CHAPTER-VI

Views, Practices and Human Rights
The information as we obtained about Muslims and Christians establishes that the behaviour and practice in reality is not exactly similar to their respective religions prescription. Some existing practices strengths the notion of superiority and inferiority among different groups. Some of their behavioural practices are so contemptuous that ostensibly they appear to be violation of Human Rights. Scholars have unanimous opinion that Muslims and Christian society cannot be understand by reading their religions text. Authentic understanding about them can be obtained by investigating their behaviour as they exist in reality. Fazalbhoy\(^1\) has coined an appropriate term “Lived Islam” to give expression to the study made on the basis of observation of field reality.

While bracketing any behaviour as to be violation of Human Rights it is incumbent upon us to present those provision of Human Rights which make any behaviour or practice not in tune with human life and dignity, and thus becomes object of violation of Human Rights. United Nations has encompassed various kinds of behaviours and practices, which it considered essential for human dignity and survival. Vienna Declaration is first institutional effort of United Nation to enumerate various aspects of Human Rights. The Vienna Convention attended by 171 countries categorically affirmed that “....all Human Rights economic, social, political and cultural, are indivisible, interdependent and inter related”\(^2\). In 1948 UN adopted resolution that “...all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”\(^3\). As such the recognition of inherent dignity of men was given prime importance in the charter of Human Rights.

There are many provisions which were incorporated from time to time by the ‘General Assembly’ of United Nation. Here we are describing only
those provisions which has its relations with behavioural practices of Muslims and Christians. Item 14 of Vienna Declaration makes it duty of the state of take effective steps for immediate intervention and essential elimination of that behaviour, which are contrary to human dignity. Human Rights explicitly mention that every human being has the inherent right to live. The term life here encompasses a wide variety of conditions which are necessary for respectful survival of man. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights adopted many resolutions in 1976 (16th December). The essence of Article 7 of the resolution is that degrading treatment to any person is inhumane and torturous. Some behavioural practices as existed among Muslims and Christians of Sagar town can be logically termed as violation of Human Rights.

II

Dividing the people in consideration of birth and occupation is a vivid case of discrimination. It has been thoroughly explained in preceding chapters that there is a visible difference between textual prescription of behaviour and actual behavioural practices of Muslims and Christians of Sagar. The Christians, more particularly the Catholics give highest place to their religions prescription. New Testament writes that only Jesus is the great teacher and only He has the authority to interpret the law. In the present day this right is conferred on Pope who is supreme religious priest of the Catholics. Similar place is accorded to Prophet Muhammad in Islam. In spite of this kind of rigid mandate, a great variety of variation is found in the behavioural practices of Muslims and Christians. The reason for difference may be attributed to regional variation in interpretation of text and variation in the perspective of scholars. Due to this Fazalbhoy says, “Islam in India have provided ample evidence to show that the Muslims in India displayed a variety of practices”.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
The religions text of both Muslims and Christians proclaim equality, thus living no room for hierarchical ranking. In Sagar people of both the communities are divided in various groups and subgroups. In India, ranking is generally seen in "Dumotian Perspective". The 'Dumontian Perspective' examines social ranking through the principle of purity and pollution. In secular perspective, as J.J. Cove7 remarks that Judicial-Servitude principle also creates social division of people equally strong as in the case of Hindus. As such caste can also be defined independently without relating it to the Hindu social system. In this way caste can be defined as G.S. Pillai does, "Caste is a form of social assortments based on herd instinct or innate desire among the primitive people to group together on high ideals of mutual assistance and social service"8. A rigid hierarchy is maintained by the Muslims of Sagar exactly on the principle of purity and pollution, the Muslims can be divided into three categories. Each of these broad categories includes in them more than one caste. Each group is accorded a definite place in the hierarchical order of Muslim society. For all practices, each group exists as endogamous caste; Muslims of Sagar constitute a caste group. The basis of division of caste group of Ashraf category is the notion of purity and pollution, while for others it is occupation based division. People of occupation-based caste are socially treated low from that of the people of Ashraf category. What is important here is that on the basis of caste (birader or jati) among that Ashraf's proclaims their superiority but it is equally accepted and recognized by the people of lower caste groups. Some individual dissent does not cut much ice to disturb the institutionalised position of the castes falling in Ashraf category. Precisely this kind of situation prompted David G. Mandelbaum9 to say that the study of Muslim Society should proceed with recognition of existence of 'jati' (Caste) among them.
The Muslims of Ashraf category keep vividly, distance from Muslims of Ajlaf and Arjal categories. Social division is one important point in the organization of intra-community relations. Muslims of Sagar are no longer satisfied with their division in three broad categories of Ashraf, Ajlaf and Arjal. There is under-current of discount among the Muslims falling in middle range. They argue that the existing division is confined to draw line only between high graded upper caste Muslims and low graded lower caste Muslims. This kind of two told division is seen harmful for the Muslim falling in middle range among the two. People of some caste vehemently oppose as higher caste but certainly they cannot be placed in the category of socially degraded caste like else where is India. A general consensus is arriving among Muslims in Sagar of to be recognized as backward caste. For our purpose here we want to emphasise the reality that apart from broad division in terms of high graded and low graded caste, people of each caste want to define their specific place in the hierarchical division of Muslims of Sagar. The emergence of the phenomenon of backward caste is a living example to this fact. Thus caste not only exists among Muslims but its root is getting deep and becoming more and more institutionalised.

