DALIT ASSERTION THROUGH INSTITUTIONALIZED ACTIVITIES IN MODERN INDIA

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INTRODUCTION

Dalit Bahujan socio-cultural life has been marked by growing many socio-cultural institutions or organizations. These organizations are giving new life and nature to dalit movement and also changing the nature of dalit movement as compare to its traditional nature. One can argue that Ancient Dalit movement was not organized and institutionalized. Moreover there was no mechanism available for them through which Dalits can fight against discrimination they have had. It was only the Upanishad period and the emergence of Buddhism that had helped the lower stratas to mark their resist known or acknowledge through these two tools they opposed the contemporary hierarchical, discriminatory, unjust social structure of that period. Although the movement was in its primary stage or have a weak nature or support base, but it paved the way for organized and strong movement in centuries to come like in medieval, colonial and modern periods. Since the article is concerned with modern period so one can refer to the Organizations like Jatav Masabha, Dalit panthers, Ad Dharma, Ravidass Dharma, and “Dalit Intellectual Collective” etc. are the organizations and activities of Dalit intellectuals which is bringing about change in the nature of Dalit Movement. In the present article all these institutionalized activities have been briefly defined and the author tried to theorize the modern movement of dalits in India.
Socio Cultural Organizations and Dalit Movement in modern India

Unlike ancient times Dalits today are not relayed only on single sided or single dimensional struggle for their rights, liberation and justice, rather they are now using every sphere or dimensions available to them in modern nation state for their mobilization i.e. social, political, cultural, economic, and religious and so on. This paper deals with some of these institutionalized socio cultural, educational, religious activities.

Dalits today set up social, political, cultural, economic, and religious organizations, i.e. Dalit Sangharsh Vahini, Dalit Sena/ Dalit Sangharsh Samiti, Bhartiya Mazdoor Union, Ambedkar Kalayn Samittee etc. Some of these organisations have open or clandestine political affiliations. Their social base is same even their membership overlaps. They also share common concern to raise the issues related to socio-economic problems of dalit and this adoration for Ambedkar (Singh, 1998).

The Jatav Mahasabha

The Jatav Mahasabha is one such organization founded in 1982; its founder Jagdish Parsad claims that it has branches in Bulandshaher, Agra, Lucknow and some other districts of UP, Jagdish Parsad was a pardhan of his village when he was inspired to set up Jatav Mahasabha, taking one from the Gujar Mahasabha which come to his notice when he visited a village near Shahadra. The Jatav Mahasabha became very active on the issue of Maithana episode in 1984.

The mahasabha held panchayats in several villages. Its membership is open only to jatavs. It is apolitical in that it does not have any political affiliation, but its membership is open to jatav belonging to different political parties. Rules and regulations of Jatav Mahasabha lay down that five Jatavs from every village elect their president; and each jatav house donate one rupee. There is a Mukhiya for eight villages a president for a district, 9 chief to work over 51 villages, and one regional president. The aims of Mahasabha are: protection of jatavs from the atrocities; removal of social evils, dowry, harassment of women, setting up educational institutions and technical service centers to give an instance, the mahasabha intervened in a case of one sided divorce. The family of groom was penalized to pay Rs. 29,000 to the bride’s family. The groom was socially boycotted. The groom abode by the decision of mahasabha. After a few months, however, his social boycott was lifted (ibid.)

Whenever any necessity comes the office of the Jatav Mahasabha is used as a platform of dalits in the surrounding areas. The organization holds a meeting and discusses the issues being come to its notice. Such matters may relate to disputes over land, caste, and harassment of women etc.

Dalit Panthers Movement

* The jatav Mahasabha is different from the Jatav Mahasabha which was set up in Aligarh in 1928. The latter was successor to Jatav Men’s association. An Agra based organisation of the 1920s. It was mainly a city based organisation which is concerned mainly with two issues; one change of the name of caste chamar to Jatav, and two, nomination of its founder. Member Paras Ram to district board.
Dalit panthers are another apolitical organization in terms of not contesting elections and having no political support base, organized for attaining the rights for Dalits. The Dalit panthers, organized in June 1972 in Siddartha Nagar, Bombay, were rooted in the little magazine movement and were inspired by the black panthers of America. (Contursi, 1993).

