

## **Book Review: “CHAMCHA YUG (The Chamcha Age) also known as THE ERA of STOOGES” by Kanshi Ram**

\*Aniruddha Baba

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#### **Author’s details**

**\*Dr. Aniruddha Babar**

Assistant Professor  
Department of Political  
Science, Tetso College,  
Dimapur Nagaland.

Email: aniruddha@  
tetsocollege.org

### **Abstract**

*The Chamcha Yug- an era of stooges, the unique political slavery of depressed classes started with the Poona Pact - an agreement between Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. This agreement was signed on behalf of the Dalits or the depressed classes and the upper caste Hindu leaders for securing the electoral seats for the schedule castes and schedule tribes to provide them with a position in the legislature of British India. This paper discusses and provides a detailed review of the book “Chamcha Yug”, also called as the “Era of Stooges” written by Kanshi Ram who dedicated this book to Jyotiba Phule, Periyar and Dr Ambedkar. The book is divided into four sections and 17 chapters. The first and the second sections are about the struggles of great souls like Jyotiba Phule, Periyar and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar while the third section presents an analysis of the contemporary social and political situation. The fourth section is devoted to the ways and the means of waging the future struggle. Thus the book is about the past, the present and also the future. The main purpose of*

*this book is to inform, and enlighten about the oppressed and the exploited Dalit people in Indian society, who were further exploited in the name of the Poona Pact. Kanshi Ram believed that it is only the Poona Pact and the strategy of Mohandas Gandhi that resulted in turning elected Dalit representatives as remain the political stooges in the hands of upper caste leaders.*

**Keywords:** Poona Pact, Gandhi, Ambedkar, Kanshiram, Dalit, Tribals.

## **Introduction**

*"We will not stop until we unite the victims of the system and overthrow the spirit of inequality in our country."*

~ Bahujan Nayak 'Manyavar' Saheb Kanshi Ram Ji

**T**he struggle of the Dalits and the backward classes in India has a long history. It is already known that Dalits or the untouchables in India faced centuries of oppression, rejection from the High Caste Hindus and have been subjected to various forms of social, political and economic inequalities. Significant political and social efforts have been made in the past for uplifting the condition of the Dalits in India. However, the socio-economic and political order towards Dalits remained unchanged even after this many years of Independence. In spite of the Constitutional commitment towards improving the social, political and economic conditions of the Schedule castes and schedule tribes, the goals towards achieving their equality and liberty seem unachievable. Although social and political

opportunities are confined to the privileged sections of the society, yet political rights of Dalits was considered as an important effort towards improving their status within Hindu dominant society of India.

Therefore, this paper focuses on one of the most important piece of literature authored by Kanshi Ram that explains the various historical reasons of unequal political position of Dalits in India. Kanshi Ram provides an immaculate description of how Poona Pact had been the major weapon used by Caste Hindu leaders to turn elected Dalit representatives into lackeys or instruments of the Congress and other political parties dominated by the high caste politicians and their interests influenced and shaped up by their caste identity. This is the reason he called them as ‘Chamchas’ and considered that era of Poona Pact as the “*The Era of Stooges*” or the “*Chamcha Yug*”.

This book was published on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Poona Pact and is specifically focused towards bringing an end to the Chamcha age. This paper will therefore, provide an analytical review of his famous book, “The Chamcha Yug” in which he describes how Poona Pact resulted in the initiation of the brutal Chamcha Yug by forcing joint electorate and snatching away the separate electorate from the Dalits or the depressed classes in India.