The raising consciousness among the backward caste is not only confined in Sagar, it is equally found in other parts of the country also. In his study, Fazalbhoy has noticed the growing feeling of Marginalization among Muslim backward caste in other parts of the country also.

In Sagar, the Muslims of the different castes recruit their members in respective group by way of birth. Kolenda give high importance to the recruitment by birth as a necessary condition to recognize a caste.

So, what the difference we find between Muslims and Hindus is the use of terminology to denote the various groups in hierarchical order. M.K.A Siddique has that in some parts, the Muslims use the term 'quom' and very
rarely also ‘birader’ and ‘jati’ to mark social division among them. Therefore it is not correct to say that ‘jati’ is an alien term for recognition of social division among other communities, more particularly among Muslims.

Lower caste Muslims are now aware that cause of continuation of lower position of their caste lies in the mechanism of conversion and settlement. The ancestors of the Muslims of lower caste embraced Islam through ‘mass conversion’ (N. Jayaram\textsuperscript{13}). Their ancestors were from the same region living very much in Sagar district. They recall that all the persons of their caste collectively converted to Islam as economically and socially they had miserable condition in native place. They left their native place and settled in Sagar town with a hope to get more job opportunity. After conversion also, they did not find more rewarding jobs and thus compelled them to carry their traditional occupation. People of Muslim community and others in general knew about the relationship between occupation and caste. Though their ancestors changed their original caste name and adopted Islamic name to escape social disabilities attached with Hindu system, but that did not work well to conceal their traditional occupation and caste identity. This feeling is much more among the educated persons from low graded caste. One educated Muslim from lower caste explained the cause of their lower position to the ignorance of their ancestors; they thought that the caste names of Ashraf categories must have emerged from the religious scriptures of Islam. Being a new convert and also illiterate their knowledge about Islam was limited to the motivator’s of conversion who had assured them to provide equal social position as Islam believed inequality and universal fraternity. By the time they realized that they did not have equal social status even after conversion, it was too late for them to go back as they had already been delineated socially and religiously from neighbour and other section of their community.
Social mobility of different caste group is rigidly restricted. People of lower castes are under going tension to climb up but, their this kind of efforts are strongly resisted by Muslims of upper caste. Caste consciousness is very strong among higher caste of Ashraf category. They may in rare cases permit inter-caste marriages within the caste from Ashraf fold but they are rigid about inter-caste marriages with non-Ashraf caste. Ashrafs make distinction on the basis of practice of Islamic rituals and observance of purity (paksaf). The Ashrafs claim that non-Ashrafs follow certain Hindu rituals like applying Tumeric (Haldi), bringing water from tank, during marriage wearing, wearing Mangal Sutra, etc. These, they say is un-Islamic and therefore refrain from marring with non-Ashrafs. Un-Islamic practice among Muslims follow the caste line: Muslims from Ashraf category are conscious not to practice anything that may become a sign of their Hindu origin.

