GANDHIAN PERCEPTION OF THE HARIJAN PROBLEMS

Dissertation Submitted for the Degree of Master of Philosophy IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

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ALIGARH (INDIA)
1992
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that Mr. Shiminraiz has completed his dissertation on "Gandhian Perception of the Harijan Problems" under my supervision. The work is original and is suitable for submission for the award of M.Phil degree in Political Science.

(Prof.) Moinuz Zafar Khan
Supervisor
NOTE

The word 'Harijan' has been banned by the U.P. Government but as we are conducting research on Gandhian thought, we can not avoid the use of the term as Gandhiji called them.

However, at the printing stage, when the dissertation will be published, the word Harijan will be substituted by some other word like Scheduled Caste or Untouchables both on the title cover and in the body of the work.
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Gandhiji was the greatest political leader of India with charismatic qualities. He has left his marks not only on Indian politics but also on many more aspects of Indian life. He was a great champion of freedom for India through truth, non-violence and non-cooperation. To struggle for freedom, unity among people of various religions and castes, was essential. He tried his best to keep the various Indian communities - Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Sikhs together. But the greatest obstacle that came in his way was the division among the Hindus on the basis of caste. The lowest of the four, the Shudras called by many names like, Chandalas, Panchamas, Melachchas, scheduled castes etc. were given the name "Barioans" by Mahatma himself. The most common factor affecting all these various shades and colours, and occupations of these shudras, by whatever name you call them is the concept of untouchability. The belief among the caste Hindus that any one who touches them becomes impure, has degraded them to such an extent that they are not even considered as normal human beings. How can such a minority of more than 60 million people could participate in the freedom struggle, shoulder
to shoulder with the caste Hindus, was a great dilemma for Gandhiji. The onset of modern civilization along with the British rule in India was making them conscious of their rights as equal human beings and the apathy shown by the caste Hindus towards their lot was bringing the two to a point of conflict. Freedom for whom? Freedom for remaining sub-humans for all time to come or freedom only for the upper castes, were the questions being raised by their leaders.

Gandhiji tried to perceive the problem in all its dimensions. He could see, perhaps, that if the problem is not solved in time, the conflict would become inevitable. He did, whatever he could, to convince the caste Hindus to give up their false sense of superiority of race and to treat the 'untouchables' on equal footing at least socially. For this he invoked religion, interpreted it in his own way but, the bulk of Hindu religious elite did not bother. Only the Congressmen, who had no religious authority, followed his new interpretation. But the masses of the caste Hindu society could not be converted to his perception as they, in matter of religion, followed the religious leaders like Acharya, Shankracharya, Mathadhish, Pujaris and saints etc., and not the western educated political leaders. The interpretation given to caste, in religious scriptures by
these religious leaders for centuries, and continued till now is really the religion of the people, and not the Gandhian interpretation.

The Harijans have not only the problem of untouchability; many more problems like - dirty occupation of scavenging, low-paid employment, economic hardships, slum-dwelling, illiteracy follow from untouchability. They are not only untouchables but also, economically, socially and educationally, the most backward community of India. The absence of upward social mobility, in a caste-ridden society, perpetuates their poverty and all other evils. These problems can not be solved by simply making these untouchable Harijans 'touchable'. They have to be provided with educational facilities and upward mobility in society and this goal can be achieved only if the caste and varna system are completely abolished. The varna system does not allow them to opt for a better profession than scavenging, shoe-making and shoe-repairing and all these are lowest paid professions. Gandhi’s insistence on retaining the varna system as 'division of labour' with all its disabilities was not a correct answer to the problem. Gandhian interpretation, of the caste and varna is therefore incomplete and unacceptable to the Hindu religious readers. But Gandhiji, inspite of his short-
comings, was the first Indian leader to move in the
direction of a greatly needed social reform. One may
or may not agree with the methods, he adopted and the
way he tried to convince the caste Hindus to give up
the concept of untouchability of Shudras, the fact
remains that he atleast made them conscious of a great
stigma in the social system which they must remove. How
far he succeeded in his mission is a great question and
an effort has been made to assess his success in the
cause of Harijans.

The subject is of great importance because it
has the potential of becoming a danger to the unity
and integrity of our nation. The nation will survive
as one not merely on our hopes and pious wishes, but
on the bedrock of equality and love for all religions,
all castes and all the people of India. Harijan prob­
lem is a national problem like Hindu-Muslim problem.
If we fail to solve it in a peaceful manner there are
greater dangers ahead. No nation can live in peace
without providing the bare necessities of life and
facilities of development for a very large and sizable
section of its people. A study is therefore made and
with due apology to Gandhians and Congressites and all
national leaders for an objective approach to the prob­
lem. Objective approach demands that the leader and
his policy and the programmes are to be analysed in a very impartial manner. The Harijan problem is there, inspite of great efforts made by the Mahatma, shows by itself the short-comings of the movement for the reform of the social system. Inspite of the lip-service paid by almost every Government, the problem remains the same. The latest riot at 'Kumher' in Bharatpur bears testimony to our stand. It was about seventy years ago that the Maharaja of Bharatpur gave the name of Jatav to a community of the scheduled caste living there in 'Kumher' and allowed them entry into the temples, in the hope that Jats and Jatavas would live in harmony. The incident of the first week of June, 1992 has shattered that hope. Around 1 P.M. on June 6, 1992 a mob of two thousand Jats attacked the Jatavas' Bara Mohallah and killed about ten people and burnt about three hundred houses belonging to the Jatavas community. The three hundred strong Police force which was searching the houses in the same Mohallah "did not dare to stop this armed angry crowd." It is said that the lower ranks of the Police "are dominated by the Jats and they refused to obey the orders of their superiors belonging to the other castes".

The study has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter deals with the origin of the caste

system and particularly the origin of the Shudra caste. In this connection references to the Manu- smriti and the Gita are unavoidable. In these scriptures lies the root of Shudra, the untouchable, the Melachchha, Chandalas, Panchamas.

In the second chapter the development of the prejudices against the Shudras or Harijans is traced. It was very difficult to find material for the subject as no dates have been available. The thought and practice of Shudra and untouchability have developed simultaneously and had reached a stage of revolt against the system in 1932 when Ambedkar, their (untouchable's) leader, demanded a separate political and social status for more than 60 million people of his community. Gandhiji realised the implications of this demand and started working earnestly, for the reform of Hindu social structure.

In the third chapter, we have analysed the perception of Mahatma and the various measures and movements which he started to remove the inequalities imposed on this great section of the population; and advocated the theory of 'change of heart'. But there were only a few thousand hearts which were changed in an ocean of thirty crore hearts. The saints and sages, the Mahatmas and the Pujaris, the Acharyas and the Sankracharyas whose preachings could convert
the hearts of the entire ocean did not take Mahatma's message to the length and breadth of the country.

Ambedkar was the only critic of Mahatma's ways, and no study of Mahatma, in this respect, can be complete without reference to him. Then there is, of course, the concluding chapter in which certain conclusions are drawn for which only the author bears the responsibility. Somewhere some harsh words might have been used but the object has been throughout, to remain objective. The author apologizes for the mistakes, if any either of analysis or otherwise.

I am extremely grateful to my Supervisor Prof. Moinu Zafar Khan for his valuable guidance, suggestions and constructive criticism which enabled me to complete this work in a much shorter period of time than usual. It is beyond words to express my gratitude in words for long hours of discussion which, in spite of his multifarious engagement Prof. Moinu Zafar spared for me. His affection, encouragement and help have made it possible for me to complete the study.

I am also indebted to Prof. A.P. Sharma, Chairman of the Department, Prof. A.S. Beg, Prof. Ishtiaque Ahmad and Dr. Subramanyam for the encouragement and help.
My special thanks are also due to Dr. Bhola Singh (Principal) D.N. College Fatehgarh and Mr. S.P. Singh, an ideal teacher and Mr. Babu Singh Nirala (Vice-Principal) who persuaded me to undertake this research.

I am also thankful to my colleague Mr. Rabban Alam and Mr. Shaukat Ali for their help in arranging certain facilities for my work. I can not forget the affectionate cooperation of Mr. Ram Prakash Nishad and Mr. Prem Narain and Mr. Shiv Prasad Singh all the staff members of 'Adarsh Shishu Shiksha Niketan' Chilla (Banda).

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CHAPTER I

THE ORIGIN OF SHUDRAS AS A CASTE.
THE ORIGIN OF SHUDRAS AS A CASTE*

Since the dawn of history, Indian society has suffered from diverse types of social disabilities. Some social problems were centred round the institution of caste. Thus caste is prominent among all the social problems. It has divided the Indians in different parts. It ranked the people, high and low. It is now the soul as well as the body of Hinduism. All the discriminations have emerged due to the caste system. It has established its roots so strong that it can not be removed easily.

An English Dramatist William Shakespear wrote about the caste-

"That monster custom, who all sense doth eat of habits devil." 1

Actually, caste is the curse of India and the parent of India's woes. John Wilson wrote-

"It is the great enemy of enlightenment and improvement and advancement in India. It is the grand obstacle to the triumphs of the gospel of peace in India. Its evil doings of late, it is not too bold to say, have moved earth below and heaven above and hell beneath." 2

If we try to know about the caste, we come to the conclusion that it is not an Indian word. It*

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*Harijan, Shudra and untouchables are the words used for the same caste interchangeably.


has been derived from the 'Casta' a Portugese word. It expresses its meaning as 'mould', 'race', 'kind' and 'quality'. First of all it was used by the Portuguese when they first came in the East. The Indian word is 'Jati' equivalent to the Latin gens and Greek "race or nation", while Jati-bheda, the representative of the foundations of the caste system means the "Distinctions of race (gentis discriminima)" Varna, another word used for it by the Hindus, originally meant a difference in 'colour'. Gradually these Indian words conveniently rendered by 'CASTE', have come to represent not only varieties of race and colour, but every original, hereditary, religious, instituted, and conventional distinction which it is possible to imagine. Caste has its peculiar recognitions - though of a discordant character, of creation, formation, constitution, and birth, in all varieties of existence and life, whether vegetable brutal, human, or super human. It gives its directions for recognition, acceptance, consecration, and sacramental dedication, and vice versa, of a human being on his appearance in the world. It has for infancy, pupilage, and manhood, its ordained methods of sucking, sipping, drinking, eating and voiding; of washing, rinsing, anointing, and smearing; of clothing,
dressing, and amounting; or sitting, rising, and reclining; or moving, visiting, and travelling; of speaking, reading, listening, and reciting; and of meditating, singing, working, playing and fighting." 3

In this way we see that all the social system depends on the caste system. Caste interferes with all the relations and events of life. It reigns supreme in the number of classes and divisions of the Hindus. It deals with death, burial, and burning. It is the guiding principle of each of the classes and divisions of the Hindus viewed in their distinct or associated capacity. A caste is any of the classes or divisions of Hindu society. All the authority of caste rests partly on written laws, partly on legendary fables and narratives, partly on verbal tradition, partly on the injunctions of instructors and priests, partly on custom and usage and partly on the caprice and convenience of its votaries. According to Manu, the roots of law are the whole Vedas, in which every thing concerning castes is vividly described. Manu himself had written the book 'Manusmriti'. In which he had given an unique importance to caste in the social system of India. He says, "no doubt that man who shall

follow the rules prescribed in the Shurti (what was heard, from the Veda) and in the Smriti (what was remembered, from the law) will acquire fame in his life, and in the next in expressible happiness." 4

In this way we can say that caste has its marks, and signs, and symbols, and symbolical acts, as well as its laws and customs. Caste is like a crown on the head of Hinduism.

The origin of caste system is founded in many Hindus scriptures. If we go through the 'Manusmriti' which is written by Manu, we found that Manu had emphasized the origin of caste system in the following words -

4. Quoted from 'Manusmriti' ii, 6, ii, 9 i, 108.

In Chapter I, Sloka 51, Manu says that for in growth of people, God Bramha had created this world under four races - The Brahma from his mouth, the Kshatriya from arm, the Vaishya from thigh and the Shudra from feet.

He also mentioned their occupations according to their castes -
Dividing their occupations God Brahma says -

To teach the Vedas, to receive and to take the
gifts, these are all the works performed by the
Brahama for the Brahmans.

To protect the people, to give gifts, to perform
Yajna, to read the Vedas, and not to busy in the
luxurious things, etc. were to to be performed by
the Kshatriyas.

To protect the animals, to do exchange of things,
to sell and buy, to give the gifts to the Brahamana,
to earn the interest, to perform the field works,
etc. were appointed for the Vaishyas.

And the last come the Shudras -

According to Manu, the God Brahma created the
Shudras for the service of others three upper castes
(Brahmana, Kshatriya and the Vaishya). Being happy

5. From the 'Manusmriti' Chapter I, Slokas No. 31,
87, 88, 89, 90 and 91.
they will serve to the upper castes, because to
serve them are the main and pious duty of the Shudras.
It was Manu's view that the original development of
humanity was confined to the four castes. As he said
that, three castes, the Brahmanas, the Kshatriyas and
the Vaishyas are twice born, the fourth, the Shudras
are once-born and there is not a fifth. He again says -

1. "The Brahmanas were produced from the
mouth of the God Brahma. They have
a right to the use of the sixteen sacra-
ments and three religious works."

2. "The Kshatriyas have proceeded from the
arms of the God. They have a right
to the use of the sixteen sacraments
and three religious works."

3. "The Vaishyas have proceeded from the
thigh of the God. They have a right
to the use of the sixteen sacraments
and three religious works."

4. "The Sudras have proceeded from the
feet of God. They have a right to
the use of twelve sacraments. Their
duty is to serve the other three
castes."

This artificial system of caste is not the
growth of a single age, or even of a few centuries.
The earliest sources of information on Indian Society
are of course, the oldest portions of the vast and
varied body of Indian literature, dominated in Vedas

p. 53.
they are four in numbers:

1. The Rig Veda,
2. The Sama Veda,
3. The Yajur Veda,
4. The Athar Veda,

The Rig Veda is the oldest. It contains oldest materials in its oldest form. It has 12000 verses.

The Sama Veda occupies second place. It has 7000 verses. The Yajur Veda is found in two collections, one of them is called Krishna or Black, other is called Shukla or white.

The Atharveda is the latest precedence. It has 6015 verses.

The time of Vedas are fixed by the 'History of Ancient Sanskrit' literature about 1200 to 1000 B.C. In these Vedas the Indian caste system developed and further divided various sub-castes. First of all the name of the fourth class, the Shudra occurs only once in the Rigveda. It seems that this class represented domestic servants, approximating very to the position of slaves. The Shudras are described.
as "the servant of another" to be expelled at will; and 'to be slain at will.' 7

It is the Atharveda, the latest of the vedic collections that gives some vivid description of the development of caste. In this period Brahmans were regarded as priests and they were dominant in some particular offices. They were not only priests but also the lords of the prince and peculiar privileges were consequently enjoyed them.

"The Vedic 'Sutras' the period of which probably ranges from 600 to 200 B.C. and which are intermediate between the Brahmanas and the law books, showed a marked growth in the development of caste." 8

Slowly caste emerged from age to age in its worst forms. If we study the caste through ages, we find that it has grown into four periods -

1. The first the Vedic period - ending about B.C. 600 and comprising the literary data of the Vedic Samhitas and the Brahmans.

2. The second period is called as the post-Vedic

7. From 'Caste and Race in India', Popular Library of Indian Sociology and Social Thought, p. 50
period, extending to about the third century of the Christian era. This period has three types of literature which throws light on this subject. The sacred laws of the Aryans present the orthodox and the epics testify to the contemporary practice. Buddhist literature is also available in this period. It gives the evidence that there should be no discrimination among the castes.

3. The third period is called the period of the Dharma-Shastras and ends with the tenth or eleventh century A.D. There are some chief exponents as Manu, Yajna Valkya and Vishnu etc.

4. The fourth period may be called the modern period and it brings us down to the beginning of the 19th century. The customs and beliefs of contemporary Hindus are those that were mostly fixed and classified by the writers of this period. It was during this period that the present day varnacualrs of India were being evolved. 9

If we go through the Rigveda, it never mentioned the four classes. It mentioned only three classes — Brahma, Kshatra, and 'Visha'. The first two classes

represented broadly two professions of the poet-priest and the warrior chief, while other class was known as common people. But in the later hymn 'Purushasukta' has been made a reference to four orders of society. But the word 'Varna' or 'caste' never appeared in the Rigveda. At that time there was no discrimination among the castes. But slowly in the later period it took as vital form and separated the Indian society in so many sub-castes.

The word 'Varna' has been mentioned in the later literature, after varna the society was divided as the 'Varna Shrama Dharma'. The word 'Arya Varna' of the 'Aryan people' that is contrasted with the Dasa Varna, were known in ancient time. The 'Shata Patha Brahma' describes the four classes as the four Varnas. Varna means colour and it was in this sense that the word seems to have been employed in contrasting the Arya and the Dasa, referring to their fair and dark colours respectively. This colour system was so strong that later on the classes came to be regularly, described as Varnas. Four different colours indicated the four castes of the society.

In the time of Rigveda the fourth class of the society, the shudras were mentioned. In this
time this class represented domestic servants, very near in the position of slaves. The Shudras are described as the servant of another, "to be expelled at will".

"Panchavimsha Brahmana" defines this position still more bad. It declared that 'the Shudra even if he be prosperous, can not, but be a servant of another washing his superior's feet, being his main business.'

In this way in the Rigveda a marked distinction was drawn between the Arya and the Dasa. In the later Vedic literature this demarcation tends to be drawn between the Arya and Shudra who are being described as of dark colour.

The Brahmanic literature of the post-Vedic period has discussed the four varnas, mentions certain mixed castes (Shankar Jati). "It is also stated that God created the Shudra to be the slave of all is replaced, and he is given the name Padja (born from the feet). He is to be supported to be fed, to be clothed with the remnants and cast away of food and raiment by the three Varnas".

11. Quoted from 'Baudhayana', p. 59.
Since Rigveda to present day the caste system has developed in many ways. In the present time there are many castes, sub-castes. India's two great Hindu epics 'The Ramayana' and 'The Mahabharata' are also given sanction to the caste system. 'The Ramayana' is the story of Ramchandra, the king of Ayodhya, and the 'Mahabharata' is the story of 'Kauravas' and 'Pandavas'. In these two great epics the names of 'Melachchhas' and 'Chandalas' were given to the fourth class are Shudras. 'Harvinsha' a portion of 'Mahabharata' says that -

"Prishadara, originally a Kshatriya became a Shudra for killing his Guru's cow and that two sons of 'Nabhagarishta' originally vaishyas became, Brahmansas." 12

To the various and contradictory accounts of the origin of caste the following is added -

"The renowned Sunahotra (a king of the lunar race) was the son of Kshatraviddha' and had three very righteous sons, Kasha, Shala and the mighty Christsamada. The son of Christsamada was Shunka, from whence sprang the Shaukar, Brahmansas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras." 13

12. Quoted from 'Harvinsha', p. 419.
In 'Harvinsa' we find again a glimpse of origin of caste, as given below—

"Vishnu sprang from Brähama, exalted above the power of sense and absorbed in devotion, becomes the 'Patriarch Daksāṇa' and creates numerous beings. The beautiful Brähmanas were formed from an unchangeable substance (Kṣra) the Vaishyas from alternation (Vikara) and the Shudras from a modification of smoke. The Brähmanas were fashioned with white, the Kṣatriyas by red and the Vaishyas and the Shudras by yellow and blue colours. Thence his creatures attained in the world the state of fourfold castes as Brähmanas, Kṣatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras." 14

According to orthodox view of the mixed castes the following is the good summary—

1. Direct from God — The Brähmana, the Kṣatriya the Vaishya and the Shudra. ... ... 4

2. From the Anuloma — The Murdha-Vasikta, the Paras-\shara, the Mahishra, the Legara, and the Vaitali\ka. ... ... ... ... ... 6

3. From the Pratiloma — The Suta, the Vaidehika, the Chandala, the Magodha, the Kṣ̣hata, Nishada, the Ayogava. ... ... ... ... ... 6

4. From the Vartyas and the Sankuras together according to the preceding books. ... 36
To which are to be added, from the Para-
Shurama Pratapa. ... ... ... 22
Total of castes enumerated. ... ... 134

"The colour of the Brahmans is white, the colour of the Kshatriya is red, of the Vaishya as yellow and of the Shudras black. These colours are very suggestive, white indicates peace and light; light suggests enlightenment, red is the colour of blood. It suggests force and power and danger also. Yellow is the yellow gold and it refers to getting and spending of money. Black is darkness just the opposite of light. 'Chankya' the famous politician-philosopher has also presented the four classes with a division of functions for all." 16

Any way we see that caste system was the steel frame of Hinduism. Every thing in the Hindu society is ranked according to one's Jati. It is more ancient than the Vedas which recorded its existence at that time. Originally, the society seems to have been differentiated into three or four

15. See: John Wilson : op. cit. p. 64
castes. The original castes (Broke-up) into various smaller castes and sub-castes. According to words of A.R. Desai -

"The status of a man born in a particular caste was determined by the rank of that caste in this hierarchy once born in that caste, his status was predetermined and immutable. Thus birth decided his status which could not be altered by any talent, he might show or wealth, he might accumulate. Similarly the caste in which a man was born predetermined what vocation he would pursue. He had no choice thus, Birth decided the occupation of a man". 17

There are some features of castes, these features are responsible for the recent changes. The features of the caste prevailing through the past continues may be described under nine heads: hierarchy, endogamy, and hypergamy, occupational association, restriction on food, drink and smoking, distinction in customs, dress and speech, pollution, ritual and other privileges and disabilities, caste organization and caste mobility. 18

All the factors that are given above are the main features of caste system. They are totally responsible for the division of Indian society. Every aspect plays its role in society to dividing it into different parts. That is the reason everywhere hatred, discrimination, feeling of high and low, untouchability are pervaded. Since beginning up to 1901 A.D. Indian castes have been divided as follows:

"From mixed unions between the different varna or between the varna and the off-spring of mixed unions and so forth come the various caste of which 2378 were actually counted at the Indian Census of 1901, some numbering into millions, others comprising a few individuals. To say that there are some 3000 different castes in India is probably to run little risk of exaggeration." 19

Thus caste sprang not only from the four varnas but from the infinite number of corporations and of groups of relatives into which these four varnas were divided. Mostly caste is an artificial creation of cunning people.

