personated a particular voter. It seems fairly obvious that the Petitioner was acting in good faith on such information as he was able to obtain and that although the information received by him proved to be incorrect in some cases, he has, at any rate, not tried to build up his case on the foundation of fabrication.

If the Petitioner or his friends had procured personation with a view to an Election Petition, his witnesses on the point might have been expected to come forward readily to support his case. But he has experienced the greatest difficulty in securing their attendance. Only 20 witnesses appeared on obedience to a summons. Warrants had to be issued for 13 and 24 did not appear till their property was ordered to be attached. This is a significant commentary on the attitude of these witnesses and leaves no doubt that they are not Petitioner's men. Counsel for the Respondent, unable to find any reasonable explanation for the conduct of these witnesses was constrained to argue that the absconding of the witnesses was also a part of the Petitioner's game and was intended to create an impression

that the witnesses are not under the influence of the Petitioner. But this is evidently an argument of despair and will not bear a moment's scrutiny. None of these witnesses has been shown to be, in any way, interested in the Petitioner. The worst that has been brought out in the cross-examination of these witnesses is that they have some relations in Sanghi, the village of the Petitioner. There is not a single instance in which the voter or personator has been shown to be so connected with the Petitioner as to justify a belief that he may have acted under his influence. Most of the personation cases, in fact, come from villages like Sunari and Singpura, which are the strongholds of the Respondent and where the chances of detection were probably considered to be small. The Petitioner had been made responsible for securing service of his witnesses and could not afford to take the risk of losing the chance of producing the witnesses, in case no adjournment was granted. He had evidently great misgivings about securing the attendance of these witnesses, as he had asked for permission to produce secondary evidence in the shape of the thumb impression of the voters or personators in the account books of their creditors and so forth. Finally, if these witnesses were absconding at the instance of the Petitioner, they would have at least given evidence in his favour when they appeared in court. But in large number of cases, they have proved hostile and given evidence against him. Out of the alleged personators only 6 have admitted personation at the instance of the Respondent or his agents. Two have attempted to suggest that the personation was procured by the agents of the Petitioner, though their statements appear to be apparently false. Warrants of arrest had to be issued for both of these men. Most of the other personators appeared only after warrants of attachment were issued and totally denied having personated anyone. There was a marked difference between the attitude of the personators

who appeared at an early stage, before the finger-print expert was examined and those who appeared later. At first the personators had not, as a rule, the courage to deny personation altogether probably because they were conscious that their thumb marks had been taken and thought they could not escape detection. But when the finger-print expert declared a large number of the thumb impressions on the counterfoils to be blurred and indistinguishable, information seems to have been conveyed to them, and they adopted a bold attitude and came forward and denied having personated any one. Unfortunately for some of them, a few of the thumb impressions happened to be clear enough for comparison, and the evidence of the finger-print expert has proved that four out of these men not only personated in favour of the Respondent at the time of polling, but have now perjured themselves to support his case. The Petitioner has produced evidence before us that the Respondent's men were going round to persuade the witnesses to keep away or, at any rate, not to give evidence against him. In view of the attitude of the witnesses discussed above, we are not prepared to ignore his evidence as altogether unreliable and it seems to point to consciousness of guilt on the part of the Respondent or his partisans. We may mention here that 22 out of the witnesses, who failed to appear till their property was attached, pleaded guilty to the charge of evading service, when they were called upon to show cause why they should not be fined under Order 16, Rule 10, C.P.C. The remaining two produced some evidence, but it was found unreliable and they too were fined along with others. Several of these witnesses were the real voters and could have absolutely no motive for evading service. The fact that these men were absconding is most significant and leaves no room for doubt that they must have been keeping back in the interest of the Respondent.

It has been already noted that in two instances personation has turned out to be in favour of the Petitioner. But these instances also seem wholly inconsistent with the hypothesis that personation was procured by the Petitioner and cannot, therefore, justify any suspicion against him. If the Petitioner had really tried to procure personation in his favour, he could not certainly be expected to bring these cases to light himself. Nor can it be believed that the personators had been instructed by the Petitioner or his men to vote for the Respondent, but by mistake voted for the Petitioner. The personators are not, in any way, connected with the Petitioner or his partisans. The personator in one case appeared only after his property was ordered to be attached and even then denied having personated anyone. In the other case, the personator admitted personation in a hesitating manner. The Petitioner has been apparently trying in good faith to prove these cases in the belief that the votes were in favour of the Respondent.