Muslims of Ashraf category are believed to be descendants from the ancestors of foreign country. Many Muslims of Sagar claiming to be Ashraf also emphasise the foreign origin of their ancestors. Muslims of four lower caste do not accept their assertion. One educated respondent from Behana Caste firmly opines with few exceptions, all Muslims of the Ashraf category have adopted only caste name, such as Sayyad, Sheikh, Mughal, Pathan, etc. There has been a long controversy about genuineness of the origin of Muslims of Ashraf categories. And this kind of controversy is an all India phenomena. Concentrating on Sheikh caste of Ashraf category S.C. Mishra\(^4\) makes a divide in them in terms of “Spurious Sheikh” and “Genuine Sheikh”. This terminological divide can well be extended to explain real situation of all the castes of Ashraf category. The categorization in terms of spurious and genuine is applicable for all castes of Ashraf category living in Sagar town. It is commonly held by non-Ashraf Muslims that the cases of spurious are more than the genuine. The basic attribute of Ashraf is that they are not indigenous
convert. Those who are not indigenous converts are addressed as "genuine Ashraf" and the converts are recognized as 'spurious Ashraf' in Mishra's terminology.

Possibly, the Ashrafs of Sagar are aware of this distinction of being 'spurious'. Therefore they make conscious efforts to establish themselves as 'genuine Ashraf' by rigorously following behavioural practices as is prevalent among "genuine Ashrafs" living in India and abroad. They do not do anything which may give a sign of being spurious. In tune with the concept of 'sanskritization' of M.N. Srinivas\textsuperscript{15}, they depict a situation where people of lower caste adopt the behavioural practices of higher caste. In context of Indian Muslims, Imtiaz Ahmad\textsuperscript{16} uses the term 'Islamization' to explain the situation where converts adopt Muslim customs and practices to prove themselves as Muslims. 'Ashrafization' explains a new type of situation, where 'spurious' section of Muslims makes conscious efforts to adopt behavioural norms and practices as those prescribed for 'genuine' Ashrafs. This they do by two ways: First, strictly adhering to the behavioural prescriptions of Ashrafs, and second, through maintaining obvious distance from common Muslims.

Hypergamy is by and large an accepted practice among Muslims. In spite of that, the Muslims of Ashraf category do not give recognitions in their own behaviour. In Sagar, a person from Sheikh family married to a girl from Behana caste. Behana is treated low in Sagar. The family member of the boy did not accepted the marriage and got the marriage terminated. This they did to prove themselves as 'genuine' Sheikh. This incidence is a clear example of existence of process of Ashrafizations among the 'spurious' Ashraf of Sagar town.
The process of Ashrafization and Islamization, both are in practice among the Muslims of Sagar. In Ashrafizations the ‘spurious’ section Ashraf make conscious to efforts to adopt rules and practices prescribed for ‘genuine’ Ashraf. In Islamization, (Intiaz Ahmad) the converts try to translate Islamic behaviour is their actual life.

The surname ‘Khan’ connotes the meaning of being in Ashraf category. Muslim scholars say that ‘Khan’ is not a general word to be used by common Muslim. It should be used to address the people of Mughal and Pathan of Ashraf category. Using the word ‘Khan’ as suffix to the name has become a quite common among Muslims of comes castes. It is in a way process of Islamizations as well as sanskritization of longer caste Muslims. Similarly, the higher caste name, such as Quareshi is now days frequently used by Muslims from the lower caste as their caste name in an attempt to upgrade their social position in eyes of others.

