

DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR BHAWAN - Know the Truth

By-Trustees-TPIT



Proposed Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Bhawan

Introduction and brief history

The demolition of ground floor structure of a proposed school which, eventually came to be known as Ambedkar Bhavan has created a wide divide amongst the followers of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. The followers of Dr. Ambedkar have been divided over several issues like regional, social and political. But for the first time the divide has arisen to claim true heirship to Dr. Ambedkar, one group claiming to be ideological heirs to Dr. Ambedkar while the other bases its claims based on blood relation. This divide has polarised the community in two camps, one claiming that ideology is far superior to blood relation while the other camp feels that blood relation is of utmost importance irrespective of the ideological similarities or dissimilarities. History has evidenced such strain earlier when the followers of Prophet Mohammad Paigambar, after his death, were split in two similar camps, one claiming ideological allegiance to the Prophet while the other through blood. This eventually divided the whole community in two camps, now known as Shias and Sunnis. However, unlike in the case of followers of the Prophet, what lies at the heart of the divide that has been created amongst followers of Dr. Ambedkar are the rumours about the demolition of so called Ambedkar Bhavan. In the midst of controversy that has erupted after this demolition, what has been cast aside are the reasons and vision with which Dr. Ambedkar decided to purchase the land on which the so-called Ambedkar Bhavan stood. Dr. Ambedkar purchased this land with a vision to establish a central headquarter for dalit movement, a head quarter that would act as a centre for solving critical and pertinent problems of dalits like relief from tyranny and social oppression, protection of civil rights, advancement of education among dalits and many more. At a time when sparks are flying high in the air between the two camps, threatening to permanently divide the whole community in two halves, what is needed is to understand the purpose and vision of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar for purchasing this land and objectively evaluate the actions and intentions of the people behind the demolition towards fulfilment of this vision of Dr. Ambedkar.

What was Dr. Ambedkar's Vision for purchasing this Property?

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was one of the greatest visionary of all times. Like normal people, he too had dreams, but unlike normal people who forget their dreams, Dr. Ambedkar chased his dreams with full might and force. One such dream of Dr. Ambedkar was to have a place for the people of his community, a place that they can call their own, and a place where people from his community could have access to any time any day without any hesitation or restriction. In his address to a gathering in Paltan on 15th February 1941, Dr. Ambedkar talks about his dream to have such a place for the dalit community, when he said, "just like some rich merchant builds a building for the benefit of his children and family, likewise, this building which I propose to construct would be for the benefit of my community. Even after I am gone, my community will continue to get benefit from this building." Dr. Ambedkar was man of his words, and so he immediately started working towards achieving this dream. Trusted people of Dr. Ambedkar like Mr. Ganpat Mahadev Jadhav, Mr. Govind Parmar, and Mr. Shantaram Upsham etc started visiting various chawls in Mumbai and started collecting donations for this project. In his first public meeting to mobilize funds for this project, which was held on 19th March 1938 in one of the chawls located in Tadwadi area of Mazgaon, the residents of this chawl donated Rs. 101 for this cause. Mr. Upsham volunteered to shoulder the responsibility of treasurer for this project and printed 1,000 receipt books with the help of donation given by residents of Tadwadi. These receipt books were to help raise more funds for the project. In cities, several chawl committees and in rural areas several rural committees were established to help raise donations for this project. It was decided to raise Rs. 2 per man and Rs. 1 per woman as

donation for the project. Dr. Ambedkar himself addressed several gatherings to motivate people to donate for this project. One such gathering was addressed by Dr. Ambedkar on 1st November 1940 at present location where so called Ambedkar Bhavan is located. In this gathering, Dr. Ambedkar talked about his vision of constructing a grand 3 story building on this site, which would serve as the Command Centre for the movement. One half of the first floor of the proposed building was to house Bharat Bhushan Printing Press and the balance half was to house municipal union and other offices. Guest rooms were proposed on second floor for letting purpose, which would generate funds to maintain the building and provide financial support to the movement. The third floor was designed as a grand public auditorium. Dr. Ambedkar had planned to generate Rs. 4,000 per year from this building, and post expenses, generate a surplus of Rs. 2,500 per year. Though Dr. Ambedkar had identified land in 1940 and entered into an agreement to purchase the land in November of 1940, due to shortage of funds he could not complete the purchase of the land and had to pay an interest of Rs. 2,200 per year. Dr. Ambedkar further emphasized the importance of this building through his address in his periodical by name Janta dated 25th December 1940, in which he stated the vision he had for this building and appealed to people to donate generously for this cause. Due to untiring efforts of Dr. Ambedkar and his colleagues, a fund of Rupees 45,095 Annas 6 and Paise 9 were raised for developing the command centre Dr. Ambedkar had envisioned. With the help of this fund, the land identified by Dr. Ambedkar in 1940 admeasuring 2,332 Sq.Yard was purchased from Mr. Ambalal Poonamchand for a price of Rs. 36,535 on 30th October 1944. Dr. Ambedkar, Mr. Bhaurao, Krushnrao Gaikwad, Mr. Daulat Gunaji Jadhav, Mr. Ganpat Mahadev Jadhav, Mr. Govind Parmar and Mr. Pandurang Rajbhoj on behalf of the Trust signed this Sale Deed. In a public gathering addressed by Dr. Ambedkar on 14th July 1952 at Damodar Hall, Mumbai, Dr. Ambedkar informed the gathering that a sum of Rupees 1,11,228 Annas 4 and Paise 3 have been collected from public for the project out of which Rupees 31,709 Annas 4 was contributed by dalits while Rupees 75,500 were contributed by people from higher class. From this total funds collected, a sum of Rupees 35,535 had been spent for purchasing the land, Rupees 35,000 had been spent for constructing temporary structure housing the printing press and balance amount of has been deposited in The Imperial Bank. (BAWS, Vol 18, Part III, Pg. 310-311). In another public gathering address by Dr. Ambedkar on 20th July 1952, Dr. Ambedkar said, "I have informed you about how much money has been collected for construction of building project, how much have been spent, where has it been spent and how much amount is balance and where is this amount kept. The purpose of informing you about this is to inform you about the facts so that not even my son should be able to stake a claim on this in future". Taking into consideration such detailed account given by Dr. Ambedkar itself, it is clear that the land and the structure housing the present day press belong to the trust itself and no member of Dr. Ambedkar's family can even stake a claim to it. Further clarifying this position, Dr. Ambedkar, in his testimony in Small Causes Court Suit No. 1095/4920 of 1954 stated that the printing press pays a rent of Rs. 50 per month to the Trust for occupying the structure erected by Trust on the said property. It is very clear from the testimony given by Dr. Ambedkar that the place and structure which houses the Buddhabhushan printing press today has been purchased and constructed by public money. He made it very clear in his letter to Yashwantrao on 23 Feb. 1956 and copy to shantaram Upasham guruji.(Vol-21,Govt of Maharashtra)