The panther’s movement was characterized in the beginning as Budhist and socialist but having no specific political ideology for the organization. As the panthers became better organized and more popular they went beyond the criticism of caste and addressed issues of economics and class (ibid).

The manifesto of Dalit panthers identifies the friends of Dalits as those true-left revolutionary parties that want to eliminate caste and class oppression, and it defines the enemies of Dalits as landlords, capitalists, money-lenders and other dominant groups of society. Further the parties who indulge in religious or caste based politics and government which depends on them are also the identified enemies of Dalits. It also argued that the problem of Dalits cannot be solved within the framework of religion and caste but required a scientific outlook, i.e. class consciousness, economic equality, and a completely atheistic and fighting humanism and it clearly states the panthers’ ultimate goal (Ibid.)

Thus dalits panthers movement is another organized framework which is based on the ideology of Ambedkar and karl Marx. There is an essentially human centered ethic in the writings of Ambedkar and the panthers that underlies their conviction that private property and exploitation are the ‘sins’ that cause human sufferings and that salvation from sufferings can be eliminated only through human action to change the whole system. This is the organization which wants to bring about the ideological and practical changes in the life of dalits.

**Dalit Bahujan Intellectual Activity**

Dalit cultural life has been marked by growing intellectual activity in recent years. Interestingly this activity seems to be taking place well outside the formal educational sites in which such endeavors usually flourish. Broadly speaking, it is being promoted variously by state, the Republican Party of India (RPI) headed by Parkash Ambedkar, dalit bureaucrats, and so on with or without the support of dalit-bahujan political parties, and by dalit non-governmental organisations (Guru, Geetha, 2000).

All these institutionalized intellectual efforts other than those organized by NGOs have much in common. First they treat the thoughts of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and Bhimrao Ambedkar, both considered infallible, as a given and indispensable framework. Secondly, they lack genuine interrogators, either from within the dalit Bahujan intellectual tradition or from outside it. Most of the scholars who participate in these efforts belong to dalit Bahujan caste. Thirdly, these endeavours seek to create an intellectual base for taking on the ‘Hindutvawadi’ forces whose project is to distort and destroy Ambedkar’s thought. Besides, the dalit Bahujan scholars seek to establish their claims to intellectual representation away from the ‘brahminised’ socialists and communists who are often accused of attempting to lead Dalits away from Ambedkar thought. These dalit efforts are ultimately aimed at establishing a claim to intellectual representation as authentic and holding on to it (ibid).

The agenda of these dalit Bahujan intellectual efforts includes an audit of the public institutions that practice exclusion of Dalits and domination over them. These institutions include the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), the University Grants Commission (UGC)
and different universities and research institutions. The dalit-bahujan intellectual efforts seek to democratize intellectual life and change in terms of the academic discourse. Their mission involves the pursuit of the recognition which is denied by the adversaries of Dalits who tend to control such institutions. The emergence of such dalit-bahujan intellectual activity should be understood particularly in the context of the denial of the authenticity of the claim to intellectual representation.

Finally, all these dalit bahujan efforts tend to be excessively preoccupied with critiquing of mainstream discourse. Perhaps one would have to go beyond criticizing the external adversary and offer a theoretical-ideological alternative. The dalit intellectual activity should be responsive to internal attitudes to intellectual Endeavour as well as to metropolitan intellectualism, which is insensitive to dalit issues, arrogant and intimidating.

**A different Forum or Organization (DIC)**

Such is the background against which Vikas Adhyayan Kendra (VAK), Mumbai has attempted to bring dalit and non-dalit scholars together. These scholars have established the Dalit Intellectuals’ Collective (DIC) with the support of VAK. The DIC stands for dalit intellectual activity with a difference. The scholars are divided into two basic categories – those who make statements (most of them Dalits) and interrogators who are expected to be creative and constructive and not patronizing.