III

Social Divisions does exist among Christians of Sagar. But the line of demarcation is not that explicit as it is in the case of Muslims. There is specific name for each social division among Muslims. Christians follow different system. They don’t carry occupation-based surname. Two different trends are at work in determination of caste among Christians. The higher caste converts instantly express the name of their pre-conversion caste. Opposite to this, lower caste converts conceal the origin of their castes. After conversion, they adopt family name of European Christians as their caste name. The family name of European Christians is not based on traditional occupation. It is also not a symbolic expression of particular social characteristics or any historical events. This makes the job to search caste or caste like factor very difficult.

This kind of situation creates problem to understand the features of social division among Christians. It is more difficult to decide place of the
people of different groups in hierarchical order. In the absence of easily noticeable caste name, one has to take other recourse to understand the existence of caste in their organizational system and its effect in governing their social behaviours with people of their own community as well as with other people of wider society.

Problem of caste identification is not same all over India. In South Christians can be easily divided on the line of caste. In South, at several places people converted to Christianity collectively what we can all 'mass conversion'. In mass conversion, name of their caste, remain known to wider section of people of that region. The other factor that makes their identity clear is retention of traditional occupation by them. Thus, conversion did not change their basis caste character and stigma attached with the caste.

Precisely for this, the Christians in South are divided on the line of higher and Dalit Christians (Tharamangalam). Caste does not exist overtly but it continues to play decisive role in their relation with other members of Christian community and also for their self-identification. Unlike the Muslims, no Christian of Sagar claims their origin to foreign ancestors. All of them are indigenous converts. Majority of them are local people, inhabitants of Sagar or places around Sagar.

Upper caste converts proudly express their original Hindu caste. They keep Hindu name and surname. On introducing by name or surname, one would take them as people from higher Hindu caste. They usually command sufficient knowledge about Hindu festivals and rituals. Even they celebrate few Hindu festivals. Important point is that they keep high regard for ritual hierarchy of Hindus. They openly talk about their Hindu origin and take pride to highlight the virtues of their pre-conversion caste.
Higher castes Christians first ascertain the pre-conversion castes of fellow Christians before making ties of friendship with them. Social visit follows the caste line. Higher caste converts form and develop social relationship with the Christians of higher caste background. Wife of head of one Catholic household proudly mentioned her caste distinction in relation to the caste of her husband. Father of the wife was Brahmin convert; where as her husband was Rajput before converting to Christianity. She was open to say that since Rajput was also a twice-born caste, she not confront the problem of adjustment. Had the husband been from lower caste, life would have become vary difficult. This reveals that notion of caste has not erased from the minds of higher caste converts. This statement speaks out that not only man, but woman members of high caste Christians also take proud of their high caste origin.

From the terminological perspective, the sentiment about original Hindu caste is just opposite among lower caste converts. People from lower castes have adopted Christianity to emancipate themselves from the ritual based hierarchical placement decided on the notion of purity-pollution principle. People of lower castes were worst sufferer of the purity-pollution scheme of the Hindus. They were placed at the lowest and given contemptuous treatment. Therefore, they avoid remembering their past. There were only sorrows and no glory. On conversion, people of lower caste took the European family name as a mark of identification of their group. English surnames have generally no historical description. These surnames also do not signify their association with any occupation.

The point to be noted is, openly caste is not there but, it continues to exist to construct behavioural frame of both, higher caste converts and lower caste converts. Higher castes converts recall their original caste to highlight their respectful and glorious part. The lower castes converts conceal their pre-
convert caste name with a well-designed plan to dissociate themselves from the agony of their past. Whatever may be the reason, in both the cases, caste is common factor to condition their behaviour frame for social identification.

There is marked division between Catholics and Protestant in respect to converts. Catholics have converts mostly from higher caste. Right from the beginning of conversion, the Catholics had been giving preference to convert higher caste people. Namboodri Brahmans were first to embrace Catholic Christianity. Though they changed their religion, but continued to maintain their superiority as Brahmin. The Brahmin converts popularly recognized as Syrian Catholics were responsible to create hierarchical division of Catholics in terms of pure and Dalit Christians. Tharamagalam reports that they maintain segregation in their relation with Dalit Christian and Trent the Dalit as untouchable (Tharamangalam\textsuperscript{18}).

