

them with a picture of their performance and to demand change. For example, over the next few years, we should consistently check the situation in our localities, and find out what proportion of girls actually attend school, what proportion of illiterate women go to literacy classes, what the dropout rates for girls are in different areas among different groups in primary schools.

If we undertake this kind of information collection and monitor the progress or non-progress of various government programmes relating to poverty alleviation, education, employment, supply of drinking water, health facilities and so on, we shall be able to counter claims and myths with facts, and suggest what changes are necessary to make the pro-programmes actually work. We will also be able to explain in concrete terms why this ruling group is not likely to make very much progress in fulfilling its promises.

Collection and dissemination of such information will be one essential step towards ensuring the building of an informed electorate which need not be carried away by "waves" of sympathy or antipathy but which participates in political processes, keeping its own interests in mind.

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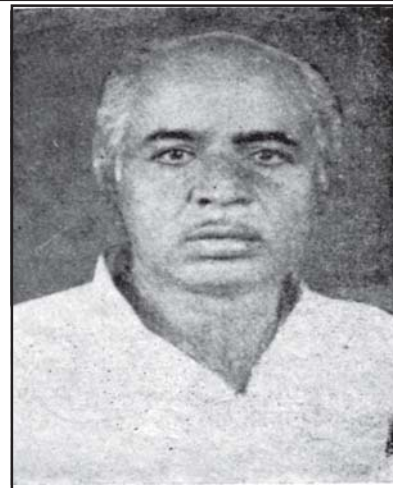
A Ray of Hope- in the Midst of Hatred

IN the midst of looting, murder and hatred that prevailed in Delhi and other cities during the three days following Indira Gandhi's assassination, Prabhu Dayal, of Baljit Nagar, died in the process of helping three women escape death by burning.

Prabhu Dayal's wife says that on November 1, he had gone to his employer's house in Wazirpur. The family lived on the first floor and the ground floor was used as a factory. When he reached there, only three women were at home—a middle aged woman, her daughter-in-law and granddaughter. Just then, a mob approached, and Prabhu Dayal tried to reason with them to prevent them from burning down the house. But they set fire to the house and went ahead. Prabhu Dayal helped the three women to climb down. While he was coming down, the support gave way and he fell in the midst of machine tools on to the ground floor. He was taken to hospital only after the police were informed. He died in hospital on November 8.

It would have been perfectly in keeping with the general mood of those days if Prabhu Dayal had run away, leaving the Sikh women to face the crowd on their own. In fact, three armed guards stationed to guard the house by the Sikh owner of the house did in fact run away. But Prabhu Dayal decided, in that instant, to stay and face the crowd.

Prabhu Dayal has left behind his wife, Atam Devi, two daughters and a son. Atam Devi works in an export factory as a thread cutter and earns Rs 317. The older girl is in first year BA and the two younger children in school. They live in a rented house. With difficulty, Prabhu Dayal had managed to start construction of a house in Uttam Nagar, on which he had



Prabhu Dayal

spent Rs 20,000. Now it stands incomplete. Atam Devi has received the compensation money of Rs 10,000 from government.

Even while praising her husband for his noble action done in the cause of humanity, she feels that he should have thought of his family before he faced the crowd. This ambivalence is understandable since her relatives have done little except blame Prabhu Dayal for her plight.

By acting as he did, even at the expense of his family's welfare, Prabhu Dayal kept alive that important element, hope, which many people lost after witnessing the November carnage.

—Prabha Rani

An Appeal

Manushi is collecting funds to contribute towards the support and education of Prabhu Dayal's children. We appeal to readers to donate generously. All contributions will be put in fixed deposit in the name of his wife and daughter. Please send money in the name of Manushi Trust with a covering letter stating that this is for the Prabhu Dayal fund.

It would also be of great help if anyone can help Atam Devi get a better paid job. She has knowledge of tailoring and is also prepared to work as a school attendant.