We should also study about the caste during the Buddhist period. According to Dr. Max Muller, some time between 600-200 B.C. Buddha religion came

into existence in India. During this time Brahmanas were known as the guardians of caste. Buddha religion in its most important social aspect was a reaction against caste. The word Buddha is not a name, but an appellative. It means the "intelligent one", other common denominations of Buddha were 'Shakya Muni' the sage of the Shaky tribe; Shakya Prabhu. The Shakya Lord, Shakya Singh, the Shakya Lion; Prabhu Gautama, the distinguished one of Gautama family; Bhagarat, the worshipful one, emphatically so called; Siddharta, the one who has obtained perfection. Buddha belonged originally to the Kshatriya caste. His father was Suddhodana the king of Kapilvastu. His mother, Maya or Maya Devi, daughter of king Suprabuddha, is said to have died seven days after his birth. Since birth Gautama was an intelligent man. He was married with a beautiful girl Yashodhara. But marriage did not interfere in his meditation. At the age of twenty nine he renounced the world, deeply affected by its prevailing miseries. Due to his meditation and 'Tap' he became known as God Buddha. His death occurred according to Professor Lassen in the year 543, and according to Dr. Max Muller in the year 477 B.C.

God Gautama was totally against the idol worship. The significant of his life was that he was
against caste system. In his time Buddha found the system of Indian caste in existence and vigorous operation when he commenced his studies and teachings. The four castes were dominant.

The Buddhist authors have given vivid description of Buddha's views on caste system. In a book 'Vajra Shuchi' written by Ashvagosh, the Brahmahood has been defined thus: Is it life or parentage or body, or wisdom, or the way (rather practice, acharya) or acts, i.e. that is morality (Karma) or the Vedas. If you say that it is life, such an assertion can not be reconciled with the Vedas; for it is written in the Vedas that the sun and the moon, and other deities, were at first quadruped; and some other deities were animals and afterward became Gods, even the vilest of the vile have become Gods. From these words it is clear that Brahmahood is not life.

If again, you say that Brahmahood depends on parentage or birth, we explain it that in the Smriti "Achala Muni was born of an elephant and Kesha Pingala of an owl, and Agastamuni from the Agasti flower, and Kausika Muni from the Kusha grass, and Kapila from a monkey, and Gautama Rishi from a creeper that entwined a Salatree, and Drona Acharya from an earthen pot, and Taittiri Rishi from a partridge and Parshu Ram from
dust, and Shringa Rishi from a deer, and Vyasa Muni from a fisher woman, and Kaushika Muni from a female Shudra and Vishvamitra from a Chandalini and Vashishta Muni from a strumpet, not one of them had a Brahmana mother, and yet all were notoriously called Brahmans."

According to Buddha Dharma all castes are one. It can be clear by giving an example. If I have four sons by one wife, the four sons having one father and mother must be all essentially alike. Know too that distinctions of race among beings are broadly marked by differences of conformations and organization; thus the foot of the elephant is very different from that of horse; that of the tiger unlike that of the deer; and so of the rest, and by that single diagnosis we learn that those animals belong to very different races. But I never heard that the foot of a Kshatriya was different from that of a Brahmana, or that of a Shudra. All men are formed alike and are clearly of one race. Every body has same blood, organs and habits. These are all the fruits of the same tree.

Buddha Dharma gave the teachings of brotherhood, and equality of social status. It was the only

20. Quoted from 'Smiti', pp. 297-298
reason that thousands of people changed of their religion and adopted the Buddha religion. Chiefly, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes (shudras) accepted it. In Buddha religion, only knowledge has been known superior. By knowledge, men may be learned and respected persons in society. He can be just equal to God by the 'Tap' and knowledge. That is why Lord Buddha left all his worldly pleasures and went to the shelter of knowledge, 'Buddham Sharanam Gachchhami'. This was the slogan of Buddhist.

UNTUCHABILITY

Since origin of the Sudras, untouchability came into existence. They were treated as not only servants, or dirty men, scavengers, hated persons, but also suppressed by the upper castes, and hence they became untouchables. From very beginning the untouchables were regarded as the source of pollution due to their dirty occupations. To carry the dead cattle, to sweeping, removing night soil etc. were the main occupations of the untouchables. Untouchability meant pollution by the touch of certain persons by reason of their birth in low caste or a low family. It is generally seen in Hindu religion. It would be useful to know that how untouchability came into
existence. B.R. Ambedkar in his book 'The Untouchables - who were they and why they became untouchables'? discussed some old beliefs of defilement. He said that defilement was caused by -

(1) The occurrence of certain events.
(2) Contact with certain things, and
(3) Contact with certain persons.

Among the events of occurrences of which was held by primitive men as certain to cause defilement were included birth, initiation, puberty, marriage, cohabitation and death etc.

Contact with certain things was also the source of defilement, for example, the Shudras used to remove dead cattle, and all the dirtiest things, which were all the sources of defilement.

Contact with certain persons gave them also the atmosphere of defilement. In ancient time all the Shudras used to live at the out skirt of villages. Due to stigma of Shudras, they had been removed from the villages, so they settled out side the villages, with their community. 22

Ambedkar wrote on this question, why the untouchables used to live out of the village? He said -

"As the question of the separate settlement of the untouchables has never been raised before. Naturally there exists no theory as to how the untouchables came to live outside of the village. There if, of course, the view of the Hindus Shastras and if one wants to dignify it by calling it a theory one may do so. The Shastras, of course, say that the 'Antajas' should live and have their abode outside the village, for example Manu says -

"X51 - But the dwelling of the Chandalas and the 'Shvapkas' shall lie outside the village, they must be made Apapatras and their wealth (shall be) dogs and donkeys."

"52 - Their dress (shall be) the garments of the dead (they shall eat) their food from broken dishes, black iron (shall be) their ornaments and they must always wander from place to place." 23

It was the reason that untouchables lived inside the village originally but when the stigma of the untouchability was imposed on them, they were forcefully removed from the village and began to live

23. Quoted from 'Manusmriti' X51 and X52, p. 25.
outside the villages. According to Ambedkar in primitive ages Hindu society was passing from nomadic life to the life of a settled village community. In those days there were two types of societies - settled tribes and broken men. The settled tribes founded and formed the village community and the broken men lived in separate quarters outside the villages for the reason they belonged to a different tribe. The untouchables were originally broken men.

It has two sets of such evidentiary facts -

One set of facts comprise the names - 'Antya', 'Antyaja' and 'Antyavasin' given to certain communities by the Hindu Shastras. These all words have their from the word 'Antya'. According to Hindu Shastras it means one who is born last and as the untouchables. According to Hindu order of divine creation is held to be born last. The word 'Antya' means an untouchables. According to B.R. Ambedkar views -

"'Antya' means not end of certain but end of village. It is name given to those people who lived on the outskirts of the village. The word 'Antya' has therefore a survival value. It tells us that there was a time when some people lived inside the village and some lived outside the village and that those who lived outside, the village, i.e. on the Antya of the village were called Antyaja." 24

In this way they lived outside the village from the beginning because they were broken men who belonged to a separate tribe from the one to which the settled tribe belonged.

Racial differences as the origin of untouchability:

The theory of origin of untouchability has been summarized by Stanley Rice. Rice has divided it into two parts. According to him the origin of untouchability is to be found in two circumstances—race and occupation. Here we shall discuss the theory of racial differences as the basis of untouchability. This theory contains two elements—

(1) that the untouchables are non-Aryan, non-Dravidian aboriginals and

(2) that they were conquered and subjugated by the Dravidians.

According to Rice there have been two invasions on Indian, first is the invasion of India by the Dravidians. They conquered the non-Dravidians aborigines, the ancestors of the untouchables and made them untouchables. The second invasion is the invasion of India by the Aryans. The Aryans conquered the Dravidians. He does not say how the conquering Aryans treated the conquered Dravidians.
If pressed for an answer he might say - they made them Sudras. After Dravidians came the Aryans, the Aryans conquered the Dravidians and made them Shudras.

Occupational origin of untouchability:

According to Rice the origin of untouchability is to be found in the unclean and filthy occupations of the untouchables, and these filthy works made them untouchables. In Narad Smriti, it is written that all the impure work will be done by the Shudras and other works will be done by the labourers. Sweeping, removing rubbish, carrying the night-soil, removing the dead cattle etc. were the works which were performed by the Shudras and that is the reason that they are regarded as the untouchables till today.

Beef-eating as the root of untouchability

We have discussed many causes of the origin of untouchability, yet B.R. Ambedkar cite another cause about the origin of untouchability. Ambedkar stated Broken men, in addition to being Buddhist retained their habit of beef-eating which gave further ground for offence to the Brahmans. In ancient time beef-eating was not prohibited by the Hindu Shastras.

25. See - Narad Smriti.
Manu Smriti (V. 11 to 18) did not prohibit the slaughter of cow; according to Smith, 'It is noteworthy that Ashoka's rule does not forbid the slaughter of cow which apparently continued to be lawful. Ambedkar started with the statement that the Brahmans were the greatest beef-eaters. He said that the Yajna of the Brahmans was nothing but the killing of the innocent animals, carried in the name of religion with pomp and ceremony. It was a method to concealing their appetite for beef. This habit was continued till the Buddha Dharma. Buddhist religion was totally against the violence or cow slaughter. In this way Buddhist religion became superior over the Hindu religion, Brahmans and non-Brahmanas gave up beef-eating. But the Shudras (untouchables) could not give-up beef eating. It has a reason that why Brahmans and non-Brahmanas became vegetarians? But Shudras always remained as non-vegetarians. Brahmans and other upper classes used fresh beef (after slaughter) while the Shudras used to take dead cattle beef. So during the Buddhist period cow slaughter was prohibited and capital sentences were given to the offenders. But there were no rules to dead cattle beef eaters. That is why the Shudras always used the beef and due to beef eating they were regarded untouchables. 26

The impure and the untouchables:

Now we should also discuss the various kinds of impure and untouchables. In 'Dharmasastras' the terms 'Antya', 'Antyaja', 'Antyavasin' and 'Bahya' were used. The following table is intended to serve the purpose -

I. Asprashya

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dharama Sutras</th>
<th>Smiriti</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Vishnu V. 104</td>
<td>1. Katyana Verses 433.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. Antya

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dharama Sutras</th>
<th>Smiriti</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Vasishtha (16 - 30)</td>
<td>1. Manu, IV, 79, VIII, 63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Apastamba (III-1)</td>
<td>2. Yajnavalkya I.148, 197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Atri 25,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Ikhita 92</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

III. Bahya

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dharama Sutras</th>
<th>Smiriti</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Manu, 28</td>
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</table>
### IV. Antyavasin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dharama Sutras</th>
<th>Smriti</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Vasishta, xviii, 3</td>
<td>2. Shanti Parvan of the Maha Bharata 141, 29, 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Madhyamangiras (quoted in Mitakshra on Yaj, 3, 280.)</td>
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### V. AntyaJia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dharama Sutra</th>
<th>Smriti</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Vishnu 37, 7</td>
<td>1. Manu, IV, 61, VIII, 277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Yajnavalkya 12, 73</td>
<td>2. Yajnavalkya 12, 73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Atri 199</td>
<td>4. Atri 199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Vedavyas 1, 12, 13</td>
<td>5. Vedavyas 1, 12, 13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The enumeration of the Antyavasin occurs in the Smritis known as Madhya Mangiras and that of the
Antyajas in the Atri Smriti, and Vedyavyas Smriti, who they are will be apparent from the following table -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Madhya Mangiras</th>
<th>Atri</th>
<th>Vedyavyas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8. Virat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>9. Dasa</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10. Bhatt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11. Kolika</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12. Pushkar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the above tables the impure and the untouchables have been shown, who were formed by the andent Hindu literature. Here the word Anya, Bhaya, Antyaja, Antyavasin have been vividly shown. 27

As for as the question of fixed period of untouchability is concerned it is not possible to fix the exact date as to when untouchability started. It is possible only an approximate date. In this connection we take two aspects -

1. fixing the upper time-limit
2. fixing the lower time-limit.

As the matter of the upper time limit is concerned those who are called Antyajas are mentioned in the Vedas. They were neither regarded untouchables nor impure. In this connection the following extract from Kane may be quoted -

"In the early vedic literature several names of castes that are spoken in the Smriti as Antyajas occur, we have Carmanna (a tanner of beds) in the Rig Veda (VI.8.38) the Chandala and Paulkasa occur in Vaj.5, the Vepa or Upata (barber) even in the Rig, the Vidalakara or Bidalkar (corresponding to the Burala of the Smriti) occurs in the Vaj.5, and the Tai, Br. Vasahpalpuli (washer woman) corresponding to the Rajakar of the Smriti in Vaj. 5. But there is no indication in these passages whether they even if they formed castes, were at all untouchables." 28

Thus it becomes clear that there was no untouchability in Vedic time. In Dharama Sutras there was impurity. Even in time of Manu, there was no untouchability, we can definitely say that Manu Smriti did not enjoin untouchability. Then what is the date of

28. By Prof. Kane.
of Manu Smriti? In this connection Prof. Buhler has fixed a date which appears to be nearly truth -

According to Buhler Manu Smriti in the shape in which it exists now came into existence in the second century A.D. In this connection Daphtrary has also come to the same conclusion. He said that Manu Smriti came into being after the year 185 B.C. and not before. The reason given by Daphtray is that Manu Smriti has a close connection with the murder of Buddhist emperor Brihadratha of the Maurya dynasty by his Brahma na Commander-in-Chief Pushyamitra Sunga that took place in 185 B.C. He concludes that Manu Smriti must have been written after 185 B.C.

Now we should come in the lower limit to the birth of untouchability. In this connection we must quote Chinese travellers who are known to have visited India. Of these Chinese travellers Fah-Hlan came to India in 400 A.D. It was the reign of the Gupta Kings. The Gupta kings were the patrons of Brahananism. In this period impurity was present. The next Chinese traveller who came into India was Yuanchwong. He came to India in 629 A.D. He stayed in India for about 16 years. In this period untouchability had already existed. Thus we can guess that while untouchability did not exist in 200 A.D. It had emerged by 600 A.D. It can be also verified that cow killing became an
When did cow-killing become an offence? According to Ambedkar, cow-killing was made a capital offence by the Gupta kings, some time in the 4th century A.D. In this way it has been proved that untouchability came into existence about 400 A.D. It is born out of the struggle for supremacy between Buddhist and Brahmana religions.

OTHER THEORIES

The earlier European observers of the caste system were content to regard it as an artificial creation, a cunning work of the Brahmans. But it is not so. It is organic rather than artificial. Nesfield in his book 'Brief view of the caste system'. According to him, Artisans working in metals rank higher than basket makers, caste he regarded as a natural product of society in the creation of which religion played no part at all.

Nesfield's view is supported by Dahlmann in his 'Das Altindische Volkstum'. Dahlman regards Indian society as organized into three natural groups, the priesthood, the nobility and the bourgeoisie.

which are in his opinion, found in every civilized community. Caste sprang not from the four Varna but from the infinite number of corporations and of relatives into which these four Varna were divided. There was, he considers, a steady progress of development from classes to corporations and from corporations to castes.

Blunt follows Dahlmann and accepts also Risley's theory, holding that the origin of caste must be sought for in the peculiar circumstances of a complex system of society - 'a society of classes with a cross-division of guilds'. The classes were largely a matter of colour, and the ultimate result was a society divided into groups of all shades of colour, all degrees that is, of mixed blood. In his theory Blunt finds first that the functional caste is made up of sub-castes. Secondly that the functional castes have much more powerful governing bodies than the non-functional, and thirdly that while the non-functional castes claim descent ultimately from a common ancestor. The examples given by Blunt of functional castes include Brahmans, Kayastha, Sonar and Lohar, of non-functional Rajput, Khatri, Jat and Bhar.

30. See: 'Caste in India' by Blunt, pp. 170-171
Chanda in his book 'Indo-Aryan Races' has explained the castes. According to him "Colour or race difference, real and fancied, together with hereditary function, gave birth to the caste system. But as never groups formed or attached themselves to the Aryan nations, the absurdity of regarding them all as distinct colours or Varnas was recognized and the theory of Varna-Sankara or mixed caste was started to explain their origin." 31

Senart, in his well known work 'Les Castes dans, L'Inde, gave entirely a different theory of caste systems. He does not maintain that the caste system springs only from primitive 'Aryan' elements but regards them as most important in the creation of caste system, as he stresses the importance of communality and derives the exclusive communality of caste from the family worship and family meal of the primitive 'gens' or clan.

Sir Herbert Risley, in his book 'The People of India' has relied mainly on theories of race and hypergamy to explain the caste system, which he clearly regards as primarily due to colour differences and to a system of hypergamy resulting therefrom.

Several other writers follow the concept of Riseley, Prof. N.K. Dutt, Mr. Hayavadana Rao and Dr. Ghurye have regarded caste as having arisen as a result of racial differences.

Ibbetson, like Ghurye has laid great emphasis on the exploitation of their position by the Brahmans who have degraded all occupations except their own and that of their patrons of the ruling class. He explains caste as arising from a combination of tribal origins, functional guilds. It is, of course, clear enough that certain tribes are responsible for the formation of certain castes, and no less clear that certain castes are, or have been in the past, restricted to certain occupation. He again says that tribes, guilds and religious monopolies have no doubt contributed to the growth of the caste system.

A quite different concept about the origin of caste has been given by Hocart, who apparently regards the whole system as originating in ritual. He regards the Varna as a division. They represent the points of the compass, as do the colours, while, red, yellow, and black.

A theory of the origin of caste which combines both functional and racial origins has been forwarded
by Spater in his 'Dravidian elements in Indian Culture'. He emphasizes that caste is actually stronger in southern than in northern India, and suggests that caste arose in India before the Aryan invasion as a result of occupations becoming hereditary and marriages being arranged by parents within the society of the common craft because sexual maturity is early and trade secrets were thus.

A.M.T. Jackson refers in his book 'On the history of the caste system' in which he emphasized to Colebrooke's work and discuss to the development of the caste system of the internal Government of castes. He lays stress on the fact that under Hindu rule the authority of the king was called in to compel castes to keep to their proper functions. The political condition of ancient India was particularly favourable to just this kind of fission. For example - Magas-thenes, reports a hundred and eighteen different kingdoms. As a matter of fact a large number of sub-castes to bear names and the same name appear as the name of sub-castes of different main castes, a number of instances are given by JACKSON, Bombay. Thus both the Ghanchi and Muchi castes have sub-castes called Ahmadabadi, both Ghanchi and Kansaras have a sub-caste called Champaneri, etc. 32.

32. See: Caste in India, by Hutton, Oxford University Press. 1946, pp. 172-180.
In this way caste is an institution which has developed through many centuries, but since it is so firmly rooted in India and since it is found now here else. Its first beginning are to be sought in India and not outside.
CHAPTER II

SOCIAL STATUS OF THE SHUDRAS (HARIJANS)
SOCIAL STATUS OF THE UNTOUCHABLES (HARIJANS)

The untouchables form the lowest stratum of Hindu society. They were in that position for centuries. Various explanations and origin of untouchability are given by the Sociologists, but the fact remains that touch or shadow or even voice of an untouchable was deemed by caste Hindu as polluting. They were forbidden to keep animals and to use certain metals for ornaments, and had to live in unhygienic outskirts of villages. Their condition was miserable. They were denied the use of public wells and their children were not admitted to schools attended by caste Hindu children. All temples were closed to them, they could not get service even from the barbers and washermen. They were treated by caste Hindus as sub-human. Public services, including Police and military services were closed to them. They were not permitted to do any service. But mostly they followed hereditary occupations and trades of a degrading order. The social segregation kept them untouchable throughout their life. They remained socially degenerated, economically impoverished, politically servants of the upper classes and were permanently excluded from
educational and cultural opportunities.