The DIC does not seek only to audit the external adversaries of the Dalits. It also wants to go in for an audit of the dalit intellectual tradition and culture, which create and sustain internal hierarchies. Secondly, it wants the dichotomy between theoretical Brahmins and empirical shudras done away with. It wants to enable the Dalits and others to visualize the intellectual journey from the immediate to the abstract, from the familiar to the universal, from the empirical to the theoretical (ibid).

The DIC is exploring the feasibility of developing a ‘dalit theory’. It has in mind a theory that would act as a moral counterweight to the language of politics which seeks to humiliate dalit-bahujan leaders. The endeavour is also to provide theoretical respectability to the dalit political culture, which is now lampooned by adversaries. The DIC has taken upon itself the task of taking serious thinking to the people by developing the public political reason.

But prior to its engagement with the public the DIC will formulate the categories and concepts which could make dalit theory concepts which could make a dalit theory possible, and then test their veracity. It will examine the potential for generalization, if any, in those categories. In other words, it has set for itself an agenda which includes documentation, clarification and interrogation, and theoretical arrival. The DIC wants to interrogate the post-modernist attempts in the area of inter-textuality which involve an inter-group dialogue taking place in conditions which make it infinitely inconclusive. In other words, to use a local and very powerful metaphor, it does not want to join the post-modernists in wrestling with oil applied all over the body but with no intention of producing results. It hopes to rein in those dalit intellectuals who are enjoying such wrestling.

Finally, as mentioned above, the DIC wants to promote an interactive relationship between scholars and the general public. In this context, its primary agenda is to seek a redefinition of the dalit self at the theoretical and political levels by developing public political reasons. Developing such reason is an important part of the agenda for two reasons. Firstly, the
cognitive map of the people at large, particularly the Dalits, seems to be occupied by a common sense which is full of intersecting layers of consciousness and emotions. Secondly, public political reason is not available to Dalits in the kind of civil society we have. In such a situation reason itself is likely to remain diverse and ghettoized and hence incapable of facilitating any meeting of minds.

Thus the DIC has a mission publicly to defend certain concepts and categories, including the dalit one, and discuss them critically. In pursuit of this mission it organized a public meeting in Mangalore in April 1998. At the meeting dalit political concerns and issues were presented by Valerian Rodrigues, K.N. Panicker, Rajeev Bhargav and the present authors to a public which had witnessed communal riots at Suratkal (Mangalore) the previous month.

The redefinition of the dalit self is not being sought in any given theoretical framework. On the contrary, it is being sought in the context of the several theoretical ideological positions (Marxist, liberal Marxist, cultural Marxist, Communitarian, Ambedkar-bahujanwadi and subaltern) represented by DIC scholars. The intention is to arrive at some kind of overlapping of theoretical – ideological interests. The attempts at redefinition made at DIC meetings so far represent a kind of rigorous contestation of points of views which depart from each other on nuances but come together on the normative concerns that still empower the human agency (ibid.).

The Ad Dharm Movement

The Ad Dharm movement was born in volatile social and political circumstances in the early 20th century and, while similar socio-political situations pertained throughout the country, the presence of various communal organisations in Punjab (Arya Samaj, Christian church, Sikh Khalsa Diwan, the Ahmaddiya movement) makes the case of the latter a peculiar one. It was precisely during this period of socio-political uncertainties that the British government passed the Land Alienation Act of 1900, Indian Counsel Act of 1909 and The Government of India Act of 1919. These Acts provided further impetus to the ongoing competition between the various communal organisations (Mohan 1992: 164.68). Although the Land Alienation Act of 1900 was aimed at preventing the transfer of land from the hands of agriculturist castes into the non-agricultural money lending castes, it also debarred many castes from owning land.