From available documents, it becomes clear that Dr. Ambedkar had a dream to construct a building, which could be owned by people of his community since 1925. In 1931, when Dr. Ambedkar was in England to attend the Second Round Table Conference, he issued an appeal to the Kings and highly

placed institutions. In this appeal, Dr. Ambedkar talks about formation of Depressed Classes Institute in 1925 and upraised people about the work being done by this institute for upliftment of the depressed classes. He informed people that the institute is operating a periodical by the name Janta. However, the press, which is used to print Janta, is small and hence cannot be used for any commercial activity and is incapable of generating any funds. To keep the mission going, it was necessary to have a self-owned medium scale office, for which a fund of 40,000 Pounds was needed. Dr. Ambedkar appealed to the Kings and Institutions to donate for this cause. In this appeal, issued out in 1931, Dr. Ambedkar is seen giving the accounts for a fund of 1,335 Pounds, that was raised in previous year (1930) (BAWS, Vol 17, Part II, Pg. 407 - 412). It can be seen that though Dr. Ambedkar registered The Schedule Caste Improvement Trust in 1944, he had been doing groundwork for the same since 1925. Further, Dr. Ambedkar was appointed as member of Viceroy's Council on 2nd July 1942 and in April of 1944, in his appeal to the Princess and People of India, Dr. Ambedkar informed people that a total fund of Rs. 3,25,000/- would be needed to establish a Social Centre for the benefit of Depressed Community. The Social Centre envisioned by Dr. Ambedkar was not limited to a few offices and a grand hall. In his appeal of April 1944, Dr. Ambedkar clearly enumerates the three essentials, the pillars for success of the movement. And these three pillars were (1) a Central Headquarter (2) a well-trained body of devoted workers, and (3) financial stability. The Social Centre envisioned by Dr. Ambedkar was to serve as a Central Headquarter for the movement and was to serve following purposes: (a) house offices of various institutions linked to the movement, (b) a temporary lodging place for volunteers, (c) a hall to accommodate about 2,500 people, (d) a library and a reading room with all facilities, (e) publishing house, (f) head office of Samata Sainik Dal, (g) facilities for promoting social and cultural means of education (BAWS, Vol 17, Part II, Page 447-454). The dream of Dr. Ambedkar to have such an all-encompassing social centre is yet to be fulfilled even after 60 years of his demise. The Peoples Improvement Trust has now taken upon itself the task to fulfill this dream of Dr. Ambedkar.

Why the dream of Dr. Ambedkar was not realized till date?

The dream of having a social centre for the depressed classes was very close Dr. Ambedkar's heart. He worked very hard towards achieving this dream. He established a Trust to take care of it, addressed several public gatherings and appealed to various dignitaries on various occasions to donate generously for this cause. However, despite all these efforts, the dream remained a dream, which was never realized during the lifetime of Dr. Ambedkar.

