CHAPTER IX

DR. AMBDEKAR’S CONTRIBUTION TO THE POLITICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL EVOLUTION OF INDIA — A SUMMING-UP

In this study we have endeavoured to present the basic political philosophy of Dr. D.R. Ambedkar and his approach to the political and constitutional issues that faced the nation during the period of his public life of over two decades, in a comprehensive manner. The title of this study, naturally, precludes a detailed examination of his social philosophy, as our attention had to be focussed on his views and activities pertaining to the political and constitutional reform in India, since the introduction of the Montague-Chelmsford reforms. Nevertheless, a brief reference has been made to his social philosophy to the extent it is necessary and helpful for a better appreciation of his political philosophy and actions. It must also be pointed out, at the outset, that the two areas — political and constitutional — cannot be separated in an exclusive manner. The negotiations that were held at the governmental and political levels between the British and the Indians were primarily to bring about a constitutional arrangement that would permit increasing participation for Indians in politics and administration. The British policy was one of gradual devolution of
power to the Indians. The key-note of the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms was the introduction of a form of self-government, in stages. But the series of developments since then, leading to the transfer of power in 1947, indicate that Indian Nationalists were not prepared to accept the 'gradualist approach' of the British. Naturally, this period (1919–1947) could be described as the last phase of British rule and of the Indian freedom struggle as well. Many individuals and institutions played an important role in Indian Politics of the period. A number of colourful and important personalities like the moderate Phirozebhai Mehta, the gracious Gopalkrishna Gokhale, the fiery Tilak, the heroic Savarkar, the deeply religious and non-violent Mahatma Gandhi, the charismatic Jawaharlal Nehru and the volcanic Subhash Chandra Bose were among the many who gave a definite turn, at some stage or the other, to Indian Politics. A mention of these names is not, however, to the exclusion of a number of other leaders like Sardar Patel, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Lala Lajpatry, Bhagat Singh and a host of others. In the course of about sixty-years since the birth of the Indian National Congress in 1885, India moved towards freedom. It was during the latter half of this crucial period that Ambedkar emerged on the Indian political scene with a
specific purpose and mission. But his name generally does not appear in the galaxy of Indian leaders, even though he was ranked as 'one of the top dozen Indians' of the period by a Western observer. This significant omission was because he was not only a born social outcaste but also had become a political outcaste as well, in view of the stand he took in the public life of the country that was not quite in conformity with the then accepted norms of participation. Still no one can deny the sincerity of purpose and his sincere dedication to the 'mission' of his life.

It was not a purposeless drift of Ambedkar from the portals of great centres of learning of the West, like the Columbia University, the London School and the Gray's Inn when he decided to remain an independent man, free to work out his own way in defence of the sixty millions of his unfortunate brethren — the Untouchables of India. It is pointed out in the earlier parts of this thesis that he was determined to emancipate these social pariahs, come what may, by utilising every opportunity that came his way. Could he not have done this by just attending to their social, educational and economic upliftment by, himself, remaining an educationist and a social worker and reformer living amidst them and by
setting them an example on the lines of Booker T. Washington of Tuskegee, U.S.A.? This was, of course, one of the possible directions in which he could have moved. Such an approach was also necessary as a first step. But the formidable size of the Harijan population and the enormity of its problems would not just permit such an approach alone. It could only set the ball in motion, preparing the ground for further and greater type of activity to achieve their emancipation. The need of the hour was to accelerate the process and the struggle had to be launched on different fronts. In the second place, the problem of the Untouchables was a deeply entrenched one. It had a religious sanction behind it. The practice was recognised by the Hindu Shastras and scriptures, so much so to the Caste-Hindu mind there was nothing unusual or obnoxious about it. Untouchability was observed and practiced by the Hindus as a natural ingredient of their religion. It was this extraordinary character of the practice of Untouchability, about which Ambedkar was pre-occupied and worried. As a keen thinker and scholar and a devoted student of Sociology and Anthropology this problem naturally engaged his attention while he was in Columbia University, when he wrote a short but an interesting paper on 'Castes in India — Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development'. He had realised

that the institution of Caste was fraught with 'tremendous consequences' as it chopped off the population into fixed and definite units, each one prevented from fusion into another through the custom of endogamy.' He had categorically stated that the priestly classes among the Hindus 'were the originators of this 'un-natural institution' founded and maintained through unnatural means.' So religion was pressed into use for the purpose of upholding and preserving this reprehensible and inhuman practice. It was nothing short of polluting religion. When Ambedkar could prove this after a thorough and scientific study, he also, in the course of his subsequent studies maintained that Untouchability had a religious sanction which led to its perpetuation. If it were just a social aberration, it would not have survived and grown in its intensity for over fifteen hundred years and even into the 20th Century — the age of liberalism! Social customs and practices cannot be immutable, as they undergo changes under the relentless stress of changing conditions from time to time.

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2. Ibid.

3. Who Were The Shudras? How they came to be the Fourth Varna in the Indo-Aryan Society; 1946; and The Untouchables — who were they and why they became Untouchables? 1946.
a scientific way, Ambedkar pointed out that it could be eradicated once it was realised that it had, after all, the religious sanction. Once that sanction is weakened, and people banish from their minds the so-called religious element in it, it becomes easier to eradicate Untouchability. Such is the significance and value of his study and thoughts on the origin of Untouchability. He set the problem in a different and more scientific perspective. It is because of this religious entrenchment that he wanted to press into use no other agency than the state itself. The State, he thought and rightly so, could be useful for the purpose, only if and when it is constituted on the modern principle of 'Secularism'. So long the British continued to rule over India, he thought, it would not be possible to establish a 'Secular India'. He also knew fully well that the official policy of the British was to interfere as little as possible with the social and religious life of the Indians. So, as Brailsford remarked, the result was 'unquestionably to stereotype the past in a land that never has discarded it with ease'. Ambedkar rightly thought that only in a Swaraj Constitution it could be achieved, which could at best be a long-range objective. In the meantime, he thought, the British Government could be persuaded to provide for some special political safe-
guards to the weaker sections of the country so that they can get into political power. It was his firm conviction that only by participating in the political power, the Untouchables could hope for their redemption by utilising the machinery of the State. That is why he decided to adopt a wider strategy and was forced to enter politics with this lofty objective, and not for personal advancement or to gratify his careerist ambitions. This was made amply clear by him, time and again, in countless number of Memoranda he submitted to various Commissions and Agencies such as the Indian Statutory Commission, the Round Table Conferences, the Lothian Commission, the Cripps Mission, the Cabinet Mission and the Constituent Assembly of India. It was because he was fully convinced of this possibility, and not just out of personal embitterment, though such a thing was understandable, that he was determined to fight the evil of untouchability on all possible fronts and eradicate it root and branch. This was the mission of his life. He launched the struggle in order to fulfill this mission. The struggle had also a philosophical justification in the right of his people for justice, equality, fraternity and fair-play. Thus he entered the fray by regarding the woes of his people as his personal humiliations and, therefore, he had a vow to make self-respecting citizens
out of those virtual slaves. In this battle for recognition he avoided, as far as possible, an open encounter with the British Government, as a part of his strategy. However, this had the disadvantage of alienating him from the nationalist sections, though his co-operation with the British was not to conflict with his national fervour and patriotism.