Untouchables who were already deprived of land according to the Hindu varna-vyavastha system were now legally debarred from land ownership. The system of separate electorates introduced in 1909 and 1919 further exacerbated communal and separatist politics (Tanwar 1999: 29), with serious implications in the province of Punjab where Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs had their respective political organisations pursuing their vested interests (Malhotra 1976: 74.88). Since Scheduled Castes did not have their own organisation to articulate and defend their interests, they became the centre of attention of all the communal organisations, each of whom was trying to woo them to secure an edge over the others in terms of numbers. This was, perhaps, the first time in the history of Punjab that the Scheduled Caste presence was recognised in the calculation and formulation of social and political forces. The provision for separate electorates also raised the expectations that they might become an independent force rather than be used by the Arya Samaj, Congress or Akalis, as pawns on the chessboard of electoral politics.

Moreover, the adoption of a resolution for the removal of untouchability by the Indian National Congress in 1917 provided further impetus to the Scheduled Castes in their efforts to
seek a respected place in society, as did the California-based Ghadar Movement and the Babbar Akali Movement, both revolutionary and militant in comparison to the non-violent and passive postures of the Indian National Congress and Arya Samaj.

Interestingly, the Ad Dharm movement, particularly some of its key protagonists, had had close affiliations with the Arya Samaj before they became active in the movement. As Juergensmeyer remarks:

The Arya Samaj had provided young untouchables with ideas of social equality not only by allowing them to attend its schools but also by creating service organizations such as the Dayanand Dalit Udhar at Hoshiarpur and Achhut Udhar at Lahore (2000: 222).

The trio that initially conceived the idea of the Ad Dharm movement consisted of Vasant Rai, Thakur Chand and Swami Shudranand, all of them also active as either pracharak (preachers) or updeshak (missionaries) in the Arya Samaj movement. Vasant Rai had been a teacher with the Arya Samaj, and subsequently with the Samaj. Orthodox hindu opposition, the Sanatan Dharm (Juergensmeyer 1988: 38). Swami Shudranand was a missionary of the Samaj, and Thakur Chand, though a Dalit, like Vasant Rai and Shudranand, was called pandits because of their association with the Arya Samaj. Even after their absorption into the newly-formed Ad Dharm movement, the Arya Samaj offered them important roles in the movement to lure them back.

**AD DHARM AND DALIT MOVEMENT**

A close study of the objectives set forth by the Ad Dharm founders and the methods adopted by them shows that they endeavored to establish a religious identity for the lower castes rather than building a subaltern consciousness. The Ad-Dharmis wanted to remove the stigma of untouchability from their community and secure equal rights and respect for lower caste people, but the approach adopted by the Ad Dharm leaders resulted in their creating another religion. The Ad-Dharmis were asked to salute each other in the name of Jai Guru Dev (Victory to the divine guru) and to respond with Dhan Guru Dev (blessed be the divine guru). These greetings were meant to differentiate them (the untouchables) from the other religious communities: for example, the Hindus address each other with Namaste, Sikhs with Sat Sri Akal and Muslims with Salaam (Juergensmeyer 1988: 53). Sant Ravidass was projected as a spiritual preceptor and Guru Bhagwan Satguru Namdev, Maharaj Kabir and Rishi Valmiki were also included in the theology of Ad Dharm. The Sanskrit phrase sohang (I am that) was adopted as a mantra of the new Ad Dharm religion and is still used in wall calendars of Guru Ravidass. As far as the salutations are concerned, they have become memorabilia of the Ad Dharm movement.

The protagonists of the Ad Dharm movement also strove to provide their new religion with a sacred book, called Ad Prakash, (the original light). The purpose of such a move was to institutionalize the newlycreated religion. Mangoo Ram expressed his will among his closest circle that only the sacred couplets from the Ad Prakash should be chanted at his death ceremony. At that time there was only a handwritten copy of the Ad Prakash available. Subsequently, Sant Isher Dass of village Nandgarh of district Hoshiarpur compiled the holy book.16 Thus the Ad Dharm movement provided a new sense of identity to the untouchables which they had lacked earlier, giving them the status of qaum, a community, similar to that of Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus.

