CHAPTER IV

NATIONALISM AND THE MINORITIES IN INDIA.

Nationalism and the Minorities:

The problem of minorities is not peculiar to any one nation or continent. With the dawn of the twentieth century, particularly as a result of the principles adumbrated in the Peace Treaties of the two World Wars, the principle of national self-determination came to be accepted everywhere. Once this principle was conceded a number of existing states had to be dismembered only to create numerous separate political entities throughout Europe based on the doctrine of mono-nationalism. Multi-national states were giving place to mono-national states wherein the boundaries of states coincided with the boundaries of nationalities. The consequences of such a reorganisation were far-reaching.

The genesis and development of the minority problem constitutes a part of the development of the doctrine of nationalism which, in turn, is itself a part of a definite historical process in the European states to start with. The principle of self-determination was nothing but an extension of the principle of the rights of the citizen to the rights of the state. As "the free citizen had a right to govern himself, ergo the whole community of free citizens had a right to govern itself." ¹

¹ Men and nations

Barbara Ward - 1965; p.16.
as well came to possess the right to self-determination. This principle was expressed in a concrete form at the end of the First World War, when President Woodrow Wilson, "the world's leading democratic statesman," wrote the right of self-determination, the right of national groups to form their own sovereign government, into the Peace Treaties ..." As a consequence of this declaration a number of new independent national states were formed after the First World War. The process was repeated with greater zeal even after the Second World War. This was, of course, the logical result of the development of the doctrine of nationalism.

Nationalism, as is well-known, stands for unity and cohesion among a people. It has been looked upon as the inspirer and the very harbinger of the aspirations of a people who may be striving to secure a homeland of their own exclusively for themselves under the sun. The troubles and tribulations undergone by the Jews in order to secure one such place for themselves is an illustration of this tendency. It is believed that the feeling of nationalism is more psychological and sentimental than real and concrete. To Hans Kohn, the historian of nationalism, it "is a state of mind in which supreme loyalty is felt to be due to the nation-state." It is supposed to

2. Ibid, pp. 16-17.
originate from a sense of kinship or feeling kindred, for, the root word 'natlo' means birth. The sense of kinship reinforced by common traditions and customs, by legends and myths, a common language over a common territory with common political aspirations would create a people a degree of unity and cohesion that moulds them into a nation. It is defined by Joseph Stalin as "a historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture." Further "Nationality is a social feeling. It is a feeling of a corporate sentiment of oneness which makes those who are charged with it to feel that they are kith and kin ... It is a feeling of 'consciousness of kind' which on the one hand binds together those who have it ... and on the other, safeguards them from those who are not of their kind. It is a longing not to belong to any other group " but their own. 

Naturally, when once a people become conscious of their nationhood they, in turn, help their neighbours and those of other groups, perhaps smaller groups within their own state, to similar consciousness. That group which becomes conscious of nationhood earlier than others develops an attitude of exclusiveness and hatred towards

the other group, which in that process grows conscious of its own position. It generates in their minds a mistrust of the other group. It is actually "the other side of the coin of union and cohesion. This is the sense of not having close links with others and the consciousness of their being strangers outside the group." Such a situation may sometimes create a sort of militant attitude in the minds of the numerically small and culturally different neighbour against the numerically stronger group. It may happen as well even within the original national boundaries. The elements of the dynamics of such inter-group relations originate the problem of minorities.

The formation of nation-states has been there since the eighteenth century. The earliest nation-state to be born was England followed by France. The English nationalism had to struggle against the feudal state and the Roman Church. The twentieth century has witnessed the emergence of nation-states in Asia and Africa. In Europe too, at the end of the First World War, a number of nationalities like the Magyars, Hungarians, Czechs and others who lived in a state of subjection under the multinational Austro-Hungarian Empire, organised struggles to shake off that subjection. The problem of minorities is intertwined with the problem of nationalism in all these cases. It is manifest everywhere. The creation of a nation-state

in the East European countries like the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Balkans, the Russians and also in India, has given rise to the problem of national minorities. The clamour for a 'homestate' by the Muslims in India during the Indian freedom struggle is a case in point.

The problem of minorities is, everywhere, the product of peculiar historical circumstances. It is possible to attribute the minority problem, as discussed in the foregoing, to the doctrine of nationalism itself. In fact, one of the drawbacks, and hence an ugly side of nationalism, is the problem of minorities. Nationalism presupposes an homogeneous society with a single common language, culture, territory etc. But it is difficult to find such preconditions prevailing in any part of the world today. Any amount of dismembering of existing political arrangements would not yield to a completely homogeneous political group based on a single nationality. No frontier that could be devised on the principle of self-determination, as far instance in Eastern Europe, Africa or Asia, "would put all the members of all the groups tidily inside their allotted frontiers." This intermingling of nationalities is bound to persist under any arrangement even under a so-called mono-national state. Such a position gives rise to the problem of minorities manifesting itself in the form "of their rights, of their dubious loyalties, of the downright mistreatment by the majority."