He was once again accused of being a tool in the hands of the British who were desperately searching out for men and agencies, whose claims could be used as counterpoises to Indian nationalism and the freedom struggle. Such accusations made him more embittered and his revolt against the Hindu society became all the more volcanic. This could be attributed largely to the environmental factors, besides those of his early life and also the influence of Edmund Burke, Booker T. Washington, Thomas Jefferson, the American Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the U.S.A. It must, however, be noted that he was not maliciously bitter, but was only looking out for the deeper causes of the evil practice of untouchability for eradicating it totally. Hence, he was in total engagement throughout his life with this social phenomena, as an humanist who, essentially and charitably, looked for what made
true humanity. This could not be the case, had he narrowed himself by his embittered attitude to merely castigate the caste system and its unseemly side, though he exposed the enormity of injustice meted out to a large section of the Hindu society. In this task he had to denigrate the Hindu faith itself and declaure the approach made by the Indian National Congress under the guidance of Gandhiji as utterly inadequate, ill-advised and unrealistic. So Ambedkar emerged on the political scene of India as a social revolutionary, who used political means for emancipating the Untouchables. He was opposed to the spiritual appeal and an appeal to the good sense of the people. He was convinced that a spiritual appeal without appropriate action geared by political power and sanction would stand little chance of survival. He endeavoured to get recognition for the claims of the Untouchables to be treated as a political minority so that they could get safeguards in any constitutional arrangement. Otherwise, it will not at all be possible for them to participate in the political power of the country. Since the 'police power' of the State was not available for their protection, the only way open to them, he argued, was to get adequate protection by way of special safeguards. That is the only means for them to rise, having fallen for centuries. On the same
count, he exhorted his people to make use of every opportunity to get into positions of importance in the government. He himself did not let go such opportunities of holding high offices as the Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council and as a Minister in Mr. Nehru's Cabinet. He was motivated solely by the lofty ideals which he was constantly upholding. He had also realised that he could achieve more by remaining within rather than without the Government. There was no point in deeming this political purposiveness of his. It was neither political chickenery nor careerist opportunism that we see in him. His acceptance of office did not mean straying away from the dedicated cause.

By insisting on the type of approach he had envisaged, Ambedkar believed that he would be not only discharging his duty towards his people, but would be rendering a profound service to the nation as a whole. Ambedkar, indeed, served the nation in this capacity as a social reformer and politician who also combined in him the qualities of a visionary and a humanist. Hence his contribution cannot be restricted to that of his leadership of a minority section of the Hindu society only, but should be acknowledged at the national plane itself. He styled himself as a 'rebel' who dared to
argue in the face of the 'pontiff', if need be, to vindicate the just claims of his brethren. Ambedkar, therefore, became an indefatigable champion of the cause of the Untouchable, and he strove to clean up the asean stable of Indian politics by espousing this cause.

The true image and stature of the man emerges fully when viewed properly against the backdrop of the Indian political scene of his day. The political scene of the country during the period in question has already been explained. It had not yet assumed a definite pattern. On the other hand, it was steeped with parochialistic and feudalistic notions and was not at all conducive to the development of true nationalism. The freedom struggle was, no doubt, the obvious expression of Indian nationalism. For nationalism to become a collective expression of a pluralistic society the only rallying point was the resentment against an alien regime. But that would not serve as a strong and enduring focal point of unity. Once the British quit India the divisive forces of the Indian society raised their ugly heads in the form of linguism, casteism, regionalism and what not. In a situation like this, only a person of Ambedkar's vision and learning could insist on going to the very root of these evils and call for remedies which were not just
half-measures. The Congress was, on the other hand, so deeply involved in the freedom struggle that its leadership could not see beyond the sole objective of making the British quit India. It was the belief of Mahatma Gandhi and others that once the British leave India, all the so-called maladies would disappear, which was, needless to say, a wrong assessment of the situation. It was something like dealing with mere symptoms rather than the true malady itself that lay deep down in the social and political fabric of India. Hence, Ambedkar's task was to apply incisive politics in order to expose the trouble spot and thus help healing this gaping wound. Politics to Ambedkar, naturally, became a mission rather than a ladder for personal gain and ambition. His politics was essentially the politics of principles and not of pragmatism. While championing the cause of the Untouchables he put the entire problem in the wider perspective of nationalism, democracy, humanity and justice. Thereby, he vitalised the national life of India that had suffered from deep-died traditionalism and parochialism which are the natural enemies of democracy. To Ambedkar, democracy meant something more than a mere frame of political society. To be complete it should encompass social and economic organisation of a particular order that would strengthen political liberty. Commenting
on this problem, Ambedkar said, "a Democratic form of Government presupposes a Democratic form of society. The formal framework of Democracy is of no value and would indeed be a misfit if there were not social democracy. The politicals never realised that Democracy was not a form of government; it was essentially a form of society." He further maintained that for democracy to be successful there are two essentials: "The first is an attitude of the mind, an attitude of respect and equality towards their fellows. The second is a social organization free from rigid social barriers. Democracy is incompatible and inconsistent with isolation and exclusiveness, resulting in the distinction between the privileged and unprivileged." Through his unremitting onslaught on such politics, he sought to liberate Indian politics from such cribbling outlook and insisted on introducing true catholicity. This was a positive ingredient in his approach to the problem of untouchables from the national point of view. Democracy for India would be meaningless without such a catholicity of outlook. He had rightly laid his fingers on the very character of Indian society in which politics was nothing.

4. Banade, Gandhi and Jinnah: 1943; p. 35.
5. Ibid, p. 36.
but 'theology in action'. Unless that was cast off and the society was secularised, representative government could not function at all. So long this theological character of the society was preserved the Depressed Classes needed to be protected by special safeguards.