The Ad Dharm made a substantial contribution to the social and political life of Dalits in Punjab. Although a large number of social organisations had sprung up since the early 1920s for
the benefit of the untouchables, all of them were patronised by the upper castes and failed to bring any significant change in the varna system and caste configuration of Indian society. That the Ad Dharm had to project Dalits as a separate qaum with an independent religion was not only a sociological issue, but also had deep political implications in an inegalitarian social system where some people were excluded by birth from the mainstream. Interestingly enough, their being untouchable was more pronounced in terms of denying them the benefits of facilities available in the civil society, and less in terms of seeking their menial services.

For two decades, from 1950 to 1970, the Ad Dharm movement remained dormant for reasons best known to its leaders. In fact, most of the Adi movements in different parts of the country ceased to play an active role in post-colonial India until 1970. Some of their leaders either joined the Congress or, for some time, carried out their political struggle under the leadership of Dr Ambedkar. Some scholars believe that the Ad Dharm movement was eventually absorbed into Dr Ambedkar’s Scheduled Castes federation and finally transformed into the Republican Party of India (Ahir 1992: 5; Saberwal 1976: 68). It has also been said that in 1946 the Ad Dharm Mandal handed over charge of the political struggle to Dr Ambedkar’s Scheduled Castes Federation and confined itself to the social and religious matters affecting the Scheduled Castes (Juergensmeyer 1988: 153).

It is in this context that the contribution of the Ad Dharm movement is crucial. It has helped the Scheduled Castes seek social recognition through the process of cultural transformation on the one hand, and spiritual regeneration on the other. It has carved out a new identity and given them a new name: Ad-Dharmi. The very title of Ad-Dharmi instils in the minds of the Scheduled Castes a sense of pride, reminding them of their pristine and rich heritage and of their historical subservience to the twice-born. The Ad Dharm movement succeeded in raising the consciousness of the downtrodden people of the Doaba region of Punjab in particular and of the entire state in general. It gave those gurus to believe in, a qaum (community) to belong to and a sense of history to relate with. It envisions the possibility and potentiality of social change for the Scheduled Castes. The process of cultural transformation and spiritual regeneration started by the Ad Dharm movement under the leadership of Mangoo Ram has continued to reverberate in the cities and villages of Punjab into the 21st century through different platforms and political formations.

Dera Sachkhand Ballan and Dalit Movement

Dera Sachkhand Ballan, also known as Dera Shri 108 Sant Sarwan Dass Ji Maharaj Sachkhand Ballan or simply Dera Ballan, is situated at village Ballan, seven miles north of Jalandhar city on the Pathankot road. Other equally famous Ravidass Deras are “Temple Ravidass Chak Hakim” (Phagwara), and “Dera of Sant Jagatjit Giri” (Pathankot). The Ravidass Deras of Ballan and Chak Hakim shot into prominence during the Ad Dharm movement. They were instrumental in bringing social consciousness among the Dalits of Punjab (Juergensmeyer, 1988:84-85).

Dera Sachkhand Ballan became a paragon of the Ravidass movement in northwest India. It made concerted efforts for the construction of a separate Dalit identity, independent of both Sikhism and Hinduism – the two main religious traditions of the region. The architecture of Dera Ballan is unique in its outlook. It resembles both a temple and a Gurdwara at the same time. Though the Guru Granth Sahib is placed in the Dera but unlike a Gurdwara, the idols of Guru Ravidass and the late heads of the Dera Ballan are also installed in its premises and are worshipped along with the Guru Granth Sahib.42The membership of the management committees of the Ravidass Deras is strictly confined to Ravidassia Dalits only. No upper caste
Sikh is allowed to become a member of the managing committees of the Ravidass Deras and Sabhas.