The four varnas - the Brahmans, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Shudras were known since the ancient time. The Brahmans were regarded as the Gods on the earth, the exemption of property from royal claim, freedom from being killed and such others were the privileges of Brahmans. The four orders of society as seen in the 'Purushasukta' denoted not only in the origin of the classes but also a divine justification of the order of society. According to Ghurye, special rights for the higher classes and disabilities for the lower ones were almost a universal features of a class society. The dominance of religion was manifest in every sphere. The most distinctive feature of Hindu culture was the religious element. Religion was interwoven with the Hindu system of law. The social basis of civilization was the joint family, the village community and the caste system. The last was regarded as divinely ordained and had religious sanctions. In all the social condition of all the four classes were different from each other. Some were regarded very pious, others were known physically powerful, while the Vaishyas were
known rich in money and other materials, the Shudras were known dirty and poor men. 1

For minute study of the social conditions of the untouchables, it would be better to go back in the time of Manu. Though it is clear that 'Manusmriti' is an artificial creation of Manu, he attributed that it was Brahma who guided him for writing of Manusmriti. We find that the four classes have their origin from the God Brahma, the Creator of the World. He also divided their ranks, occupations and social values. Among all the four classes, the Brahmans, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Shudras, the later have very worse position in the society, Being human they were treated as slaves. Animals were better than the Shudras. In Chapter I, verses 91, it is stated thus -

**क्षेत्रेश्वरः सृष्टिप्रधानः कर्म समाविष्टाद् । ।
क्षेत्रामेव वणाश्व शुद्धानन्दमू मया ।।** 2

Allotting the right of occupations, God Brahma gave the lowest jobs to the Shudras. He gave them to serve the other three classes - the Brahmans, the

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2. Manusmriti : Chapter I.
Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas respectively. Since then the Shudras are treated as the servants of the society.

Their names were

मंगलम ब्राह्मण्य रत्नाधिशय विशालिनिताम्

१० शून्यशय धन संयुक्तां शून्यशय हृ ज्ञुपिनिताम्॥ ३

The Brahmans were given the names 'Mangalam' (it indicates pious) the Kshatriyas force (power, energy) and the Vaishyas names were concerning the money. But the Shudras were allotted as 'das' (servant, as - Ramdas, Shivdas, etc.).

Shudras were not authorized to wear the pious threads. They were not allowed to live in those villages where other three upper classes lived. 4

Now we come to the last stage, that is death. We see what was the condition of a Shudra after his death -

दक्षिणीनां दूरं दूरं पुरुषं दर्शनं निर्देशते

पशिमाक्षरं पूर्णं हृदया योग विज्ञानं ई॥ ५

3. Manusmriti, Chapter II.
4. Ibid " , verse 61
5. Ibid " , verse 92
Dead body of a Shudra should be carried from the door of south, while others (the Brahmans, the Kshatryas, the Vashyas) dead bodies should be carried from the doors of west, north and east, respectively. It means that south door was impure. That is why the dead body of a Shudra was to be carried from the southern door.

The discrimination among the classes was continued in every field of work. The Shudras were charged high rates of interest than other three classes. The rates were 5% to the untouchables, 4% to the Vaishyas, 3% to the Kshatryyas and 2% only to the Brahmans. 6

Punishment was the worst item to the Shudras -

If any person addressed a Brahma in insulting manner, he was liable for the dire punishment for saying so, Kshatryya was punished by 100 pans, Vaishyas by 10 pans and Shudra was punished to death. 7

6. From Manusmriti Chapt. 3 Versus 142.

7. " 8 Versus 167
It is also stated that a burning rod would be pierced into the mouth of a Shudra if he insulted a Brahmana.

If a Shudra hit a Brahmana by any part of his body according to law of Manu, king was authorized to cut off that organ by which, Brahmana was hit.

The Shudras were bound to do work as servants of the other three classes. It is stated that with or without pay, they were bound to serve to the Brahmanas. To pay any reward for their service, was depended on the mercy of the Brahmanas.

So according to Manu's code the condition of the lower classes was very bad. Manusmriti is a root of Varna, so that evil practice is continued running till now. Inspite of the Government and other social reformers, the untouchables are known as low caste, an impure person.

8. From Manusmriti Chapt. 3, Versus 279
9. " " " " Versus 413
It was a belief of Shudras that their main occupation was to serve the upper castes, because doing so they can get 'Moksha' from this dirty life. They were not authorized to education, nor they could collect the money, even then they could not demand their wages, in line of their service. To give them wages, were depend on the mercy of the Brahmans.

'A Shudra must not acquire wealth because thereby he causes pain to the Brahmans. Manu roundly declares that a Shudra can not commit an offence causing loss of his caste. So degraded was he, evidently the Shudra was regarded beyond the pale of moral influence. The Brahma­mana did not ever condescend to expect of him on adherence to his high moral precepts. A house holder when sipping water for personal purification must not use it if brought by a shudra. A member of the first three castes must not travel in the company of the Shudras. Shudras were considered to impart some of defilement to objects like bed and seat by their touch. 10

In ancient time Shudras were not entitled to take advice from the Brahmansas Manu says -

"Let him not give advice to a Shudra nor (except) to his own servant) what remains from his own table; nor classified butter of which part has been offered (to the Gods)"

10. See : Caste Race in India, op. cit. p. 91
nor let him give spiritual counsel to
such a man or inform him of the legal
expiation for his sin. Surely he who
declares the law to a servile man and
he who instructs him in the mode of
expiating sin-sinks with that very man
into the hell named Asamvrita."

The Shudras were not entitled to listen the
Vedas. The Veda is never to be read in the presence
of a Shudra and for him no sacrifice is to be per-
formed. Thus since birth to death, they were re-
stricted for their rights by the caste taboo. In
the greatest events of life and death, the privi-
ledges of a Shudra are of a very restricted charac-
ter. He must not marry in any caste superior to
his own, while Brahmanas use this right mostly.
They keep concubines in the lower castes. It was
a fashion of amusement for the upper castes people.

His life was very trifle in value of Brahmana.
His murder by a Brahman is equal only to the killing
of a cat, an owl, a frog, a dog or a crow. In the
matter of food of a Shudra, according to later Indian
literature, defines - 'A person who becomes fat by
eating Shudra's food, is of the Shudra caste. A per-
son who dies with Shudra food in his stomach becomes
a village pig or is reborn in a Shudra family. A person who sacrifices after eating with Shudra is for
saken by 'Pitris' and 'Devas' and goes to hell. The

11. Quoted from 'Manusmriti' p. 46.
wisdom of a Brahmaana looking to a Shudra becomes powerless. Food ought to be given on the ground to a Brahmaana as a dog. If a Shudra make a 'Namaskar' to a Brahmaana, and a Brahmaana accepts it, the Shudra first goes to hell, and then the Brahmaana. In the same way the food of a Kshatriya, like milk, that of a Vaishya like food; and that of a Shudra like blood. It is again discussed about the importance of food. The Brahmaana's food is holiness, the Kshatriya's like an animal; the Vaishya's like a Shudra; and a Shudra's like hell. He who eats the food of a Shudra, eats his sin. 12

During the period of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, the social status of the Shudras was not better. They were treated badly. They were hated by all the upper castes. According to the story of 'Dronacharya' and 'Eklavya' we can conclude the condition of the Shudras in the period of Mahabharata. Eklavya was a shudra, according to Vedas, but he wanted to learn archery. Rishi Dronacharya refused to teach archery to Eklavya, as he was a 'Nishada'. But the boy was determined. He made a statue of the Rishi and with the permission of the Guru, i.e. the statue, he started to practice archery. He became

an expert in the art. When Dronacharya came to know of it keeping in view the god of Arjuna, his favourite disciple, he asked Bhavya to give his right thumb as 'GuruDakshina', the teacher's fee which Bhavya did like a true disciple and lost his art for ever. 13

Persons belonging to the first three Varnas were considered fit for political, diplomatic and military services. Ministers and ambassadors were mostly from Brahmanas.

The condition of same is given in a holy scripture -

दौल, घंघार, चुंब, पशु, नारी।
मकल ताड़ना के अधिकारी।
(Drum, uncivilized, abudra, animal, and women, all are entitled to torture and sufferings). 14

The above analysis indicates that the old Indian social organization was based on the Varnas, Religious, economic, political and social life of the individual was determined by the Varna in which he was born. His or her rights and duties were determined by the very birth in a particular varna. This system put the Brahmanas at the top and the Shudras

14. From Ram Charit Manas: by Goswami Tulsidas (sanskrit). 2 3 6 0
at the lowest strata of the social organization. It has been clearly presented that during the early ages the Shudras were denied all civil, economic and religious rights. They were there to serve the Brahmans, the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas by their physical colour. It was expected of a Shudra that he should be truthful, meek and pure. Religion was not a part of his life, he could not study the Vedas, so 'Heaven and Hell' did not matter for him.

At the same time we may see the other side of the coin also. In the 4th century B.C. Shudras ruled over a vast empire which is now known as Sindh (in Pakistan) the Shudras described in the Mahabharata had their kingdom on the bank of river Saraswati. The Atharveda describes the Shudras a material race, many of them succeed in getting their daughters married in the royal families. Sumitra one of the three wives of Dashartha was a Shudra. 15

In the Islamic medieval period, the Shudras and the untouchables were denied the human rights of education, equality and liberty. Islamic message ended in despair. The Muslim rulers created sardar or

noblemen from the caste Hindus. They did not confer these privileges on untouchables. The reason of this Muslim behaviour could be traced to the prevalence of untouchability. The rulers thought that they would have to face opposition of the caste Hindus if they conferred privileges on the untouchables. In the Maharashtra empire also, though the untouchables especially 'Mahars' fought heroically against the Mohammadans, they were not so regarded. Even the great Shivaji could not abolish the system of untouchability.

The British rulers of India never gave thought to the solution of the problem of castes, in so far as it affected the nationhood of India. Ever since the 1857 rising, the Indian army was purged of the higher castes. It was regarded that the rising was largely the work of the soldiers of the high-caste Brahmanas and Rajputs, and so there was a clamour in England that the high-caste sepoys should be exterminated.

It can be safely said that the measures which the Britishers adopted were generally promulgated piece-meal and with due regard to the safety of British domination. 16

Since Vedic period till 1950, the condition of untouchables was not good. They were suppressed by the caste Hindus very badly. Untouchables were treated as serfs and got off the roads not only when Brahmans passed but even when their food was being carried along then. In Travancore untouchables hid themselves in ditches or climbed up trees to prevent atmosphere pollution. Logan's Malabar Manual and K. Padmanabha Menon's 'History of Kerala' mention that low caste women were required to keep their bosoms uncovered. One who had the impertinence to wear a dress when appearing before a member of the ruling family had her breasts cut off. Actual slavery was common. At the sea port of 'Anjengo' there was a slave market. It may be mentioned here that under pressure all temples in Travancore had been opened by the temple entry proclamation of 1937 to all Hindus even to untouchables. It was the first major move of this kind anywhere in India. 17

According to S.K. Ghosh, the conditions of untouchables was worse than animals. He said, "The first off-spring of a married woman of any caste

must be fathered by a Namboodri Brahmmana and then she could get children by her husband. This practice prevailed in Kerala." 18

Due to caste taboos, the untouchables have been suppressed by the all upper castes. All the rights were useless for them. The concept of justice had no place in the Hindu social milieu and therefore the untouchables had to lead a life of sutrine servitude. Ambedkar writes "under the rule of the Peshwa in the Maratha country the untouchables were not allowed to use the public streets, if a Hindu was coming along lest he should pollute the Hindu by his shadow. The untouchable was required to have a black thread either on his wrist or around his neck as a sign or a mark to prevent the Hindus from getting themselves polluted by his touch through mistake. In Poona the capital of Peshwas the untouchables were required to carry strung from his waist a broom to sweep away from behind the dust he treded on, lest a Hindu walking on the same should be polluted. In Poona, the untouchable was required to carry on earthen pot, hung by, his neck where ever he went for holding his spit lest his spit falling on earth should pollute a Hindu who might unknowingly happen to tread on it." 19

18. Ibid, p. 10
This was the social conditions of the untouchables which was deplorable.

A great sociologist, G.S. Ghurye has told about the untouchables in the following words:

"It is recorded that under the rule of the Marathas and the Peshwas, the 'Mahars' and 'Mangs' (Untouchables) were not allowed within the gates of Poona after 3 P.M. and before 9 A.M. because before nine and after three their bodies cast too long a shadow, which falling on a member of the higher castes - specially Brahmans defies him." 20

He again says, "Brahmanas in Mysore consider that great luck will await them if they can manage to pass through the Hisleya (untouchables) quarter of a village unmolested". 21

It was the same position in Punjab. According to Punjab Census 1911, "The restrictions regarding pollution by proximity have been for less stringent than in other parts of India, a sweeper while walking through the streets of the larger towns was supposed to carry a broom in his hand under his arm pit as a mark of his being a scavenger and had to shout out to the people warning them of his polluting presence." 22

22. Quoted from 'Punjab Census 1911, p. 413.'
Briggs has opined that the schools maintained at public cost are practically closed to such impure castes as the 'Chamars' and 'Mahars'. Both teachers and pupils in the schools make it most difficult for low caste boys to sit in the class.

In the same way, in Gujrat the depressed castes used to wear a horn as their distinguishing mark. According to Bhattacharya, the untouchables were not authorized to build their houses more than one storey. He says thus,

"In Dravidian India the disabilities of the lower castes went so far as to prescribe what sort of houses they should build and what material they might employ in the construction thereof. The Shanars and Izhavas toddy tapper of the eastern and the western castes, were not allowed to build houses above one storey in height." 23

In this way in each period the position of the 'Scheduled Castes' and 'Scheduled Tribes (untouchables) was the same. As it was thousand years ago, not any glimpse of improvement was looking in the mirror of Hinduism.

23. Quoted by G.S. Ghurey from 'Bhattacharya in Caste and Race in India, p. 12.
In December 1930, the Kallar in Rummnad pro­
pounded eight prohibitions, the disregard of which led to the use of violence by the Kallar against the exterior castes, whose huts were fired, whose granaries and property were destroyed, and whose live stock was looted. These eight prohibitions were as follows:-

1. that the Adi-Dravidas shall not wear ornament of gold and silver;

2. that the males should not be allowed to wear their cloths below their knees or above the hips;

3. that their males should not wear coats or shirts or baniyans;

4. no Adi-Dravida should be allowed to have his hair cropped;

5. that the Adi-Dravidas should not use other than earthen ware vessels in their homes;

6. their women shall not be allowed to cover the upper portion of their bodies by clothes or ravukuics or thavanes;

7. their women shall not be allowed to use flowers or saffron paste; and
the men shall not use umbrellas for protection against sun and rain nor should they wear 'sandalas'.

During the time of Ambedkar, the situation was the same. Being an untouchable by birth Ambedkar was forced to sit aside in the school. He could not mix with other boys or play cricket and other games with them. The untouchables were prohibited to learn Sanskrit. The Sanskrit teacher was adamant and did not teach Sanskrit to the untouchables. Ambedkar was forced to take Persian as the second language in High School. He said, "Though I had the eager desire to learn Sanskrit, I was forced not to learn it on account of narrow attitude of our teachers". The teachers never touched the note-books of the untouchable students. Some of them did not even ask them to recite poems nor put any questions to them for fear of being polluted, Ambedkar had to face humiliation.

When he was appointed to serve in the State of Maharaja Baroda, he was not away from that stigma of untouchability. The higher offices were managed by orthodox upper class Hindus. The ideas of pollution by touch were so strong that even the peons in his

office used to throw the office files at him lest they should be polluted. The social conditions were unfavourable and unbearable for him to continue in the service. In the same way when he was appointed as a Professor of Political Economy in Bombay College, though he was a learned man, yet the social treatment remained unchanged. The high caste Professors objected to his drinking water from the pot reserved for the professional staff. 25

Ambedkar studied deeply, the origin of the castes, then he discovered those facts, that how the Shudras became untouchables. In his study he found the following short comings in the social status of the untouchables -

1. that a shudra was to take the last place in the social order:

2. that a shudra was impure and therefore no sacred act should be done within his sight and within his hearing:

3. that a shudra was not to be respected in the same way as the other classes:

4. that the life of a shudra had no value and anybody may kill him without having to pay compen-

sation and if at all of small value as com-
pared with that of Brahmama, Kshatriya and
Vaishya:

5. that the shudras must not acquire knowledge
and it was a sin and a crime to give him edu-
cation.

6. that a shudra must not acquire property and a
Brahmana could take his property at his
pleasure:

7. that a shudra could not hold office under the
state:

8. that the duty and salvation of a shudra lay in
his serving the higher classes:

9. that the higher classes must not inter-married
with a shudra. They could, however, keep a
shudra woman as concubine, but if a shudra
touched a woman of the higher classes, he
would be liable to dire punishment:

10. that a shudra was born in servility and must
be kept in servility for ever.

Thus Ambedkar explained the condition of the
untouchables in a very clear way. According to him
the animals were better than untouchables. People like to enter into a village of an animal but did not like to enter into a village of an untouchable. Nobody like to touch him, being born in a human race they were treated by upper caste Hindu as non-human. Actually it was a great stigma over the untouchables. He writes again -

"The Hindus will not allow the untouchables entry in the schools. The Hindus will not allow untouchables to wear clean clothes. The Hindus will not allow untouchables to wear jewellery, the Hindus will not allow untouchables to put tiles on the roofs of their houses. The Hindus will not tolerate untouchables to own land, the Hindus will not allow untouchables to keep cattle. The Hindus will not allow an untouchable to sit when a Hindu is standing. There are not isolated acts of a few bad man among the Hindus. They are the manifestations of the permanent anti-social attitude of the Hindu community against the untouchables."

Hindus exploited the untouchables and enhanced a feeling of pride and dignity befitting a master class at the cost of the untouchables. The untouchables were used as forced labourers, scavengers and sweepers as they could be compelled due to their complete destitution and helplessness to work on a mere pittance and sometimes on nothing at all. Thus they could be kept to lower jobs and prevented from enter-

ing into competition for higher jobs. Their plight became worse than that of slaves.

Since beginning up to this time they were regarded by various names, such as broken men, Chandalas, depressed class, harijan, etc. Ambedkar found all these names as labels of slavery.

Issacs is of opinion that the term 'Depressed Classes' was introduced some time late in the last century in British official records. It was only in 1932 that this word was officially defined as only meaning the 'untouchables'. Ambedkar demanded inter alia a change of this name. Finally as recommended by the Simon Commission the term 'Scheduled Caste' was adopted by the Government. 27

In 1933 Gandhiji coined the new term 'Harijan'. The Constitution Assembly used the word 'Scheduled Caste' while drafting the constitution. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had earlier opposed the word 'Harijan'. If today we guess the social status of the Scheduled Castes, we find that there is a greater consciousness among the Scheduled Castes. Our Government is also very conscious in doing efforts for their upliftment. Recently

27. See: Government of India Act 1935, Para 26, Schedule I.
B.J.P. Government in M.P. and U.P. has banned the name of Harijan. Now in the above States the word 'Harijan' is illegal. This step has been taken by the Government to identify them in a better way, so that they may not feel humility in society, by calling them as Harijan. Now they will be known only as 'Scheduled Castes' and 'Scheduled Tribes'. Discussing about the scheduled castes, Muntaz Ali Khan observed —

"All the Depressed Classes' are Harijans. All the Harijans are scheduled castes. All the untouchables are 'Depressed Classes'. Harijans are scheduled castes. But not all Depressed Classes Harijans or Scheduled Castes are untouchables. However in the common usage the term Harijan denotes only the untouchables."

It is a fact that majority of the Harijans or Scheduled Castes are untouchables. As cleared by the notification of India (1950), the untouchables largely include 'Sudras' and others at the outer fringe of the caste system. The officially declared depressed classes and more often not as scheduled castes were almost the same whom Gandhiji called Harijans. 30

28. See : Government of India Act 1935, para 26,
In the concern of 'untouchables caste' Barbara R. Joshi has defined, "The untouchables' were regarded as so polluting that the touch or even the shadow of a caste member defiled members of caste Hindus, leaving the untouchable castes at the bottom of a ritually based hierarchy of castes. Those castes at the bottom of the ritual scale were generally at the bottom of the local economic scale as well, so that ritual degradation and material deprivation and dependence reinforced one another." 

