

## Book Review-1

**Sharadendu Kumar, *Bhupendra Narayan Mandal, the Immortal Seeker of Socialist Thought*, Anamika Publishers, 2021, Price: 250, pp. 293**

A person becomes great not by birth but by work. Bihar has had many great personalities whose works, struggles, and efforts established new paradigms of social structure, which have given new direction to Indian society. Their ideas spread awareness in society, and the deprived class initiated to challenge the traditional social system and hierarchy. Bihar is still an economically backward state, where, on the one hand, social inequality, casteism, and illiteracy have played a vital role in the downward mobility of society (p.5). On the other hand, the narrow thinking of the regional political parties and leaders of Bihar has obstructed its progress. In such a situation, this book critically examines several dimensions and establishes the relevance of Bhupendra Narayan's thoughts in the contemporary scenario. It also emphasizes several ideas given by Bhupendra Babu for democracy, socialism, politics and morality, economic policy, agricultural policy, national interests, and media (p.12). His ideas provided new values for uplifting Indian society, especially for exploited people. In this book, the author collected primary sources and tried to write about actual incidents and thoughts related to Bhupendra Babu. Bhupendra Babu's political activism-initiated reforms in Bihar's politics as well as in the country's politics. From his speeches in the Parliament House during his political life, it appears that he was not only concerned about the poor economic condition of the people but also the political illiteracy among the masses. He was fully committed to uplifting Dalits and backward classes throughout his life. Bhupendra Babu was primarily concerned with socioeconomic inequality. He states that the country is becoming inadequate due to the misuse of resources and poor bureaucratic management. He wrote many letters to the Government of India and organized several meetings with common people for their welfare and prosperity.

This book is divided into a total of three sections. In the first section, the author emphasizes the life, biography, and socialistic point of view of Bhupendra Narayan Mandal. This part has two chapters that provide wide information about his struggle, initial social activism, and the political ideology of Bhupendra Babu. The second section has 23 chapters that mention the speeches of parliament, and in this part, the author has collected letters and documents regarding the various activities of Mandal Sahab. On the basis of these primary sources, the author has evaluated various contributions that are relevant to the contemporary society. The third section has five chapters in which the author

has mentioned several articles that several intellectuals of India have written to examine the legacy of Mandal Sahab's journey of life. This book explains the events and actions from his birth till his death. Maximum socialist ideology is adopted only by the poor or deprived class, but Mandal Saheb adopted a socialistic ideology despite being from the elite class. He not only embraced the socialistic ideology but also worked for the socialist idea throughout his life. He always did his election campaign with a bullock cart. During the election campaign, he was staying in the Dalit Basti and having food with them.

Part one of this book explains the biography and family status of Bhupendra Babu. He belongs to a landlord family, and his father has appointed a servant for his personal and domestic work. It is believed that the great man is born as per the demands, time, and needs of society. In the land of Bihar, many karma yogis have left an indelible memory among people with their personalities, from whom people get lessons and inspiration for struggle. Bhupendra Narayan Mandal, the immortal seeker of socialist thought, has a personality about whom very few people know. Mandal Saheb contributed through his activism in regional politics and became an international hero, considering his work as the prime factor. As people say 'Honahar Balvan ke hot chicken paat,' so since childhood, Mandal Saheb was a meritorious student, and active political worker, loving humanity only and had an analytical personality by testing facts tightly in the test of logic. Although he did not face financial constraints, he had a special attitude toward the poor people. In his political career, it appears from his speeches in the House of Parliament that he worked towards poverty theoretically and practically. There are many contributions from Deepak Prasad and Professor Sharadendu Kumar, who gave the form of a book to his whole life's struggle and immortal personality. In the present times, the relevance of this book increases because of the way the attitude of the government is changing towards the general public, and it becomes indispensable to study the thoughts of Mandal Sahab. In this regard, the speech given in the Rajya Sabha on December 18, 1967, in chapter 13 of the book, is quoted. He believed that in a democratic regime, the government should behave as per the constitution because the constitution teaches liberty, equality, and fraternity, and the preamble of the constitution reflects the way to act. It should be the responsibility of the government to reach the common masses. Lohia to have clear views in this regard. Economic inequality and casteism are twin demons; if one is to be fought, it is necessary to fight the other.