### **Author Introduction**

*“Manyavar Saheb Kanshi Ram was a crusader for the cause of Dalit rights who exhorted Dalits to lead a life of self-respect and honour and fought against Manuwadi forces.”*

~ Bahujan Samaj Party supremo Mayawati on death of Kanshi Ram on 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2006

The book 'Chamcha Yug' also called as the "Era of Stooges" authored by Kanshi Ram (also known as 'Bahujan Nayak') was a great Indian politician and also a social reformer who fought his entire life for the rights and honour of that particular strata of the Indian society which was thrown and suppressed for centuries within the Indian caste system. He worked for the upliftment and the social equality of Bahujans-the untouchables, outcastes, backward people in India. It was Kanshi Ram who turned Uttar Pradesh to Bahujan Pradesh from Brahmin Pradesh. He broke the Brahminical hegemony that had ruled in Uttar Pradesh. Kanshi Ram was never married. Kanshiram won people's heart when he said, "*I will never get married, I will never acquire any property, I will never visit my home, I will devote and dedicate the rest of my life to achieve the goals of Phule-Shahu-Ambedkar movement.*" Kanshi Ram was a missionary of Phule-Shahu-Ambedkar Movement. He devoted his entire life for the political rights, social justice, development and growth of the downtrodden people who were in the majority but deprived of their rights.

His works were mainly focused on promoting the rights of the Dalit-Tribal, OBC and religious minority communities in India. In the year 1971 he founded All India SC, ST, OBC and Minority Employees Association that became BAMCEF in 1978 (Narayan, 2014). The main purpose of BAMCEF ("The All India Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation") was to persuade the learned, educated, gainfully employed people from the oppressed communities to come together and support the principles and vision of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar for the upliftment of the Schedule Castes, Schedule Tribes, Other Backward Classes and minority communities (Webster, 2001). The message to Dalit employees by kanshi Ram was straight and simple -- efforts by Dr. Ambedkar had

helped them secure ‘fees, scholarship, job and promotion’. And for those who could thus attain economic stability, it was now payback time. In the year 1981, Kanshi Ram formed another social organisation that was named as ‘*Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti*’ (DS4) with the purpose of organizing the Dalits and other oppressed classes of the country. This organisation was later absorbed in the form of Bahujan Samaj Party on 14<sup>th</sup> April in the year 1984 (Kumar, 1999). Kanshi Ram believed that Dalits and backward classes should work politically for themselves, rather than making any compromises by working with other parties and political masters (Kumar, 2010).

Kanshi Ram’s book ‘Chamcha Yug’ is divided in four parts and seventeen chapters. The first two parts of the book provides the information regarding the past social and political struggle for Dalits right to gain representation in the Government. The third part of the book is about the then political situation and the different forms of Chamchas (stooges) that were used by the Hindus to accomplish their political interests. This chapter also informs about the evil ramifications of the Chamcha Age. The fourth part of the book is specifically dedicated towards identifying the ways and means for supporting future struggle for Dalits.

### **Review of the Book ‘Chamcha Yug’**

*“Self-respecting people understand the definition of ‘struggle’. Those whose self-respect is dead, they are slaves.”*

~ Kanshi Ram

Chamcha Yug was released on 24<sup>th</sup> September, 1982, on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Poona Pact. It was

dedicated to Mahatma Jotirao Phule, "whose initiation of cultural revolt in colonial India, later taken up by Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Periyar E.V. Ramaswamy and many other rebellious spirits brought us to this level where we are thinking, planning and struggling to put an end to the 'Chamcha Age' and usher in 'Bright Age' for the Shudras and the Ati-Shudras." Author Kanshi Ram writes while fondly remembering the time, works and struggles of the Father of India's Social Revolution Mahatma Jotirao Govindrao Phule.

The Chamcha Age began with the Poona Pact and continues to exist today. The establishment of SC/ST Reserved Seats in legislature resulted in the meteoric rise of Chamcha politicians. In order to win election to an SC/ST Reserved Seat, an SC/ST candidate needed the support of a major political party. In exchange for that support, the winning candidate was more than happy to act as a Chamcha—or Stooze—for the party. Instead of representing SC and ST people and fighting for the needs of those oppressed communities, the Chamchas happily becomes 'Yes Men' doing whatever their political masters orders them to do. This was the kind of political system that came into being after Poona Pact ultimately became responsible for caging the 'political freedom & aspirations' of Dalits.

