

which the author gives an understanding of the social functions of communication through this work. Times are changing and these changes are reflected in society and culture. From the legacy of the freedom movement in the form of the Nehruvian era to neoliberal economics, there have been changes in Indian society and rural India. These films express these changes. For an interesting presentation of these changes, the author needs and deserves praise and congratulations. Rawat publication also deserves credit for its useful and timely publication. The book would certainly attract the attention of cultural critics and "film journalists". It would be useful to introduce the book to undergraduate and graduate students to understand the complexity of social life that can be understood by watching the film. The writer is also asked to explore the nature and content of the film outside of "Bollywood" so that the reality of different parts of India can be felt "on the reel".

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## Obituary

### Dr Bindeshwar Pathak

On August 15, 2023 evening we received the sad news of the demise of Dr Bindeshwar Pathak. We never expected that the end would come so early. In fact, after the Independence Day celebrations he collapsed and was immediately rushed to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences. He was brought into the hospital at 1.15 p.m. and shortly after which he suffered a cardiac arrest and died at 1.42 p.m.

Bindeshwar Pathak was born on April 2, 1943 in the village Rampur Baghel of Vaishali District of Bihar. His parents, Pandit Ramakant Pathak and Yogmaya Devi came from respectable middle-class background. His apparently uneventful early life but for a few incidences, that in retrospect changed the course of his life. Dr Pathak started his life like any ordinary person of his community. There was nothing dramatic about his middle-class family with its orthodox Brahminical traditions. But, he rose to become a gentle giant among the many luminaries that India has produced in the post-independence era.

After completing his high school in the village school, he took his B.A degree from B.N. College Patna. Since he had low grades in his B.A, he could not get a seat to study for M.A. Sociology in Patna University. So, he had to do a number of odd jobs, none too lucrative, to tide over a difficult period in his life. It was about this time that he got married to Amola Pathak. The not so comfortable financial position of the family did not offer too many leisurely options. The geniality and cooperation of his wife did help to sort out matters to a great degree. Three children, all well named, Madhubala, Kumar Dilip and Kiranbala completed his family. But, the struggles to manage the growing family not only got more difficult and complex.

With his desire to do Masters' degree, he set out to do MA in Criminology from the Sagar University, Madhya Pradesh. As he was waiting for the train to go to Sagar, two persons from the Gandhi Centenary Celebration Committee, Patna, who were known to him and were also distantly related, came to him and persuaded him to change his mind to do his post-graduation and instead join the Committee whereby he can learn about Gandhiji and fulfill his dreams of serving the country through eradication of untouchability and creating a scavenging free India. He was even promised financial emoluments for his work in the Centenary Committee, which was attractive enough since he was earning only rupees five a month for the school job that he was doing at the time. He changed his mind and decided to join Gandhi Centenary Committee.

It is a different story, however, that he ended up doing translation of the literatures concerning Gandhi's life and teachings provided by the Centenary Celebration Committee, for no pay at all. It was during his association with the Gandhi Centenary Celebration Committee that he read more and more about the questions of scavenging and the practice of untouchability and Gandhiji's efforts at eradicating these scourges which affected the society and demeaned the nation. Dr Pathak considered this enlightenment as reward enough for whatever he did during the six months of his association with the committee. Not only that, he was also convinced that it was his vocation to pursue the Gandhian ideology of a scavenging free India.

During the days when he joined the Gandhi Centenary Celebrations Committee and afterwards when he decided to continue to work among the scavengers and study their problem, his father-in-law had raised serious objections wherein he was asked to choose between his wife and his chosen field of action. Dr Pathak's determination won him both his wife and his vocation. Smt. Amola kept her faith in her husband and has followed him throughout his continuing journey of liberating the scavengers and creating a clean India.

During his work at Gandhi Centenary Committee, he was asked to go and live among untouchable communities to get a first-hand

experience of the life and problems. This would come handy when he later embarked on his doctoral studies. His experiences with the people would enable him to conduct social surveys to study their problems. His stay and work was a productive period in his life in that, he was able to get deeper insights into the question of scavenging and the plight of the manual scavengers, an understanding that would be deeper and wider in scope than his own early childhood experiences.

In 1970, Dr Pathak founded the Sulabh Organization called the Sulabh ShauchalaySansthan, a non-governmental and non-profit organization. Dr Pathak drew upon the seminal idea of a toilet system and worked upon it and came up with his two-pit pour-flush toilets. Developing a physical model would require the skills of an engineer, the draughtsman, the mason and the manual labourer all combined. He still had to find the money to implement any programme at all. His application for grants did not bear fruits.

It was Rameshwar Nath an IAS officer in the Department of local self-government who suggested that he raise funds himself. But nothing much happened, and Dr Pathak had to raise money for day-to-day expenses by selling his land and his wife's ornaments. It was in August 1973 that he went to Arrah town to meet officers and discuss his projects with them. There he met Mr R. K. Mishra, executive officer of the Arrah Municipality. Being sympathetic to Dr Pathak's cause Mr Mishra gave him five hundred rupees and asked him to construct two demonstration toilets in the office compound of the Arrah Municipality. The chairman of the municipality, Mr Ram Vilas Singh was very impressed with the toilets and directed the executive officer to put up such toilets in Arrah town. Mr Suresh Prasad Singh, a councilor of the municipality asked Dr Pathak to convert the bucket toilet in his house to the Sulabh toilet model that people saw how it worked and were convinced of its benefits. And people came in droves to get Sulabh toilets constructed in their homes. Gradually, the two-pit pour-flush toilets came to be accepted throughout Bihar.