The facts discussed above seem to point unmistakably to but one conclusion, viz., that personation in the cases in dispute could not have been procured by the Petitioner or his partisans but must have been procured in the interest of the Respondent.

We have now to consider in which of the instances, if any, personation is proved to have been procured, abetted, or connived at by the Respondent or his agents. A number of persons have been named as "agents" of the Respondent in this connection, viz., Bal Ram, Bije Ram, Harke, Sufedposh, Dani and others. The Respondent has denied that these men were his "agents". These men were admittedly not the declared agents of the Respondent. But the Petitioner's contention is that they were helping the Respondent during the election and were, therefore, his "agents" within the meaning of the term in election law.

The term "agent" has been defined in the Punjab Electoral Rules as "including an election agent", and "any other person who is held by the Commissioners to have acted as an agent in connection with the knowledge or consent of the candidate" (*vide* Rule 30). This definition leaves a wide discretion to the Commissioners, which is in conformity with the well-established principles of the Election law of agency in England. It was remarked by Grove J. in the Wigan case, "The law of agency in election cases has for a period of many years.... been held.... to go much further than the ordinary law of principal and agent. Various attempted definitions have been given of it, but I do not think anyone has been entirely successful Each case in that respect must stand upon its own ground and it really comes to this, that the court must see what the relation of the person charged is from the facts of the case and it is more a matter of inference from facts than anything that is capable of being expressed by positive law" (4 O'M. and H., page 10). The reason for this elasticity in the interpretation of the term "agent" is not far to seek. In the absence of such discretion to the Court or Commissioners, it would be obviously easy for a candidate, who is inclined to resort to corrupt practices to defeat the law and achieve his purpose through persons who are not his avowed agents.

The question whether a particular individual has or has not been an agent of a particular candidate is, therefore, to be decided upon the facts and circumstances in each case. "The substance of the principle of agency is that if a man is employed to get you votes, or if without being so employed nor authorized to get you votes, or if although neither employed nor authorised, he does, to your knowledge, get you votes, and you accept what he has done and adopt it, then he becomes a person for whose acts you are responsible, in the sense that if his acts are of an illegal character, you cannot retain the benefit which those illegal

acts have helped to procure for you" (5 O'M. and H. 178). The nature of evidence required to establish agency cannot be precisely defined; but certain principles have been held to be well established. For example, general canvassing for a candidate, or general activity at an election including taking voters to the poll have been held 'sufficient to constitute agency', (cf., Rogers *On Elections*, 19th edition, vol. 2, pages 601 and 605). In the present instance, the Petitioner's allegations are that the alleged agents canvassed for the Respondent in certain villages or grounds of villages and took voters to the poll. It will appear from the above authorities that these allegations, if proved, will be sufficient to establish agency.

In 5 out of the 21 cases of personation in favour of the Respondent, the Respondent has been named along with his agents, as having procured or abetted personation. The other cases are attributed to different agents. There is direct evidence regarding the procuring of personation in six cases only. In the remaining cases, the Petitioner relied upon circumstantial evidence in proof of agency. It will be convenient to deal with the case of each agent separately at first and then consider the question of Respondent's liability in the end. In the case of each alleged agent, we have to consider (1) whether personation in any instance or instances has been proved to have been procured, abetted, or connived at by him and (2) whether he is proved to be an agent of the Respondent, within the meaning of the term, as explained above.

The proved cases of personation in the interest of the Respondent, which have been attributed to the various agents, are as follows:

Name of the alleged agent attributed to him	No. of proved personation cases	References to cases in schedule
1. Bije Ram of Madina	5	Nos. 1 to 5
2. Bal Ram, <i>Zaildar</i> of Sunari and 26	4	Nos. 7, 8, 9
3. Ram Swarup, <i>Zaildar</i>	1	No. 6
4. Ude of Bhallot	1	No. 32
5. Harke of Singhpura	4	Nos. 17 to 32
6. Bishan Singh and Raghunandan Singh of Bohar	2	Nos. 22 and 23
7. Hardawari and others	4	Nos. 27 to 30
Total	21	

After discussing the evidence, which showed that Bije Ram canvassed for the Respondent, and brought voters to the polling station, the learned Commissioners observed:

1. We hold it proved that Bije Ram was an agent of the Respondent and that he procured the personation in cases Nos. 1 and 2.
2. Bal Ram. A large number of personation cases have been attributed to Bal Ram. In five out of these personations have been proved, and we have good reason to suspect it in five others.