We did not find any Dalit convert among the Catholics of Sagar. Dalits and Tribal have converted to Protestants. Dalit converts are not treated equally by higher caste converts among Protestants. They are subjected to many such treatments that can be term as violation of human rights. Dalits are not given respectful treatment in Church also. So much so that Dalit Christians had to construct their own church. This is known as ‘Believers Assembly’. Only Dalit converts are members of this church. The reason for creation of the church was to serve the need of the people from Dalits. This kind of factor reaffirm that conversion to Christianity does not eliminate the caste, instead it continues to provide deep root.

The practice of segregation of Dalit Christian is not confined to Sagar only, it is found in other parts of India also. Alexander\textsuperscript{19} has found existence of separate churches for higher castes and the Harijans (Dalit) among the Christians of South. Narrating his experience of Tamil Nadu, Tharamangalam Remarks: “...distinction among Vellala, Udaya and Nadar are important both
among Catholics and Protestants"\textsuperscript{20}. He further describes the existence of "one caste churches" (Theramangalam\textsuperscript{21}) is commonly found in many places in Tamil Nadu. Situation in Kerala also exhibits the same picture. Among Jacobites, Alexander\textsuperscript{22} reports, the lower caste converts are given back seat in congregation of church.

In Sagar, the higher caste converts practise untouchability in suppressed form. Generally they do not prefer the visit of Dalit Christians to their houses. If they come they are served tea at the same length they are asked to wash cup by giving one or the other reason. However, all the higher caste Christians do not insist on washing cup.

The ceremony of Holy Communion is a vivid example of the existence of segregation and untouchability. Earlier all the members used to sip wine Holy Liquid from the common bowl. The people of upper caste converts resented this practice. This made the Church to change the system. Now the wine is served on disposable small cups. This is example of practicing untouchability. They changed the ritual to maintain segregation and untouchability.

The practice of untouchability is common among Christians living in other parts of the country. Alexander noted the "Pulaya Christians are not given food inside the house of a Syrian Christian or in a good dish, but only outside the house in some broken dish. After taking food, they have to wash it"\textsuperscript{23}.

Tharamanglam also notices the practice of untouchability among Syrian Christians of Kerala. They do not allow the new converts to sit along with them in commensality. The higher caste Christian of Sagar observes strict segregation of untouchable converts in commensality.
Segregation on the line of higher caste converts and Dalit caste converts exist in both Muslim and Christian societies, but observance of segregation and its concomitant practice of untouchability do not follow the common route. Muslims have clear hierarchical set up, where as the Christians maintain it in concealed form and practise it in suppressed manner. The Muslims do not make discrimination in Mosque and prayer. Christians make the segregation explicit in Church and worship. Differences and similarity between Muslims and Christians have been tried to explain through the analysis of their views on some important issues relating to caste hierarchy and untouchability.

Table 27 and 28 presents the views of Muslims and Christians respectively on the importance of caste in settlement of marriage.

**TABLE 27**

**Consideration of Caste background in Settlement of Marriage : Muslim**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>Make enquiry</th>
<th>Make no enquiry</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sayyad</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheikh</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mughal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathan</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasai</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makrane</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rangrez</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behana</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhisti</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>88</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 28

Consideration of Caste background in Settlement of Marriage: Christian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religions Branch</th>
<th>Make enquiry</th>
<th>Make no enquiry</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Tables give surprising result. 68 per cent Muslims and over three fourths Christian make enquiry about the caste background of prospective bride or groom in settlement of marriage. It clearly establishes that caste continues to play role in major life events. People from Hindu fold embraced Muslim or Christians to get rid of from caste, but the conversion could not wipe out the caste from their thinking process.

Head of households from Muslims and Christian were made to give their views on specific issue of establishing marital relation with a person from untouchable castes. Their response has been demonstrated in Table 29 (Muslims) and Table 30 (Christians).