It has been this combination of religiously based social discrimination and isolation with economic disadvantages which has given the institution of untouchability, its sting and its staying powers, and it is with this combination of factors that we shall be most concerned in our analysis of scheduled castes mobility and political development. Barbara R. Joshi again says, "Traditional social morals and religious values denied legitimacy to social mobility for any individual or caste. In theory, the position of individuals and the ascriptive group to which they belonged was fixed, though in practice, each caste made

exception for itself and some quite successfully altered their relative status. However, under the circumstances of severely depressed social status and economic dependency, it was extremely difficult for an untouchable caste to alter its position in society." 32

In commenting on this problem M.N. Srinivas has noted that -

"Sanskritisation (a process in which nouveaux-riches castes adjusted their ritual practices to meet the norms of higher status local groups), then restored the equilibrium (between wealth, power and rural rank) and traditionally it has been able to do this in the case of all castes except the Harijan. In the first place there were very few opportunities for Harijans to acquire wealth or political power, and in the rare cases where did acquire it, their being on the wrong side of the pollution line proves an almost insuperable obstacle to mobility." 33

Though untouchables in rural as well as in urban are equal in the eyes of law, inspite of it, the upper caste Hindus in rural areas, still torture them. There is still great feeling of untouchability in rustic villages. In some places they are treated in the same manner as were treated in the past. A lot of social

32. Barbara, R. Joshi, op. cit. p. 9

33. Quoted by Barbara R. Joshi, op. cit. p. 9.
problems are faced still by the untouchables. Robbery, atrocities, rapes, adultery, kidnapping are some recent examples in the life of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in each State of India. After the Independence, mostly these atrocities are done by high caste Hindus over scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The cases of atrocities being perpetrated on the ex-untouchables are hideous to recount. The following facts and figures are given by the Home Ministry -

"During 1969-70, five ex-untouchables were burnt alive and 85 houses of ex-untouchables were reduced to ashes, the number of atrocities was 1541." 34

There are only the reported cases. In every village of India, there take place many cases of atrocities which remain unnoticed and unreported. The number of atrocities perpetrated in different States are as follows -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M.P.</td>
<td>446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujrat</td>
<td>413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.P.</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mysore</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orissa</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of the five ex-untouchables burnt alive, three come from M.P. and one each from Orrissa and U.P. The houses are huts reduced to ashes in different States are M.P. - 28, U.P. - 13, Orrissa - 12, Tamilnadu - 9, Maharashtra 3, and Rajasthan - 5. The court has also failed to do justice to the ex-untouchables as 40 cases dealing with the untouchability offences act remained undecided during 1969 in M.P. and 64 in U.P. Due to the loopholes in the Untouchability Offences Act and of course with the connivance of the Police, U.P. in 55 cases out of 64 in 1969 and in 52 cases out of 83 no legal action was taken. 35

If we go through in Andhra Pradesh, we shall be able to know the atrocities of the Harijans. According to R.J. Rajendra Prasad "In the less than 35 years since the formation of Andhra Pradesh in 1956, Harijans numbering 303 have been killed in caste violence in the State. The Protection of Civil Rights call in the criminal investigation department took up 289 such cases but only 19 led to conviction." 36

Despite of all the facilities given by the Government to them, the people of scheduled castes

35. Quoted by G.S. Lokhande in 'Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar - A study in social democracy, 1977, p. 138
are always tortured by the higher castes people. In each State of India, there are still the latest examples to cite for evidence. I feel that a middle aged man of comparable situation hailing from U.P. and M.P., Maharashtra or Tamil Nadu will even now be able to give details of indignities and insults to which the untouchables are exposed and which are so fortuitously absent from life. I think any one from the 'Panchamar' in Tamil Nadu, the 'Mahars' of Maharashtra, the 'Sansi Sikhs' from Punjab or the 'Chamars' from U.P. will do better justice to the untouchable story. D.P. Das in his book 'The Untouchable Story' has cited some examples of the untouchables. He remarked—

"I wish, I could write the life of a true untouchable Indian such as Rajen Singh of Natharas in (U.P.) in the Aligarh District, who was done to death by fellow students of Polytechnic on 13 December, 1972. Rajen was a boarder in the hostel and he wanted to dine with high-caste fellow students. The fear of pollution put an end to his life who died at the hands of high-caste Hindu friends." 37

The grisly details as to how a Shudra's buttocks should be gashed, how he should be put to death without trial, how his property should be confiscated, how he should be killed in case he had the temerity to observe vedic rituals, how could he spend those long twenty

five years in translating the Slokas which enjoined society to burn the widows on the funeral pyre of husband? It is a wonder that without so much a disturbed conscience, he went on translating the Law-giver's threatened punishments to those who would fail to marry their daughters off at the age of eight. The grandeur of Sanskrit sat side by side with abnoxious rituals such as human sacrifice, infanticide, burning of widows, polygamy, kulunism, child-marriage, caste prejudice, untouchability. And these prejudices, practices and taboos became so powerful that life under Hindu system meant a lifeless drill of dry rituals. The Muslim rule further drove these prejudices to subterranean firmness. The Indian society lingered on and did not move forward, and this was the real India where untouchables lingered under a lengthening shadow of excruciating pain. To be free from the taboo of untouchability untouchables used the weapons of changing their religion. If we look past, we find a lot of untouchables who converted their religion. At a small village in Meenaxipuram in Tamil Nadu, on 19th February, 1981, 765 untouchables changed their religion and became Muslims. And till 15 July, 1981, in the villages - Viruranoor, Poosari, Harva, Ayakud Melaman-

38. See D.P. Bas: op. cit. pp. 290-91.
dan, Atijayudu and Koreyur in District of Ramnad (Tamil Nadu) 561, and in Thiruthuraayapundi, District Tangur 43, untouchables changed their religion and accepted the Muslim religion. 39

They changed their religion due to feeling of inferiority. Some became Muslims, others became Christians, Sikhs and Buddhists. Ambedkar encouraged them to do so. But the slogan 'change of religion' given by Ambedkar also could not solve the problems. Why was it so? It was meaningless because the neo-Buddhist lived in their old accustomed surroundings where the change of religion did not mean anything. The high caste neighbours treated them in the same old manner. The people who had changed the religion also did not expect much social upliftment.

The feeling of untouchability is not only limited in the high caste Hindus, but the untouchables themselves have prejudiced against lower than them. There is an example —

Some years ago it happened at Barsud that members of the higher castes decided to abolish untouch-

ability. They arranged an inter-caste dinner, and a Brahmana, a Bania, a Balahi and a Mehtar were invited to eat together. The dinner took place in public and the pioneers of caste-abolition were applauded by many lookers-on. When the dinner was over, the diners were received by their caste community without objection or censure. Only the Balahis (an untouchable caste) objected and out-casted the representative of their community because he had eaten with a Mehtar (an untouchable caste lower in rank than the Balahis). The Mehtar answered this slight against their caste by out-casting their representative because he had eaten with a Balahi. When the Brahmana and Bania heard of this, they could do nothing else but out-caste the man who had eaten with a Balahi and a Mehtar. 40

By this example it becomes clear that some untouchables are themselves responsible for their untouchability.

If we look towards U.P., the crime against scheduled castes and scheduled tribes by other upper castes. The figures is astonishing as the following table shows -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Scheduled Caste</th>
<th>Scheduled Tribe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rapes, hurts etc.</td>
<td>Murder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>13,967</td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>13,866</td>
<td>501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>14,308</td>
<td>493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>15,054</td>
<td>514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>18,834</td>
<td>525</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

41

Through this table the condition of the untouchables can be guessed. Though the above data are old and concerned only with the State of U.P., one can imagine as to what is happening in the rest of India.

I would like to discuss some Harijan cases during the reign of many Chief Ministers in U.P. In the reign of Mr. V.P. Singh, Dehuli riot happened where 20 scheduled caste men were killed by some Kshatriyas, gang of dacoits (Radhey and Santosh). The second incident took place few months later in Firozabad, Sarupur riot, where 11 scheduled caste men were killed by Anar Singh Yadav. In the time of Mr. Birbahadur Singh (Chief Minister of U.P.), in a Panwari riot in Agra District, where some Kshatriyas objected to a

41. From B.S.P. Office Lucknow (U.P.)
a Jatav marriage party (scheduled caste), in which 7 scheduled caste were killed by Kshatriyas. Few months back, in the reign of Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav (Chief Minister of U.P.) a riot in Sikandra Rao (Aligarh) took place, when a scheduled caste girl was raped by a Brahman boy, and 3 scheduled caste men killed. In the reign of (Mr. Kalyan Singh, Chief Minister of U.P., B.J.P. Government) a riot took place in Farrukhabad District, where 6 scheduled caste were killed by the Yadavas. In the same district at Lakhanpur village 6 scheduled caste, belonged to a family were killed by the Brahmanus. 42

In Etawah District, village Pilkhani, three family members of scheduled caste were shot dead by the Police firing. 43

In Gaya, a District in Bihar 10 scheduled caste men were killed by unknown persons. 44

In another case at Sirahul in Etawah District three family members of scheduled caste were killed

42. See : Amar Ujala (Newspaper) 12th August, 1991
Thus we see that inspite of Government control the atrocities on scheduled castes and scheduled tribes are continuing in many States of India. Many Acts and Bills are passed by Government to check this violence but the conditions remain the same.

45. See: AAJ (Newspaper), 5 April, 1992.
CHAPTER III

GANDHIAN PERCEPTION
Mahatma Gandhi's name evokes in many a heart the highest and noblest ideals of the human conduct and thought namely, truth, self-sacrifice, self-abnegation, universal love, non-violence, peace, tolerance, equality, liberty and universal brotherhood. These qualities are considered the main pillars of his personality. People also believe that he lived and actually died for these ideals. In the manner of his living, as of his death, he demonstrated the highest traits of human nature. Indians idolised him as something more than human. As Louis Fischer remarks:

"Gandhi, a private citizen without wealth, property, official title, official post, academic distinction, scientific achievement, yet men with Goyts. and armies behind them paid homage to the little man of 78 in loin-cloths."

Gandhiji, when he was a child of twelve years of age, realized that untouchability was an evil. In an address delivered as President of the suppressed classes held at Ahmadabad in April 1921 he said,

*I was hardly yet twelve when this idea had dawned on me. A scavenger named Ukha, an untouchable,*

*The words 'Barijan' 'Untouchables' are used interchangeably in these pages.

used to attend our house for cleaning latrines. Often I would ask my mother why it was wrong to touch him, why I was forbidden to touch him. If I accidentally touched Ukha, I was asked to perform ablutions, and though I naturally obeyed, it was not without smilingly protesting that untouchability was not sanctioned by religion, it was impossible that it should be so. I was a very dutiful and obedient child and so far as it was consistent with respect for parents. I often had tussles with them on this matter. I told my mother that she was entirely wrong in considering physical contact with Ukha as sinful."

During his school days, whenever he touched an untouchable, he reported this fact to his parents. His mother used to ask him to perform the easiest method for purification by touching any Muslim passing by.

It was that problem on which many a Buddha and Mahabira wept at the plight of the poor but they could not move the iron-gates of rigid Casteism. The Muslims closed their eyes to their plight and the Christians tried to solve the problem through conversion, so thereby created more problems. Gandhiji came on the scene and the things started taking a turn for the

better. Though there had already been many a social reformers in the preceding century, like Rajaram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekanand, Dayanand Saraswati, but could do very little.

Gandhi came back to India in 1915, from South Africa, and established his satyagraha Ashram at Kocharakan, near Ahmedabad in his native district of Gujrat. The purpose of this Ashram was to train the pupils in social services, to educate them and also to impart some primary industrial training to them. Once, Amritlal Thakkar asked Gandhiji, "A humble and honest untouchable family is desirous of joining your Ashram. Will you accept them?" Gandhiji welcomed them but their admission created a flutter amongst the friends belonging to Caste Hindu community, who had been helping the Ashram. All monetary help was stopped. But Gandhi was prepared for social boycott. I told my companions that, if we were boycotted and denied the usual facilities, we would not leave Ahmadabad. We would rather go and stay in the untouchables quarters and live on whatever we could get by manual labour."

On all such occasions God has sent help at the last moment. A Seth came there and he gave Rs 13,000 for Ashram.

Though in South Africa, some members belonging to this community used to visit his place and live and eat with him. His wife and other women did not seem quite to relish the admission into the Ashram of these untouchable friends. His eyes and ears easily detected their indifference. The monetary difficulty had caused him no anxiety, but this internal storm was more than he could bear. The admission of this family proved a valuable lesson to the Ashram. In the very beginning he proclaimed to the world the Ashram would not tolerate untouchability.

From that day, onward, Gandhi started writing against the practice of untouchability, in his paper 'Young India.' This paper was issued by Gandhi on 7th May 1919, from Bombay under his supervision. It was a weekly Gujarati Journal Paper.

Gandhiji could never believe that untouchability was a part of Hinduism. He wrote in Young India as follows in 1921.

"I have never been able to reconcile myself to untouchability. I have always regarded it as an excrescence in Hinduism. It is true that it has been handed down
to us from generations, but so are many evil practices even to this day." 4

He admitted that evil practices like untouchability, dedication of girls to virtual prostitution and sacrificing goats to Kali had become religious practices. These practices were irreligious and must go. He had regarded untouchability as the greatest blot on Hinduism. He also told to people that this idea had been brought home to him by bitter experiences during the South African struggle. It was due to the fact that he had been once an agnostic. 5

Untouchability Gandhi maintained, was no part of Hinduism. He wrote -

"Untouchability is not only a part and parcel of Hinduism but a plague, which it is the bounden duty of every Hindu to combat." 6

In a speech in 1925 he spoke thus, "If this is Hinduism, O, Lord, my fervent prayer is that the soonest it is destroyed, the best."

4. M.K. Gandhi; Young India, 6-10-21
5. See ; The Removal of untouchability by M.K. Gandhi p. 3
6. Young India 6-10-21
He regarded untouchability as a snake with a thousand mouths, through each of which it shows its poisonous fangs. According to Gandhi, "Hinduism will reach its perfection only when the 'untouchables' become not only touchable but thoroughly merged into the main Hindu stream. The problem could not be left to the Harijans because they were totally ignorant and suppressed to raise their voice." 7

He told to the people that Hinduism told everyone to worship God according to his own faith or dharma and so it lived at peace with all religions. The basic principles of Hinduism are according to Gandhi, the same as those of the universal human religion. In his words, "It is the good fortune or misfortune of Hinduism that it has no official creed...... If I were asked to determine Hinduism, I should simply, search after truth through non-violent means. A man may not believe in God and still call himself a Hindu." 8

It means that in Gandhi's conception of Hinduism the importance of the four moral principles - Satya, ahinsa, brahmacarya, and aparigraha, is primary and absolute while that of the belief in any studying of the holy books i.e. the Vedas, the Shrutis, and the Smritis, is secondary and relative.

Gandhi did not agree on untouchability as approved by religion. In his words,

"Untouchability is not a sanction of religion. It is a device of satan. The devil has always quoted scriptures. But scriptures can not transcend reason and truth." 9

Gandhiji wanted to uplift Hinduism and therefore he regarded the untouchables as an integral part of the Hindu community. He was pained when he happened to see a single 'Bhangi' driven out of the fold of Hinduism. But he did not believe that all class distinctions could be obliterated. He had deep faith in the doctrine of equality.

Gandhi again observed -

"To remove untouchability is a penance that caste Hindus owe to Hinduism and to themselves. The purification required is not of 'untouchables' but of the so-called superior caste. There is no vice that is special to the 'untouchable' not even dirt and insanitation. It is our arrogance which blinds us. Superior Hindus to our own blamishes and which magnifice those of our down trodden brethern whom we have suppressed and whom we keep under suppression." 10

The Vedas, Shastras and Smritis, Gandhi could not rewrite them, could not improve upon them but he interpreted the holy books in his own way and he claimed that he was a Sanatanist. For him Vedas

were indefinable as God and Hinduism. The reverent reading greatly strengthened his faith in the Gita.

In this connection he opined.

"I have letters, some of them angrily worded, from those who style themselves Sanatanists. For them untouchability is the essence of Hinduism .......... Their definition of a Sanatanist is obviously different from mine. For me 'Sanatan Dharma' is vital faith handed down from generations belonging even to prehistoric period and based upon the Vedas and the writings that followed them. For me the Vedas are as indefinable as God and Hinduism." 11

Gandhiji had accepted that the service of the 'untouchables' was the service of Hinduism, and the service of Hinduism was the service of humanity. Hinduism was no exclusive religion. It tolerated no intolerance. Intolerance is to be a sin. But unless and until we befriend the Harijan, unless and until we treated them as our own brother we could not treat humanity as one brotherhood. 12

Gandhi remarks on his Hinduism-

"Hinduism is like a mighty ocean which receives and absorbs all religious truth. It is a tragedy that India and the Hindus seem to have forgotten their heritage." 13

12. See Harijan 11.1.1935
His religion was Hinduism. His Hinduism was very vast. It was a grand evolutionary process as ancient as time and embraces the teachings of Zoroaster, Moses, Christ, Mohammed, Nanak and other prophets. His Hinduism was not an exclusive religion. In it there was room for the worship of all the prophets of the world. Hinduism tells everyone to worship God according to his own faith or Dharma. He had great faith in his Hinduism. In his own words -

"Hinduism is like the Ganges pure and unsullied at its source, but taking in its course the impurities in the way, even like the Ganges it is beneficent in its total effect. It takes provincial form in every province, but the inner substance is retained everywhere." 14

The beauty of Gandhian Hinduism lies in its all embracing inclusiveness. What of substance is contained in any other religion is always to be found in Hinduism.

Gandhi was a firm believer in the Geeta and the Vedas. According to him, Vedas are the source of knowledge. He was much impressed by the Geeta (a holy book). This book teaches us the lesson of equality and brotherhood. It tells us that members of all the

14. M.K. Gandhi: Young India 8.4.1926
four Castes should be treated on an equal basis. It is therefore our duty to see that they (untouchables) do not feel that they are -------- on looked down upon. The Geeta attributes the four fold Caste system to God but at the same time the emphasis is on functional distinctions and not on distinctions of birth. (Jati)

Gandhi quotes the 'Bhagvat Geeta' in support of his views and believes that it refuses any kind of distinction which causes separation of human beings into different sects. Similar teaching he found in the 'Quran' and other scriptures, realization of the highest goal or Moksha. According to him, it depends upon purity and not on mere loyalty to the scriptures. Everyone even the most lowly can attain Moksha if he has purity of heart. Since religion is the matter of heart, and not the matter of blind obedience to the authority.

Gandhiji accused priests for defaming them. In those days priests, who were known as the real protectors of religion, became unsocial and immoral. Their actions were showy towards religion. Corruptions was the main object of the priests. In this reference Gandhiji said, "It is a painful fact but it is a historical truth, that priests who should have been the
real custodians of religion have been instrumental in destroying the religion of which they have been custodians. 15

Gandhiji was a firm believer of Hindu Dharma. Upto 1922 Gandhi was a defender of the caste system. But after 1925 he became an upholder of varna system. He understood Hinduism to be a 'living organism liable to growth and decay'.

He upheld the principle of caste division of society as it was in conformity with varna dharma, the original Indian conception of natural classes, but he opposed the caste system as the institution when it had degenerated to a great extent, so that social stratification on the basis of caste had become the order of the day. In order to understand his point of view clearly it would be better if we classify his views on the subject under three heads—

a) his conception of varna
b) caste as varna
c) caste as distinguished from varna.

a) His Conception of Varna:

Gandhi's views regarding varna, varnashram dharma, occupy an important place in his social philosophy. These views give us a clear idea of the social order which he wanted to establish. He believed that non-violent social order is possible only if varnashram dharma is observed in its pristine purity. Varna ashrama consists of two words - Varna and Ashrama. Varna means the law of heredity and Ashrama means the stage of life. There are four varnas - Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. The different varnas, according to Hinduism are confined to different professions for earning livelihood. So the Brahma has to earn his livelihood by imparting education and instruction to other varnas. The Kshatriya has to earn his livelihood by protecting and providing security to other varnas. The Vaishya and Shudra have to earn their livelihood by wealth producing activities and manual labour, respectively. This was the broad division of the society on the basis of professions.

Similarly there are four ashramas or the four stages of life, i.e. Brahmacarya or the life of the students, Grahastha Ashrama or the life of the house
holders, vanprastha ashram or the life of retirement, sanyashrama or the life of renunciation. Gandhi accepted varnashram in its pristine purity and social understanding. He wrote on this subject in his weekly 'Young India', and 'Harijan' and emphasized - "That Hinduisum is nothing without law of varna and ashramas." 16

He again said,

"Varnashrama, is in my opinion, inherent in human nature and Hinduism has simply reduced it to a science. It is associated with birth. A man cannot change his varna by choice, not to abide by one's varna is to disregard the law of heredity, the division, however, into innumerable castes is an unwarranted liberty taken with the doctrine, the four fold divisions are all sufficing." 17

In a speech delivered at Trivendrum on 9th October, 1927, he explained 'varna' in the following terms :-

"so far as I know any thing at all of Hinduism, the meaning of varna is incredibly simple. It simply means the following all hereditary and traditionally callings of our forefathers in so far as the traditional is not only for the purpose of earning one's livelihood. I regard this as the law of our being ..... You will realize that if all of us follow this law of varna we would limit our material ambition and our

energy would be set free from exploring those vast fields whereby and where-through we can know God." 18

Again Varnashrama dharma defines "man's mission on this earth. He is not born day after day to explore avenues for amassing riches and explore different means of livelihood: on the contrary man is born in order that he may utilize every atom of his energy for the purpose of knowing his maker. It restricts him, therefore, for the purpose of holding body and soul together, to the occupation of his forefathers. That and nothing more or nothing less is Varnashrama dharma." 19

Gandhiji laid stress on functions being hereditary because in his opinion, heredity is a law of nature. But he was not for exclusive, watertight divisions. Though he believed that varna was closely related to birth, yet he did not subscribe to the view, as has been wrongly ascribed to him by Dr. G.S. Ghurye that 'once born a Brahmana always a Brahmana'. In his words, "Varna is determined by birth but can be retained only by observing its obligations. One born of Brahmana parents will be called a Brahmana,

18. M.K. Gandhi Young India 20.10.1927
19. M.K. Gandhi Young India 27.10.1927
but if his life fails to reveal the attributes of a Brahmama when he comes of age he can not be called a "Brahmana. He will have fallen from Brahmamahood. On the other hand one who is born not a Brahmama but reveals in his conduct the attributes of a Brahmama will be regarded as a Brahmama, though he will himself disclaim the label." 20

Thus we see that Gandhiji has not advocated a rigid and mechanical adherence to the 'form' of the law of Varna. He was for the spirit of the law. And if the law is taken in its spirit, it is in harmony with the enlightened modern conception of religion and of profession according to the attitudes.

b) Caste as Varna

Gandhiji extended his support to the ideal Caste system and not to its perversion. He equated the theory of Caste with the law of Varna. Gandhiji held that the Caste institution had its value when considered from economic, political and spiritual angles. Gandhiji accepted the functional basis of caste and there he was in the company of eminent sociologists. In 1921 he wrote from the economic point of view. He said that it ensured hereditary skill; it limited competition. It was the best remedy against pauperism, and it had all

the advantages of trade guilds. Although it did not foster adventure or invention. He expressed his views—

"Historically speaking, Caste may be regarded as man's experiment or social adjustment in the laboratory of Indian society. If we can prove it to be a success, it can be offered to the world as a heaven and as the best remedy against heartless competition and social disintegration born of avarice and greed."