Dr. Ambedkar's contention was that Muslims, as a minority, grew from strength to strength because of the protection under the system of separate electorates. The Untouchables, though formed a part of the Hindu religion, should also be accorded such a special protection as given to the Muslims in view of the severe social, economic and political disabilities they have undergone. But it was strongly opposed by Gandhiji as, according to him, special electoral protection to the Depressed Classes would mean driving a deep wedge into the Hindu religion and society. If it is accepted, it would be suicidal for the Hindus. In other words, the Mahatma was for the upliftment of the Harijans within the framework of the Hindu religion, and the caste sections should strive at it. But what Ambedkar held was: the emancipation and elevation of the Untouchables as a matter of right, upheld by law and statute and not through derivative concessions. The Gandhian approach to this problem was, therefore, conservative, sentimental and limited; whereas
Ambedkar's approach was radical, realistic and emancipative.

The difference between the two approaches is significant when we see the problem in the democratic set-up of independent India. The late Prime Minister Nehru had envisaged the socialistic pattern of society, as we know, for independent India. The socialistic pattern of society cannot be confined to the economic aspect alone. Economic reform is, no doubt, indispensable. Ambedkar had made it amply clear, even as early as 1936, that political and economic reform should be preceded by a reform in the social order. A just social order cannot be built on a defective base like the unreformed traditional Hindu society — full of inequalities and other undemocratic features. Ambedkar wrote that the socialist state of India cannot be built without grappling with the problem of social reform which was fundamental and inescapable. So, his approach to the problem was more scientific and comprehensive than that of any other thinker and reformer of the period, except perhaps Mr. Nehru, who was very much alive to this reality. He was never tired of castigating 'casteism' in India. Ambedkar esounded a prophet when he said in 1936 that only a secular India in which the death-knell
of 'casteism' is sounded that can be fit for a socialistic pattern, based on equality and justice. It is redeeming to note that destiny chose him to write the new Constitution of India. Secularism is one of his precious contributions in the political and constitutional evolution of India.

It is already pointed out in the course of the foregoing Chapters of this thesis to what extent Ambedkar drew from history, Constitutions and political life of the Western nations and applied them to our own problems with a view to avoiding their mistakes and to building a more useful and enduring social order. It is on the basis of such experiences of other countries, though the problems in India had their own peculiarities, that he demanded for a just and humane treatment of the minorities in India by providing them equal opportunities with others in the political, social and economic spheres. Otherwise, he had warned, there would be the natural tendency towards disintegration. His views, for example, on the safeguards for the religious and linguistic minorities in India were realistic. He had demanded in his earlier Memoranda that the Depressed Classes should participate in general constituencies with

6. Annihilation of Caste; 1936.
reserved seats. Later on, at the Round Table Conferences, he demanded separate electorates as given to other religious minorities. But he had to agree to joint electorates in order to save Gandhiji's life. He was a votary of separate electorates for minorities till such time they could catch up with others. He provided a scientific criteria for determining the minority position of a group. It is not religious affinity alone that should matter. The degree of social, political and economic disability that a group suffers, should constitute the basis for according special protection, no matter to what religious or racial group they belong. He insisted upon the need for a change in the basic outlook of the majorities towards the minorities. The majority group should not ill-treat the minorities. The minorities should be made to feel a sense of security so that some day in the course of their evolution they will be able to cast off their minority mark and feel they have no particular disability. The position and attitude of the Parsis, who constitute, perhaps, the smallest group among the minorities in India, is a case in point. They have never complained of any injustice, nor they have ever clamoured for special safeguards, either before or after independence. It is mainly due to the fact that no Indian ever had any social inhibitions about a Parsi, nor he was
ostracised for his religious faith. The Parsis have been well-off educationally, socially, economically and they have played a vital role in the field of business, education and politics. So it is not the religious, racial nor even the numerical position that should matter in this respect. It is the social and other disabilities that a people have suffered for generations that should constitute the basis for special protections and safeguards, according to Ambedkar. He laid special emphasis on this problem in his works such as States and Minorities: Thoughts on Linguistic States etc.

Having called attention to the need for secularising Indian society and politics, Ambedkar also worked out the details of a safe-polity for minorities. He envisaged a new social and political organization based on what he called the 'ground plan' of the society, than merely in the form of speculative observations. According to this 'ground plan' the Depressed Classes were entitled to special protections more than any other religious minority in the country. He maintained that all minorities in general, and the Scheduled Castes in particular, should be protected under special safeguards provided in the Constitution itself. He was opposed to the principle of nomination which would emasculate a people.
He wanted representation through election only, as it was 'not only correct in principle from the standpoint of responsible government, but is also necessary in practice from the standpoint of political education which cannot well be secured otherwise than by the exercise of the vote'. That is why he provided for democratic elections at every level and upheld the principle of universal adult suffrage to one and all irrespective of caste, creed or sex. The weaker sections like the scheduled Castes would require additional weightage by way of reservation of seats etc., not for ever, but till such time as they reach a particular position of strength. It is because of these views he held that he had declared that minorities could not consent to any self-governing Constitutional arrangement for India unless their demands were met in a reasonable manner. But this was misconstrued as an anti-national, unpatriotic and obstructionist pronouncement, which was quite understandable in the prevailing circumstances at that time. Nevertheless, Ambedkar sincerely pursued the cause and did not rest until he wrote it in the new Constitution of India.

It is necessary, at this stage, to refer to some of his observations in the post-independence period, during which time the minority problem assumed new facets. The
clamour for reorganising states on linguistic lines was, as we know, there for quite some time, even during the British rule. Ambedkar was opposed, in the beginning, to such a reorganisation. He had anticipated that the creation of linguistic states in India would add to the minority problem in every state in a new form. At the same time, he agreed that unilingual states would be necessary for the development of a free and democratic life. His suggestion, therefore, was to have more than one state for a particular language, and given wise statesmanship the inherent dangers of a unilingual State can be overcome. In other words, he had pleaded for smaller states nearly equally balanced in size, population and economic viability. He rightly anticipated the possible tendency towards 'balkanisation' between the North and the South, and the predominance of unduly large states like Uttar Pradesh in the public life of the country. His suggestions to have balanced states, a second capital for India etc., would have brought about real national integration in the country. It would have also removed the edge of communalism and linguism. The malady of present-day India is parochialism which is eating into the very vitals of national life. Ambedkar's suggestions, if adopted betimes, would have gone a long way in accomplishing national integration by bringing about the needed emotional integration. The developments since the
reorganisation of States in the year 1956 substantiate the apprehensions expressed by him in this respect.