Table 29

Views on Marriage with Untouchable Converts: Muslims

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sayyed</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheikh</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mughal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathan</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasai</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makrane</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caste</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rangrez</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behana</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhisti</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 30**

Views on Marriage with Untouchable Converts: Christians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>Sub Division</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protestants</td>
<td>Untouchable</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tribals</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High caste</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholics</td>
<td>Untouchables</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tribals</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High caste</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

86 per cent of Muslims are categorical to say that they would not establish marital relation with a person from untouchable converts of their own community. Figure on this issue among Christians is 76 per cent. Even the persons who were themselves from untouchable castes are not in favour of establishing marital relation with a person from untouchable converts. Behana and Bhisti are accorded lowest position among Muslims and they are treated as untouchables by some higher caste Muslims though in suppressed form. Even persons from these two low graded castes do not want to establish
marital relations with untouchable converts. The figure is nearly 67 per cent among Behana and hundred per cent among Bhisti.

Christians are also not very different on this issue. 76 per cent Christians do not want to establish marriage with untouchable converts. As like Muslims, the converts with untouchable background also do not favour marital alliance with untouchable converts. This gives a clean indication that both Muslims and Christians do not want to do anything which may become cause for their low gradation in hierarchical order of their respective societies.

Some Protestant appears to be slightly liberal on this issue, but Catholics are quite strong. All the Catholics say that they would not marry with untouchable converts. It is to be remembered that all the Catholics of Sagar are converts of new higher strata of Hindus. The caste feeling of superiority and purity is present in them. Conversion has not brought any change in on the notion of purity of blood.

Views of persons from both the communities on the question of commensality with untouchables have been quantitatively enumerated in Table 31 (Muslims) and Table 32 Christians.

**TABLE 31**

**Commensality with Untouchables : Muslim**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>Hindu Untouchables</th>
<th>Converted Muslim Untouchable</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Take Food</td>
<td>Work Table</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sayyad</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheikh</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mughal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathan</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasai</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makrane</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 32

**Commensality with Untouchables: Christians**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>Hindu Untouchables</th>
<th>Converted Muslim Untouchable</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Take Food</td>
<td>Wont Take</td>
<td>Take Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rangrez</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behana</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhisti</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>Pre-conversion caste</th>
<th>Hindu untouchables</th>
<th>Converted Christian Untouchables</th>
<th>Would take food if not engaged in traditional occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Take Food</td>
<td>Wont Take</td>
<td>Take Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestants</td>
<td>Untouchables</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tribals</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High Caste</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholics</td>
<td>Untouchables</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tribals</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High Caste</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Response of Muslims and Christians on question of commensality with untouchables has been obtained through two angles one, commensality with Hindu untouchables, and two commensality with untouchables converted to their respective communities. 84 per cent Muslims refused to take food along with Hindu untouchables. However the number is slightly less in case of untouchable converts to their own community. Here the number is 64 per cent.
The Christians appear to be less rigid on this issue in comparison to the Muslims. Nearly one third (that is 30.3 percent) have no reservation to take food on the same table along with Hindu untouchables. The strength increases in case of commensality with converted untouchables of their own community. It works out to 63.6 per cent of the Christians. They appear to averse more on account of unhygienic occupations of the untouchables. Some Christians say that they can eat on the same table along with untouchables provided they disengage themselves from their traditional occupations. The number was only 30.3 per cent who had no objection on commensality with untouchable. The number goes up to above 60 per cent on the condition if the untouchables refrain from doing their unhygienic traditional jobs. But still there remains about forty per cent Christians who do not want to take part in commensality with the people of untouchable caste. This reveals that religious faith can be changed, but it is not easy to change age old social practices. The notion of touchable and untouchable continue to hunt them even after conversion. This is equally applicable for Christians and Muslims.

The practice of untouchability becomes further obvious from the statement of Muslims and Christians on the matter of providing access to the people of untouchable castes into their kitchen. The following Table present the record of their statement.