And 'the vast organization of Caste answered not only the religious wants of community but it answered its political needs. The villagers managed their internal affairs through the Caste system, and through it they dealt with any oppression from the ruling power or powers. It is not possible to deny of a nation, that was capable of producing the Caste system, its wonderful power of organization."

Gandhiji defined his ideal social order in 1934 in the following terms—

"I believe that every man is born in the world with certain natural tendencies; every person is born with certain definite limitations which he cannot overcome. From an observation of those limitations, law of Varna was deduced. It establishes certain spheres of action for certain people with certain tendencies. This avoided all unworthy competition; whilst recognizing limitations, the law of Varna admitted of no distinctions of high and low; on the one hand

21. M.K. Gandhi: Young India 5.1.21
it guaranteed to each the fruits of his labours and the other it prevented him from pressing upon his neighbour." 23

c) Caste in Practice as Distinguished from Varna

Gandhiji considered the four divisions alone to be fundamental, natural and essential. He felt, "The innumerable sub-Castes are sometimes a convenience but often a hindrance. The sooner there is fusion the better." In the same article he added that "there appears to be no valid reason for ending the system because of its abuse." 24

But he became gradually convinced that Caste as an institution was a travesty of Varna and emphatically declared: "Varna has nothing to do with Caste. Down with the monstrosity of Caste that masquerades in the name of Varna." 25

In the same strain he said, "Varnashrama of the Shastras is today non-existent in practice, the present Caste system is the very antithesis of Varnashrama. The sooner public opinion abolishes it the better." Though he called himself a Sanatan Hindu, yet it was he who could assert; Caste has nothing to do with religion. It is harmful both to spiritual and national growth." In 1937, in reply to an American clergyman,

24. M.K. Gandhi: Young India 8.12.20
25. M.K. Gandhi: Young India 24.11.27
he categorically stated, "Hinduism does not believe in Caste." In 1946 he stated, "Caste is anachronism".26

These utterances suggest that he changed from his earlier position of 1920, which created the impression that he was out and out conservative in social matters.

To conclude Gandhiji said that it was a custom whose origin he did not know and did not need to know for the satisfaction of his spiritual hunger. But he knew that it was harmful both to spiritual and national growth. Varna and Ashrama were institutions which had nothing to do with Castes. The law of Varna taught us that we had each one of us to earn our bread by following the ancestral calling. It defined not our rights, but our duties. It also followed that there was no calling too low or too high. All were good, lawful and absolutely equal in status. 27

Gandhi gives the main difference between Caste and Varna - that castes are man-made and are countless while Varna is God gifted and these are only four (Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra). Varna is not a thing that is imposed on Hindus, but men

26. From Hindustan Times 13.4.1946.
who were trustees for their welfare discovered the law for them. It is not a human invention, but an immutable law of nature - the statement of a tendency that is ever present and at work like Newton's law of gravitation. Just as law of gravitation existed, even before it was discovered, so did the law of varna. In this connection Gandhiji said, "Varna ashrama is not caste. I hold that there is nothing in common between caste and varna whilst varna gives life, caste kills it." 28

In his opinion the law of varna defines man's mission on this earth, whilst the caste system spoils it and fills the hatred among the people.

With regard to the relation of untouchability with varnashrama, Gandhi was of opinion that it was not the Varnashrama that had introduced untouchability, but its distorted form, of course, had helped in promoting it. Thus it is not necessary to destroy the Varnashram as such but its corrupt interpretations by selfish people. There is no evil in the principle itself, but in its misuse. Gandhiji further held that the caste system in its present condition was the distorted form of varnashrama which was not found in the original sarita.

Since Manusmriti up to present day Hindus have believed whatever is written in the Manusmriti and Vedas. The Manusmriti is written by Manu under the guidance of Brahmans and saints. The Caste is a religious system in the holy scriptures. These holy scriptures are the root causes of untouchability. The Purushasukta divided Hindus into four Castes. The Shudra had no religious sanctions to perform any religious ritual. In Vedas Brahmans are regarded pious and the Shudras as dirty men. The four division of society were the essence of Hinduism. This Hinduism allotted the Shudras the job of serving the upper Castes. Untouchability was an essence of Hinduism. The Mahabharata gives us the evidence of four Castes. In Manusmriti and Vedas, there is no guarantee of equality to the Shudras. All the religious activities are closed to them.

Gandhi's approach to Hinduism is just like 'Old wine in a new bottle.' He gave a very wide interpretation of these scriptures. He believes in religion and in all holy scriptures in his own way, specially he was a firm believer of the Gita. Why he liked Gita so much? He answered that it does not create differences in four Castes. But if we go
through 'Mahabharata' (of which Gita is a part), Dronacharya refused to make Klavya his disciple because he was a Shudra by Caste. On the other hand, Gandhi's Hinduism is full of Varna system. Though Gandhi has tried to distinguish between Caste and Varna system, but his interpretation of this system is baseless, because Caste and Varna system are the same thing. His Varna system is based on the hereditary occupation. How it is possible to remove untouchability and keep Varna system in tact? If a 'Chamar' does his father's occupation (skining) and a 'Mehtar' does (sweeping) would any Hindu accept him as equally honourable? Would he get the same status in society as is given to the Pandit? Definitely, not. If profession is hereditary, then how mobility from one profession to another can be made possible? Bulk of Hindu society does not believe in his Hinduism. It is the main reason that after 47 years of independence untouchability can not be removed. Hindus believe in Hinduism, that is found in the Vedas and Manu-smriti. The word 'Harijan' first occurs in the Gandhian literature in 1933. It was used by the great saint Narsinga Mehta, a Nagar Brahmam, who
defied the whole community and claimed the 'untouchables' as his own. Gandhiji wrote, "The untouchable to me is as compared to us, really a Harijan, is man of God, and we are 'Durjan' (men of evil) for while the untouchable has toiled and moiled and dirtied his hands, so that we may live in comfort and cleanliness, we have delighted in suppressing him, we are solely responsible for all the short comings and faults that we laid at the door of these untouchables. It is still open to us to be Harijan ourselves, but we can only do so by heartily repenting of our sin against them." 29

He also made a clear distinction between a Harijan and a Durjan. "Our own fellow beings have become 'untouchables, because of evil in us. The evil does not lie in them, it lies in those who have reduced them to a poor miserable beastly life. Those responsible for bringing about this sorry scheme of affairs should repent and atone for their sins." 30

It is also to be pointed out that when Gandhiji was in South Africa, he had to suffer much humiliation at the hands of the white ruling class there. He found that Indians were called 'Coolies' and he himself

29. M.K. Gandhi : Young India 6.8.31
30. See : Gandhi and the Harijan by Z. Hassan p.29
became a 'coolie barrister, Indians were 'untouchables' there and suffered all insults much in the same way as 'the untouchables' in India suffered at the hands of their own brethren. In this connection he remarks -

"It can be truly said that there is no difference between these locations and the untouchable's quarters in India. Just as the Hindus believe that touching Dheds or residence in their neighbour hood would lead to pollution, so did the Europeans in the Transvaal believe for all practical purposes that physical contact with the Indians or living near them would defile them."

Gandhiji gave another reason for this name 'Harijan'

"All the religions of the world describe God pre-eminently as the friend of the friendless, helper of the helpless and protector of the weak. The rest of the world apart, in India who can be more friendless, helpless or weaker than the forty million or more Hindus of India who are classified as 'untouchables'. If therefore any body of people can be fitly described as men of God, they are surely these helpless frinedless and despised people."

Gandhi, by using the term Harijan emphasizes both equality of all Indians before law and before God. For

31. Quoted by Z. Hassan in 'Gandhi and the Harijan' from Satyagraha in South Africa vol.3, p.2
32. Quoted by Z. Hassan op.cit. p.29
Gandhi the idea of equality as a purely secular concept is incomplete, for it does not question or enter into a dialogue with the other, more durable mode of thinking and behaviour namely religious. Untouchability an extreme and inhuman form of inequality, derives its sanctions from inhuman religious beliefs and practices. Gandhiji started English weekly journal 'Harijan'. By this weekly he preached among Hindus against the sin of untouchability. This weekly paper was started in Feb, 1933, which was his mouthpiece for the rest of his life. It was a modest little sheet of eight pages. The first number opened with a moving poem by Tagore on the Harijans.

An English writer’s words; "In terms of hermeneutics Gandhi's use of the word Harijan is an attempt at the reformation of a meaning addressed to his readers and listeners in the form of a message that transcends the experience of the listeners and transposes their understanding to a higher level of 'self-comprehension'."

In 1933, Gandhiji took up two movements for the good of the Harijans—The temple entry movement and the establishment of the Harijan Sevak Sangh. By temple entry movement he tried to give them the right.

of entrance in the temples. It was a strange irony that the untouchables worshipped the Gods and Goddesses of Caste Hindus but were not allowed to enter the temples where these Gods and Goddesses were enshrined. They were turned away beaten, and sometimes prosecuted against if they tried to have a 'darshan' of the deity. He opined that temple entry was the one spiritual act that would constitute the message of freedom to the untouchables and assured them that they were not out castes before God. Gandhiji wanted that the Harijans should not enter temples without the active co-operation of the Caste Hindus. The Caste Hindus should willingly open the gates of their temples for the 'untouchables.' There can be no use of force in religious matters, Gandhiji repeatedly asserted. As a matter of compromise he had one more suggestion about the entry in Guruvayur temple. He suggested, "During certain hours of the day, the temple should be thrown open to Harijans and to other Hindus who have no objection to the presence of Harijans, and during certain other hours it should be reserved for those who have scruples against the entry of Harijans. There should be no difficulty whatsoever in accepting the suggestion, seeing that in connection
with the festival at Guruvayur, Harijans are allowed to enter side by side with other Hindus and then the idols of the temple undergoes purification." 34

Gandhi was not in favour of 'purification.' To him it was an insult of both the deity and the devotees. It was the duty of the Caste Hindus to see that the gates of the temples are thrown open to the 'untouchables.' They, the caste Hindus had to atone for sin of untouchability. He said -

"What is required is not so much the entry of Harijans to the temples as the conversion of the orthodox to the belief that it is wrong to prevent Harijans from entering the temples. This conversion can only be brought about by an appeal to their heart i.e., by evoking the best that is in them. Such an appeal can be made by the appellants prayer, fasting and other suffering in their own persons in other words by their ever-increasing purity." 35

Haridayal Nag brought some startling facts to the notice of Gandhiji. He wrote that Gautama Buddha failed to mend temples so he ended temples. Buddhism was a reaction against the then prevailing evils in the Hindu society. Gautama Buddha did not feel any presence and thereby any necessity of a God or Goddess. Hence there was no place of a temple in his scheme of religious reformation and social reconstruction. But then with.

35. Harijan 15.4.1933.
the passage of time, Buddhism declined and Brahmanism was once more dominant through the length and breadth of the country. The temples were again there and with them came those who could not enter temples. Gandhiji wrote -

"Shri Hardayal Nag says truly that if the temple untouchability is not destroyed the temples have to go; and if temples go with them must disappear Hinduism as we know it." 36

He stated that there should be perfect freedom for Harijans to enter ordinary temples and ordinary schools and to use common wells. He also recommended erection of model temples specially designed for the convenience of untouchables.

This movement against untouchability gathered strength. It was in Sept. 1933, that leading Hindus claiming to represent the whole of Hindu India, met together and unanimously passed a resolution condemning untouchability and pledging themselves to abolish it by law, so there was a temple entry bill by Dr. Subbarayan of the Madras Legislative council. There were four bills introduced in the Central assembly. One was by Mr. Gs. Rangalyer another by Mr. Harbilas Sarda, and a third by Mr. Lalchand Navalrai, on the Temple - entry bill introduced 36. Harijan 3.5.37
by C.S. Rangalayr on 24 March 1933, the Mahatma commented thus—

"It is sad to think that the anti-untouchability measure has been hung up for one year by the legislative assembly and that the amendment to hang it up received the support of the Government, but the reformers may not rest till untouchability is blotted out of the Statute Book." 37

Thousands of Harijans do not want to enter temples while thousands of Harijans do want to enter temples. But whether Harijans desire the consideration of temple entry or not, whether if temples are thrown open to them, they will make use of them or not, Caste Hindus have to perform their simple duty. They have to open their temples for Harijans to offer worship precisely the same terms as for themselves.

The other movement which Gandhiji sponsored in 1933 was the establishment of the Harijan Sevak Sangh with a network of branches all over India. It was made with the blessing of Madan Mohan Malviya, champion of Hindu orthodoxy. Its aims and objective was the eradication of untouchability in Hindu society. There were three objective which lay behind the organization of the Sangh—

37. Quoted by: S. R. Bakshi: in Gandhi and his social thought 1986 p125
First- was to prove that Hindus had enough charitable spirit towards the untouchables and that they would show it by their generous contributions towards their upliftment.

The Second was to serve the untouchables by helping them in the many difficulties with which they were faced in their daily life.

The Third was to create in the minds of the untouchables a sense of confidence in the Hindus from whom they were estranged in matters political.

The Sangh was run by the Caste Hindus. Gandhiji argued that Harijan Sevak Sangh was an act of penance on the part of the Hindus for the sin of observing untouchability. It was they, who must do the penance, therefore the untouchables can have no place in running the Sangh. Thus Gandhiji admitted only Caste Hindus in this Sangh.

He gave important advice to his workers thus -

"Every Sevak must be fired with a passion to purify Hinduism and must be ready to lay down his life in the attempt. Such Sevak will be ready to sacrifice his all family connections, social advantages and life itself in order to wipe out the blot on Hinduism." 38

He also expected the all India workers to arrange simultaneous walking tours in their own provinces for the purpose of delivering the message and even collecting copper and silver pieces from the people by way of purses to be sent to them. There should be more intimate touch established between the workers and the Harijans and friendly approach to the satanist. The programme made by Gandhiji for his workers was as follows:

Workers should devote all their energy to:

(i) Promotion of cleanliness and hygiene among the Harijans.

(ii) Giving up of intoxicating liquors.

(iii) Giving up of carrion and beef.

(iv) Inducing parents to send their children to schools wherever they are available and parents themselves to attend night schools wherever such are opened.

(v) Abolition of untouchability among themselves.

The Sangh must try to secure decent living conditions for Harijans. And this could be done with ease and without any heavy expenditure. 39

39. See For workers against untouchability by M.K. Gandhi Ed. B. Kumarappa, p. 5.
No further suggested them -

First they must see to the proper drainage and cleaning of the Harijan quarters and the making of roads, slight repairs should be carried out in the houses as to allow a free passage to light and air.

Secondly, they must obtain for Harijans a good supply of water. Harijans lived in villages in worst conditions. They had yet to develop strength enough to assert and maintain their right to draw water from public wells by seeking the protection of Courts or otherwise. Meanwhile the Sangh must construct for them good wells from which even the Savarnas would be tempted to take water for themselves and during the period that these wells were under construction reformers must draw water for the Harijans and pour it into their pots.

Thirdly the Sangh should establish good preparatory schools for Harijan children where the teachers would not make a fetish of three R's but try to teach their pupils to keep their persons and clothes clean, so as to enable them at the end of six months to take their place in line with Savarna children of the same age.
Fourthly, as regards Ashramas, he thought, they had better fight shy of that big word and rather call their institutions, Chatralayas (hostels) or Udjugalayas (industrial home).

To this end it is the duty of Harijans workers and Caste Hindus to do sweepers work themselves. He also gave a suggestion to the Harijans who used to disposal of carcases. "Disposal of dead cattle is a sacred obligation and occupation, but the eating of carrion is almost filthy habit regarded as one of the heinous signs in Hindu scriptures and it is essential that at this hour of self purification our Harijan brother should be helped to get rid of this habit." 40

Almost all the Harijans were illiterate. They were deprived of the fruits of education and learning. Harijan children had so poorly dressed that no school teacher would admit them to his class. They had no schools of their own and colleges were run by Caste Hindus and no Head Master would admit a Harijan child as it displeased Caste people. Ambedkar, when a school child, had to stand outside the classroom with his stick and then he was allowed to sit on his own mat.

in a corner, well segregated from his Caste Hindu Class mates. Admitting an 'untouchable' to a school amounted to an insult of the Caste Hindus. Gandhiji appealed to the conscience of Caste Hindus. He suggested the opening of separate schools for the untouchable children. He wanted the teachers and Caste-children to be kind and tolerant. The situation was well brought to the notice of Gandhiji by a sincere worker. It needs to be quoted in full.

"My school is conducted in a Harijan Vridhand, some of my scholars are those whose noses are full of slim and eyes full of dirt. They spit where they squat. The condition of their bodies is in keeping with their eyes and noses. That of the clothes defies description. Some have bits of 'roti' or sweets which they continually chew even whilst they are in the class. My lesson therefore begins with telling them how to keep clean, and behave. Whilst I am reciting the lesson, I do the cleaning myself. Lazy talkative and quizzical, they provide me with a good lesson in patience. They are bad liars some of them are industrious and wise. I play them and perhaps learn more than I teach...

....I sleep in a Harijan Dharmashala about a furlong from the school."

He pointed out that it was but a sample of the condition of Harijan children. Only teachers endowed with missionary spirit could work among such children. The basic thing is how to make these children
look like school going children. The first lesson of cleanliness is yeu to be learnt, taught and applied to the prevailing conditions.

Gandhiji wrote in Harijan —

"Preliminary training should consist in teaching Harijan children manners and good speech and good conduct. A Harijan child sits any how; dresses any how; his eyes, ears, teeth, hair, nails, nose are often full of dirt; many never know what it is to have a wash. I remember what I did when in 1915 I picked up a Harijan boy at Trampyebah and took him with me to Kochrab where the Ashram was situated. I had him shaved, he was then thoroughly washed and given a simple 'dhoti' and a cap. In a few minutes in appearance he became indistinguishable from any child from a cultured home." 42

Gandhiji was not much in favour of high technical or academic education for Harijans. His fundamental belief was that they should take to their parental profession. If they get education of a higher academic level, they would go in search of jobs, not meant for their Varna. Education Gandhiji knew was the potent instrument for exorcising the demon of untouchability. His main aim of education was —

"By education, I mean an all round drawing out of the best in child

and man, body, mind and spirit; literacy is not the end of education nor even the beginning. It is only one of the means whereby men and women can be educated. Literacy in itself is not education. I would, therefore, begin the child's education by teaching it a useful handicraft and enabling it to produce from the moment it begins its training. I hold that the highest development of mind and soul is possible under such a system of education." 43

Gandhiji's attitude was based on the Plato's system of education. Plato in his theory of education insists on gymnastics for the body and music for the soul as the necessary pre-requisites of a balanced education. Gandhiji, too, stresses the intelligent use of the body in order that the intellect might be developed effectively and the spirit properly cultivated.

Gandhiji fully believed in industrial education and wished the numerous Harijan students would turn their attention to it. Harijan Sevak Sangh could not force Harijans to such education. They had to encourage its academic side also with the industrial. Once, when Seth Ghandhyamadas Dirla, President of the 'Harijan Sevak Sangh' asked Gandhi for the new residential schools for Harijans boys, Gandhiji whole

heartedly supported this scheme, because Gandhi knew well these schools would greatly enhance their academic standard and would enable them to become better citizens for India. The syllabus of this scheme was thus -

We propose to have three crafts, one of which will be taken up by every boy at his option. These will be either -

1. carding, spinning, weaving, dyeing and bleaching or

2. carpentry and smithy or

3. paper making, book binding and ordinary composing. 44

and hygiene, music, games, riding, swimming etc. should be taught, religious or moral training should not be neglected. Under this plan half the number of the students should be Harijans who would have free education and free boarding and lodging.

Later Gandhi also recommended the higher education for Harijans. "I hope all those who are interested in the removal of untouchability are familiar with

Mr. David's scheme for the higher education of selected Harijans by caste Hindus. In Mr. David's words 'It aims at enabling a large number of untouchables to enjoy the benefits of the best higher education possible in this country'. 45

The main aim of David's scheme was to create a large number of lawyers, teachers, doctors and engineers from among Harijans.

Once a question was asked to Gandhiji. If the Harijans get academic education who will do the scavenging work? Long back he had written in Young India (22.6.1921);

"When untouchability has disappeared altogether, it is not feared that Bangis will refuse to do sanitary work, if they are properly paid and well treated. The removal of untouchability implies that there is no sin of shame in cleaning for other people, even as it is no sin for a mother to clean her baby or for a paid nurse to clean her or his patient." 46

The question of inter-dining and inter-marriage was also discussed and explained by Gandhiji. In his early statements he is not very much in favour of such practices. These issues are very complicated.

46. Young India 22.6.1921.
and deep rooted. Even in one and the same Brahmama family all the members will not sit and eat together. Brahmamas have their own sub-castes almost all over the country and inter-dining and inter-marriage are practically avoided. Gandhi knew all these things, so he did not want to make a fetish of outward observances.