In Ravidass Deras, Ravidass is worshipped as Guru. Moreover, Gaddi Nashins (heads) of the Ravidass Deras are also considered as Gurus. Sant Niranjan Dass is the fifth Gaddi Nashin in the line of individual Gurus in the Dera Ballan. However, in Sikh religion, Ravidass is known as Bhakta. In Sikh religion only the ten Gurus and Guru Granth Sahib are considered the legitimate Gurus. The issue of Bhakta versus the Guru has not only pitted the Ravidassia community and Jat Sikhs against each other in Punjab and elsewhere, but has also led to communal polarization between the Sikh and Dalit diasporas. The recent Vienna incident is a violent escalation of this chronic communal polarisation. Another factor that distinguishes Sants of Ballan from the priests of Sikh religion (especially since the formation of the Khalsa in 1699) has been their nomenclature. The titles of their last names are “Dass” (humble). Perhaps, they inherited the tradition of suffixing “Dass” from the very name of their Guru Ravi (Dass). The titles of the last names of the Sikhs are invariably “Singh.” Though Sants of Dera Sachkhand Ballan also don a turban, keep unshorn hair and a flowing beard like that of the Sikh priests, still they do not consider themselves Sikhs. One of the heads of the Dera Ballan, Sant Garib Dass, was clean-shaven. It is in this context that the Dera Ballan has emerged as an alternative religious site for the Dalits, separate from Hindus and Sikhs, with its own code of conduct that paved the way for a separate Dalit identity.

The religious insignia of Dera Ballan and of all other Ravidassia Deras is “Har” (Supreme Being). This insignia is also known as the “Koumi Nishan” of the Ravidassia samaj. The religious symbol of the Sikh Gurdwaras is “Khanda” (Two-edged sword over a quoit with two crossed sabers below the quoit). The insignia “Har” is composed of a Sun-like circle with an image of forty rays on its circular edge. The forty rays round the circle of the insignia signify forty hymns of Guru Ravidass. Within the circle, there is another smaller circle within which “Har” is inscribed in Gurmukhi script with a sign of flame on the top of it. The flame represents the “Naam” (word) that would illuminate the entire world. The sign of flame crosses over into the bigger circle. In between the bigger and smaller circles is written a couplet Naam teere kee jot lagayi, Bhaio Ujiaaro Bhawan saglaare (Your Name is the flame I light; it has illuminated the entire world). This inner circle couplet is taken from one of the forty hymns of Guru Ravidass. The insignia “Har” represents the very being of Ravidass and his teachings. The insignia Har is chosen after the name of their Guru [Ravi-Sun-dass-servant] (servant of the sun). The Dalits, especially the Chamars of Punjab, proudly hoist flags with the print of insignia “Har” on top of their religious places, and on vehicles during processions on the occasion of Guru Ravidass’s birth anniversaries and other festivities. The insignia “Har” has become a symbol of a separate Dalit identity.

The format of the Ardas (a formal prayer recited at most Sikh rituals) performed in the Ravidass Deras also differentiates them from that of Sikh religion. It is comprised of a Shloka (couplet) and one of the forty hymns of Guru Ravidass. It closes with the utterance: Bole So Nirbhay, Sri Guru Ravidass Maharaj Ki Jai (Fearless is the one who utters: Victory to Shri Guru Ravidass). Whereas, in the Sikh religion the Ardas concluded with: Bole So Nihal, Sat Sri Akal (Blessed is the one who utters: True is the Immortal One). The reference to Nirbhay (fearless) in the conclusion of the Ardas of the Ravidass Deras has become a central motif of Dalit consciousness. The inclusion of the word “Nirbhay” in the Ardas of Ravidass Deras is thus not only symptomatic of the historical oppression of the Dalits at the hands of the upper castes, but is also reflective of their determined willingness to confront it head on.