Part second of this book emphasizes contributions and activities that have given direction to society and politics to achieve prosperity. His ideas rejected irrelevant traditions and customs that exploited deprived people. The author explains that he believed in a social system that maintains human dignity, equality, and fraternity. That's why Bhupendra Babu became a socialist leader after Lohia. He was the only socialist leader who never compromised on prestige and ideas by denying positions (p.111). The stories of his life, ideology, and

struggle of such a great man cannot be combined in a single book; the untiring efforts of Sharadendu Kumar and Deepak Prasad tried to include all those essential aspects of Mandal Saheb. The book shows that he was more inclined towards the mother tongue. In this context, reference may be made to his speech in the Rajya Sabha on March 18, 1968. The country does not have any official language, which means that the country will remain weak. All government activities should be conducted in the mother tongue. This was the reason why he objected to the speech given in English by the President (p.233). He had an invaluable heritage of ethical conduct in politics, whose inspiration he got from his advocacy time. In such a situation, his work was different from the others; he used to make both the plaintiff and the defendant sit near him and decide without reaching the court, and he did not demand any fees from them. He was influential and active in the Non-Cooperation Movement and Quit India Movement. When he stepped into active politics, he focused on the upliftment of the poorest and most downtrodden people. He considered caste impurity and discrimination towards the lower caste people as the biggest obstacle in the development of the nation. He states that "Progress cannot be defined practically by depriving 90% of the population of the mainstream (p,123)". He used to do his election rallies with a maximum number of bullock carts where the driver belonged to the marginalized community.

In section three, the author includes several chapters that provide remarks regarding Mandal Saheb. In a speech in the Rajya Sabha in 1969, he drew the attention of entire members of the House by becoming the voice of Dalit oppression and their backwardness because, at that time, there were a lot of atrocities on Dalits in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar, which he opposed in the House (p. 27). He did not do caste politics but Jamaat politics. Some politicians thought about the future and the nation. Some politicians thought ahead of their time in ideology and action. He believed that to implement the concept of an egalitarian society practically, all the representatives must ensure accountability in their area and work by reaching the villages. Only then can the country be improved. Regarding the country's budget, he believed that a separate budget should be prepared every year for rural development and poverty alleviation. Still, it has yet to be reviewed and evaluated, that is why the schemes have not been implemented correctly in India.

In the contemporary scenario, the ideas of Bhupendra Babu play a significant role because of the revolutionary changes taking place in the socialist world. It must re-examine the means It has adopted to achieve the ends of socialism. There is no room for doubt that the aim must remain the clear dominance of the social interest over the sectional and the attainment of social justice for all. However, considering the fact that it is now universally accepted that the best way of achieving these objectives is not through state ownership, physical controls, and high taxation, It should move away from the socialist fundamentalism to which much of our thinking has been mired. The trademark

of pragmatism that, under many titles, currently directs the activities of almost all civilizations. It has been discovered that the fastest and most reliable way to achieve social justice is not to place a strong emphasis on controlling the creation of wealth and attempting to distribute it through fictitious channels but rather to support economic growth in every manner that is feasible because it increases employment and, consequently, real incomes for everyone. Fundamentalism is just as damaging, illogical, and backward-looking in social and economic ideas as it is in religion. So, It's pleading with people to replace that fundamentalism with reason. To the extent that certain democratic domains and partial regimes, including representation, civil rights, horizontal accountability, participation, and the effective authority to rule, have improved or deteriorated over time, and whether or not they have altered the fundamental logic of democracy, is still up for debate. Through this book, an individual can be able to understand the parameters that describe a democratic crisis.

This book, indeed, has provided comprehensive knowledge regarding Bhupendra Babu, but the author needs to mention appropriate references and reference lists at the end of the chapter. Its central theme is socialism, but it has broad aspects, and Bhupendra Babu has given their ideas regarding Indian society, which are different from Western socialism. There is no separate chapter regarding this. As in the third section, several intellectuals have contributed to their chapter, and the author should make a list on the initial page before the preface of how many contributors have contributed. Besides these critical points, it is an excellent book with analytical explanations regarding Bhupendra Babu.

Finally, based on the deductive method, this book is essential to understand socialism and its significance to establish a social democracy. Focusing on the works of such a great leader, this book has been designed to bring social consciousness and the harmony between social justice and politics. It has provided readers with various perspectives to help them to understand contemporary reality and myths of Indian society through Bhupendra Babu's perspectives. This work will enhance knowledge in the academic world, particularly for those who are interested in social transformation, social justice, casteism, socialism, and Bihar politics.

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