The untouchables were forced to sign the Poona Pact under the 'threat' of the coercive fast unto death of Mohandas Gandhi. Dr. Ambedkar denounced it the very next day expressing his views, "*The untouchables were sad. They had every reason to be sad.*" He kept denouncing it till the end of his life in 1956. He denounced it in private discussions, public meetings, relevant writings, in fact on all the occasions that demanded denunciation. Babasaheb Ambedkar could never forgive Mohandas Gandhi for Poona Pact that was to throw

the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in perpetual political slavery in the ages to come.

There cannot be much debate on how as an electoral democracy, India is definitely not the most successful or just nation-state. In a country rife with caste violence, electoral processes have often been punctuated by upper caste dominance. Would things have been better, or at least different, if Dalits were awarded separate electorates? Mohandas Gandhi made sure that the question would never be answered.

### **Early Political Efforts for Dalits**

*“Where Brahminism is a success, no other ‘ism’ can succeed; we need fundamental, structural, social changes.”*

~ Kanshi Ram

One of the most significant events that led to the development of the Chamcha Age was the Poona Pact. Therefore, the author starts by explaining about the Swarajya efforts that were being made in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The initial efforts to gain freedom were mainly being made by the High Caste Hindus, while on the other hand the already oppressed castes or people of the society were fighting for their own freedom and self-respect. ‘Slaves of the slaves’ is the term that Kanshi Ram has given for the Dalits or the lower caste of the society. Slaves were the upper caste Hindus, who were fighting for their own freedom from the British rule, while the slaves of the slaves, who were the Dalits or the schedule caste and schedule tribe people, were looking towards getting freedom from bondage and humiliation, which was also unknown to the rest of the world. In the first part of the book, Kanshi Ram explains

by throwing light on the internal struggle and panic within the depressed classes of the society, who were frightened with the thought that their age old oppressors, which were the High Caste Hindus in India will become their new rulers without any safeguards and relief for them, by getting back the freedom of the country from the British rule.

One significant effort that Kanshi Ram has made in this part of the book is that he had associated the struggle of the oppressed classes and their need to change their condition within the country as the direct result of the British rule. Kanshi Ram informs that British people came with western culture, modern thoughts, knowledge and thinking that ignited the spirit within the Dalits and oppressed classes to realize that their oppression in the 'caste system' is not humane rather there was a need that they should fight and demand their own freedom from age old slavery, they understood that they need to carve out the path of their own liberation. Studies have identified that the main aspect of the national freedom movement must have been to integrate the different social groups for fighting against the colonial rule (Patankar & Omvedt, 1979). However, the initial national movement was only led by the High Caste Hindus of Indian with no involvement of the Dalits and other oppressed classes. One of the findings of Kanshi Ram that oppressed classes of India stood to fight for their freedom were inspired and promoted by British rule can be said to be true, as Omvedt (1994) also identified that various political, social and economic initiatives were taken under the British rule and the British administration had taken a specific focus on protecting the interest of the Dalits which resulted in motivating the latent discontent and resentment of Dalits against the oppressive caste system. As the result of this, oppressed classes were



revolting in different regions of India against the oppressive features of the Brahminical culture to which the first heavy blow was given in 1848 by Mahatma Jotirao Phule. Looking at the map of India, from Punjab to Bengal the Adi-Dharmis, the Jatavas, the Kureels, the Pasis, the Puma and the Namoshudras were restless and struggling for self-respect. Moving downwards, we find the Ahirwars, the Berwas, the Mahars, the Adi-Andhras, the Adi-Karnatakas, the Adi-Dravidas, the Pulayas and many more groups of the depressed classes revolting against the oppressive features of the Brahminical culture sanctioned by the religious scriptures and holy writs.