We hold it proved (1) that Bal Ram was an "agent" of the Respondent, as he helped the Respondent in his election by canvassing and taking voters from Sunari to the polling station, and (2) that he procured the personation in cases Nos. 8, 26 and 10 in the schedule. In the remaining cases from Sunari, we strongly suspect that he was responsible for procuring votes.

3. Harke. In view of the evidence procured, there are good grounds for believing the personation in Singhupura cases must have been procured by Harke, who was working there for the Respondent. Harke had canvassed for the Respondent.

We accordingly hold that (1) Harke was an "agent" of the Respondent and (2) that the personation in the four Singhupura cases referred to above was procured with his connivance.

To sum up we find:

1. Bal Ram, Bije Ram and Harke are proved to have been "agents" of the Respondent.
2. To have procured or connived at "personation" in his interest in eight cases as follows:
Bije Ram: Cases Nos. 1 and 2 in the schedule.
Bal Ram: Cases Nos. 8 and 26 in the schedule.
Harke: Cases Nos. 17, 18, 19 and 20 in the schedule.

We now come to the question of Respondent's personal liability. In three out of the four cases, personation which we have held to have been procured by Bije Ram and Bal Ram, the Respondent has been named by the personators along with these men, as having procured personation. The personators deposed that they were told by the Respondent himself that there was nothing wrong in what they were asked to do and that on this assurance they personated certain voters and cast their votes in his favour. As already pointed out, these witnesses are not shown to have any motive for giving false evidence against the Respondent, and *prima facie* we find no good ground for disbelieving their statements in respect of the Respondent. The Respondent's suggestion is that his enemies have deliberately

procured personation in his favour with a view to unseat him. We have already discussed the general question of agency and found that the facts on record show unmistakably that personation was procured not by the Petitioner or his partisans but by the Respondent or his partisans in order to ensure his success.

There is no doubt that the Respondent had a momentous issue at stake in the result of the election. The Respondent was practicing as a pleader in the mufassil and we have it from him that his professional income was at least Rs. 750 to Rs. 1000 per mensem. He had evident hopes of becoming a minister and the temptation cannot be considered small. The fulfilment of his hopes depended, in the first instance, on the result of the election. The election was keenly contested one, and he must have naturally been anxious to ensure his success.

There is an important piece of evidence before us, which throws a flood of light on the Respondent's attitude in prosecuting his election campaign, and that is the employment by the Respondent of one Tek Ram, a desperado, as an agent. This Tek Ram had an unenviable record. He had been twice tried for murder. He had been charged with a serious assault on a Sub-Inspector of Police. His movements had been restricted under Act 5 of 1918 and Section 110, Criminal Procedure Code. He had also been interned under the Defence of Indian Act. The Respondent admits in his statement that Tek Ram is of desperate character. He also admits that Tek Ram and his party helped him at Samchana and brought voters from that village. Respondent's statement, as a defence witness for Tek Ram, when Tek Ram was tried on a third charge of murder in last January, i.e., after the election is still more explicit. Respondent then deposed that Tek Ram helped him throughout the election, from 20th to 26th November, and that he worked for him also before the actual polling.

It is inconceivable that any candidate, who wished to keep his hands perfectly clean, would have thought of employing a man of the type of Tek Ram for furthering his election. This fact shows beyond doubt that the Respondent was not scrupulous about the selection of his agent, and if he was not scrupulous about the selection of his agent, would it be surprising, if his attitude was the same with respect to the choice of his means.