Ambedkar's views on the minority problem are further examined in his *magnum opus — Thoughts on Pakistan or Pakistan or the Partition of India*. He showed, by his extensive and scientific study of the problem of minorities in Europe, that unless there is a tradition of a treatment of understanding and fellow-feeling by the majorities towards the minorities, there cannot be national integration. It leads to the disintegration and disruption of national life, which may not be in the best interests of either the majority or the minority group. His contribution in the course of this work, which he brought out at a great psychological moment in the country's political evolution lies, not in the propagation of the Pakistan idea, but in his presentation of Indian history and politics in their communal aspects. By posing and answering all the probable questions, both for and against the Pakistan scheme, he helped public opinion to be formed on the basis of correct information. This was an intellectual service of no small measure that he rendered by providing the much needed food for thought on this problem. It was pointed out by him that Pakistan had become a political necessity,
if not anything else. To any objective reader of his book on Pakistan one thing would be quite obvious: at every stage he has pointed out that there is no point in blaming the Muslim League alone for this startling demand. There were others who were also equally or even more responsible for creating a situation in which such a demand was natural. The policies of the Indian National Congress from time to time, and the attitude of the leaders who really mattered, cannot be overlooked. The Hindu Mahasabha by propagating the methods of 'Shuddhi' and 'Sanghatan' strengthened the Muslim apprehensions. So they were also equally responsible for the situation. If only the Hindus had acted with understanding, the Pakistan scheme would have been at least weakened, though not completely negativized. It may not be too much to claim for Ambedkar that such of the leaders, who were important in this context, were helped by his presentation of the problem to find a philosophical and political justification to accept partition without further oscillations. Ambedkar was not content with just stating this unpleasant truth. He had also foreseen the possible dangers of conceding Pakistan in the form and shape it was demanded by the Muslim League. He insisted that the State so composed should be an ethnically homogeneous one, if it is to achieve the purpose underlying its creation.
To this end he had suggested territorial demarcation of boundaries wherever possible; and actual shifting of population wherever necessary. The idea was scoffed at when it was suggested, yet no one could deny later that Ambedkar was, after all, right. The book and the thoughts contained therein, are indeed a valuable addition to the art of scientific propagation and to the political thought of India. As a review of the book stated: it "... is an epitome of the political and social history of India during the last twenty years — the most fateful in the annals of the country since the Mutiny." 7 No doubt, he rendered an invaluable intellectual service to the nation at a very critical period in the political and constitutional evolution of India in presenting the issue of Pakistan to the public in a dispassionate and scientific way.

Constitution-making:

It is pointed out already that after a period of partial eclipse and political set-back on the eve of transfer of power to Indian hands, Dr. Ambedkar was to emerge as a great constitution-maker of our times by entering the Constituent Assembly of India. His membership of the Assembly opened up a vast field for putting his

7. The Times of India; Feb. 26, 1941.
talents at the disposal of the nation. At the same time, he also joined Mr. Nehru's Cabinet as Minister for Law. Despite the ill-will that was generated between himself and the Congress leadership, he was invited by Mr. Nehru, who was magnanimous and sporting enough to recognise the merits in a man and to utilise them in the best interests of the nation. At no other time the services of a man of Dr. Ambedkar's talents and abilities were needed than at the time of making the Indian Constitution. Mr. Nehru, perhaps, was impressed by Ambedkar's views on the minority problem, and, particularly, his emphasis on secularism as the only way to solve the minority problem on a more rational basis. Ambedkar and Nehru held similar views on the need for establishing a secular state, the nature of socialistic pattern of society and national integration in India. Further, as we know, Ambedkar had all along pleaded for democratic planning as the means to achieve the social good through a phased planned economic development. Above all, his abilities as a constitutional lawyer were already well-known. So he was invited by Nehru, and Ambedkar responded gracefully, once again with the sole purpose of serving his people and through them the nation at large. When he was elected to the Drafting Committee and put as its Chairman he was more than surprised. A social and political outcaste, as he was all these years, was admitted into the Assembly and the Cabinet in a very important capacity.
as the principal architect of the Constitution and as the Law Minister. He stated, time and again, that he accepted these offices not because of vanity on his part, but because he thought it afforded him an unique and a life-time's opportunity at long last to serve the cause of the Untouchables in a significant manner. He had hoped that he could write the rights of the Untouchables into the constitution, thereby expunging for-ever all the injustices and contumely the Untouchables had suffered.

He strove his utmost to incorporate into the Constitution of India such provisions as would help establishing a new social order based on the lofty principle of political, economic and social justice for one and all. He tried to bring about all the necessary changes in the Hindu society in order to make it a more democratic one. But as it is argued in the course of the preceding Chapter of this thesis, he was placed under severe handicaps and limitations in this task. He had to play the role of a technocrat applying his skill in the drafting of the Constitution. The Drafting Committee had to take guidance from other agencies and also to contend with others' views. The several Committees of the Constituent Assembly; and the ideology of the Congress
Party, which was the dominant party in the Assembly, had to be kept in the view. Mr. Nehru and Sardar Patel, the philosopher and the realist respectively, had the last word on so many points including on matters of fundamental objectives and important provisions regarding the right to property. As he himself revealed later, in a speech at Ramadaspur on October 27, 1951, the ten-year period for special safeguards to the Scheduled Castes, was accepted at the instance of Sardar Patel. Ambedkar said: "The reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes is for 10 years only. I wanted that this reservation should remain for such time as untouchability is there but the Congress leader, late Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel opposed me. So the other persons who were there in the Committee also had to support Sardar because they belonged to his party. Therefore, we should try to send our true representatives to the Assemblies so that they may safeguard our rights and also try to secure this reservation after 10 years ..."8

The Drafting Committee had also to follow and adopt the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935 as directed by the Constituent Assembly. Referring to

8. Private Papers of Ambedkar at the Bombay University Library.
this Dr. Ambedkar said: "The Drafting Committee was in effect charged with the duty of preparing a constitution in accordance with the decisions of the Constituent Assembly on the reports made by the various Committees appointed by it ... The Constituent Assembly had also directed that in certain matters the provisions contained in the Government of India Act, 1935, should be followed..." So the Draft had to be finalised taking into consideration all these factors and the mandates. Thus the Constitution has come to be 'a formidable document' in itself with as many as 315 Articles and 3 Schedules. The task of the Committee was of a technical nature and its Chairman, Dr. Ambedkar brought to bear upon it his legal skill and constitutional knowledge. In this way he participated in the work of constitution-making in a large measure.