Kanshi Ram specifies in his book that Congress was the main political party that constituted the High Caste Hindus of India, which was under the significant pressure because of the revolution of oppressed classes against them. This situation forced the Congress to pass a resolution in 1917 under which they demanded freedom, justice and righteousness for the oppressed classes (Omvedt, 2006). The Congress resolution of 1917: *“This Congress urges upon the people of India the necessity justice and righteousness of removing all disabilities imposed by custom upon the Depressed Classes. The disabilities being of a most vexatious and oppressive character. Subjecting those classes to considerable hardship and inconvenience.”* Congress passed many resolutions over the period, which had some significant political motive. For example, a study conducted by Basu (2018) argues that the early nationalists and leaders of India and even their successors were mainly occupied with responding to the oppression of imperial British rule, and their motive behind developing different policies and resolutions was mainly concerned about mobilizing the public opinion and getting support of entire public for political liberation of the country, without placing

any concern towards the actual rights of Dalits. Congress was supposed to work for the Dalits as it identified under its resolution, but according to Kanshi Ram, they did nothing.

However, in the later years, Dr. Ambedkar emerged as the leader and savior of the Dalits-Tribals and other oppressed communities, which also resulted in giving him the right to represent himself as the undisputable leader of the untouchables in the two Round Table Conferences (1930-31). Ambedkar submitted two Memorandums in the two round table conferences for the rights and freedom of the Dalits and oppressed classes of India. This was the time when Ambedkar worked towards politically safeguarding the rights of the oppressed classes. Political safeguarding was also associated with providing the special rights and political representation of the Dalits and oppressed classes.

### **Political Representation of Dalits in the Government**

*“Till the time we won't be successful in politics and not able to have power in our hands, the social and economic transformation is not possible. Political power is the key to success.”*

~ Kanshi Ram

In “Chamcha Yug”, Kanshi Ram has specifically focused on the development of the efforts towards bringing Dalits in the politics and helping them to have a separate place for themselves. In the 1920s it was found that joint electorate system was developed for election in India, for which any member of the society, regardless of their caste can participate in the elections from any constituency as per the Simon Commission (Muthaiah, 2004). However, this proposal was

rejected by the leaders of the All India Depressed Classes Association, as they demanded separate electorate. This demand was first put forward by M.C. Rajah, who could not get the support of British government and later Dr. Ambedkar was identified as the main representative of the Dalits (Pai, 2002). Kanshi Ram explores in his book that the main purpose of the Indian National Congress was to gain the support of the Dalits, so that they could achieve the public support in gaining freedom. However, their purpose was not towards freeing Dalits from the oppression. Annihilation of Caste, liberation of Dalits, Tribals, women from their age old shackles was never on the agenda of the Congress.

The sufficient representation of the schedule castes and schedule tribes in the government was demanded by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in the form of a separate electorate in the Round Table Conferences (Rao, 2009). He demanded this right for the oppressed classes, because similar right was provided to the Muslims in India and British Government had provided separate electorate for Muslims under the Indian Council Act, 1909, according to which some of the seats were specifically reserved for the Muslim candidates (Vundru, 2017). The major development in the area of providing or securing the political rights of the Dalits was made by the announcement of the Communal Award by the British Government. According to Basu (2018) “*the Communal Award gave the Dalits voting right along with caste Hindus in the general constituencies and also an extra vote in special ‘Depressed Classes’ constituencies numbering 71 for a period of 20 years*” (p. 19). However, this announcement was significantly opposed by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and his camp because he believed that this facility would result in disintegrating the Hindu society. Gandhi believed that separate electorate

would result in disrupting religious and moral grounds associated with Hinduism. Although he also stated that oppression of the depressed classes over the centuries could not be compensated, yet separate electorate would also not make any significant effort in improvement of their condition (Ram, 1982). The stand taken by Mohandas Gandhi was not surprising. His thoughts about caste system, untouchability and social justice were well known. His love for Hinduism and its evil traditions was well exhibited. There was a sea of difference between Mohandas Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar's approach on the issue of 'Caste'. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar stood for the annihilation of caste. He saw untouchability as a fundamental result of caste, and believed that there could be no alleviation, no uplift, no relief from untouchability without the abolition of caste. Gandhi here was not simply a devoted Hindu, but also a fervent believer in his idealized version of "Varnashrama Dharma." He felt that what he considered to be the benign aspects of caste – its encouragement of a certain kind of solidarity — could be maintained while removing hierarchy and the extreme evil of untouchability. This view was in fact the core of his idea of 'reformism' which became a foundational aspect of his arguments against 'Separate Electorates' for Dalits and Tribals (The Depressed Classes).