As regards Respondent's own activity, Sheikh Abdul Aziz states: "I saw Chaudhri Lal Chand himself leading the voters to the polling booth at the various polling stations. Chaudhri Lal Chand was bustling about amongst his own voters. Occasionally, he accompanied the voters to the polling booth himself. He was going to and fro from one polling station to the other". To the same effect is the evidence of Pt. Devi Dayal Joshi, another presiding officer at Rohtak. Even, the evidence of Qazi Fazal Illahi, whose bias in favour of the Respondent is apparent, shows that the Respondent was very active at all the above-mentioned polling stations and was "moving round and round like a wasp", as he graphically expressed it in the vernacular. It is difficult to accept the Respondent's statement that he took no interest in the voting and merely contended himself with seeing that there was no breach of the peace. Qazi Fazal Illahi states that the Respondent had a printed list of voters, a map, and a pencil in his hand, when he was going about. Can it be believed that he made no use of these? The answer is, we think, obvious. The Respondent was evidently taking keen interest in the voting – as was only natural – and has been compelled to take up the above position only, through apprehension of being fixed with knowledge of the "corrupt practices", which were resorted to, in order to further his interests. We think that there is little room for doubt that this systematic and widespread campaign of personation is to be traced to the same instinct that dictated the employ-

ment of the desperado Tek Ram.

We have given this case our anxious consideration from the outset in view of the position of the Respondent and the consequence, which our findings might involve. But after carefully considering the evidence before us, we are compelled to hold that the Respondent abetted personation in the aforesaid three cases in which he has been specifically named by the personators, and that personation in other cases was connived at by him. On behalf of the Respondent, reference was made to the Punjab South East Case of 1920, and it was urged that the percentage of the proved cases of personation is insignificant as compared with that case. But we do not think that this can by any means be considered a decisive factor. The law looks upon the offence of personation as a serious and even a single instance brought home to a candidate or his agent is sufficient to void an election. There are also several other distinguishing features in the present case. In the Punjab South East Town Case, there was apparently no direct evidence as regards the procuring of personation against the candidate or his agents – the charge being one of the connivance (see I.E.P., page 165). In the present instance, there is direct evidence against the candidate as well as his agents. There are also other important facts to be taken into account- such as, employment of a man of the type of Tek Rain as an agent, the presence of the candidate at different polling stations, the active interest taken by him, and finally the systematic attempt to procure votes by personation on different dates and at different polling stations.

Our unanimous findings are (1) that Bal Ram, Bije Ram and Harke were agents of the Respondent and were guilty of the corrupt practice of personation under Part 1 of Schedule 5 of the Punjab Electoral Rules, and (2) that the Respondent himself was also guilty of the same corrupt practice, by abetment and connivance.

Under Rule 45 we have to report accordingly that the

Respondent was not duly elected. The Petitioner has asked for a declaration that he was duly elected; but we do not think he is entitled to such declaration, and it is not possible to say whether the Petitioner or the third candidate would have succeeded, if the Respondent were out of the contest. All the votes given to the Respondent cannot be considered to have been thrown away (cf., I.E.P., page 221; also Rogers *On Elections*, 19th edition, pages 129-30).

The Respondent and the above-mentioned agents, Bije Ram, Bal Ram and Harke have incurred the disqualification referred to in Rules 5 and 7. Bal Ram and Harke, who had not appeared as witnesses, were called upon to show cause why they should not be reported to be guilty of the corrupt practice of personation (*vide* proviso to Rule 47). Their pleas were to the same effect as advanced by the Respondent. The supplementary evidence produced by them has been recorded. It has, in fact, only served to strengthen our conclusions.

We also report that the following persons, who have either admitted having personated certain voters, or have been proved to have done so, have also incurred disqualification under the same rule.

1. Ratia Singh P.W. 17.
2. Kanhayia, son of Chandu P.W. 18.
3. Kanhayia, son of Jai La1 P.W. 22.
4. Shibby P.W. 54.
5. Mau1a P.W. 55.
6. Kurda P.W. 32.
7. Jas Ram P.W. 20.
8. Rullia P.W.21.
9. Mauji P.W. 88.
10. Shiv Ram P.W. 15.
11. Jita P.W. 64.

12. Nihala P.W. 103.
13. Sarupa P. W. 91.
14. Chandgi P.W. 34.
15. Bad1u P.W. 21.

As regards costs, the Petitioner had to fight this case against great odds. The charge of personation is not an easy one to prove and the Petitioner's difficulties were increased by the position of the Respondent and the pressure which was evidently being brought upon the witnesses from the outset with a view to stultify the inquiry. We think, the Petitioner is entitled to get substantial costs from the Respondent. In the circumstances, we assess the costs at Rs. 3,000.