While considering Ambedkar's contribution to constitution-making, we have to take note of his two different capacities, i.e., as a champion of the Untouchables; and as a constitutional expert. Further, his role as a politician should be bifurcated from that of the constitutional expert. He, no doubt, borrowed

substantially from the constitutional life and experience of different countries, particularly from the U.S. Constitution, for writing the Indian Constitution. Ambedkar himself testified to this effect. There were criticisms voiced in and outside the Assembly "that there is nothing new in the Draft Constitution, that about half of it has been copied from the Government of India Act of 1935 and that the rest of it has been borrowed from the Constitutions of other countries. Very little of it can claim originality." 10 Dr. Ambedkar was not interested in concealing this truth and accepted it, and gave justification for looking to other constitutions for guidance. He said:

One likes to ask whether there can be anything new in a Constitution framed at this hour in the history of the world. More than hundred years have rolled over when the first written Constitution was drafted (the Constitution of the U.S.A.). It has been followed by many countries reducing their Constitutions to writing. What the scope of a Constitution should be has long been settled. Similarly, what are the fundamentals of a Constitution are recognised all over the world. Given these facts,

all Constitutions in their main provisions must look similar. The only new things, if there can be any, in a Constitution framed so late in the day are the variations made to remove the faults and to accommodate it to the needs of the country. Il

The ingenuity of the maker lay in adopting the provisions of other constitutions in such a way as to make them serve adequately the needs of a particular society. Dr. Ambedkar's contribution in the making of the Constitution is, therefore, to be recognised and the claim for him that he was a principal architect of our Constitution should be conceded ungrudgingly. He did not copy the constitutions of other countries blindly, and he refuted the criticism in these words:

...The charge of producing a blind copy of the Constitutions of other countries is based, I am sure, on an inadequate study of the Constitution. I have shown what is new in the Draft Constitution and I am sure that those who have studied other Constitutions and who are prepared

to consider the matter dispassionately
will agree that the Drafting Committee in performing its duty has not
been guilty of such blind and slavish imitation as it is represented to be... 12

One could understand the need and usefulness in
looking to the democratic constitutions abroad. But,
could there be any justification for adopting the
provisions of the British-imposed Constitution of 1935,
which was subjected to scathing criticisms by not only
the Congress leadership but by several other agencies
and individuals? It did not have any democratic value.
On the other hand, there were a number of anti-democratic,
feudalistic and pernicious clauses like Section 93 of the
Act. It was but natural that members and observers
outside expressed their surprise on this point. Ambedkar
had this to say in reply:

As to the accusation that the Draft
Constitution has produced a good
part of the provisions of the
Government of India Act, 1935, I
make no apologies. There is nothing
to be ashamed of in borrowing. It
involves no plagiarism... What I am
sorry about is that the provisions
taken from the Government of India Act,

1935, relate mostly to the details of administration. I agree that administrative details should have no place in the Constitution. I wish very much that the Drafting Committee could see its way to avoid their inclusion in the Constitution. But this is to be said on the necessity which justifies their inclusion...

He gave the justification for the inclusion of administrative details by referring to the concept of 'Constitutional morality', as it was expounded by the Greek historian Grote. Ambedkar explained Grote's concept of constitutional morality to mean: “a paramount reverence for the forms of the Constitution, enforcing obedience to authority acting under and within these forms yet combined with the habit of open speech, of action subject only to definite legal control, and unrestrained censure of those very authorities as to all their public acts combined too with a perfect confidence in the bosom of every citizen amidst the bitterness of party contest that the forms of the Constitution will not be less sacred in the eyes of his opponents than in his own.”

It is to generate such a spirit that there should be a close relationship between the form of administration and the form of constitution. Moreover, by changing the form of administration without touching the form of the constitution, a constitution can be perverted in course of time, if the form of administration is not made a part of the fundamental law. Only where constitutional morality is diffused, as it should be, one can afford to leave the form of administration outside the scope of the Constitution. But where constitutional morality is not developed, as in India, details had to be worked out in the constitution itself to prevent any attempt at perverting the constitution itself by the Legislatures. To those who have carefully followed the tone and point of emphasis throughout his speeches in the Assembly, it would be obvious that Ambedkar was rightly conscious of the absence of constitutional morality among Indians. He had realised that the people were yet to develop it. And to save them from the inevitable consequences of such a situation, he thought it necessary to work out the form of administration in the new Constitution. He believed:

...it is only where people are saturated with constitutional morality ...that one can take the risk of omitting from the Constitution details of administration and leaving it for
the Legislature to prescribe them. The question is, can we presume such a diffusion of constitutional morality? Constitutional morality is not a natural sentiment. It has to be cultivated. We must realize that our people have yet to learn it. Democracy in India is only a top-dressing on an Indian soil, which is essentially undemocratic.

In the circumstances, he said "it is wiser not to trust the Legislature to prescribe the forms of administration. This is the justification for incorporating them in the Constitution." 15

In this task there could not obviously be a sudden break in the administrative set-up of the country, that was shaped by the British in the course of a number of constitutional reforms including the one in the Constitution of 1935. So, to that extent, the provisions of the Act of 1935 had to be taken note of, though not their undemocratic spirit.

Ambedkar was constantly emphasising on this problem of constitutional morality in India if the benefits

15. Ibid, p. 38.
of a democratic constitution are to accrue to them. The misgivings he had expressed in this connection were not born out of mere scepticism or of suspicion. He argued that mere political freedom is not an end in itself.