Like the Ardas, the Aarti (a Hindu ceremony of adoration which consists of waving round the head of an idol on a platter containing five burning wicks) that Ballan Sants perform in front of the sanctum sanctorum of their Dera differentiate them from that of Hindu temples. The Ballan Sants do not wave a platter of burning wicks. They blow a conch-shell and rattle gong, which is followed by recitation of a hymn from the bani of Ravidass (based on participant observation). The
Salutations in the Ravidass Dera are also formulated selectively in order to project their unique and independent religious identity. Every religious community has its own way of greeting. Sat Shri Akaal (True is the Immortal One) is the greeting of the Sikhs; Jai Ram Ji Ki or Jai Sita-Ram (Victory to Ram or Victory to Sita-Ram) is of the Hindus; Ravidass Deras adopted the greeting Jai Gurudev or Jai Guru Ravidass (Victory to the divine Guru or Guru Ravidass) to which the reply was Dhan Guru Dev (blessed the divine Guru). The short version of the greetings is Jai Santan Di (Victory to the Saints). The forms of Ardas, Arati, and salutations adopted by the Sants of Dera Ballan have thus become distinct markers of the separate identity of the Dalits of the region. In other words, the Dera Ballan has evolved into a nursery for the cultivation of symbols, icons, signifiers, and narratives to shape a separate Dalit identity.

Despite the fact that Ravidassias and Ravidass Deras have emerged as a separate community and distinct Dalit religious space respectively, the former continued to be confused with Dalit Sikhs and the latter with gurdwaras probably because of the physical appearances of some of the Ravidassias, on the one hand, and the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib within the premises of Ravidass Deras, on the other. Not only that, it has further led to a sort of contradiction between the long established Sikh rahit maryada (code of conduct) and observance of non-Sikh rituals and traditions within Ravidass Deras such as touching the feet of the Heads of the Deras and worshiping the idols and calendar images of Bhakt Ravidass revered as Guru. This contradiction is considered to be one of the several main reasons behind the ghastly shooting incidence that took place at the Ravidass temple in Vienna on May 24, 2009. The Sants of Dera Ballan took strong objection to the gross misrepresentation of their mission and the dilution of their separate Ravidassian Dalit identity as clubbed with the mainstream Sikh religion in national as well as international print and electronic media.

It was against this crucial backdrop that the Ballan Sants decided to completely detach themselves from a long preserved tradition of reciting the holy bani from the Guru Granth Sahib on the important occasions of birth and death anniversaries of the Sants of Dera Ballan and of Guru Ravidass. This was perhaps for the first time in the 109-year-old existence of the Dera Sachkhand Ballan that on June 11, 2009 (death anniversary of Sant Sarwan Dass) and again on June 13, 2009 (antim ardas, the last condolence concluding ceremony of Sant Ramanand, the deputy chief of Dera Ballan, who died in the Vienna shooting) the religious ceremonies were organised without the “parkash” of the Guru Granth Sahib. “The palanquin or canopy, under which Sikhs’ holy book is usually placed for reading scriptures, instead held the portrait of Sant Sarwan Dass in whose name the Ballan dera was established nearly a century ago” reported the Times of India (June 14, 2009). Dera spokesperson SR Heer called this deviation a “reaction to Vienna incident” and “decision of Sants of the dera” (Times of India, June 14, 2009). The deviation and the strategic silence about it, however, is intended to sharply focus on the separate Ravidass Dalit identity than on distancing from close ties with mainstream Sikhism. Moreover, the deviation has also been widely perceived by the large followers of the Dera as a permanent solution to the blown up communal issue of the violation of the Sikh code of conduct at Ravidass Deras.
CONCLUSION

After having a viewpoint of all these organisations and institutionalized activities of dalit Bahujan, the dalit movement is taking new shape. The jatav mahasabha is fighting for social evils like dowry, harassment of dalit women, unemployment, illiteracy etc. Dalit panthers want to change the whole system by human action by using the Marxian and Ambedkarite Theology. Dalit Intellectual, collective is an institution which seeks to democratize intellectual life and change the term of the academic discourse. Their mission involves the pursuit of the recognition which is denied by the adversaries of Dalits who tend to control such institutions. Ad Dharam movement and Ravidassia Dharm has also contributed to make a shape of new identity for Dalits. Thus all these organizations can be defined as socio-cultural institutions or organisations which are giving new socio-cultural space to Dalit movement. Further these organizations have made the movement multidimensional and heterogeneous in nature that is needed to be re-theorizing.
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