1. In July of 1942, Dr. Ambedkar was appointed as Labor Member of Viceroy's Council. This required Dr. Ambedkar to shift his residence from Mumbai to Delhi. Further in 1946, Dr. Ambedkar was appointed as the Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee and later as the first Law Minister of independent India. Thus, from 1942 to 1952, Dr. Ambedkar was stationed in Delhi and his visits to Mumbai were very infrequent and had rarely been to the place of present "Ambedkar Bhavan" at Gokuldas Pasta Lane, Dadar, Mumbai between this period of time. As testified by Dr. Ambedkar himself during cross-examination in the matter of Small Causes Court Suit No. 1095/4920, Dr. Ambedkar visited the place only 3-4 times. From 1944 to 1948, Mr. Ganpat Jadhav also known as Madke Bua looked after the Property. After his demise in 1948, Mr. Yashwant Ambedkar, son of Dr. Ambedkar, looked after the property. Dr. Ambedkar returned to Mumbai from Delhi in 1952 and after his return, he re-started the work for building Social Centre on this site. With the help of an architect, Dr. Ambedkar prepared a plan for constructing three-story building by demolishing the

existing temporary structure housing the printing press. However, Dr. Ambedkar could not make progress in constructing the building since Mr. Yashwantrao had, in 1949, given a portion of the land on lease to three refugees who came from Pakistan after partition. It was necessary to get vacated the tenants before starting construction and to this end, Dr. Ambedkar had to request these tenants to vacate the property. However, the tenants refused to vacate the premises because of which Dr. Ambedkar had to file a suit in Small Causes Court in Mumbai. The matter was decided in 1955 and the Court ruled in favor of the trust and ordered the tenants to vacate the premises. However, the Court granted them a period of three years for vacating the premises. Aggrieved by this order, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar appealed to higher court against the order giving three years to the tenants for vacating the premises. However the court verdict on the appeal was not pronounced in the lifetime of Dr. Ambedkar. Because of these unfortunate events, Dr. Ambedkar's dream never saw the light of the day during his lifetime. In continuation of ongoing litigation, the three original tenants bought 20 new sub-tenants and these sub-tenants also filed cases in the Court. The Court decided in trust favor by February 1962. However, these sub-tenants challenged the same in High Court. Eventually, all these matters came to be settled by 2001 and the ownership of property was ruled in favor of the trust without any encumbrance.

2. Dr. Ambedkar, during his life, had got a plan approved from approving authorities for construction of three-story building. However, due to the ongoing litigation, the work on construction the Social Centre never really started. In the meantime, Mumbai Municipal Corporation, in 1967, published a new development plan for the city, in which the property was reserved for Secondary School. This required the then chairman of the Trust Mr. D.G Jadhav to change the original plan, which was submitted to BMC for approval in 1973-74. This plan was not approved by BMC. However, work was started on site in 1974. But due to lack of funds, Trust was not able to complete the works. The plan submitted by Trust finally got approved in 1982 in which the ground floor of the building was shown as parking for school buses and upper floors for school and auditorium. To complete works as per this approved plan, trust approached The State Bank of India for loan. SBI sanctioned a loan of Rs. 6,00,000/- for the complete construction. Out of the total sanctioned amount, Rs. 2,50,000/- were released by the Bank to the Trust. With the help of this fund, construction on site was re-started and around 1985, the ground floor parking area of the structure was completed. However, in the interim period, the Trust could not pay its instalments, because of which the Bank refused to disburse further sums of money and the construction work on site came to a grinding halt again. Since the building never got completed, facilities like power, water connection, and drainage connection for sanitation etc. never got commissioned for this structure. Eventually the Trust managed to provide some makeshift arrangement for this facility. Due to these constraints, the structure never hosted any big scale event or a function. In fact, as against envisioned by Dr. Ambedkar, this incomplete structure never hosted any event of significant historical value.

Efforts made by the Trust for construction of the Social Centre

It was not until 2001 that all the litigation pertaining to property was over. The construction, which was started in 1974, was left incomplete because of lack of funds. Due to rains and corrosive weather conditions, the strength of the structure deteriorated much rapidly. The temporary structure housing printing press, which was constructed around 1945-46, also was in a seriously dilapidated state. Taking this into consideration, the Trust decided to demolish existing structures and construct a new one in its place, one that will do justice to the vision Dr. Ambedkar had for the

place. But the Trust realized that before any work can be started, the pending loan amount extended by State Bank of India, had to be cleared first. The loan of Rs. 2,50,000/- extended by State Bank of India had translated into a total loan of Rs. 12,00,000/- after factoring in compounded interest. Original papers pertaining to the Property were mortgaged with State Bank of India as the security. Besides this, a total of Rs. 1,20,000/- was due and pending as Property Tax and the Government had sent several notices to the Trust threatening to auction the land if the dues were not cleared. Taking cognizance of this, the then chairman of Trust, Mr. R.G Kharat and Secretary Prof. V.S Asware decided to engage Mr. Sunil Shah, owner of Varsha Caterers and entered an agreement with him. As per this agreement, Varsha Caterers would be required to upfront money to clear all dues and liabilities of the Trust and in return of this, Mr. Sunil Shah could use the structure of the Trust, after repairing, for providing catering services to the events organized at the structure for 3 years. The Trust entered into negotiation with the State Bank of India and settled all its dues, including that of outstanding property taxes. With all these issues cleared, Trust started making an effort towards raising further funds so as to complete the construction of the building. However, soon after all these problems were over, Mr. Prakash Ambedkar filed complaint against Trustees for misappropriation of funds, cheating and fraud and made several complaints to this effect to the State Government. The Police Department held detailed enquiries in this matter and reported that no truth was found in any of the allegations levelled by Mr. Prakash Ambedkar against the trustees. The entire investigation lead to severe harassment and mental torture to all the Trustees and proved to be setback for the efforts made by trustees to realize the dream of Dr. Ambedkar. Rising from this crisis, the Trustees again started making an effort for raising funds and finding ways and means for realizing the dream of Dr. Ambedkar. In one such effort, trustees also toyed with an idea of engaging a private developer for undertaking construction of the building. However, this effort too failed. Eventually, in 2011, Trust succeeded in securing a funding of Rs. 10 crore from Government of Maharashtra for construction of the building. GR was issued to this effect in 2011 itself. This financial assistance from the State Government is yet to be received.

