

Untold Story of Ch. Ranbir Singh

-Hawa Singh Sangwan, Ex. Commandant. Mob. No. 94160-56145

Late Ch. Chhotu Ram had to quit the Congress Party after the differences erupted with Gandhi Ji on Non Co-operation Movement during 1920. In 1923 Ch. Chhotu Ram had formed Unionist Party known as Jamindara Party also, after the collaboration with Fazle-A- Hussan with the sole aim of welfare of peasantry class, labour class and the rural based people as a whole, to keep them out of the exploitation by the middlemen and usury in Joint Punjab. Within short span of time, the Unionist Party had grabbed the power in Joint Punjab during 1926 and continued in majority till the sudden demise of Ch. Chhotu Ram on 9th January, 1945. Before the demise of Ch. Chhotu Ram, a very big rally was organized on 8th May, 1944 at Miyawali now in Pakistan to challenge the plan of Mr. Jinnha for the formation of Pakistan in Punjab, because all the 81 Muslim MLAs were in the Unionist Party. Two MLAs of Muslim League, who were elected in the last election had also sided with the Unionist Party hence the creation of Pakistan was only a dream for Mr. Jinnha but after the sudden demise of Ch. Chhotu Ram, circumstances had taken a very dramatic and ugly turn that all the Muslim MLAs had joined Muslim League within six months, a party of Mr. Jinnha, who was on rampage to form Pakistan in Punjab. Now the dream of Mr. Jinnha had become reality on the existence of Pakistan on 14th August, 1947, resulting into the partition of India. The ideology of the Unionist was shattered and none of the partyman was left to carry forward the legacy of Late Ch. Chhotu Ram in free India.

On 14th July, 1947, a Constituent Assembly of India was formed consisting 389 members to draft the Indian Constitution, out of which Ch. Ranbir Singh was lone staunch Haryanvi member at the young age of 32 years. To draft the Indian Constitution, the Assembly so constituted had taken 165 days in sitting, covering into 11 sessions and 114 days were spent on the consideration the Draft of the Constitution. The first Draft of the Constitution which was circulated to seek the public response, did not refer to village or peasant or Panchayat at all. The work was assigned to a Drafting Committee consisting of seven members. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was its Chairman. Coincidentally, none of the seven members of the Committee was a villager or a peasant. Whereas, the village, the peasant and values which had got evolved during hard, long struggle for freedom were conspicuously absent in the drafts.

On 6th Nov. 1948, the Constituent Assembly of India had met in the Constitutional Hall at 10 A.M. on Saturday being Vice- President Dr. H. C. Mukharjee in the Chair. All the senior members such as Pt. Nehru, Sardar Patel, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, J.B. Kriplani, C. Rajgopalacharya, Sarojini Naidu, Dr. Rajender Prasad, Sharat Chander Bose, Babu Jagjiwan Ram etc. were sitting in the front row. One of the youngest member of the assembly, Ch. Ranbir Singh sitting in the next row was pretty nervous in the beginning with sort of mixed feeling high and low. His heart and mind was rolling somewhere in a village, a mean peasant's life, witnessing KURKI(mortgage) of the land etc. of a poor farmer.

One member, Babu Thakur Dass Ji was advocating the urbanization in his speech. As soon as his speech was over, the young Ch. Ranbir Singh after due permission of the Chair had started delivering his speech with his full confidence and calibre that the constitution is incomplete without incorporation of village, peasant and Panchayat. While elaborating his speech, he had given emphasis on upliftment of village and peasant's life with giving proper price of his product, strengthening the national co-operative organization of the agricultural products, ensuing (Bima) of his crops and abolishing usury. On 18th Nov. 1948, he was the first leader, who had demanded for separate state of Haryana, in the Constituent Assembly, having old Delhi as its