Later Sulabh spread its wings throughout India and abroad. As it was very difficult to manage Sulabh's activities from Patna, he shifted to Delhi. On the side of Palam Dabri road, he acquired land for constructing a school and the office. In 1992, he established Sulabh Public School where children of scavengers study with the other students. Being an English medium school, it has helped the children of scavengers to attain social mobility in their life. In 1994, Dr Pathak set up Sulabh International Museum of Toilets in New Delhi, the first of its kind in the world. Another invention of Dr Pathak is the conversion to toilet waste into gas which was used for lighting, cooking and production of electricity. The water from the toilet was cleaned and used for watering the garden.

A visit to Rajasthan convinced Dr Pathak the Sulabh model could be replicated there, too. The Nai Disha was started in the Alwar district of Rajasthan in April 2003 with a view to train the liberated scavengers in alternative skills and enable them to take up occupation which provide a minimum income to sustain their life with dignity. Usha Chaumar of Nai Disha, Alwar has been made the President of Sulabh International and received Padma Shri Award by the hands of Hon'ble President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind ji at Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi on November 11, 2021. Similar centre was also established in Tonk, Rajasthan. In addition, he established many institutions as Academy of Environmental Sanitation and Public Health, International Institution of Health and Hygiene and The Sulabh Mahila Avom Bal Kalyan Sansthan. In 2012, Dr Pathak undertook a great philanthropic mission at the behest of the Supreme Court of India of providing better services and care for the women. Pathak started by giving monthly stipend of Rs 2,000/-, provided ambulances, free weekly health check-ups and training to teach the women new skills including reading and writing, embroidery and candle making.

Dr Pathak tried to propagate his ideas through seminars and conferences. The National Seminar held at Patna in Bihar in 1978 had recommended the adoption of Sulabh model of toilets to be adopted throughout India. Dr Pathak organized another seminar in 1992. It

was to spread awareness about the need for liberating the manual scavengers from their traditional occupation. Another important milestone in the growth of the Sulabh was the World Toilet summit held in 2007 in collaboration with the World Toilet Organization. The National conference on Sociology of Sanitation was held in 2013. In the same year 12 authors were invited to New Delhi and were asked to write books on Sociology of Sanitation. Out of them six wrote a book each and they were published in 2015. Later, many authors wrote books on Sociology of Sanitation, Action Sociology and on Sulabh Sanitation. His ambitions regarding the new branch of sociology that he helped to evolve and his expectations that one day it should become a teaching subject in universities all over India has borne fruit, since more than 25 universities have adopted it as a teaching subject. The final conference on Sociology of Sanitation was organized on April 02-05, 2023 at Dr Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi. The central point of discussion was Action Sociology, a new subject within the contours of sociology of sanitation. The first issue of Sulabh Journal of Action Sociology was released on that day with other 12 books.

Dr Pathak was a prolific writer and he has written 34 books out of which only 16 are available now. Sulabh Shauchalay: A Simple Idea that Worked (1982) is his first book and Road to Freedom: A Sociological Study on the Abolition of Scavenging in India (1991) is his second book. It is based on his field work carried out while he was living among the scavengers.

Dr Pathak has received more than 100 awards in recognition of his contribution to the society, country and humanity as a whole. The first award was K.P. Goenka Memorial Award in 1984. He received Padma Bhushan, the second highest civilian award for his contribution to social welfare in the year 1991. In 1992, he received The International Saint Francis Prize for the Environment at Assisi, Italy. Another is the Gandhi peace prize in 2019. In 2016, he received 'Humanitarian Award' of the New York Global Leaders Dialogue in recognition of his efforts to recycle and conserve water. Dr Bindeshwar Pathak is a true Gandhian. He participated in all the

reforms undertaken by Gandhiji. However, there are some differences between them. First, Mahatma Gandhi wanted his followers to follow his own lifestyle such as wearing khadi and teetotalism whereas Dr Pathak wanted his followers to follow their own lifestyle. Second, though Mahatma Gandhi was against caste and untouchability, he considered Varna system to be functional to the society. But Dr Pathak advocated that one should be able to select one's own caste. Thus, Usha Chaumar became Usha Sharma. Third, Mahatma Gandhi was for non-violent force such as participating in dharna whereas Dr Pathak used no force but he got all things done as taking the Untouchables to the temple, taking them to bathe in the Ganges etc. through persuasion of the upper castes.

May his soul rest in peace.

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## GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Original unpublished research-based papers, articles in the area of Humanities, Science, Management, Law, etc with inter disciplinary approach *adhering* to the latest *plagiarism* rules can be submitted in *.doc or .docx* format. Book Review can be submitted too.

A general guideline for contributor(s) is given below: -

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