**Table 33**  
View on Untouchable's Access to Kitchen: Muslim

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>Allow</th>
<th>Wont Allow</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sayyad</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheikh</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mughal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathan</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caste</td>
<td>Allow</td>
<td>Wont Allow</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasai</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makrane</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rangrez</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behana</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhisti</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 34**

View on of Untouchable’s Access to Kitchen: Christians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholics</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seventy eight per cent Muslims are frank to admit that they would not allow a person from untouchable castes to enter into their kitchen. This section comprises those Muslim also who are considered downgraded and offen untouchables by the members of their own community.

The response follows almost the same line in case of Christians 60.6 per cent Christians give negative answer on the issue of giving access to people of untouchable castes in their kitchen. The feeling of untouchability is more strong among the Catholics. The figure is 75 per cent from among the Catholics who do not allow a person from untouchable caste to enter their kitchen.

In the sequence of discussion on their views regarding untouchability, it is logically appropriate to present their opinion about the hold of caste and
untouchability in changing social scenario. Opinion on the hold of caste among Muslims and Christians has been presented in the Table 35 and 36 respectively.

**Table 35**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste Category</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sayyad</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheikh</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mughal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathan</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasai</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makrane</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rangrez</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behan</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhisti</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>92</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 36**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholics</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The opinion expressed lay Muslim and Christians on issue of hold of caste is alarming 92 per cent Muslim consider that caste is gaining ground in India. The figure is more than 75 per cent (75.75) among the Christians. This
implies that those who do not believe in caste, they also that caste is deeply getting ground in social fabric of India society.

So is the case of spread of untouchability in India in general, and its effect among Muslims and Christian society in particular. The opinion of Muslims and Christian about spread of untouchability among them has been displayed through Table 37 and 38

**Table 37**

**Opinion on Existence of Caste and Untouchability : Muslims**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>Spreading</th>
<th>Non spreading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sayyad</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheikh</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mughal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathan</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasai</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makrane</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rangrez</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behana</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhisti</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 38**

**Opinion on Existence of Caste and Untouchability : Christian**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>Spreading</th>
<th>Non-spreading</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholice</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the opinion of 76 per cent respondents untouchability exists among Muslims. People may not accept openly but they follow untouchability in practice. The Christians give divided opinion on existence of untouchability in Christianity, at least this is true for Christians of Sagar. 59 per cent Christians acknowledge existence of the Practice of untouchability. Among Catholics, the figure is hundred per cent.

It is evidently clear from the views and opinion expressed by the respondents that both, Muslim and Christian society of Sagar are in the grip of caste and the practice of untouchability. It is to be analysed that to what extent those practices come within the purview of violation of human rights.

There are several practices and conditions of human living which attract provision of violation of human right. In India we can get cases at every here and there which very well come within the purview of violation of human rights. Human rights declarations make provision of health, medical treatment, education, nutritius food, etc. as necessary condition for survival of man and to live life with honour and dignity. If one goes by the actual meaning of the provisions of human rights, then one will have to say that concept of human rights is meaningless in Indian caste et. At every step, one can encounter situations exhibiting violation of context human rights.

Thus, it is not appropriate to take account of all matters and social practices which are instrumental to attack provisions of human rights. Taking many matters and practices will only make the situation blurred and confusing. Inspired by these line of thinking, here instances of selected practices are given which attach life and dignity of persons from Muslims and Christian communities.

Main provisions of human rights closely related to life and dignity have been consciously selected to describe the facts of violation of human
rights obtaining place in Muslim and Christian societies of Sagar town. The provisions have already been described in early pages of this chapter.

Differentiation in consideration of purity and impurity of blood is a serious case of violation of human rights. The hierarchical division of people on the basis of membership of group is against the concept of equality of human being; This is more serious if recruitment of members depends on birth. In Muslims and Christian societies people acquire membership of his group on the basis of his birth. Each group is given a definite place in the hierarchical order of their communities. The behaviour of people is prescribed according to the placement of his group in the hierarchy. Some groups are treated high and respectful while those occupying lower position are subjected to ill treatment and degradation.