capital. Later on, after 16 years, his demand had become voice of Akalis, Swami Omanand, Ch. Devi Lal and Prof. Sher Singh etc. He had also demanded to divide U.P. into two states to cease its border upto Yamuna river in the West. Now we can easily imagine his vision and wisdom. He was first leader of India, who have pleaded for making retaintion of the Land Alienation Act on 2nd December, 1948 in the Constituent Assembly. When his demand for Haryana State was not accepted, on 1st August, 1949 he had pleaded for inclusion of rural Delhi and New Delhi in Punjab state. Moreover, he had demanded for special economical concession for Punjab state for 10 years due to its suffering in the partition. On 19th August, 1949, he had bluntly pleaded to exempt the peasant's class and Harijan from all forms of the taxes. Ch. Ranbir Singh was the first leader in Free India who had demanded the reservation for the villagers as a whole. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was the first leader who had demanded the reservation for the depressed class. While speaking on Public Service Commission and New Employment Policy, Ch. Ranbir Singh had clearly addressed the Constituent Assembly on 22nd August, 1949 "martial races belong to to the countryside(rural) these people still join the Army as soldiers but the military officers are mostly urban people. Thus the need of our is that the backward people of the villages should be helped to advance forward for which reservation is necessary." On 24 Nov. 1949, he was the first leader in India who had demanded for the abolition of Jagirdari system in free India and also demanded for an early completion of Bhakra Dam works projecting this as a life line for Punjab state. While speaking on Railway Budget 1948, he had demanded for smooth transportation of agricultural products by the Railways, for which he had quoted an example "Chana is being sold at @ Rs. 5 maund in Hisar region, whereas the same is being sold @ Rs. 50 per maund in Madras region causing loss to the farmers and consumers both, due to shortage of Railway wagons. Similarly, he had given examples of Gur and other agricultural products also.

It is most pertinent to note that Ch. Ranbir Singh had given new definition to "General Public Interest," while speaking about land holdings on 2nd Dec. 1948 "it can mean only the interests of the peasantry and labours not only the interest of the vocal middle class intelligentsia and vested people" it clearly shows his pain for the poor classes whom he had loved and having great affection from the core of his heart.

His speeches can be divided into two parts i.e first which made in the Constituent Assembly for the purpose of making of the Constitution and second for the legislating. During this period of two and half years, he had voiced on various important matters as follow in addition to the above. The subjects were – Problem of 'pest' control, Uniformity of Land Revenue, Problems of Agriculturists and Peasantry, Cotton Textile Cess Bill 1948, Railway Budget 1948, General Budget 1948, Electricity Bill 1948, Reserve Bank Bill 1948, Grow More Food Campaign, Hindu Marriage Validity Bill 1949, General Budget 1949, Indian Finance Bill 1949, Child Marriage Rastraint Bill 1949 and Essential Supplies Bill 1949 etc.etc. He had judiciously picked up all the clauses of the bills related to the farmers and villagers very intelligently and the concerned Ministers thereto had to give reply during the debates in length. It is very momentous to note that he was the first leader who had established "All India Backward Sangh" in 1960 and once the then Vice President of India, Sh. Radha Krishan had also presided over one of its function. Ch. Ranbir Singh was a very good orator who had performed his duties as a member of the Constituent Assembly, with his high esteem, zeal and zenith, for which he fully deserved all praises, appreciation and due admiration. But it is still common belief among the Haryanvi that late Ch. Ranbir Singh was a mute member of the Constituent Assembly, because of his works were not timely publicized due to obvious reasons that is why this article is given name as an "Untold Story". I hope this article both in English and Hindi is likely to help in awareness about the excellent job done by our respected leader and the departed soul. Ch. Ranbir Singh was

only leader being a Congressman who had carried forward the legacy as well as ideology of late Ch. Chhotu Ram immediately after India got the freedom in 1947, through his eloquency and action.

Late Ch. Ranbir Singh was the first Indian leader who had been a member of seven different Houses at different times. He was due to be elected as CM of Haryana in 1968 but the then Senior Congress Leader Sh. Guljari Lal Nanda had proposed the name of Ch. Bansi Lal for the post of CM of Haryana and subsequently Ch. Bansi Lal was elected as a CM of Haryana and proved himself as a Hard Task Master known as Builder of Haryana, who had also advocated for separate state of Haryana in the Parliament on 18th Sept. 1966. Ch. Bhupender Singh Hooda son of Late Ranbir Singh is now Chief Minister of Haryana since about eight years but he has yet not done enough for publicizing the great achievements and excellent works done by his father from 1947 to 1960. However a Chair has since been founded in the name of Late Ch. Ranbir Singh in the MDU, Rohtak for research works headed by Sh. K.C. Yadav a reknowned historian, is a matter of satisfaction.

(Extracts from the speeches of Ch. Ranbir Singh in the Constituent Assembly of India and RTI.)

Note : It is our moral duty to project the good deeds of our departed leaders irrespective of religion, region, sect and political lien, without any prejudice and prediction.