Changes in Name of the Trust and its Rules

From amongst many trustees of the Trust, Mr. G.M. Jadhav, Mr. Dadasaheb Gaikwad, Mr. G.T Parmar, Mr. Shantaram Upasham, Mr. P.N. Rajbhoj, Mr. B.H.Varhade, Mr. P.L Lokhande, Mr. Dadasaheb Shirke, Mr. S.S.Dikhale, Mr. R.G.Kharat, Mr. Yadavrao Gangurde were personally known and worked with Dr. Ambedkar. Post the demise of these trustees, new members were appointed as trustees. This includes Mr. G.K Mane, Dr. P.T Borale, Mr. Moreshwar Tambe, Mr. J.D Jadhav, Prof. V.S. Asware, Mr. A.S Upasham, Dr. S.S.Dhaktode and Adv. Shrikant Gaware. Mr. Vilas Wagh, Mr. Vasant Dhaware and Mr. Shankarao Gaikwad were appointed as trustees after the demise of trustees Mr. Mr. G.K Mane, Dr. P.T Borale, Mr. Moreshwar Tambe and Mr. J.D Jadhav. Also, the trustees, in 2004, unanimously passed a resolution to change the name of the Trust from "The Bombay Schedule Caste Improvement Trust" to "The Peoples Improvement Trust" to assume a larger role for the Trust in the society. Likewise, some of the rules of the Trust too were amended to address the changing scenario. One such change in rules was the change in retirement age for the Trusty, which was revised to maximum 75 years. If the trustee is in good health and contributing, as a special concession, it was provided to grant a further extension of 5 years to the trusty but only with the approval of remaining trustees. This rule made it possible for Mr. Vasant Dhaware and Mr. A.S. Upasham to be given an extension to remain as trustees till they turned 80 years. Dr. Dhaktode and Mr. Vilas Wagh retired at the age of 75. Mr. Shankarao Gaikwad resigned from the Trust. In

2012, a serious criminal complaint was filed against Prof. V.S Asware. Taking this into consideration, Mr. Prakash Ambedkar of BHARIP, Mr Anandraj Ambedkar of Republican Sena, and Republican Vidarthi Sena staged fierce agitation for removal of Prof. V.S Asware from Trust Board on moral ground. Heeding to such agitation, the Trustees passed resolution on 1.1.2013 to discharge Prof. V.S.Asware from chairmanship of Trust. On 14.07.2014, prof. Asware turned 75 and accordingly applied to trust for an extension of 5 years. However, the trustees decided against this and Prof. V.S Asware retired at the age of 75 years from the Trust and appointed new members on Trust Board and the same along with necessary paperwork had been communicated to Hon.Charity Commissioner and change report filed.

Attacks on trustees and attempts to take them Off-Course

History would bear evidence that all the trustees of the Trust, at all points of time, have with all the dedication, worked hard towards achieving the dream of Social Centre seen by Dr. Ambedkar. However, this road has been fraught with a lot of pain and anguish all the while. On one hand, Trustees had to take time out of their jobs, social work and other daily chores and work hard for realizing the dream of Dr. Ambedkar and on other hand they had to fight with self-centered forces who raise baseless allegation against the trustees and cause great mental trauma to the trustees, trying to put them off-course from achieving their target. Despite these challenges, the Trustees have managed to stay steadfast on their course and have made significant progress to achieve the vision of Dr. Ambedkar. Even the most trusted people like Mr. Shantaram Upasham, who was also one of the most trusted person know to Dr. Ambedkar, were not spared from such allegations and defamation. From the very first day Dr. Ambedkar made an appeal for raising funds for building Social Centre, Mr. Upasham volunteered to be the treasurer and kept track of all the financials of the Trust. Mr. Upasham worked selflessly without taking any remuneration for his service provided to the Trust till he retired from his job in 1955. He worked tirelessly for the cause till his demise in the year 1975. In 1967, Mr. Upasham published detailed accounts of Trust starting from 1938 until 1965, enumerating list of all the donors who had donate more than Rs. 25 to the Trust with their name and address. Despite presenting detailed accounts of Trust, Mr. Upasham had to face troubling allegations like having siphoned off money from the Trust for construction of his own house and sending his son abroad for education etc. Trusty Dr. P.T Borale were subjected to physical harm and humiliation when he was striped half naked and beaten up by self-centered people who have at all times, to fulfil their agenda, have raised obstacle in the paths of the trustees. In 2006, Advocate Mr. Prakash Ambedkar himself lodged a baseless complaint against the trustees with police, which were dismissed as baseless and defamatory after detailed investigation undertaken by the Police. Despite dismissing their complaints as baseless, Mr. Rajendra Pawar a relative of Ambedkar family on 29th January 2014 filed a complaint against Trustees with the Charity Commissioner, which too eventually was dismissed by Charity Commissioner as baseless and without any truth. Despite their claims being dismissed as baseless at the highest level, this have not deterred these self-centered forces from creating distractions and obstacles for the trustees. These forces even today pursue their vested interests and raise allegations against the trustees. In the year 2006, Dhammadiksha Suvarna Mahotsav Samiti was appointed to help conversion of several families from "Bhatkya/Vimukta" (VJNT-DTNT)community to Buddhism. The Samiti had planned for a grand event at Mahalaxmi Race Course in Mumbai to mark the event. On request of organizers of this event, Mr. Laxman Mane who was leading the "Bhatkya/Vimukta" community and Mr. Baban kamble, editor of Dainik Samrat newspaper , the trustees decided to make available to the Dhammadiksha Suvarna Mahotsav Samiti