Among Muslims, each group is given a specific name. Some names connotates its being ritually superior, as the four caste-groups of the Ashraf category are considered superior. Other groups have been given name on the basis of their traditional occupation. A clear divide exists among Muslims on the basis of their occupations – one, the groups engaged in traditional occupation, and the others who have no system of family occupation. They are generally referred to as non-traditional occupation groups.

People having no history of traditional occupation are considered high and pure in comparison to the people having traditional occupation. These occupational castes are hierarchically placed as Ajlaf and Arjal. The placement of various groups is governed by social rating of their respective occupations. The hierarchical position of groups determine the form of relationship of members of a group with persons of other hierarchically placed groups. There is no room for mobility of different groups as membership is recruited through birth.
The declaration of human rights is categorical to state that there shall not be any discrimination of people on the basis of birth or occupation. Membership in occupational groups is determined by birth. Thus, it is a practice of discrimination of Muslims on the basis of birth or occupation. Having regard for textual prescriptions, the Muslim do not generally address the various divisions by the term caste. But non-application of the term does not eliminate the fact of existence of caste among them.

People do not have any control on their birth. But subjecting them to degraded treatment, both in terms of social position and behavioural practices is a violation of human rights.

Similar situation of discrimination is found also among Christians of Sagar. Christians are accorded superior or inferior position on the line of their affiliation to Catholics or Protestants. Catholics are placed higher to that of the believers of Protestant. Within Catholics and Protestants, people are distinguished on the basis of their pre-convert castes. It is not enough that they assign different positions on the basis of pre-convert caste, but they carry this differentiation in their behaviour with others. Discrimination on the basis of pre-conversion caste among the Christian are so conspicuous exclusively made for Dalits and untouchables that Protestants are compelled to take membership of Church.

The high caste converts treat Dalit converts very low. They are not given equal treatment in rituals and worship in the Church. A clear segregation is maintained between higher caste converts and lower caste converts. Separate seating arrangement is made for the untouchable converts. So much so they changed the rituals relating to the ceremony of holy communion in the form that the presence of untouchable should not bring displeasure to higher caste Christians.
Separate treatment to untouchable converts is direct attack on their status and dignity. The practice of discrimination became so unbearable that the untouchable and Dalit converts had to create separate churches for themselves. There is one specific church in Sagar town. No higher caste Christian become members of that church. That church is exclusively for Dalits and untouchable converts.

The notion of untouchability is present with equal strength among both, Muslim and Christian society of Sagar. People are discriminated on the basis of their pre-convert caste. This kind of discrimination is common in both the societies. Owing to the consideration of untouchability, they do not allow the untouchables to enter their kitchen. They do not take food in the house of untouchables. They do not eat in the same row along with untouchable converts.

The presence of the notion of untouchability becomes vividly known during settlement of marriage. In both the communities, people from higher caste background make it a point to not to establish marital relation in a family from untouchable or Dalit castes. The untouchable castes embraced Islam or Christianity as a way of emancipation from the evils of Hindu society, but they continue to receive the same treatment in their new religion also.

Hierarchical division of people and behavioural prescription in terms of their placement in hierarchy is a infringement of rights of human beings. Deptying the situation of unchanged social position of untouchable converts, Thramangalam rightly says that “caste is back with a bang”\textsuperscript{24}. The situation of ill-treatment is so rigid that Alexander\textsuperscript{25} reports that some untouchables (Harijan) converts have started re conversion to Hinduism.
In India, neither the religious societies nor the Government take care to protect the untouchable people from the inhuman treatment given to them.

M. Shiviah writes that the effluent countries do this via welfare programmes. In India they are left to oscillate between state and religious communities Conversion could not stand a viable means to eliminate discrimination and practices of inhuman treatment. The treatment given to converted untouchables in Islam and Christianity of Sagar town reveals that how human rights are violated by those religions society which is seated on the pillars of equality and universal fraternity of mankind.
REFERENCES:


3. Ibid, p. 28.

4. Bible.

5. Fazalbhoy, Nasreen, op. cit., p. 503.


8. Pillai, G.S., “The Origin and Development of Caste”.