Gandhi wrote a letter to the British Government in which he had mentioned that he would fast unto death if the Government would not withdraw its scheme of separate electorate. He wrote that such a scheme is against the interest of the Dalits (Ram, 1982). Therefore, the weapon of Satyagraha and fasting resulting in mobilizing public opinion against separate electorate for Dalits, and different appeals were also made with the Dalits not to force the government for separate electorate. Moreover, Several Untouchable

leaders feared that Dr. Ambedkar would be held responsible if Gandhi succumbed to his fast, and this in turn, could put the lives of ordinary Untouchables in danger.

Kanshi Ram provides a detailed overview of the letters written by Mohandas Gandhi to the Government, as well as the response that was sent to Gandhi by the Secretary of State. Palshikar (1996) espoused in his work that Gandhi was against the separate electorate for the Dalits as he was specifically supporting the Caste Hindu people and their purpose. However, the *Chamcha Yug* explains that the British Government had justified its action of announcing Communal Awards, as they believed that disagreement between the Congress and Dalit leaders led to this decisions (Ram, 1982). However, Gandhi's moral and religious weapon resulted in influencing the masses and various Indian leaders to work a compromise between the joint electorate and separate electorate (Kumar, 1985). Although, Gandhi was against any reservation under joint or separate electorate, but identifying the prevalent attitude of Dalits in the country, he agreed for the reservation of the seats for the Dalits under joint electorate (Ram, 1982). Dr. Ambedkar and Gandhi agreed to the reservation of the seats for Dalits under the joint electorate. This agreement was signed in the form of the Poona Pact on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1932. Total 148 seats were reserved for the representatives from the depressed classes in the general electorates (Palshikar, 1996).

Different studies have focused on conducting a critical analysis of the Poona Pact including Kanshi Ram in the 'Chamcha Yug'. The book identifies that Poona Pact had adversely affected the political, social and religious rights of the Dalits. Dr. Ambedkar believed that Poona Pact has given 148 seats to the untouchables, while the Award had given only 78 seats, but he ignored a significant fact that the Award was

specifically for the untouchables, while the Pact was for joint electorate (Jensenius, 2013). Kanshi Ram brought to light in his book that although Poona Pact increased the fixed number of seats for Dalits, it took away the right of double vote, which was granted under the Communal Award. Therefore, Kanshi Ram believed that the fixed number of seats can never compensate for the loss of the double vote. Secondly the main purpose of such a critical analysis presented by Kanshi Ram explains that the Award was a major political weapon for the untouchables as they had the complete right in their constituency, and their voting strength would have also influenced the general elections (Naskar, 2011). As the result of this no Caste Hindu would have ignored the rights of the untouchables in his constituency, as he would have been made dependent on the votes of untouchables (Naskar, 2011).

Therefore, in the second part of the book, Kanshi Ram informs about the various disadvantages of Poona Pact and how it affected the political representation of untouchables. Kanshi Ram provides concise information about the Memorandum offered by Dr. Ambedkar to the Constituent Assembly, under which he informed about the disadvantages of Poona Pact (Ram, 1982). According to Dr. Ambedkar, the Pact was supposed to devise an appropriate approach through which untouchables would have been able to become representatives in Legislature. However, such an intention was completely nullified (Ram, 1982). The first problem identified in Kanshi Ram's book about the Poona Pact was about the 'Panel of Four' to be elected in primary elections to vote for the candidates. According to Biswas (2018), the panel of four was considered to be the maximum number of four by Ambedkar, but caste Hindus considered 'four' as the minimum number and supported cumulative voting. In the

panel, Hindus voted for the untouchable candidate that was considered to be most suitable for them.