Religion is not just a matter of eating, drinking or marrying. It is something deeper. Hindus are doomed, he said, if they attach undue importance to the spiritual effects of foods and human contacts. He stated that marrying and dining are matters of individual concern. Later on he found that these things have a great communal and social significance. By the year 1946, there was a great change in his thinking. He started advocating that inter-dining and inter-marriage were very helpful in removing untouchability and fostering communal harmony. He wrote,

At one time I did say that inter-dining was not an essential part of campaign for the removal of untouchability, personally, I was for it. Today I encourage it. In fact today, I even go further." 47

Personally he was already in favour of inter-dining. By the change of time, he felt the necessity

47. M.K. Gandhi : Harijan 28.7.1946
of inter-dining as it removes social stigma. He went further and approved or recommended inter-caste marriage. It was another difficult problem but quite vital to the removal of untouchability. If it happened that an educated Harijan girl married a caste Hindu, she would be cut off from her caste and thus it will be a loss to the family as well as to the whole community. But he gave its solution: If an educated Harijan girl married a caste Hindu, Gandhi noted, the couple should devote themselves to the service of Harijans. As he stated -

"Even if one Harijan girl marries a caste Hindu with a high character it will do good to both the Harijans and caste Hindus. They will set up a good precedent and if the Harijan girl is really worthy, she will spread her fragrance far and wide and encourage others to copy her example. Society will cease to be sacred by such marriages. They will see for themselves that there is nothing wrong to them. If children born of such a union turnout to be good, they will further help to remove untouchability." 43

There were practically more caste Hindu girls well educated to work amidst the Harijan families.

48. Harijan 1.6.1946
Gandhiji advised such girls to select Harijan husbands. He contended that the marriage of a caste Hindu girl to a Harijan is better than that of a Harijan girl to a caste Hindu. He said -

"If I had my way I would persuade all caste Hindu girls coming under my influence to select Harijan husbands. That it is most difficult I know from experience, old prejudices are difficult to shed. One cannot afford to laugh at such prejudices either. They have to be overcome with patience." 49

Gandhi wanted to help Harijans provided they remain peaceful. If they took to violent methods and left the path of Truth and ahima, Gandhi expressed his inability to help them. He was ready to live and suffer with them, because it was a sacred cause to uplift the downtrodden. Since it was a sacred cause, there is no room for violence and brute force in his constructive programme. It was his faith that no force of a group, caste or Government machinery can help in the eradication of this evil. If the will of the people is not in favour of a particular movement it cannot be imposed on the people. If there is a move from the people or an agitation against a wrong done to them, Government can be of great help. So Gandhi declared that "untouchability

49. Harijan 7.7.1946.
will not be removed by the force even of law". It could be removed only if the people responsible for perpetrating it wanted to do away with it.

"It can only be removed when the majority of Hindus realize that it is a crime against God and man and woman are ashamed of it. In other words, it is a process of conversion, i.e. purification of the Hindu heart. The aid of law has to be invoke when it hinders or interferes with the progress of the reform as when, inspite of the willingness of the trustees and the temple-going public, the law prohibits the opening of a particular temple." 50

To him the programme of the removal of untouchability had no political overtones. Political expediency is purely selfish, it is timely; while Gandhi's programme was to bring about a change of heart. "It is a movement purely and simply of purification of Hinduism. And that purification can only come through the purest instruments." 51

Gandhiji was not in favour of conversion or change of religion. At that time Arya Samajists made a plan to convert the untouchables to their faith. But Gandhiji believed that the admission of the untouchables to the Arya-Samaj will not solve their

difficulties. Because, "The hearts of millions of non-Aryasamajists will not be touched by the Harijans' acceptance of the Aryasamaj. It is the 'superior' Hindu heart that has to melt." 52

He criticised every type of conversion. "Those who use the threat (conversion) do not, in my humble opinion knew the meaning of religion. Religion is a matter of life and death. A man does not change religion as he changes his garments. He takes it with him beyond the grave......therefore those who threaten to renounce Hinduism are in my opinion betraying their faith." 53

Inspite of it, conversion of Harijans to Christianity, Islam and Buddhism, was almost a daily affair. These missions were spending a lot of money on them. They held out hopes of real freedom and equality of social status to the poor Harijans. To Gandhiji, they were flirting with Harijans. He never found fault with religions but with dust of the ages which had spoiled and bedimmed the pristine glory and fundamental sanctity of a religion. The

52. M.K. Gandhi : Hindu Dharma, p. 311
false prophets and preachers were responsible for this degradation in the affairs of religion. He thinks religion is an essentially personal matter. It is one between oneself and one's God. It should never be made a matter of bargain.

Dr. Ambedkar was totally against Gandhi preaching in support of Hindu religion. It was the faith of Ambedkar, to change a religion, if that religion does not give us honour and equality in the society. That is why, a number of Harijans changed their religion and accepted Buddha religion. Gandhiji criticised it saying that Dr. Ambedkar sought shelter in Buddhism but it has neither taken much from Hinduism nor added much to Buddhism.

Jagjivan Ram, an eminent Harijan leader, made a study of the situation and noted, "while many more embracing Christianity, and even Buddhism because of the indifferent behaviour and victimisation by caste Hindus. It is high time that they treat scheduled caste brethren as human beings and restore their rights. It is time they allowed them to live a decent life." 54.

He wanted that conversion of Harijans to other religions should be stopped and it should be done by improving upon the living conditions of Harijans. If the Harijans feel secure and lead a decent life in the Hindu fold, they will never embrace Christianity, Buddhism or Islam. He suggested some ways and means also. He wants that casteism should be totally abolished, land redistributed and equal opportunities given to the so-called ex-untouchables. There was a move that surnames should be dropped, but the idea could not spread and died out. He further said, "I have been saying that caste surnames be dropped or banned totally. This is doing harm to national and emotional integration. This is one of the root causes of injustice and social inequality." 55

He further points out that educational institutions should not bear caste names, because an institution in a particular caste name is always a source of social tension. He feels that casteism had already done much harm, it has to go. In his words, "unless people understand the grave dangers of casteism, success can not be achieved. If India wishes to prosper and if society wants to flourish both casteism and untouchability have to be abolished right now. I believe the

55. Quoted by Z. Rusin, op. cit. pp. 45 and 46.
uplift of those submerged sections of society as a whole alone would bring about national prosperity." 56

Ambedkar came on the political scene of India. The first meeting of Ambedkar with Gandhiji took place in Bombay on 14th August, 1931. Ambedkar demanded the separate electorates and reservation of seats for his community. He put this matter before the Round Table Conference. Gandhiji was elected as sole representative of the Congress to attend the Round Table Conference. Gandhiji was against separate electorate to the untouchables. He never wanted that there should be any segregation or separation of the Harijan from Hindus. Gandhiji bitterly opposed the idea:

"I am certain that the question of separate electorates for the 'untouchables' is a modern manufacture of a satanic Govt. The only thing needed is to put them on the voters list, and provide for fundamental rights for them in the Constitution."

He further noted that,

"Separate electorates to the 'Untouchables' will ensure them bondage in perpetuity. The Musalmans will never cease to be Musalmans by having separate electorates. Do you want the 'untouchables' to remain 'untouchables' for ever." 57

56. Ibid, p. 46

57. Young India 12.11.1931.
Though Gandhiji opposed the separate electorates to the 'untouchables' whole heartedly, yet the British Prime Minister J.Ramsay Mac Donald announced Communal Award on the 17th August 1932, ignoring Gandhi's ultimatum. The basis of this award was laid down in these words.

"It will be recalled that owing to the failure of various communities to reach any agreement on the subject principally because of a radical divergence of opinion on the vital question of separate electorates and the distribution of communal seats, His Majesty's Govt. themselves reluctantly undertook the task of dividing a scheme for the composition of the new Legislatures." 58

According to the award, seats in the Legislative Councils in the Governor's provinces were allotted and it was provided that election to the seats allotted to the Muslims, Europeans and Sikhs constituencies were to be by voters voting in separate communal constituencies covering between them the whole area of the provinces.

Members of the 'Depressed classes' who were qualified to vote, were to vote in a general constituency but a number of a special were to be assigned to them, which were to be filled by election from special constituencies to which only the members

58. Quoted by B.R. Ambedkar in 'Poona Pact', p.53
Buddhist Publishing House, Jalandhar.
of the depressed classes electorally qualified were to vote. Any person voting in such a special constituency was also to be entitled to vote in a general constituency. In an explanatory statement Mac Donald observed, "our main object in the case of the 'depressed classes' has been while securing to them the spokesman of their own choice in the legislatures of the provinces where they are found in large numbers, at the same time to avoid electoral arrangements which would perpetuate their segregation. . . . . The anomaly of giving certain members of the 'Depressed Classes' two votes is abundantly justified by the urgent need of ensuring that their claims should be effectively expressed and the prospects of improving their actual condition promoted." 59

Thus Communal Award gave two benefits to the untouchables -

(i) A fixed quota of seats (71 seats in all provincial legislatures) to be elected by separate electorate of untouchables and to be filled by persons belonging to their caste.

(ii) Double vote, one to be used through separate electorates and the other to be used in the general electorates.

59. Quoted by B. R. Ambedkar, op. cit. p. 65
This was a vital issue before Gandhi and he wrote, "I do not mind the 'untouchables' being converted to Islam or Christianity. I should tolerate that, but I can not possibly tolerate what is in store for Hinduism if there are two divisions set forth in the villages. Those who speak of political rights of 'untouchables' do not know India and do not know how Indian society is today constructed, therefore, I want to say with all the emphasis that I can command that if I was the only person to resist the thing, I will resist it with my life." 60

And Gandhiji started a fast unto death on September 20, 1932 against the communal award in Yarvada Jail. This fact was an individual 'Satyagraha'. Ultimately a compromise was reached between Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya, Sapru, Jaykar, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Rajgopalacharia and Gandhi on one side and Ambedkar and other Harijan leaders on the other side. This agreement historically known as 'Poona Pact' was signed on September 24, 1932, through which separate electorates for 'scheduled castes' was abandoned. According to this pact number of their representatives in provincial legislatures

60. Young India 20.11.1931.
was increased to 148 from 71 as provided under the
Communal Award. Thus in Madras 30, Bombay with Sind
15, the Punjab 8, Bihar and Orissa 18, Central Pro-
vinces 20, Assam 7, Bengal 30, and the United Provin-
ces 20. The election to these seats was to be by
joint electorates, subject, however, to the following
procedure. All voters in a general constituency belong-
ing to the 'Depressed Classes' would form an 'electoral
college' which would elect a panel of four candidates
belonging to the 'Depressed Classes' for each of such
reserved seats, by the method of the single vote, the
four persons getting the highest number of votes in
such primary would be eligible for election by the
general constituency. It will be also applicable to
the Central Legislature.

Thus Gandhiji tried to maintain the unity
among the Hindu Castes. By signing the 'Poona Pact'
he became a prominent leader among the Hindu
community. At any rate he did not agree to
separate 'Harijans' from Hindu religion. That is
why the programme of the removal of untouchabi-
licity had a wider importance for Gandhiji as
he said, "The idea behind this message was not only
to unite the disintegrating sections of the Hindu commu-
nity but to establish brotherhood among the Hindus,
On 7th Nov. 1933, Gandhiji set out on a propagation tour on behalf of the Harijans, which lasted ten months. Gandhiji started his tour from Wardha and covered over 12,500 miles covering greater part of India. He preached and wrote busily. He collected money for the cause – 8 lakhs of rupees in all (£ 60,000) much of it in coppers, some of it in women's jewellery. He addressed at many places, some samplings are given below:-

During his one day stay in Bejwada, he stated in a public meeting –

"We shall dig our own grave if we do not purge ourselves of this curse of 'untouchability' we should have no place, till this monster is buried." 62

In a press interview he said –

"It is a dead thing but being a monster it still seems to be taking breath. But it is the last breath." 63

At one meeting a man offered to pay down ₹116 per minute of Gandhi's stay in his house but only two minutes could be spared, saying –

62. Quoted by : D. E. Tendulkar in 'Mahatma' vol III, p. 286
63. Ibid p. 290
"I am a Harijan worker, my time is precious. I had one mission before me — the eradication of untouchability. I had only one mission — begging mission. My mission therefore is to invite Savarna Hindus to wash themselves clean of the guilt of untouchability. " 64

He summed up his conclusion of his 'Harijan-Tour' in a press interview —

"The impression left on my mind is that untouchability is on its last legs, I should mention that the 6 lakhs of rupees collected during the past nine months represent contributions from the poorest. People are not known to contribute for causes which they utterly dislike, the third thing I should like to say about the tour is that a demonstrable awakening on a large scale has taken place among the Harijans." 65

To Gandhi, untouchability was the main reason of slavery. He said —

"There can be no Swaraj without the removal of the curse (of untouchability) from our midst, our being treated as social lepers, in practically the whole world, is due to our having treated a fifth of our own race as such. " 66

64. Ibid p 291
65. Quoted by D.E.Tendulkar : op,cit. p 344
On an occasion Gandhiji said -

"I do not want to be reborn, but if I have to be reborn, I should be born as 'untouchable' so that I may share their sorrows, sufferings and the affronts levelled at them, in order that I may endeavour to free myself and then from that miserable condition. I prayed that if I should die with any of my desires unfulfilled with my service of 'untouchables' unfinished, with my Hinduism unfulfilled, I may be reborn amongst the 'untouchables' to bring my Hinduism to its fulfilment." 67

Gandhi faced a volley of questions about the untouchability from time to time. His answers were: -

1- What are the practical steps to be taken to remove untouchability?

A. To open to 'untouchables' all public schools, temples and roads that are open to non-Brahmanas and are not exclusively devoted to any particular Caste.

B. For Caste Hindus to open schools for their children to dig wells for them where they are in need and to render them all personal service that they may need e.g. to carry on temperance and hygiene, reform them, and to provide them with medical aid.

2- What would be the religious status of the 'untouchables' when the ban of untouchability is completely removed?
The religious status would be the same as that of the Caste Hindus. They will therefore be classed as Shadras instead of Ati-Shadras.

3- What would be the relation between the 'untouchables' and the high Caste orthodox Brahmans, when untouchability is removed?

The same as with non-Brahmana Hindu.

4- Do you advocate intermingling of castes?

I would abolish all castes and would keep the four divisions.

5- Why should not the 'untouchables' build temples for their own worship, without interfering with the existing temples?

The 'higher' Caste have not left them much capacity for such enterprise. It is the wrong way looking at the question to say that they interfere with our temples. We the so called higher Caste men have to do our duty by admitting them to be the temples common to all Hindus.

6- Are you a believer in the efficacy of Varnashramadharma?

Yes, but there is today a travesty of Varna, no trace of Ashrama and a misrepresentation of Dharma. The whole system needs to be revised and
brought in unison with the latest discoveries in the field of religion.

7- Is not education and reform among the 'untouchables' a primary condition to be fulfilled before one can begin to talk of the removal of untouchability?

There can be no reform or education among the 'untouchables' without the removal of untouchability.

8- Would you not be interfering with the religious and Caste system (Varnashram dharma) of India whatever may be the bad or good points of the above system and religion, if you advocate the removal of untouchability?

How do I interfere with anything or any body by mere advocacy of a reform? Interference there would be, if I were to advocate removal of untouchability by the use of force against those who retain untouchability.

9- Would you not be guilty of doing Himsa to the orthodox Brahmans if you interfere with their religious beliefs without convincing them in first instance?

I cannot be guilty of Himsa to the orthodox Brahmans as I do not interfere with their religious belief except through conviction.
10 - Are not the Brahmanas guilty of untouchability when they do not touch, dine with or marry the various other castes, leaving alone the 'untouchables'?

Brahmanas are guilty of the sin if they refuse to 'touch' the other caste." 68

In January 1934, Bihar suffered from one of the most terrible earth quakes in recorded history. Government and Congress vied with each other organizing relief. Gandhiji visited the stricken Province in March, going from village to village on foot. He was convinced that such "calamities come to mankind as a chastisement for their sins". "It is an ennobling thing, he wrote, for me to guess that the Bihar disturbance is due to the sin of untouchability". 69

Due to efforts of Gandhiji, Travancore opened all temples to Harijans in November, 1936, Baroda and Indore followed suit in 1938, and opened wells, hostels and schools as well as temples for them. With Congress in Office, the Provinces began to legislate in this direction in 1938. Bombay moved first and then Madras (under Rajgopalacharia) with two Acts, one of which swept away all the social disabilities of the Harijans in so far as legislation can do it, while the other opened the temples for them in Malabar. 70

70. See Mahatma Gandhi by H.S.L. Polak, p. 207 and 208.
Without suffering and hardwork, nothing is possible. Gandhiji suffered much for this cause of removing untouchability. He put his life in danger many a times but he could not leave the path of uplifting these down-trodden people. He had to fight a long and bitter battle against the orthodox Hindu fold for nearly 20 years. In the course of this long struggle he was misunderstood and abused bitterly as being opposed to tenets of the Hindu religion. Little did they know the immense purification that he was bringing about the Hindu society by this vital social reform.

Many a times he put his life in danger. In Bihar orthodox people stoned Gandhiji's car. Elsewhere they lay in front of it to stop him. They tried to murder him. Once, they laid a bomb on his track at Poona in 1933, but Gandhiji remained firm in his mission.

**AMBEDKAR'S CRITICISM OF GANDHI**

Ambedkar was perhaps the greatest critic of Mahatma Gandhi. He came on the Indian political scene as a Harijan leader in 1924. In December,
that year he convened a meeting at the Damodar Hall in Bombay to consider the problems of the depressed classes.

The first meeting of Ambedkar with Gandhi took place in Bombay (1931). In the course of their conversation Gandhiji explained to him how in spite of opposition from his colleagues, he introduced the removal of this curse (untouchability) as one of the main programmes of the Congress, but Ambedkar replied, "Congress did nothing beyond giving formal recognition to this problem". He continued, "had it been sincere, it would have surely made the removal of untouchability, a condition like the wearing of 'Khaddar', for becoming a member of the Congress." 71

Ambedkar explained that Hindus were not showing signs of change of heart in regard to the problem of untouchables. "We are not prepared to have faith in great leaders and Mahatmas. Let me be brutally frank about it. History tells that Mahatmas like fleeting phantoms raise dust, but no level. Mahatmas have come and Mahatmas have gone. But the untouchables have remained as untouchables." 72

71. Quoted by: V.V. Kuber: op. cit, pp. 166-167
He never criticised the person of Mahatma Gandhi. He only criticised his public life and ideology. His criticism was motivated by the patriotic consideration. "I criticise Gandhi, because I love India more. That is the true faith of a nationalist. I have hopes that my countrymen will some day learn that the country is greater than the man." 73

As we have said that Gandhiji was first of a firm believer in caste system. Later he changed it into varna system. Supporting this system in a good manner, he wanted to uplift the Harijans. He said, "I believe that if Hindu society has been able to stand, it is because it is founded on the caste system." 74

Ambedkar was quite against caste system. He thinks it as the root of untouchability. Without destroying this (untouchability) the stigma of untouchability cannot be removed. In the words of Ambedkar, "Caste is not a physical object, like a wall of brick or a line of barbed wire to be pulled down, caste is a notion, it is a state of mind, the

73. Ibid, p. 1
74. M.K. Gandhi: Navijivan Journal 1921, p. 22
destruction of Caste does not therefore mean the destruction of a physical barrier. It means a national change." 75

He thinks Caste as anti-national and unfit for the progress of society. He suggested to his community, "you can not build any thing on the foundation of Caste, you can not build up a nation, you can not build up a morality, anything that you will build on the foundation of Caste will cruck and will never be a whole." 76

Ambedkar criticised Gandhian Varna system saying that it is not fit for his community. He thinks it really an imposition by the ruling classes upon the servile classes. In this connection Ambedkar blamed Gandhi as a follower of the Gita. Ambedkar put a question, why his Varna system is different from the Gita's Varna System? The Varna system of the Bhagwatgita has two merits: It does not say that it is based on birth. It does not say that the profession of the son shall be that of the father. It does say that the profession of a person shall be according to his innate quality. Gandhi differs from this formula. According to Ambedkar, "Mr. Gandhi
has given a new interpretation of Varna system. With Mr. Gandhi Varna is determined by birth and the profession of a Varna is determined by the principle of heredity, so that Varna is merely another name for Caste." 77

Ambedkar thought that this new interpretation of Gandhian Varna system was an obstacle in the progress of the Harijans. They could not do any other better occupation except dirty work.