Unless the people develop the required sense of constitutional morality, political freedom would be meaningless. He was right, after all, in expressing his misgivings, for we see to-day in the life of the country not only the absence of constitutional morality, but an open defiance of accepted norms of behaviour and too frequent a resort to unconstitutional means to press for certain demands. It is because we have not yet discarded the Gandhian techniques of fighting a government, which were developed under particular circumstances and that too that against an alien government. They cannot obviously be used against self-government when definite constitutional means are open. Nevertheless, the cult of violence that is rampant on the Indian scene to-day may be attributed to the phenomenon, known as "the revolution of rising expectations." It is not surprising, therefore, that the notion of constitutional morality was stressed by Ambedkar frequently. Unless this tendency is checked, it may constitute a grave threat to the very unity of the nation. Ambedkar, it must be said to his credit, anticipated, in a very precise manner, the shape of things to come and had warned that
the Constitution cannot be an end in itself. It has to be used judiciously for achieving the ideal of justice to one and all. Otherwise Constitution as such will lose its value and utility. We will do well to recall here Ambedkar's observations in the Constituent Assembly drawing attention to this problem. He had said that "...where constitutional methods are open there can be no justification for these unconstitutional methods. These methods are nothing but the grammar of Anarchy and sooner they are abandoned the better for us." The anarchy that might follow would not only be dangerous to the weaker sections but would disrupt the very life of the entire nation. Equality, Justice and Freedom would be the inevitable casualties under such conditions. Very few leaders realise the grave implications of violating constitutional morality.

In the course of the preceding Chapter of the thesis we have also discussed the contribution of Ambedkar in the framing of the Constitution itself. It was pointed out that in the making of a Constitution no single individual, or agency could be looked upon in isolation. It is an enormous task in which several individuals and forces exert their pressure and influence. As Chairman of the Drafting Committee, Dr. Ambedkar had greater scope than any other individual for shaping

the Constitution. But it should be realised that it was a constitution written and finalised by adopting the most democratic method of open deliberation. It had to be adopted through a clause by clause consideration in the Assembly with modifications that were acceptable to the majority as such. The views of other members of the Drafting Committee were also to be respected. Besides, as we also know, the Constituent Assembly and its various Committees supplied the basic frame and philosophy for the Constitution. There were towering personalities, who had emerged successful in the freedom struggle and held in high esteem by the nation, like Jandhiji, Nehru, Patel and a number of others. The influence of these people and the organisation to which they belonged played a dominant and significant role. The task of the Drafting Committee was to give the required shape to the Constitution. So it produced a Constitution, a formidable document indeed, incorporating the ideas and directives that emanated from different individuals and agencies. Ambedkar's contribution lay in so far as he expressed the ideas and directives in a coherent fashion using his unsurpassed constitutional skill and legal acumen. The constitution would not have been so explicit and clear as it is to-day, but for his skill and industry.
There was also another aspect, an equally important one, of constitution-making with which Ambedkar was directly concerned. He had the unique privilege of moving the Draft Constitution in the Constituent Assembly for consideration. He had to explain every clause of the Draft and reply to the criticisms from the members. It is in this work of his that we have an opportunity to understand his basic political and constitutional ideas. Of course, in certain important respects he had to defend provisions which he would not have supported otherwise. While doing so, he was only carrying out the wishes of the other participants in the task. There was nothing wrong in his doing it as it was not to be an imposed constitution but a democratically adopted one. But one cannot fail to notice in him a certain degree of emphatic assertion which evoked even resentment from certain sections of the Assembly. Very often he commended in almost a dogmatic way several provisions. So much so, the House had no other alternative but to accept them. The same could be said of the House also, in which case Ambedkar used to bow gracefully to its wishes. Even then, it should be said to his credit, he discharged his duties in a remarkably elegant and able manner. Despite the fact that he was not a free agent in writing the constitution, it should be conceded, ungrudgingly and without
reservations, that he did play an important role in the writing and adopting of the Constitution. His contribution in the field is of a greater degree and quality compared to others. There were many who are entitled for the credit, while conceding it to them, we are to determine the degree of credit also. Many were the architects and masons who hammered out and worked upon this edifice of the Constitution. This formidable edifice that established a democratic machinery, could not be the handi-work of one man. So, while we acknowledge gratefully the services of all the participants, we have to single out Ambedkar for the honour and credit of being the principal architect of the Constitution of India, whose contribution is substantial, significant and spectacular. He is remembered as not only a great social reformer, a patriot, a vigorous champion of justice and freedom, but much more as a great constitution-maker that the nation could produce.

The 'Mission' fulfilled?

It would be appropriate to conclude this thesis with a brief reference to the 'mission' of his life with a view to finding out whether it was accomplished to his satisfaction. We know that Ambedkar was a man with a 'mission' in his life and that was the eradication of
untouchability and securing political, economic and social justice through appropriate political action. In other words, it was a comprehensive objective of 'man-making'. He bargained with the British for adequate constitutional safeguards in the form of separate electorates. But he had to accept a qualified system of joint electorates as a result of a resort to fast unto death by Gandhiji. Once India was free, and there was to be a Swaraj Constitution, he had thought, at last his people could be emancipated in the true sense of the term. He had entered the Constituent Assembly with the sole purpose of achieving it, and he naturally grew optimistic when he was put on the Drafting Committee, and that too as its Chairman. With such an opportunity of an intimate and direct association with the work of constitution-making, he had longed to see that the untouchables would be able to cast off their centuries-old blemish and join the stream of national life as a strong tributary and produce a vigorous Indian nationalism. But as the Constitution finally emerged, he came to realise that, after all, it was not possible to achieve the objective fully. He sadly realised that a political arrangement and solution devoid of economic and social content was not going to bring his excluded community anywhere nearer the goal he had envisaged. He was very
much saddened and became a disillusioned man in the years immediately after the Constitution of India that came into force in January 1950.

He made yet another desperate bid to bring about certain fundamental changes in the Hindu Law with a view to making it more modern and democratic. He took great interest in introducing the highly controversial legislative measure, the Hindu Code Bill. Of course, the proposal to codify the Hindu Law was there even before independence and a Committee under the Chairmanship of Sir B.N. Rau was constituted in 1941 itself, to make proposals for reform. When Ambedkar became the minister for Law, he had, naturally, to take up the matter into his hands and he incorporated in the Bill certain fundamental changes in those parts relating to joint family and women's right to property, which was not realised by the reactionary sections.

The chief objective of the proposed Code Bill was to codify and modify certain branches of the Hindu Law. Ambedkar thought there was nothing retrograde in the measure. It was neither radical nor revolutionary, he claimed. He said that the Bill, while according sanction to modern ways of progress, did not oppose orthodox
practices completely. He had proposed legalising of intercaste marriages, forbidding polygamy among the Hindus and setting up a system of divorce, among other things. To Ambedkar it was the right step and was perfectly within the scope of the Directive laid down in Article 44 of the Constitution: "The State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India." But those who were suspicious of the proposed changes raised the bogey of 'Hinduism in danger', and the fight was on. Ambedkar tried to argue and point out that the Bill was drafted on the basis of Hindu *Shaastras* and *Smritis*. He cited Kautilya, *Parashara Smriti* and *Brihaspati Smriti* in support of the divorce and women's property clauses. But one cannot deny the fact that he wanted to utilise this opportunity to change the basic frame-work of the Hindu society itself and democratise it. He worked once again very hard and marshalled the documental support to justify the changes he had proposed. The stage was thus set for the introduction of the Bill in the Parliament.