Different scholars have also analysed that joint electoral system was nothing more than a system that promoted the political interest of Hindus and also gave them an opportunity to select the untouchable candidate who could be their nominee (Ram, 1982). The main purpose of such an approach was to outnumber the untouchable voters, and to restrict them from selecting their own nominee. However, this could not be achieved until the surplus votes of the Hindus were directed towards the untouchable candidates (Zelliot, 2008). Kanshi Ram identified in his book that Mohandas Gandhi was the father of the Chamcha age, as the Dalits gained the false representation in the Legislature, and were being mainly elected through the Caste Hindu organisations. This is the reason that representatives of the Dalits are being defeated, as the Hindu leaders and their candidates are using their surplus votes to gain regional and national representation (Jensenius, 2013).

### **The Chamcha Yug**

*“If you call someone as Chamcha, he will not like it and is likely to go against you. But when you are calling the Age as the Chamcha Age, you are biting so many and they may hit back. But as Chamcha cannot operate on its own, the operator may hit you back with the Chamcha. We should, therefore, be prepared for the ‘Chamcha Attack’.”*

~ Kanshi Ram

Kanshi Ram identifies in his book that Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was the father of the Chamcha Yug, as he was the

one who was responsible for enforcing the provision of joint electorate on the Dalits (Ram, 1982). It was stubborn Gandhi; blinded by his religious loyalty and reverence for caste hierarchy who forced Dr. Ambedkar to give up his demand for the separate electorate for the Dalits. However, later Dr. Ambedkar had recognized that joint electorate is nothing more than a significant right in the hands of Hindus to nominate an untouchable as the representatives of the untouchables, whom they could use as the tool under their constituencies (Ram, 1982). Kanshi Ram identifies in his book that Gandhi left no stone unturned for protecting the high caste Hindus' religious, social and political interests and made no efforts for safeguarding the rights of the untouchables. This is because Gandhi wanted the country to run on the principles of Dharma, or the Chatur Varna system, which means he wanted to keep the untouchables in the Dark Age (Ram, 1982).

In the third part of the book, Kanshi Ram firstly informs that Dalits were the 'tools of the Hindus' (as called by Ambedkar) (Ram, 1982). Dr. Ambedkar also called such untouchable representatives as the agents of Hindus or the stooges of Hindus, who are elected by Hindu political party leaders and placed as the representatives of Dalits or untouchables (Narayan, 2014).

Chamcha can be identified as an indigenous word, which is used for the person who works as the stooge, tool or the agent and cannot operate on his own; rather he is used and operated by the others for achieving their own interest and benefit (Ram, 1982). Chamchas are used by the people for the benefit of their own community, creed and society, which could always be considered as detrimental for the creed of Chamchas (Ram, 1982). Gandhi, who was the supporter of the caste system in India considered the need of developing



Chamchas, who from outside could present themselves as the representatives of the untouchables, but internally could be the tools used by the Caste Hindu leaders for their own political benefit (Ram, 1982). Studies also identify that Chamchas or stooges were created to display an opposition towards the real fighters or actual representatives of Dalits (Gorringer & Waghmore, 2018). The analysis of Kanshi Ram in his book informs that the vision of Ambedkar was to take Dalits from the Dark Age towards the bright Age, but the Chamcha Age resulted in slipping Dalits away from the bright Age (Yurlova, 1992).

Kanshi Ram also identified that the best representative of the Congress raised Chamcha was Jag Jeevan Ram, which was projected as the 'Dalit Face' by Gandhi and the Congress Party, who even rose to become the deputy Prime Minister. Kanshi Ram also espoused in his book that Chamchas or the fake untouchable representatives are used against their own creed in order to weaken the genuine and real untouchable leaders (Ram, 1982). Kanshi Ram also identified the need of creating Chamchas and informs that Chamchas were created when there is a real fighter, who could threaten the dominance of the Caste Hindus in the country. For example, in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, untouchables or the depressed classes had started standing against untouchability, inequality and unjust social order that was affecting their freedom, rights and dignity (Vasily, 2009). Their struggle was initially ignored due to the lack of strong leadership. However, in the later years the leadership of depressed classes became powerful and formidable, and their struggle could no longer be ignored (Vasily, 2009). Such condition resulted in encouraging the High caste Hindus to set up Chamchas against the real and powerful Dalit leaders.