an office space in Ambedkar Bhavan on temporary basis. This led to furious reactions from Mr. Anandraj Ambedkar. The fact that despite the presence of Bhartiya Baudha Mahasabha led by Mrs. Miratai Ambedkar, how other people working for Buddha Dhamma be tolerated was a preposterous idea for Mr. Anandraj Ambedkar to digest. Driven by rage, Mr. Anandraj Ambedkar went to such an extent of using abusive language against trustees. Mr. Anant Upasham, Mr. Vasant Rao Dhaware and Prof. V.S. Asware were threatened to physically harm them for their actions. The threats were so serious that a complaint had to be lodged in Bhoiwada police station on 7.10.2006. Similarly on 5th December 2010, one of the trusty Advocate Shrikant Gaware was beaten by Mr. Pratik Dhanraj Kamble and Mr. Prasenjeet Dhanraj Kamble, both members of BHARIP, party lead by Mr. Prakash Ambedkar. These two persons also threatened another trusty Dr. S.S. Dhaktode. Besides, these two persons also caused damage to the property of the Trust. Trustees filed a police complaint against this act of violence in Bhoiwada Police Station on 10th December 2010. This threatening got aggressive with time and on 26th December 2015, Mr. Rakesh Gaikwad, driver of Mr. Anandraj Ambedkar made an attempt to kill the advisor of the Trust Mr. Ratnakar Gaikwad and his daughter Ms. Shivanjali Gaikwad by trying to run them over with Toyota Qualis vehicle. A police complaint was lodged in Bhoiwada Police Station on 26th December 2015 against this attempt. Undeterred, the attempt to stop the trustees continued with attack on chairman of Trust Mr. Yogesh Varhade and trustee Mr. Nagsen Sonare and Mr. Uttamrao Bodwade on 19th April 2016 at Worli by 3 scooter riding attackers. This too was reported to local police station and FIR was lodged at N.M Joshi Police Station on 20th April 2016. The trustees had to face a great deal of hardship starting from allegations to attempt on life, just for trying to fulfil the vision of Dr. Ambedkar. Despite all these hardships and threats, the trustees had managed to stay steadfast on their course to realize the dream seen by Dr. Ambedkar more than 75 years back.

Road to realization of Dr. Ambedkar's Dream

Many of the old trustees, who because of their age were unable to take the baton to fulfil Dr. Ambedkar's dream with full force and passion, retired with time and made way for induction of new young trustees, who without any fanfare dedicated themselves to the cause. It had been more than 75 years since Dr. Ambedkar saw the dream of building a Social Centre in the form of a three-story building. In the time that went by, the world at large started acknowledging the efforts and works of Dr. Ambedkar and his reverence grew beyond the Indian shores. Dr. Ambedkar came to be acknowledged not just as a dalit leader and chief architect of the Indian Constitution but as an epitome of struggle against injustice globally, a source of inspiration for fight against oppression. He came to be acknowledged as one of the greatest men ever lived. His thoughts and works attract many more people from across the world to India. The trustees in the Trust envisioned building a grand building to be known as Ambedkar Bhavan as a befitting tribute to such a great man. The trustees planned to construct a Social Centre, which would serve as the headquarter to lead the movement started by Dr. Ambedkar. The Social Centre is designed to inspire people. It is designed in such a way that despite its grandeur, even an illiterate person, without asking anyone for help, would be able to witness the works of Dr. Ambedkar and his achievements. However, as always, the trustees had to face a series of hurdles before this dream could be fulfilled. One such hurdle was the reservation of Secondary School in the development plan by MCGM Mumbai for the city. With the school reservation, it was impossible to construct anything other than School on this site. This posed a serious challenge for trustees. In order to change the reservation, trustees started correspondence with MCGM. However, soon it was realized that it was in the jurisdiction of State Government to