Gandhi had stated that removal of untouchability did not mean interdining or intermarriage between the Caste and the untouchables. He believed in Hinduism, believed in Caste, Cow worship upheld the law of Karma, predestination of man's condition in this world, accepted the authority of the Shastras, believed in 'avatars' or incarnations of and idols; all this is accepted by Gandhism Ambedkar remarked, "All that the Gandhism has done is to find a philosophic justification for Hinduism and its dogmas." 78

78. Quoted by W.N. Kuber: op, cit. p.170
According to Ambedkar, Gandhian philosophy in the field of economics is not suited to the untouchables. Because Gandhism meant a return to village system and making the village self-sufficient. His opposition to machinery and love for 'Charka' are not a matter of accident. They are a matter of his philosophy of life. By this system, Mr. Gandhi does not wish to hurt the propertied class. He has no passion for economic equality. In Ambedkar's words, "Mr. Gandhi does not wish to destroy the hen that lays the golden egg." 79

Gandhi had faith in religion. He gave it more importance than life. The change of religion did not solve any problem. The high-caste neighbours treated those converted to other religions in the same old manner. Gandhiji quoted some line from the Gita—

Krishna warns Arjuna:

श्रीयमन्वादाम् विद्यत
पराधार्मत स्नुतस्थात
स्वामिन्निपायनम् श्रीय: पराधार्मक व्यावहारः

(Even in the incomplete ceremony of one's own faith is better than the elaborately complete faith of another person. It is better to die in

79. B.R. Ambedkar: what Congress and Gandhi have done to the untouchables. p.293
one's own religion than to adopt another's which should be held an object of mortal fear). 80

Ambedkar was against this philosophy and said that it was Hindu religion that had lowered us and made us slaves. It was his pleading that religion is for men, not men for religion. So he did not believe in the Hindu religion, nor he was a worshipper of Hindu idols, "I am no worshipper of idols, I believe in breaking them." He again said, "Those ideas of hero worship, duliaction and negligence of duty have ruined Hindu society, are responsible for the degradation of our country." 81

According to him, changeness is the virtue of nature. As we destroyed our old clothes, being dirty and torn, in the same way we should change everything which is not useful for the society. In his own words, "There is nothing fixed, nothing eternal nothing sanatan, that everything is changing, that change is law of life for individuals as well as for society." 82

80. Quoted by D.P. Das; in 'The untouchable story' p 505
81. Speech by Ambedkar at Nasqan, Bombay, Feb. 1933
82. Quoted by V.K. Ruber, op cit. 160
Gandhiji put forth his claim for the representation of all sections and all communities, including the untouchables. Ambedkar was not satisfied with this plan of Gandhiji. Ambedkar asked his men to denounce the attitude of Gandhi. He said that Gandhi valued more his reputation as the saviour of the untouchables than his reputation as the champion of Swaraj or as the protagonist of Ahinsa. According to him, "As a unifying force, Gandhiji was a failure. It was his only propaganda but in practice he was not able to do it. He said more, did less." 83

Gandhiji attacked everybody who had taken part in producing the minorities pact at the Round Table Conference since his famous 'Salt Satyagraha' of 1930 had ended in a jail sentence. He was particularly furious at the recognition given to the untouchables as a separate political entity. "I can understand the claims advanced by other communities, but the claim advanced on behalf of the untouchables that is the 'unkindest cut of all'. It means the perpetual bar and sinister.... I would not sell the vital interests of the untouchables even for the sake of winning the freedom of India." 84

83. Quoted by J.N. Kuber; op. cit. pp 167, 168
The Round Table Conference found Muslims, Sikhs, Anglo-Indians, and Indian Christians all demanding separate electorates to guarantee their political rights. In this context, Ambedkar demanded a separate electorate for untouchables. Eleanor Zeliot points out, "From this time on separate electorates was the battle cry of the untouchables under Ambedkar's leadership until Independence." 85

For the first time Ambedkar and Shrinivasan were invited as representatives of the scheduled Caste to the Round Table Conference to discuss India's future constitution in London. "It was a recognition of the independent position of the scheduled Castes." 86

But Mahatma Gandhi never agreed with the views of Dr. Ambedkar regarding separate electorate because he firmly believed that this would create an unbridgeable gulf in the Hindu society. When communal Award was announced by British premier on August 17, 1932, it was the first time in the political history of India when untouchables were given an independent political status and legal rights. Of course this was the victory of Ambedkar's efforts. Gandhi opposed it by his heart and soul. Criticising the views of Gandhi, Ambedkar said, 85

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85. Eleanor Zeliot; Gandhi and Ambedkar
86. Ibid
"Everybody felt that Mr. Gandhi was the most determined enemy of the untouchables. So much of his energy and attention did Mr. Gandhi concentrate on the question of the untouchables that it would not be unfair if it was said that the main purpose for which Mr. Gandhi came to the Round Table Conference was to oppose the demands of the untouchables." 87

In defence of his opposition of Communal Award, Gandhiji said: "Muslims and Sikhs are all well organised. The 'untouchables' are not. There is very little political consciousness among them and they are so horribly treated that I want to save them against themselves. If they had separate electorate, their lives would be miserable in village. By giving them separate electorates you will throw the apple of discord between the 'untouchables' and the orthodox." 88

In opposition to it Gandhi began his fast unto death. Ambedkar expressed his views, "Mr. Gandhi declared a fast unto death, he did not want to die. He wanted very much to live. The fast nonetheless created a problem, and that problem was how to save Mr. Gandhi's life. The only way to save his life was to alter the Communal Award which Mr. Gandhi said

87. B.B. Ambedkar: what congress and Gandhi have done to the untouchables p.70
88  Ibid
hurt his conscience so much." 89

However Ambedkar agreed to sign this pact (Poona Pact) unwillingly. After signing this pact, Ambedkar expressed his views, "There was before me the duty which I owed as a part of common humanity, to save Gandhi from sure death. There was before me the problem of saving for the untouchables the political rights which the Prime Minister had given them. I responded to the call of humanity and saved the life of Mr. Gandhi." 90

Though by this Poona Pact, scheduled Caste were given more representation than in the communal Award. They were given 148 seats instead of 78 in the legislatures of India. But Ambedkar was not satisfied by this pact. The main reason of his dissatisfaction was that this increase in seat could never be deemed to be a compensation for the loss of the double vote. The right of second vote given to scheduled Caste in general constituencies by Communal Award was a priceless privilege.

In the views of Ambedkar, this pact was disliked by the Hindus and disfavoured by the untouchables. It was given recognition by both parties and was embodied in the Govt. of India Act 1935. It is assumed that although Mahatma Gandhi is opposed to the system of

89. B. R. Ambedkar - op. cit, pp 87, 88
90. Ibid p. 88
separate electorates, he is not opposed to the system of joint electorates and reserved seats. That is a gross error. Ambedkar blamed for this trick of Gandhi saying, "It was being forged in Poona pact, that Congress will not intermeddle in the elections of the untouchables to the seats reserved for them. But this hope was dashed to pieces. The Congress had a double purpose; to play its part in the election to the reserved seats of the untouchables. In the first place, it was out to capture these seats in order to build up its majority in the second, it had to prove the statement of Mr. Gandhi that the Congress represented the untouchables and that the untouchables believed in the Congress." 91

It can be seen by a table as given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Total seats reserved for the untouchables</th>
<th>Total seats captured by the Congress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Province</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madras</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengal</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.Provinces</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

91. B.R.Ambedkar: op, cit. p 94
Bombay .......... 15    4
Bihar .......... 15    11
Punjab .......... 8    NIL
Assam .......... 7    4
Oriasa .......... 6    4

Total .......... 151    78

The total number of seats allotted to the untouchables under the Govt. of India Act 1935 was 151.

The above table shows how many were captured by the untouchables candidates who stood on the Congress ticket. The Congress in capturing 78 seats left only 73 seats to be filled by true and independent representatives of the untouchables. Ambedkar said, "The untouchables were worse off under the Poona pact than they would have been under the Prime Minister's Award."

The Congress under the leadership of Gandhiji made a constructive programme of social amelioration in 1922. To finance these activities, it started a fund. It was called the 'Tilak Swaraj fund.' By this fund Gandhi tried to uplift the

92. See: What Congress and Gandhi have done to the untouchables, by B.R. Ambedkar pp 94, 95
the untouchables. He collected money for this purpose (Rupees 9½ lakhs). Gandhiji used this money in various programmes for the untouchables. Ambedkar found it only a shabby show. He told that Congress Committee had fixed five lakhs rupees for the untouchables, but the working committee under the leadership of Gandhiji felt it too big an amount for so unimportant a work and so unprofitable work as the amelioration of the untouchables and reduced it to Rs 2 lakhs, (two lakhs for 60 millions untouchables).

Did this amount was actually spent on the amelioration of untouchables? Ambedkar supplies the following information:

Here are the figures -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Amount sanctioned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rajahmundry depressed class mission</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antayaj Karayalya, Ahamadabad</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;                                             &quot;</td>
<td>17,381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depressed classes work in Andhra</td>
<td>7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Social Conference for depressed classes work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil district P.C.C for depressed classes work</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depressed classes work</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>43,381</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To sum up, the Congress could find only Rs 43,381 out of Rs 49½ lakhs which was actually spent for carrying out the constructive programme, otherwise known as the 'Bardoli programme' in which the uplift of the untouchables was given so much prominence. Ambedkar asked, "Was this the sincerity of Gandhi and Congress to the untouchables?" 93

Gandhi gave a new name to the untouchables as 'Harijan' in 1933. Harijan means, men of God. Calling them Harijan, is a pious word. It indicates the name of God (Hari). While the untouchables know it as a symbol of recognizing them as Shudras. Ambedkar was totally opposed to naming them Harijan. Gandhi stated, "Dr. Ambedkar is bitter. He has every reason to feel so. He has received a liberal education. He has more than the talents of the average educated Indian. Outside India, he is received with honour and affection, but in India, among Hindus at every step, he is reminded that he is one of the out Castes of Hindu Society." 94

Ambedkar thought that it was the trick of Gandhi to win the support of untouchables as their

94. Quoted by D.G. Tendulkar in 'Gandhi' vol III p236
saviour. Ambedkar remarked, "By calling the untouchables 'Harijans' Mr. Gandhi has killed two birds with one stone. He has shown that assimilation of the untouchables by the Hindus, is not possible. He has also, by his new name, counteracted assimilation and made it impossible." 95

The name of 'Harijan' by Gandhiji means men of God. At this Ambedkar asked, "If Harijans are the men of God, Are the Hindus, men of devil?" 96

Ambedkar wished that Gandhi should give this name to all Hindu Castes so that there might not be any division among the Castes, but Mr. Gandhi did not. He wanted to give them a separate name, so he did.

About Gandhian weapons for gaining Swaraj, as non-cooperation; boycott, civil disobedience and fast. Ambedkar remarked that non-cooperation was to make Govt. useless by boycotting the Govt. schools, colleges, Courts etc. According to him boycott was a weapon, the aim of which was to coerce individuals not prepared to follow the dictates of the Congress. Civil disobedience was a

95. B.R. Ambedkar: Gandhi and Gandhiism p 156
96. Quoted by L.R. Balley in 'Bhim Patrika' p 16
deliberate breach of law with a view to courting imprisonment, filling jails and thereby discrediting the Govt. It was practised on a mass scale or individually. Fasting was reserved for Gandhiji only. Ambedkar found that really many times Gandhi used his satyagraha and fast weapons against British Govt. for the redressal of political wrongs. But he said, "Mr. Gandhi has never used the weapon of satyagraha against Hindus to get them to throw open wells and temples to the untouchables." He again said," It is said that there have been altogether 21 fasts to the credit of Mr. Gandhi, some were for the sake of Hindu-Muslim unity and quite a number as atonements for the immoralities committed by the inmates of his Ashram. In these 21 fasts there is not one undertaken for the removal of untouchability." 97

WalChand and Jammalal Bajaj (Congress leaders) asked Ambedkar to join Gandhi's Camp, so that he might have boundless resources at his disposal for the uplift of the 'Depressed classes.' Ambedkar told them frankly that he vitally differed from Gandhi on many points and said," He would not sacrifice his conscience for his success." He

97. B.R. Ambedkar: what Congress and Gandhi have done to the untouchables. p239
remarked that Gandhiji had always discriminated between the constitutional safeguards of untouchables and other communities but he had never explained his reasons. He remarked that Muslims and Sikhs were fragments of old ruling communities, therefore Gandhi favoured them. So how the untouchables could regard such a man as 'sincere' and 'honest'. According to him Gandhi wished to retain Caste and abolish untouchability. said, "such a man can not be a friend of untouchables." 98

Gandhiji was a supporter of education to the untouchables, but he wanted to give them technical education instead of higher education. His main aim of education was to give the untouchables basic training of cleanliness and to know the importance of education. Later he also became a supporter of higher education. But was it true? Ambedkar criticised it saying, "Under Gandhism the untouchables may study law, they may study medicine, they may study engineering or any thing else they may fancy so for so good. But will the untouchables be free to make use of their knowledge and learning? Will they have right to choose their profession? Can they adopt the career of lawyer, doctor or engineer?

98. Quoted by W.N.Kuber; op, cit. 170
To these questions the answer is no. " 99

Ambedkar was convinced that a man who lived voluntarily in the near orderly asceticism of an ashrama, making occasional public visits to working slums, could not possibly know what real poverty meant and had no right to glorify poverty as spiritually rewarding in speeches to the involuntary poor. According to him Gandhi's message sounded too much like the traditional religious assurance to the untouchables that patience with suffering in this life was the only way to a better existence in the next. Mrs. Naidu, a leading figure in the Congress, could joke about, "what it costs India to keep the Mahatma in poverty." Gandhi often defined poverty as voluntary limitation of wants, to Ambedkar poverty was exclusively synonymous with misery and he rejected the idea of passive submission to poverty a key theme in his text for Buddhist converts. 100

The bulk of Hindu society regarded Gandhi as the God, who has descended on the earth. People used to see him as a God, and a real 'Massiah' of the untouchables. But Ambedkar blames him as the protector

99. B.R. Ambedkar : what Congress and Gandhi have done to the untouchables. p 306
of caste. "This God by name Gandhi came to console an afflicted race, he saw India and changed it not saying all is well and will be, if the Hindus will only fulfil the law of Caste. He told the people, 'I have come to fulfil the law of Caste." 101

Temple entry movement was a natural corollary to the movement for the removal of untouchability under the leadership of Gandhiji. Under this plan Gandhi advocated to give them the right to enter the Hindu temples. But Ambedkar was not satisfied with this upliftment. According to Ambedkar, Gandhiji's aim in advocating the temple entry movement was to destroy the basis of the claim of the untouchables for political rights, by destroying the barrier between them and the Hindus. He characterised Gandhi's temple entry movement as strange game of political acrobatics. He again charged Gandhi, "Before 1932 Mr. Gandhi was opposed to allow untouchables to enter Hindu temples." To quote his own words, Mr. Gandhi said, "How is it possible that the Antayajas (untouchables) should have the right to enter all the existing temples? As long as the law of Caste and ashram has the chief place in Hindu religion, to say that

every Hindu can enter every temple is a thing that is not possible today." 102

The movement for temple entry must therefore remain a matter of great surprise. According to Ambedkar, Gandhi was not likely to uplift the untouchables. Temple entry movement was a foul trick of Gandhiji in place of guaranteeing them political rights. Ambedkar claimed, "when the untouchables put forth a demand for political rights, he changes his position and becomes a supporter of temple entry. When the Hindus threaten to defeat the Congress in the election, if it pursues the matter to a conclusion, Mr. Gandhi, in order to preserve political power in the hands of the Congress, gives up temple entry." 103

If we verified the result of temple entry movement led by Gandhiji, we found that reality was different than appearance. Once on 17th August 1939, a member of scheduled castes Mr. B.K. Gaikwad in the Bombay Legislative Assembly asked a question as to how many temples in the Bombay presidency were thrown open to

102. Quoted by B.R. Ambedkar from Gandhian Shikshan vol II p 132

103. B.R. Ambedkar; op. cit p 125
the untouchables since 1932. The Congress Minister replied that 142, temples were opened for Harijans. Ambedkar remarked, "of these, 121 were ownerless temples standing on the way side, which were under the care of no body, and no body used them as places of worship. Another fact revealed was that not a single temple was thrown open to the untouchables in Gujrat, the district which is the home of Mr. Gandhi." 104

Another movement, Harijan Sevak Sangh was also launched by Gandhiji to uplift the Harijans. Gandhiji selected only Hindus as its workers. He gave no place to the untouchables as a worker in this organisation. Ambedkar criticised the activities of Harijan Sevak Sangh by saying that the main aim of the Sangh was to weaken the ranks of untouchables. Examine the Sangh, he said, from any angle, one might like to, and the creation of slave mentality would appear to be its dominant purpose. Ambedkar compared the work of Harijan Sevak Sangh in many ways. According to him, "The work of the Sangh reminds one of the mythological demonness 'Putna' Kansa, the king of Mathura wanted to kill

104. B.R. Ambedkar; op. cit, p 272
Krishna, as it was predicted that 'Kansa' will die at the hands of 'Krishna'. Having come to know of the birth of 'Krishna' Kansa asked to Putna to undertake the mission to kill Krishna, while he was yet a baby. Putna took the form of a beautiful woman and went to Yashodhara, the foster-mother of Krishna, and having applied liquid poison to her breast pleaded to be employed as a wet nurse for suckling the baby Krishna and thus have the opportunity to kill it. The Sangh is to the untouchables what Putna was to Krishna. The Sangh under the pretence of service is out to kill the spirit of independence from among the untouchables."

Ambedkar again compared it with 'Bhishma' - Bhishma proclaimed with great show that the 'Pandavas' were right and the 'Kauravas' were wrong. Yet when it came to a war between the two, Bhishma fought on the side of 'Kauravas' and against 'Pandavas'. In the same way the work of Harijan Sevak Sangh was to show mercy to untouchables and claimed to be in service of the untouchables. But actually this Sangh did all for the benefit of Hindus, commented Ambedkar.

The worst part of the activities of the Harijan Sevak Sangh was that it was run by Caste Hindus.

105. B.R. Ambedkar, op. cit. p 278
Ambedkar asked Gandhi, why he had not allowed the untouchables to be members of the Sangh. Gandhian argument was that the Sangh was an act of penance on the part of the Hindus for the sin of observing untouchability. Therefore the untouchables had no place in running the Sangh. Another argument of Gandhiji was that the money collected by him was given by Hindus and not by the untouchables. So the untouchables had no right to be on the governing body. Ambedkar replied as follows; "The refusal of Mr. Gandhi may be tolerated, but his arguments are most insulting."

Ambedkar again charged that Mr. Gandhi did not want the untouchables to organise and be strong. For he feared that they might thereby become independent of the Hindus and weaken the Hindu society. As he said, "The whole object of the Sangh is to create a slave mentality among the untouchables towards their Hindu Masters. 106

He further argued, "In the first place, if the Sangh was handed over to the untouchables, Mr. Gandhi and the Congress will have no means of control over the untouchables. The untouchables will cease to be

106. B.R. Ambedkar: Gandhi and Gandhism p 83
dependent on the Hindus. In the second place, the untouchables having become independent will cease to be grateful to the Hindus." 107

Thus Ambedkar clarified that Gandhian Harijan Sevak Sangh was not for the good of untouchables, it was only for the good of the Hindus, through this Sangh, they wanted to win the sympathy of the Harijans.

Gandhiji undertook a tour of India in 1933 for collecting money for the welfare of Harijans. Ambedkar accused this tour as destroyer of Harijans political rights. According to him, "Having put his programme to test, Mr. Gandhi might have shown his willingness to concede the untouchable's demand for political power as their only means of salvation." 108

Gandhian opinion was that untouchability will not be removed by force even of law. Untouchability could be removed only if the people responsible for perpetuating it, wanted to do away with it. It could only be removed when the majority of Hindus realised that it was a crime against God and man. In other words, it was a process of conversion i.e., purification of Hindus.

107. B.R. Ambedkar; op, cit. p 87
108. B.R. Ambedkar: what Congress and Gandhi have done to the untouchabilities p 281
heart. Conversion of hearts was possible only by love, affection and non-violence. Ambedkar mocked this slogan of Gandhi. He put his answer, "Since many hundred years, Hindus are dominant over us and they have made us slaves. We are treated lower to animals, why did Hindus not change their hearts until this time?" 109

In his opinion it will never be possible for the Hindus to change heart. His solution was to demand the political rights and some laws against untouchability. He thought that unless the Indian people secured political power and that power did not concentrate in the hands of the socially suppressed section of the Indian society, it was not possible to completely wipe out all social legal and cultural disabilities, from which that section suffered. He said, "No body can remove your grievances as well as you can and you cannot remove these, unless you get political power into your hands ... We must have a Govt. in which men in power will not be afraid to amend the social and economic code of life which the dictates of justice and expediency so urgently call for." 110

Gandhiji wanted to win Swaraj with five conditions, namely -

(i) Hindu-Muslim Unity.
(ii) removal of untouchability.
(iii) universal adoption of hand-spun and hand-woven khadi;
(iv) absolute non-violence and,
(v) complete non-co-operation.

He had not only laid down these conditions but had told Indians that without the fulfilment of these conditions there could be no Swaraj. For gaining this object he suffered much as— in 1922, he fasted for the sake of Hindu-Muslim unity.

In 1924, he made production of hand-spun yarn the basic franchise for Congress membership etc. Ambedkar objected to Gandhian conditions saying, "why did he not make non-observance of untouchability the basis of Congress franchise in 1924 or at any time subsequent there to." 111

The statement given by Gandhiji, that he had opposed untouchability, when he was a student. "I was hardly yet twelve when this idea downed on me."

Ambedkar criticised it saying that in his student

111. BR. Ambedkar: what congress and Gandhi have done to the untouchables. p265
life Gandhi never thought that untouchability is a sin. In his student life he was a blind supporter of orthodoxy of Sanatanist.

In the election campaign of 1937, Ambedkar in a public meeting had denounced Congress as a tool in the hands of the capitalists and remarked that it was working against the interests of workers and peasants. Ambedkar charged that Nehru Govt. and the Congress party had failed to give to the people the pure and incorruptible administration. He accused the Congress of not providing food and clothing to the people, specially to the untouchables. He said that the Congress had failed to give the people pure administration, free from corruption, bribery, nepotism and favouritism, what stood in its way, according to him was the Congress itself. He charged that the Congress was being conducted on the basis of personal allegiance.