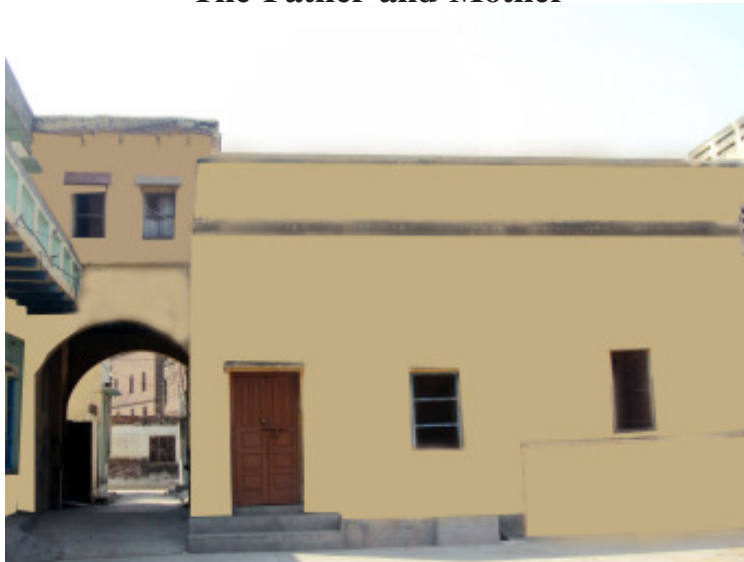
M.V. Bhide
M.M. Mackay
D.C. Ralli

Story

in Images



The Father and Mother



The House



The Passion



The Resistance



The Defiance



Swami Dayanand



S. Ajit Singh



Neta Ji



Jawahar Lal Nehru



Lala Lajpat Rai



Bhagat Singh



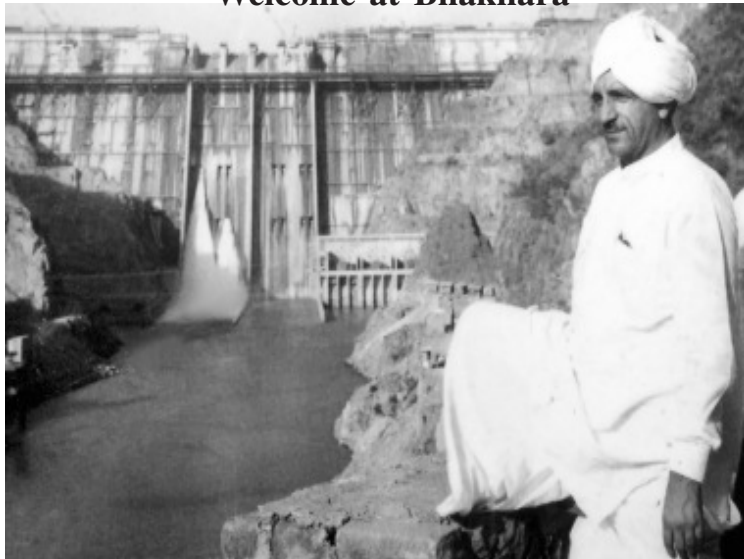
The Down of Freedom



Chating the Path



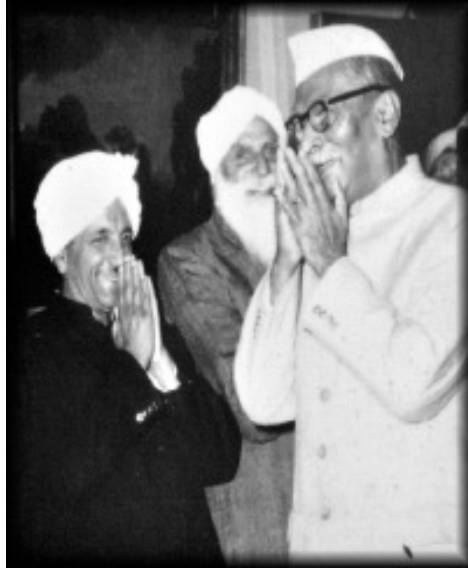
Welcome at Bhakhara



The Dream Project



The Communicator



With Dr. Rajender Prasad



Facing an adversom. S. Tara Singh



At Amritsar Session 1956



With a Delegation



Felicitation by Rashtrapati-K.R. Narayanan



The Last Journey...

The Immersion...





The Head Bows...



Smadhi Sthal at Rohtak