amend the Development Plan (DP plan) of the City and began the uphill task of follow-up with State Government for changing this reservation. The trustees took all the allegations, defamation, threats caused to them by people infested with vested interest in their stride and continued to pursue BMC and State Government Officials. Change of reservation was a near to impossible task. The trustees decided to change the reservation from Secondary School to Public Hall and Institutions which would permit them to construct a building that would serve the purpose Dr. Ambedkar envisioned for it. However, even changing the reservation was no easy task, with the Government needing no-objections and clearances from several departments within Government. To achieve this task, a good working knowledge of the Government Machinery was needed, in order to pursue the papers with various departments of Government and in Mantralaya. Assessing this need, the trustees approached Ex. Chief Secretary of the Government of Maharashtra Mr. Ratnakar Gaikwad for assistance. Heeding to the request of trustees, Mr. Ratnakar Gaikwad agreed to act as an Advisor to the Trust for realizing the dream of Dr. Ambedkar. Keeping aside protocols, Mr. Ratnakar Gaikwad personally met several officials from the lowest level of bureaucracy to the top-most level and explained the need to change the nature of reservation and the merits supporting this change. These efforts finally bore fruits and the Government of Maharashtra finally agreed to the request of the trust and changed the DP reservation from Secondary School to Public Hall and Institutional Use. The Government of Maharashtra issued a notification to this effect on 3rd December 2015. This was a major breakthrough in a long time for the Trust towards achieving the dream of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Immediately after this change of reservation was brought into force through the notification, the trustees approached BMC with the grand plan of constructing 17 story Ambedkar Bhavan. BMC, after thorough due-diligence on their part and after satisfying itself about fulfilment of all necessary compliances, approved the plans for construction of Ambedkar Bhavan on 13th April 2016. For the first time after Mahaparinirvan of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, it was possible to truly construct a building that would fulfil the dream of Dr. Ambedkar of having a Social Centre for the Oppressed Community, a building that can act as a Central Headquarter for the movement, a building which can house offices of various institutions associated with the movement, a building which could inspire people and give a new lease of life for the movement. Charged with the energy, the trustees focused their attention now on execution of plan. For this, it was imperative to demolish the old structure housing the printing press, which was constructed in 1945-46 and the temporary incomplete structure of school, which was started in around 1985 and was left incomplete. The trustees had allowed Mr. Prakash Ambedkar to use part of the temporary structure as head office of his political party BHARIP. Likewise, a part of structure was allowed to be used by Mr. Anandraj Ambedkar for office of his political party Republican Sena and a part of it was being used by Mr. Bhimrao Ambedkar for printing press. The trustees tried to engage all Ambedkar brothers by briefing them about the plan of trustees to demolish existing structure and construct a grand 17 story building in its place, in which provision has been made for accommodating all of them by providing them the space which was much more than presently under their occupation.

Sequence of Events Leading to Demolition of Ambedkar Bhavan

Charged with energy and enthusiasm after succeeding with change of reservation, the trustees approached BMC for approval of plans of grand 17 story Ambedkar Bhavan. BMC, after checking necessary compliances, approved the plans on 13th April 2016. As a precondition to obtain commencement certificate for starting actual construction work, it was necessary to demolish the existing structure standing on site. Since the existing structure had various offices occupied by Mr.

Prakash Ambedkar, Mr. Bhimrao Ambedkar and Mr. Anandraj Ambedkar, the trustees, despite all the continuous pain and anguish caused to them by these brothers, started engaging them in a dialogue, to inspire and motivate them to participate in this endeavor of the Trust to realize the dream of Dr. Ambedkar. With this intention, the trustees approached Mr. Prakash Ambedkar, Mr. Bhimrao Ambedkar and Mr. Anandraj Ambedkar. However, none of them agreed to come forth for a dialogue. After a lot of persuasion, Mr. Bhimrao Ambedkar and Mr. Anandraj Ambedkar finally agreed to listen to the trustees. Mr. Bhimrao and Mr. Anandraj persuaded Mr. Prakash Ambedkar to hear-out the proposal of the trustees and accordingly a power point presentation was arranged for briefing of Mr. Prakash Ambedkar along with Mr. Bhimrao and Mr. Anandraj Ambedkar on 5th April 2016. However, none of them arrived for this meeting. After a lot of perusal from the trustees, a meeting was arranged with Mr. Bhimrao Ambedkar on 12th May 2016. Mr. Bhimrao Ambedkar was appraised about the plan of the trust to construct a grand 17 story tall Ambedkar Bhavan by demolition of the existing structure and constructing a new building thereon. Mr. Bhimrao Ambedkar showed satisfaction on the plans prepared by the Trust and placed three conditions for co-operation. The conditions were (a) members of Ambedkar family should be provided space in newly constructed building equivalent to area presently under their occupation, (b) The premises under Buddha Bhushan Printing Press is the family property of Dr. Ambedkar and hence should be handed over to the Ambedkar family. The documents pertaining to the ownership of this property shall be produced within a period of 10 days from the meeting and (c) Mr. Bhimrao Ambedkar and Mr. Prakash Ambedkar should be inducted as trustees in the Trust. The trustees agreed unconditionally to the first demand. As for the second demand, the trustees agreed to transfer the ownership of property under Buddha Bhushan Printing Press provided proof of such ownership are produced. And as for the third demand, the trustees refused to break a rule made by Dr. Ambedkar himself and which all the trustees till date, the rule of keeping family out of this trust as anybody having interest in the property is not eligible to become a trusty as per the provisions in the byelaws. Thus trustees refused to break this rule and refused to accept their third demand. The stand of the trustees was communicated to all of them through the letter dated 16th May 2016. The letter correspondence failed to generate any response from either Mr. Prakash, Mr. Anandraj or