It was introduced on February 5, 1951 and after a three-day debate it was postponed to the next session that was to meet in September, 1951. Ambedkar, by this time, was realising the intensity of opposition to his
Hindu Code Bill, both from within and without the ruling party. He did give expression to this feeling and earned the wrath of top congress leaders. But he was still hoping to pilot the Bill before the General elections, as Mr. Nehru had expressed in favour of Ambedkar's Hindu Code Bill. He had continued in the Cabinet only with this desire and wrote about it to the Prime Minister. After protracted discussions in the Congress parliamentary party it was decided to take up only one part of the Bill on Marriage and Divorce. The Parliament House had to be put under heavy security arrangements on that day. But in the course of the Debate the opinions expressed were so divergent that there was nothing but confusion and the Prime Minister let down Ambedkar hopelessly when he advised Ambedkar to drop the Bill! The Bill was thus let down and, as Ambedkar put it, the Bill had "died unwept and unsung after four clauses of it were passed." A Bill which, it was hoped, would provide 'poetic justice', was thus completely mutilated to the utter disappointment of its sponsor. Mr. Justice Bajendragadkar had hoped:

The Hon'ble Dr. Ambedkar has played an important role in the progress of this Bill and in introducing the Code before the Parliament he has shown

17. Keesing's Contemporary Archives; 1951.
his determination to persuade the Legislature to see it through without delay. It is well-known that Dr. Ambedkar can legitimately and justly be proud for the substantial work done by him in the drafting of our Constitution. If with the active co-operation and support of the Prime Minister, who fortunately shares his Law Member's enthusiasm for the Code, Dr. Ambedkar is able to pilot the Code through all the stages and to give it the pride of place in our Statute Book, I for one would hail it as Time's sweet revenge on the Hindu society as a whole. If Dr. Ambedkar gives us Hindus our Code, his achievement would go down in history as a very eloquent piece of poetic justice indeed! 18

But this was not possible and Ambedkar's hopes were shattered to pieces. There was no other alternative for him than to renounce his post of the Law Member in the Central Cabinet and return to the Opposition.

He sent in his letter of resignation to the Prime Minister on September 27, 1951, and explained in a separate statement to the Press the reasons for his resignation.

He was not even allowed to make a statement to the Parliament as the Chair insisted on 'precensoring' his statement which stung Ambedkar bitterly. He walked out in protest saying that he was no longer 'the Hon'ble Minister'. In his statement he expressed his disagreement with Mr. Nehru's Kashmir policy and the foreign policy in general. Secondly, he was deeply dissatisfied with the treatment accorded to the backward classes and scheduled castes, who, he declared, were suffering from "the same old tyranny, the same old oppression, and the same old discrimination which existed before." The Scheduled Castes were almost entirely excluded from the Government service. The most important development that had led him to resign, was the handling of the Hindu Code Bill by the Cabinet and the Parliament. He said "to leave inequality between class and class, between sex and sex, which is the soul of Hindu society, untouched and to go on passing legislation relating to economic problems is to make a farce of our Constitution." Though the Cabinet had unanimously decided that the whole Bill should be put through in the then Parliament, Mr. Nehru

had later suggested that, as there might not be sufficient time for the passage of the Bill as a whole, its marriage and divorce clauses should be passed separately. Subsequently after two or three days discussion of the Bill in parliament, it was proposed that even these clauses should be dropped, perhaps, in view of the forthcoming First General elections in the country. Though Mr. Nehru was "long convinced of the necessity" of the Hindu Code Bill and had been anxious that it should be passed, he came out with a suggestion to drop the Bill. This decision shocked and disillusioned Ambedkar completely.

Dr. Ambedkar, it is reported, was keen on assuming the stewardship of the Planning Commission of India and an assurance to this effect was reportedly given by Mr. Nehru. Ambedkar had continued in the Cabinet hoping to get into the Planning Commission. This was also another reason for Ambedkar's resignation.

The decision to renounce the Ministership was followed by his crucial decision to renounce his 'faith' in Hinduism. He made a frantic search for a satisfying 'faith' either in Buddhism or Christianity, Islam or

21. This was revealed to me during a discussion with Mr. Dhananjay Keer at Bombay.
Sikhism. Each one of the different religious groups in the country started wooing Ambedkar to adopt their own religion along with his followers. Ambedkar visited Nepal and Ceylon and toured throughout India in search of a new 'faith' for himself and his followers. Finally, he decided to embrace Buddhism along with his followers. He looked upon Buddhism as a religion of equality. This element of equality, tolerance and rationality in that religion that particularly impressed him and he administered accordingly the oath to his 75,000 followers at a special ceremony at Nagpur on October 14, 1956. Addressing his followers on that occasion Ambedkar had explained the reasons for his crucial decision. He 'was discarding the Hindu religion as it looked down upon men of his caste and treated them with discrimination. He would no longer venerate the Hindu gods nor perform any religious poojas', he said. He further told them: "By discarding the ancient religion, which stood for inequality and oppression, today I am reborn. I have no faith in the philosophy of incarnation and it is wrong and mischievous to say that the Buddha was an incarnation of Vishnu." 22

His cherished hope that his political struggle would provide the much needed leverage to set off a

religious revolution for social justice had, apparently, only sparked off a religious revival of old fanaticism instead of a renewal of a chastened Hindu faith. He was naturally frustrated and dis-illusioned. His greatest desire to whistle the Hindu society to a democratic shape was completely blasted and he died a broken man on December 6, 1956. He found eternal peace 'after life's fitful work'. Thus passed away a great man whose life's 'mission' "was the preservation of human dignity, development of self-respect among the down-trodden classes, and attainment of self-salvation. In a word, it was man-making!," that was the solo goal and ambition that Ambedkar had set for himself.