The reserved seats under the joint electorate for the Dalits remained operative under the terms and provisions of the Poona Pact (Velusamy, 2010). One of the most painful questions that Kanshi Ram addresses in his book is - how long the Chamcha age will last? Answering to this question Kanshi Ram explains that Chamchas are used by the high caste Hindus when their position is threatened or found to be in danger with the presence of a real, powerful and genuine Dalit leadership, but when there is no such need, Chamchas are not used (Ram, 1982). However, such situation is found to last till the struggle between the oppressed and oppressor classes continue. It has also been identified in the book that the joint electorate resulted in destructing the independent movement of the Schedule Caste & Schedule Tribe people (Ram, 1982). Kanshi Ram also explained the various variations of Chamchas and how they are used by the High Caste Hindus for achieving their political benefits.

Kanshi Ram identified some significant consequences of the Chamcha age, such as it resulted in negatively affecting the independent movement of the Dalits, created leaderlessness among the Dalits, discouraged their spirit to revolt for their rights and equality and left them in poverty. In the last chapter of the book, Kanshi Ram explains that there is a need of genuine and capable leadership and also the need of promoting education and employment among the untouchables (Ram, 1982). For overcoming the age old poverty and backwardness, there is a significant need of educating schedule castes and schedule tribes. To meet the challenge of the chamcha age, Kanshi Ram could develop various ways and means through a well-planned concept of "Educate, Agitate, Organise". Considering the short term resolution to the problems, Kanshi Ram believed that ending the Chamcha age is important,

which can be initiated by inducing awareness among the masses (Ram, 1982). He further states that planned social actions towards gaining equality must be initiated to bring in a social change. For long term efforts, Kanshi Ram states that focused political actions, such as developing the separate and independent political party of Dalits and other oppressed communities could be an important approach towards gaining a fair share in the country.

*“At any rate, the Chamcha attack should not frighten us, because a Chamcha is not a powerful or a deadly weapon. Besides, we must aim at the hand that uses the Chamcha. If hit hard, the Chamcha will fall. A fallen Chamcha is absolutely harmless. Thus, this way, we hope to end the Chamcha Age within a short span of about 10 years.”*

~ Kanshi ram (24<sup>th</sup> Sept., 1982, D-S4 Office, Karol Bagh, New Delhi) his prophetic words turns out to be true when Bahujan Samaj Party formed its Government in Uttar Pradesh and Mayawati became first female Dalit Chief Minister in 1995.

This paper provides a critical review of the book “*Chamcha Yug: the Era of Stooges*”, by Kanshi Ram who believed that by forcing Ambedkar to sign the Poona Pact on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1932, Mohandas Gandhi pushed the Untouchables into the ‘Chamcha Yug’ (The era of stooges). Kanshi Ram’s only book, *Chamcha Yug*, primarily dwells on the nature and the form of the post-Poona-Pact Dalit politics.

The main purpose of this book was to inform about the existence of the ‘elements’ in *Dalit Shoshit Samaj* as the Chamachas or Stooges, and to awaken the masses about how

Dalits were being used as the Stooges. Another purpose of this book is also to enhance the awareness of the masses and improving their ability to make a difference between the counterfeit leadership and the genuine leadership working towards safeguarding the rights of Dalits or depressed classes in the society. This book is divided in four important parts, where the first two parts are based on explaining the past struggles including the development of Poona Pact and the consequences of Poona Pact on the rights and equality of the schedule castes in the country. Third part of the books specifically informs that what are Chamchas and how they could be identified in social and political arena. The purpose of this part is to explain the present condition of Chamchas and how they could be differentiated from the genuine untouchable representatives and leaders. Fourth part of the book provides the ways to fight the future struggle and mainly outline the necessary ways to fight against the social and political Brahmanism. Therefore, the book provides a significant detail about the past, present and future of the Dalit struggle and how their situation can be improved. Kanshi Ram has placed a significant focus on providing the historical political situation in order to understand the ways in which future can be enlightened.

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