Mr. Bhimrao Ambedkar. They had already been informed through registered post dated 4th April 2016 about the intention of trustees to demolish existing structure to undertake construction of new the building and to shift their belongings from the structure at the earliest. As an effort to reach out to common public and to make them aware about their plans, the trustees issued notices in newspaper Marathi daily Loksatta on 4th May 2016. However, all this while neither of Mr. Prakash, Anandraj or Bhimrao Ambedkar voiced their concern or resistance in any manner to the plans of the trust. As a compliance of conditions of approved plan, the Trust made a request to BMC to check the structural stability of existing structure. After duly undertaking various tests, it was certified by two independent structural auditors that the existing structure is not safe and beyond repair and should be demolished immediately. Accordingly MCGM issued a notice under section 354 of BMC Act on 1st June 2016 to the Trust for immediate demolition of the structure. Notice of demolition was thus pasted on noticeable location of the structure, on premises occupied by Mr. Prakash Ambedkar, Mr. Anandraj Ambedkar, Mr. Bhimrao Ambedkar and office of Bhartiya Baudha Mahasabha. To ensure smooth demolition, police protection was requested from Bhoiwada police station and a written application for the same was made on 21st June 2016. Information about the demolition and intend plans of the Trust to construct a 17 story tall Ambedkar Bhavan was printed for three consecutive

days in local dailies like Dainik Vruttaratna Samrat, Jantecha MahaNayak and Dainik Loknayak which are read widely by followers of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. While all this was being done, in public eye, neither of Mr. Prakash Ambedkar, Mr. Anandraj Ambedkar, Mr. Bhimrao Ambedkar voiced any concern or staged any resistance for the plans of Trust, despite being fully aware about it. They did not even care to respond to the demolition notice posted to them by speed post and courier and pasted on their offices. Considering this, it becomes quite evident that the Trust made all attempt to communicate the plans of rebuilding Ambedkar Bhavan in place of the present incomplete and dilapidated structure. (See documents and correspondence on www.tpit.org)

Above is the detailed and factual narration of all the facts and events leading up to the demolition of the so called Ambedkar Bhavan, which was actually parking place of a proposed to be constructed school which was built around 1984-85. However, to take political advantage of this situation, some people with vested interest, are spreading all kinds of lies and false information amongst masses to emotionally charge them and to use them for their vested political advantage. Some of the false propaganda being spread by people with vested interests are;

(1) Propaganda No. 1: Ambedkar Bhavan is a heritage structure:

To qualify and declare any object, place or any area, art form or any such thing associated with any great person, Central Government have made certain Acts like (a) The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 and rules made thereunder dated 1959, (b) Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972 and (c) The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2010. In addition to these central acts, some states have passed acts at State level to protect monuments and places which to suit the specific needs of the state. However, in Maharashtra, the Central Acts narrated above are in force and no State Level Act has been passed in addition to these Central Acts. As per this Central Act, any object, piece of art or place, which is linked to any event of historical significance or is linked to any person of great significance, such object, place, building or art can be declared as holding Heritage value. Such declaration can be made upon recommendation of Central or State level Archaeological Survey Department or Heritage Conservation Department through a notification. Depending on the importance, such object, building, or place being declared of heritage value is categorized in three categories, Grade I, Grade II and Grade III category. Government, from time to time, issues rules and directives for upkeep, maintenance, restoration and reconstruction of these heritage structures. Any request / application received from owner of heritage structure to alter anything with the structure is first scrutinized by Heritage Conservation Committee. Only after such alteration/ reconstruction is approved by Heritage Conservation Committee can the owner carry out such alteration / reconstruction. Unless any object, place or any area, art form is declared as a heritage structure through a Government Notification, no object, place or area or art form can be considered as holding heritage value. As for the present structure known as Ambedkar Bhavan is concerned, Dr. Ambedkar himself visited this place only about 3/4 times between 1942 and 1952 since he was stationed in Delhi during this period. Dr. Ambedkar has testified the same during cross-examination in Small Causes suit no. 1095/4920 of 1954. The place played no role of historical significance during the life term of Dr. Ambedkar. Knowing well that neither the place nor the Buddha Bhushan Printing Press has ever been declared as heritage structure, despite this, the people who claim that the printing press has significant historical value have never opened these press for the public. Not even

on days like 6th December on which lakhs of people gather in Dadar to pay homage to their beloved and respected leader. No information was ever shared with public about the state in which the printing press was preserved. If these people had genuinely felt that the printing press has heritage value, then one obvious question that comes to anybody's mind is why these people never approached Government for declaration of printing press the heritage. The people who spread false propaganda about the printing press want to play with emotions of people who regard Dr. Ambedkar as the sole emancipator and revere him like God. The panchanama carried out by police post demolition clearly mentions that no damage has been caused to the printing press during demolition. However, despite this factual position, lies is being spread amongst people that attempts were made to break the press using sledgehammers. Self-centered people for their own vested political interest are spreading such kind of false propaganda.