Thus Ambedkar was against Gandhian method of removing untouchability and the leadership of the Congress. He doubted the intention of the Caste Hindu leadership of the national movement and wanted to organise the untouchables on a separate platform to fight their own battle against the upper Caste leadership.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION
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Gandhiji was essentially a political leader. The main objective of his life was to liberate India from British rule. Social awakening was a method for achieving that objective. The Indian society, divided as it was, had to be united and social injustices and inequalities had to be removed. At the same time, the political movement could only be strengthened if society changed in certain fundamental aspects and made cohesive.

Political circumstances demanded that he should pay his utmost attention to the cause of removing the untouchability. It was dividing the Indian society and threatening the unity of the National struggle for freedom. The scheduled caste people had been organising themselves under the influence of modern civilisation, and encouraged by the British rulers of India, they were demanding recognition as a separate community. This course of action would have been disastrous for India's unity and integrity also.

He was not a social reformer primarily. He realised that unless there is a definite breakthrough with the caste system and a kind of 'emotional integration brought about, the Indian society could not fight the British Raj.
His role was multi-dimensional. Sometimes he spoke like a politician and changed and began to speak like a prophet. At times he was saint among politicians and sometimes he posed himself to be political among saints.

At any rate Gandhiji wanted to see India free, for this purpose, he struggled and whatever obstacles came, in the way of this mission, he removed them in a very sagacious manner. The total population of untouchables was more than 60 millions. Gandhiji wanted their cooperation to win India's freedom but, without being their leader, it was not possible to get their cooperation. So Harijan problem (untouchability) became a focal point of his attention and he became a saviour of untouchables. Circumstances thus made him a social reformer and he tried to solve their problem, so that he might win freedom for India. In his own way he was only a part time social reformer. He could not give his full time to think about them nor could he give any accurate solution to the problem of untouchability.

Though he had to be a social reformer, but at the same time he was afraid of radical and revolutionary changes, whether social, economic, scientific or philosophical. He appeared to speak with authority on religion
which his learning betrayed, like mystics and saints. He did not like his teachings and beliefs to be subjected to the test of reason. All this created confusion in the minds of younger generation, and, as well as, some sections of untouchables. The leaders of untouchables always used to say Gandhi had created illusions and lived in the world of illusion.

Gandhi could not achieve complete success in his mission of removal of untouchability, because he believed in 'Varna system' that each one should do the work assigned to him through tradition. How it may be possible to remove untouchability, accepting the rule of Varna? His theory of caste and varna was nothing, but the two aspects of the same coin. According to his varna system, no body was authorised to adopt a new profession, except hereditary. It means a scavenger would do the same dirty work, as was performed by his ancestors. As a result of his profession no caste Hindu would accept him as equally honourable. He would not get the same status in society as was given to the Brahmana. If there was no mobility in their profession, untouchability could not be removed. Here Ambedkar was right in his thinking that Gandhian varna system was an obstacle in the progress of the untouchables, because by this system, untouchables are not entitled to get better occupations except dirty work.
It has been said that Gandhiji was traditional, that he believed in the varna system. Critics of Gandhi have pointed out that his faith in the varna system prevented him from being truly secular and modern. While it is true that Gandhi believed in the varna system, of occupational differentiation, he did not believe in the division of labour as superior and inferior. Functional division in the traditional order was not the focal point of his attention. He was against the system of attributing high and low status to functions. To him a scavenger's work was as important for society as that of a teacher or a bureaucrat. But how could he get equal status with a teacher or a bureaucrat? His economic condition will remain the same. He will not get the same pay as is given to a teacher or a secretary.

Gandhiji had full faith in Hinduism and in whatever was written in all holy scriptures, e.g. Manusmriti and Vedas etc. These scriptures ranked the Sudras as lowest caste and ultimately they became untouchables. Gandhiji stated that untouchability is no part of Hinduism. In his defence he tried to interpret Hinduism in his own way. He never tried to improve Hinduism, nor he dared to challenge the validity of caste system. He gave only a philosophic interpre-
tation of caste/varna system. On the other hand he accepted all those things which were found in holy scriptures, as cow worship, varna system, idol worship, religion, law of Karma. He believed in predestination and in every man's station in this life and accepted the authority of Shastras, believed in 'Avtars' of God and idols.

Untouchability can not be removed with Gandhian interpretation of Hinduism. Gandhian interpretation of Hinduism failed and he could not remove the untouchability. Here Ambedkar's perception seems to be relevant than Gandhi's that all such scriptures should be reinterpreted giving equality to Harijans otherwise Hindu society will not survive.

Gandhi was a true follower of Hindu religion. This religion does not permit the untouchables to enter the temples. He was also a follower of Gita. In Gita he found the message of equality. But no caste Hindu believes in this interpretation of Gita. The example of Dronacharya and Eklavya, proves that there was no concept of equality in Gita.

Gandhian opposition to change of religion by Harijans again showed his political motivation. He
feared that this will weaken his position as the sole leader of National Movement and also the leadership of the Congress. He criticised Ambedkar for advocating this line of thinking. Gandhiji pleaded to the caste Hindus that they should change their heart willingly. They should accept the untouchables as their brethren. He told the untouchables that by change of heart, untouchability could be removed. He did not agree that untouchability can be removed by force or even by law. But, was it true that by this method untouchability can be removed? Definitely not. Till the present day the caste Hindus have not changed their hearts or they are not ready to accept them as their equals in society. Though Gandhi's appeal was essentially directed at a change of heart and it was made to the caste Hindus but he was not prepared to go to the extreme extent of hurting Hindu sentiments. The higher castes responded partially to accommodate national compulsions and interests but they never went beyond that. Neither the social system nor the people were broad-minded enough.

Gandhiji opposed the scheme of separate electorates for the untouchables. He told people that he did not like to separate the untouchables from Hindus. Perhaps he opposed it due to political reasons. He did it for strengthening his following against
British Govt. On the other hand he did not like that untouchables should be loyal to the British Govt.
The untouchables should be left at the mercy of the Caste Hindus. The untouchables should have faith in Hindus. Having signed the Poona Pact and granting them more reservation of seats, he wanted to become a champion and saviour of the untouchables. But this trick did not work. Consequently Ambedkar and his coherds began suspecting Gandhiji. They thought that Gandhiji was cheating them. These reservations became a matter of controversy among the untouchables. Why did Gandhiji oppose separate electorates? and why did he give us more seats than what we were given by Communal Award?

Opposition of Communal Award by Gandhiji was really a matter of suspicion. He did not oppose it for Muslims. He did not oppose the Sikhs. He did not oppose the Christians. He opposed only the untouchables. He started a fast unto death against it, while we know that Gandhi had never took such a fast for the removal of untouchability. This he did only to keep the Hindu society apparently united. Ambedkar's demand of separate electorates was a better step in the field of political guarantees to the untouchables. Gandhiji never opposed the Congress to contest the elections on the reserved seats. As a result, the congress captured 78 seats out of the 151 Scheduled Caste seats in elections held
Gandhiji called them Harijans (children of God). He regarded the work 'Harijan' pious to them, and by this name Gandhiji tried to give them an honourable place in society. This name (Harijan) created a gulf between the untouchables and caste Hindus. It granted them a separate recognition in the society. Calling them Harijan, caste Hindus have ill-feeling against them. Ambedkar refused to accept this name. Though Gandhiji's intention was to give them a better name but it did not bring any real good to them. It created ill-feeling and humiliations in the minds of the untouchables. It would have been better if Gandhiji had used this name for the whole Hindu community. At present U.P. and M.P. Governments (BJP) have banned to use the word Harijans for them.

Harijan Sevak Sangh was a vital constructive programme for the untouchables. It was run by caste Hindus under the leadership of Gandhiji. Gandhiji selected only caste Hindus as its workers. He gave no place to the untouchables in this organisation. Gandhiji told them that Sangh was an act of penance for the caste Hindus, for their sin of observing
untouchability. Therefore the untouchables had no place in it. The untouchables were not convinced to get any benefit from this Sangh. They wanted to be members of this Sangh, so that they might be able to know the real purpose of this Sangh. It meant that Gandhi's main aim was to show mercy towards the untouchables by caste Hindus, so that they should be loyal to them. The leaders of the untouchables suspected that Gandhiji did not like them to organise and be strong. They thought that Gandhiji himself wanted to get the following of the Harijans. He should have given opportunity to the untouchables to work for their own betterment in collaboration with caste Hindus.

Gandhiji was both traditionalist and modern. On the one hand he believed in the varna system but he advocated women's education and intercaste marriages. He suggested caste Hindu girls to marry the Harijan boys. His appeal of education to the women and intercaste marriages opened the new gate of modernity among the untouchables. His perception of education was based on technical and industrial training. He wanted to make education compulsory for all communities, but especially he advocated technical education for the untouchables. For this purpose he recommended new schools and chhatralays for them. He made a provision
to impart them free education. He also suggested to the teachers that they should not discriminate against them.

Gandhiji's suggestion of inter-dining was a good step in their (untouchables) welfare. By this method he tried to bridge the gulf between high and low in society.

His temple entry movement was also very helpful to the untouchables. Gandhiji urged to those people who had closed the temples to untouchables, that they should throw open the gates of temples willingly for them. On the issue of temple entry of Guruvayur in Kerala, Gandhiji started a fast which was averted as a result of a referendum, in which people voted overwhelmingly for temple entry. He pleaded for their rights to draw water from the public wells and to offer their prayers before the God in the temples. Gandhiji statement that whether the untouchables wanted to go to the temples or not but the caste Hindus should willingly throw open the gates of temples and wells.

Gandhiji was a Karmyogiv. He believed in practice rather than in preaching. He wanted to look into their conditions in the villages and to talk to them, so he went on a tour from Wardha in 1933, and covered every province of India, in about ten months. He
pleaded against untouchability and collected money for the cause of its removal.

He took this tour mostly on foot. This tour made Gandhiji a faithful leader of the untouchables. Through this tour he received sympathy and honour from the untouchables.

Why did social reform movement fail to produce a real change in the system, and in the relationship between the touchables and the untouchables? It was in some ways due to partial response; and whatever was done to eradicate untouchability was piecemeal in nature. The opening of hostels, schools or wells for Harijan could not by themselves undo the evil of untouchability. Why did it all fail? A social analyst like Kharat attributes it "to a lack of organisation, a concerted effort on the part of the higher castes to organise and lead a mass movement. All the reformers from Raja Ram Mohan Roy to Gandhi shared in common the failure to eradicate untouchability. It was so because not even one among them was able to organise it." 1

Gandhian and Ambedkar's perceptions for the removal of untouchability were different. Ambedkar wanted to get them their right of equality through struggle.

He did not like the caste Hindus to give them in alms what was their due. He claimed equality as a birth right. Ambedkar asked his brethren to fight for their rights. While Gandhiji was the worshipper of peace and non-violence. He was trying to change the mentality of caste Hindus to give rights willingly to the untouchables. Gandhiji knew that if the caste Hindus would not agree to give them their rights, there might be conflict and the untouchables would be ready to fight against them. For this purpose Gandhiji wanted the caste Hindus to give Harijans their rights in a peaceful manner.

The paths these two great sons of India, Gandhiji and Ambedkar chose, were different but their objective was the same. It was for the love of the cause for which each one of them wanted to serve with passion, with unfathomable sincerity. They fought and reconciled and continued to fight to build India strong a more peaceful place to live in.
In nutshell it can be said that the Gandhian approach to the problem of Harijans was simple. He wanted peaceful and non-violent means to be followed in this case also as in the pursuit of other ends. He did not accept the Harijans to take up the task of reforming their own lot.

Gandhian contribution of removal of untouchability has been vividly described by A.N. Bhardwaj -

"The caravan of uplifting the untouchables ahead is continuously running. It was with the effort of Gandhiji that after coming to power in 1936, the Congress Govt. introduced a number of bills for the removal of these social evils. The Congress Govt. also established departments for Harijans Welfare work. Municipalities and other social bodies were directed to examine the deplorable living and working conditions of sweepers and scavengers and take necessary measures to provide them housing and other amenities." 2

Gandhiji had already started thinking in 1942, of reserved seats for scheduled castes in the elected bodies. Replying to a question of a scheduled caste M.L.A. as to what will be the position of the scheduled castes in the future constitution to be framed, he wrote, "The Constitution which I could influence

2. A.N. Bhardwaj: Problems of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India, 1979, pp. 72-73.
would contain a provision making the observance of untouchability in any shape or form an offence. The so-called untouchables would have seats reserved for them in all elected bodies according to their population within the electoral area concerned. 3 But he never wanted that reservation should be taken to a harmful extent.

It was due to his efforts and keen interest that the Constituent Assembly provided constitutional guarantees and safeguards for the uplift of Harijans.

The problems of the scheduled castes were closely studied by the framers of the constitution. They incorporated certain provisions for their exclusive benefits.

The preamble of the Constitution itself indicates the general purpose for which the people ordained and established the constitution. It aims at securing social, economic and political justice, equality of status and of opportunity; and fraternity among the citizens without any distinction on the basis of race, castes, community or sex. This was exactly the reali-

sation of the dream of the Mahatma, as he had mentioned in 'India of my dreams' and India in which "the poorest shall feel that it is their country in whose making they have an effective voice; an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony. There can be no room in such an India for the curse of untouchability." 4

To give it solid base, the makers of our constitution adopted 'Fundamental Rights' to safeguard individual liberty and further strengthened it with the 'Directive Principles of State Policy and social, economic and political justice for every member of society. Special provisions have been made in the Constitution to safeguard the interest of the weaker sections and scheduled castes. These constitutional provisions for safeguarding the interest of the untouchables fall under various Articles in the Constitution of India such as - 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 25, 29, 35, 38, 39(A), 46, 164, 244, 275, 320(4) 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 371(A), 371(B) and 371(C). These provisions and preferences can be divided into three categories. 5


I. Protective safeguards.

II. Political safeguards.

III. Developmental safeguards.

I. Protective Safeguards:

Article 15 - Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.

1. The state shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, place of birth or any of them.

2. No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them, be subject to any difficulty, liability, restriction or condition with regard to:

(a) access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of public entertainment; or

(b) the use of wells, bathing ghats, roads and places of public resort maintained wholly or partly out of state funds or dedicated to the use of the general public.

3. Nothing in this Article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children.
4. Nothing in this Article or in clause (2) of Article 29 shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes.

Article 17: Abolition of Untouchability:

'Untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of 'untouchability' shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.

Article 25: Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion:

1. Subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of this part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion.

2. Nothing in this practice shall affect the operation of any existing law or prevent the State from making any law -

(a) regulating and restricting any economic, financial, political or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practices,
(b) providing for social welfare and reform or throwing open of Hindu religious institutions of a public character to all classes and sections of Hindus.

Article 29: Protection of interests of minorities:

1. Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same.

2. No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them.

Along with these safeguards, Article 16, 320(4) and 333 (safeguards for employment). Article 19 (economic safeguards for scheduled tribes), Article 46 (protection from social injustice and all forms of exploitation), Articles 244 and 339 (Administration of scheduled and tribal areas) are also mentioned in our Constitution.
II. **Political Safeguards:**

**Article 330**: **Reservation of seats for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in the House of People**:

1. *Seats shall be reserved in the House of the People for—*
   
   (a) The scheduled castes;
   
   (b) The scheduled tribes except the scheduled tribes (i) in the tribal areas of Assam, (ii) in Nagaland (iii) in Meghalaya (iv) in Arunchal Pradesh and (v) in Mizoram and
   
   (c) The scheduled tribes in the autonomous districts of Assam.

2. *The number of seats reserved in any State or Union Territory for the scheduled castes or the scheduled tribes under clause (i) shall bear as nearly as may be the same proportion to the total number of seats allotted to that State or Union Territory in the House of the People as the population of the scheduled castes in the State or Union Territory or of the scheduled tribes in the State, or Union Territory or part of the State or Union Territory as the case may be in respect of which seats are so reserved, bears to the total population of the State or Union Territory.*
3. Notwithstanding any thing contained in clause (2) the number of seats reserved in the House of People for the scheduled tribes in the autonomous districts of Assam shall bear to the total number of seats allotted to that State a proportion not less than the population of the scheduled tribes in the said autonomous districts bears to the total population of the State.

Article 332: Reservation of seats for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in the Legislative Assemblies of the States.

1. Seats shall be reserved for the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes, except the scheduled tribes in the tribal areas of Assam, in Nagaland and in Meghalaya, in the Legislative Assembly of every State.

2. Seats shall be reserved also for the autonomous districts in the Legislative Assembly of the State of Assam.

3. The number of seats reserved for the scheduled castes or the scheduled tribes in the Legislative Assembly of any State under clause (i) shall bear as nearly as may be the same proportion to the total number of the seats in the Assembly as the population of the scheduled castes in the State or of the scheduled
tribes in the State or part of the State as the case may be, in respect of which seats are so reserved, bears to the total population of the State.

4. The number of seats reserved for an autonomous district in the Legislative Assembly of the State of Assam shall bear to the total number of seats in the Assembly a proportion not less than the population of the district bears to the total population of the state.

5. The constituencies for the seats reserved for any autonomous district of Assam shall not comprise any area outside the district.

6. No person who is not a member of a scheduled tribe of any autonomous district of the State of Assam shall be eligible for election to the Legislative Assembly of the State from any constituency of that district.

Article 334: Reservation of seats and special representation to cease after thirty years. Notwithstanding any thing in the foregoing provisions of this part, the provision of the Constitution relating to -

(a) the reservation of seats for the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes in the House of the People
and in the Legislative Assemblies of States and

(b) the representation of the Anglo-Indian community
in the House of the People and the Legislative
Assemblies of the States by nomination, shall cease
to have effect on the expiration of a period of
thirty years from the commencement of this Consti-
tution.

Provided that nothing in this Article shall
affect any representation in the House of the People
or in the Legislative Assembly of a State unit the
dissolution of the then existing House or Assembly
as the case may be.

Article 325 : Claims of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled
Tribes to services and posts:

The claims of the members of the scheduled castes
and the scheduled tribes shall be taken into considera-
tion, consistently with the maintenance of efficiency of
administration, in the making of appointments to services
and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or
of a State.

Article 338 : Special Officer for Scheduled Castes,
Scheduled Tribes etc.:

1. There shall be a special officer for the scheduled
castes and scheduled tribes to be appointed by the
President.
2. It shall be the duty of the special officer to investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes. Under this Constitution and report to the President upon the working of these safeguards at such intervals as the President may direct, and the President shall cause all such reports to be laid before each House of Parliament.

3. In this Article, reference to the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes shall be construed as including references to such other backward classes as the President may, on receipt of the report of Commission appointed under clause (i) of Article 340, by order specify and also to the Anglo-Indian community.

**Article 339 : Control of the Union over the administration of Scheduled Areas and the Welfare of Scheduled Tribes :**

The President may at any time and shall, at the expiration of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution by order appoint a Commission to report on the administration of the scheduled areas and the welfare of the scheduled tribes in the State.
Articles 340, 341, and 342 are also very helpful for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. In all these Articles President is empowered to make rules in good of weaker sections. Appointment of a Minister-in-Charge of Tribal Welfare in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa is given under Article of 164. Special provisions in respect of Nagaland, Assam and Manipur are given under Articles 371 A, 371 B and 371 C.

III. Development Safeguards

Under this safeguard, following Articles are given in the Constitution, such as -

Article 46: Promoting the educational and economic interest of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

Article 275: Grants from Central Government to the States for welfare of scheduled tribes and raising the level of administration of such scheduled areas.

Article 39 A: Provision for free legal aid. 6

These provisions were not considered comprehensive enough to tackle the Harijan problems. The Government has established a Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes which investigates cases of discrimination against Harijans and suggests ways and means for the amelioration of the condition of Harijans. The Commission has been investigating into the complaints received in its office from time to time. But most of its work is confined to 'should be' and 'ought to be'. Recommendations given by the Commission are very significant and will go a long way in solving the Harijan problems.

Without questioning the sincerity of purpose of Mahatma, it seems unavoidable to say that he invoked religion in support of his movement against untouchability in the hope that the Hindu society will accept his interpretation of Manusmriti and Gita. But he forget that the Manusmriti is the basis of Varna system which resulted into untouchability. How can one eliminate the fruits of a tree and keep the tree blooming at the same time? How can one keep the cake and eat it too? It would have been better if Ghandhi had appealed to the human sentiment of the people rather than invoking religion and religious scriptures. It complicated and confused the whole issue.
Gandhiji was really a sincere leader, but his political burden of leading the national movement and huge organisation of Congress dominated by the caste Hindus, could not allow him to go whole hog against this sentiment of his colleagues and friends in the national movement. Therefore his approach was piecemeal and could not reach the bottom of the problem. The support which he was getting from the rich and upper castes was also very essential for the national movement. So, therefore, devised a scheme through which both the caste Hindus and the Harijans, the rich and the poor, the high and the low should join the struggle for national Independence.

Gandhiji's sincerity was above board. The methods he adopted were those which could be palatable to a caste Hindu and reformatory for the untouchables. The compromise formula of keeping the upper caste in good humour and schedule caste satisfied could not work for long.
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