Ambedkar — An estimate:

The entire nation mourned the death of this great humanitarian. No less a person than the late V.D.Savarkar, himself a great freedom-fighter, described Dr. Ambedkar as 'a truly great man' of the period. Savarkar, while paying this sincere tribute, was not in the least exaggerating. For, we know, the test of a great man envisaged by several thinkers of the Occident and the Orient including Dr. Ambedkar himself are as follows. According to...

to Carlyle and Rosebery, the ingredients of a great man are: genuine sincerity of purpose, and an 'indefinable spark' which may be called 'genius'. Rosebery further stated that a man to be called great should be one who 'stands for natural power, for predominance, for something human beyond humanity'. (italics mine) To these qualities Ambedkar suggested a modified criterion. He thought, apart from sincerity a great man should also have intellect, whose combination alone would entitle a man to this appellation. Further, one who is sincere and at the same time a genius should also be "motivated by the dynamics of a social purpose and must act as the scourge and scavenger of society." By these very tests and standards Dr. Ambedkar was fully qualified, in his own right, to be called 'a truly great man'. His life, as we know, was a saga of a heroic fight for establishing basic human values in society. In this capacity of a humanist he was intensely human, even 'beyond humanity'. As regards the other tests of intellect and sincerity, he was gifted with great erudition and scholarship which were the outcome of a great mind and robust intellect. As far as sincerity of purpose went, even his avowed enemies could

not question it. He was a great man indeed by all standards.

In conclusion we may do well to sum-up the life and work of this great man, whose emergence on the Indian political scene marks 'one of the most turbulent careers in Indian politics'. According to one writer "Doctor Ambedkar threw his thunderbolts into every camp... He was hailed as the messiah of his people... He was the first to storm the citadel of the Viceroy's Executive Council... Ambedkar put his people on the legislative map of India... He had variably sprung out of the bowels of the earth and to the earth he seemed to remain loyal. His uncommon energy, superb intelligence, passion for work and courage supplied the real leader to his community. The arrival of the Simon Commission ignited the spark in his public career..." Ambedkar's public career which, for all practical purposes, started in the year 1930, continued with unabated vigour and reached its culmination with the adoption and promulgation of the Constitution of free India in the year 1950 — an eventful and worthy period of two decades in the most exciting phase of India's freedom struggle.

Dr. Ambedkar, with his robust intellect, influenced Indian politics during the two decades and has left his indelible imprint on every aspect of our national life—law, politics, the Constitution and society as a whole. It may not be too much to claim for him, if we say that his biography is nothing but the history of the struggle for the emancipation of sixty-million Untouchables from perpetual degradation and misery. Mr. Nehru, who had great regard for Ambedkar's outstanding abilities, described him as "the symbol of revolt against the most oppressive features of Hindu society."

Dr. Ambedkar's contribution to the evolution of free India lies in his striving for secularising Indian politics, state and society; and his struggle for meting out justice—political, social and economic—to one and all as an humanist. He breathed the spirit of liberalism and nationalism into the lives of not only the Untouchables but of all Indians. But unfortunately his campaigning on behalf of the Untouchables was misunderstood very often and he was dubbed as a sectionalist. Nevertheless, he was a nationalist, democrat and a patriot par excellence. He proved to be a great statesman, besides being a fearless intellectual who was also extraordinarily forthright and outspoken in his views.
His courage of conviction was something astounding, which would not bend him down to a compromising of his principles, even for the sake of his people. This explains why he was often found out of tune with prevailing approach to the country's problems. He was often accused of holding unorthodox views, not because they were wrong, but probably he thought much ahead of his times. Thus he sought to liberate Indian politics from the cribbling effects of parochialism, traditionalism and theology. In his capacity as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly he hammered out a comprehensive and workable constitution into which incorporated some of his views though not all of them. He gave free India its legal frame, and the people the basis of their freedom. By all counts his name will figure prominently in any history of the socio-political and constitutional evolution of India in the final phase of the British rule which ended with the ushering in of the Sovereign Democratic Republic of India. To this end his contribution was significant, substantial and spectacular.

Harijans would certainly remember him as their saviour. But Indian nationals cannot but admire his legal acumen, sociological insight, and vast constitutional knowledge. He was a rare combination of these abilities. And it is through these faculties of his, he contributed
to the political evolution of India, and students of Indian Constitution are proud of his memorable services to India's Constitution-making. All may not agree with his controversial politics and his political and social ideas. But his solid contribution to the growth of political traditions of India cannot be denied even by his critics. Mahatma Gandhi, who is regarded as the 'Father of Indian nation', came in for criticism not only at the hands of foreign critics, but also at the hands of his own countrymen. Gandhiji's views on methods of attaining independence and on problems such as birth-control, industrialisation etc., were not accepted by some of his own followers. A perusal of Nehru's autobiography would confirm our observations. Two epoch-making leaders — Gandhi and Tilak — did not agree on fixing priorities for India. Whether political independence should be preceded by social reform or they should come simultaneously was the subject-matter on which Gandhi and Tilak held diametrically opposite views. Hence there is no justification for either discrediting Ambedkar by stoning him for some of the views he candidly advocated. Edmund Burke's views on contemporary problems facing England such as treatment of the American colonists, the Irish question etc., were not upheld by his countrymen. Coming to our own century, Harold J.-
Laski's role in British politics and his political and social views were not acceptable to many, including his Party Members. Prime Minister Attlee himself had to openly clash with Harold Laski's views on foreign policy and other crucial questions. But both Burke and Laski are ranked as Britain's profound political thinkers and their writings have enriched political literature of the world. Similarly Ambedkar's role as a politician and his intellectual contribution have become an integral part of the story of India's political evolution. He did not dominate Indian politics like Gandhi and Nehru, but he did influence important political decisions and his remarkable ability for constructive statesmanship manifested spontaneously during the period of Constitution-making. Those who go through the proceedings of the Indian Constituent Assembly cannot but be struck by the astonishing wide-range of Ambedkar's knowledge and his capacity for convincing others with facts and arguments. Ambedkar's role as Minister, was not smooth-sailing and he had to cross swords with his colleagues and the Prime Minister himself and he had to resign his Ministership under unfortunate circumstances. Although his exit from Nehru's cabinet was timed to coincide with the first General Elections and was influenced by election strategy, his statement explaining the circumstances of
his resignation would certainly throw a flood of light on the practice of Parliamentary Democracy in India. As a man of action Ambedkar's achievement is by no means small. As a thinker his position is still greater. As a man of thought and action, he immensely influenced India's political and constitutional development. Had he devoted more time to more fundamental issues of politics and society, he would have certainly eclipsed many social and political thinkers of the world. But even by his several writings and utterances on Indian problems, from time to time, he has carved out a definite place for himself in the national history of modern India.