(2) Propaganda No. 2: Demolition of Ambedkar Bhavan is an Act to put an End to Ambedkarite Movement

It's a fact that several events connected with Ambedkarite movement have been arranged in Ambedkar Bhavan. However, all these events came to be held at structure presently known as Ambedkar Bhavan only after 1985. This is important to note since perpetrators of false propaganda claim that this structure was the epicenter of the movement. During the lifetime of Dr. Ambedkar, no significant activity was undertaken at the site. After the Mahaparinirvan of Dr. Ambedkar until 1985, nothing was built on the site after which an incomplete structure was erected by trust in 1985. So labelling present structure, as epicenter of Ambedkarite movement is nothing but gross exaggeration of facts. Ambedkarite movement is spread out far and wide and is alive in various political, social, cultural, religious fields. It is absolutely wrong to claim that present structure has been a center point for Ambedkarite movement, which has assumed such a wider canvas and so many dimensions. Except for people perpetrating such false propaganda, no other groups were ever allowed to use the premises. So much so that even the event which marked conversion of many "Bhatkya/Vimukata" tribes to Buddhism, an event which had such great significance for the Ambedkarite movement, failed to get support from these perpetrators. Mr. Baban Kamble, the editor of daily Samrat and Mr. Laxman Mane who was leading the group of "Bhatkya/Vimukata", both who were organising this conversion, requested the trust to temporarily provide office space to co-ordinate and organise the event. When the Trust acceded to this request by allowing them to occupy office on temporary basis, Mr. Anandraj Ambedkar staged a furious protest questioning the trustees of how can they support any religious group other than the one led by Mrs. Miratai Ambedkar. He even threatened to attack Chairman Mr. Anant Upsham, Mr. Vasant Rao Dhavre, and Mr. V.S Asware. A written police complaint was lodged in Bhoiwada police station on 7th October 2006. Taking this into consideration, it is clear, that the present structure was not used for any other events other than those linked to political parties linked to Mr. Prakash and Mr. Anandraj. That being the case, it would be absolutely false to state that the present structure was the epicenter of Ambedkarite movement.

(3) Was it appropriate to demolish Ambedkar Bhavan in the secrecy of night?

After receiving notice for demolition of this structure from BMC, which was issued by BMC under section 354 of BMC Act, the trustees pasted the demolition notice on noticeable location of the

structure, on premises occupied by Mr. Prakash Ambedkar, Mr. Anandraj Ambedkar, Mr. Bhimrao Ambedkar and office of Bhartiya Baudha Mahasabha. To ensure smooth demolition, police protection was requested from Bhoiwada police station and a written application for the same was made on 21st June 2016. Information about the demolition and intend plans of the Trust to construct a 17 storey tall iconic Ambedkar Bhavan was printed for three consecutive days in dailies like Vruttaratna Samrat, Juntecha Maha Nayak and Dainik Loknayak which are read widely by followers of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. While all this was being done, in public eye, neither of Mr. Prakash Ambedkar, Mr. Anandraj Ambedkar and Mr. Bhimrao Ambedkar voiced any concern or staged any resistance for the plans of Trust, despite being fully aware about it. Considering the location of site, located in Dadar, one of the busiest locations of Mumbai and taking into consideration the traffic jams that may ensue post demolition, it was decided to demolish the structure at night in order to avoid any inconvenience to anyone, and there is no any illegality in this.

For people who want to hide facts and make use of the situation for their own political and personal motives, it becomes necessary to ignite the feelings of masses so that the agitation so caused can be used to their advantage. To achieve this, people with vested interest resort to spreading rumors and involve in perpetuating false propaganda. In the age of WhatsApp and Facebook, it becomes easy to circulate authentic looking material, irrespective of its factual correctness. Innocent people staying in remote villages and hinterland takes this material at face value and fall prey to such rumors and propaganda being perpetuated by such people. The rumors spread by this group go the extent that people have been informed that the demolished structure, so called Ambedkar Bhavan, was actually the place of residence of Dr. Ambedkar at Hindu Colony Rajgriha and that this place of residence itself has been demolished by the trustees with government support. Baseless and frivolous allegations like the trustees who have demolished the structure are actually puppets of Government and RSS and that they have received crores of rupees have been levelled against the trustees. Rumors like Dr. Ambedkar purchased this property with his own funds and not through public money and that this property is now being given out to private developer for construction of mall are being circulated by these people. Emotions are the last resort for people who have fallen out of favor of merits and the same can be seen in the case of Mr. Prakash Ambedkar and Mr. Anandraj Ambedkar about their dealing with demolition of present structure. The most disturbing aspect about the entire episode that has unfolded after this demolition is not what the future holds for the structure, but the fact that how blatantly and with such impunity Mr. Prakash Ambedkar and Mr. Anandraj Ambedkar lie in the face to the public, the fact that they represent the very flesh and blood of our emancipator Dr. Ambedkar, a person of such integrity and morality, a person who could not even in his dreams think of lying and deceiving his people, a person who had an unshakable faith in the Constitution. It is disturbing to know that for their own petty interest, how Mr. Prakash Ambedkar and Mr. Anandraj Ambedkar can resort to blatant lying and make use of Dr. Ambedkar. Despite all this, we as trustees of the Trust have only one thing to say. The Trust and the Society respects you since you represent the flesh and blood of our emancipator, the only person who we revere as God. But please do not hold his name, as a ransom to demand things that are illegitimate. This is our only request!!

By TRUSTEES-The People Improvement Trust

Yogesh Varhade-Chairman

Adv. Shrikant Gaware-Secretary

Dr.Abhay Bambole-Trusty

DR RR Shinde-Trusty-Treasurer

Nagsen Sonare-Trusty

Uttamrao Bodwade-Trusty

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