Who are the Minorities?

Historically, the development of the State brought about a social organization which could bring together masses of culturally and physically heterogeneous groups and sub-groups into a single entity. But strangely enough it is once again the state organization itself that was responsible for encouraging minority-feeling on the part of a number of groups. It is due to the fact that in spite of their inhabiting the same territory and being ruled by the same government, they share cultural traits different from others and reckon themselves, in a sense, as kinsmen by descent. "Moreover, certain of these sub-groups, especially the more numerous and more powerful ones, have tended to act as if the population of the state society was like the population of a primitive tribe; have tended to act as if the state society to which they belong ideally ought to consist of their own physical and cultural type; and if the state were merely the territorial expression of their own people or 'nation'. Thus, from the persistence of primitive principles of social organization, there emerges that strange contradiction of terms known as the 'national state'. It is the prevalence of this contradiction which guarantees the proliferation of minority situations throughout the modern world." 8

It is also true that no nation state is racially and culturally homogeneous. The frequent changes in the boundaries that are occasioned by wars, revolutions or voluntary territorial re-adjustments through treaties, hardly allow for the evolution of really homogeneous national states. It is a myth, if one claims that in the modern society a state and nationality coincide. In such a heterogeneous society the "national way of life is the life of the numerical majority, and the strangers - the minority members - form smaller cultural racial enclaves." 9

The minority groups are often faced by an ideal of national culture and national physical type associated with the characteristics of the dominant segments of the state societies into which they have been incorporated." 10

This statement can be further substantiated with a reference to C.A. Macartney who draws a distinction between the nationality meaning 'the feeling of appurtenance of a nation, 'and nationality' in the sense of membership of a State.' The former is called by Macartney as 'personal nationality' which is based on 'personal, often inherited, and usually objective' characteristics. "These characteristics exist in the individual quite independently of the locality in which he may be domiciled, whether the majority of the inhabitants share them or no, and independently of the political regime under which he may live,

whether this be in the hands of persons possessing the same characteristics or no. The body of persons possessing these characteristics constitute the nation.  

Thus 'personal nationality' is an important factor in the life of a state. It may not be a problem to the state so long the feeling of 'personal nationality' does not conflict with the objectives of the state. But when a group of people having 'personal nationalities' that are identical, come under 'pressure from without'; in the words of Julian Huxley, the group may become conscious of its minority position and press for its own special rights and protection. It may assume, gradually, such dimensions that a breaking away becomes necessary.

Further, the emergence of the forces of democracy and economic nationalism - the belief that industrialisation makes the preservation of national economy a necessity for everybody's livelihood - have strengthened such feelings. In fact, the Marxists have gone to the extent of explaining the birth of modern nations and nationalism as a part of "the process of the abolition of feudalism and the development of capitalism." The instinct of economic preservation was of course one of the forces that built up nationalism. Besides this, the racial conflict, the elements of tradition and culture

of a people may also contribute, and have contributed, substantially to the generating of the feeling of nationalism. When such elements become stronger in a given group, it may develop secessionist tendencies from the other groups with whom they might have lived, perhaps harmoniously, for a long time.

A minority, therefore, is that part of the general population of a country which distinguishes itself from the rest by virtue of racial, linguistic, religious and other differences. The degree of distinction is actually determined by its relationship and attitude towards the dominant group. So in a discussion on the minority problem we have to consider its size, social, racial or cultural affinities or disaffinities and the degree of hostility it bears towards the dominant or the majority group. Whenever a people develop a feeling that they are an exclusive group developing in themselves a 'consciousness of kind' and have a longing to belong to their own group they are supposed to constitute into a separate group—perhaps a minority group.

The problem of minority attitude has become more articulate with the adoption of democratic methods of governance. Democracy, as is well-known, is based on principles such as majority rule; one-man-one-vote; individual right; government by discussion and so on.
The impact of adult-franchise, in particular, on the problem of minorities, is of great significance which cannot be undermined. The principle of one-man-one-vote would always help the minorities to be conscious of being out-voted by the dominant group. They will be labouring under an apprehension of getting submerged, or even annihilated systematically, if they do not take adequate steps. The minorities will naturally start clamouring for special protections, safeguards, weightage etc., in order to preserve their individuality. In a democratic set-up, the right of the minorities to preserve identity and in their culture, language, religion is bound to be more vociferous and it is bound to get recognition. Their right to self-preservation will have to be conceded as a fundamental right as, for example, the fundamental right provided for in the Constitution of India to the linguistic and religious minorities. The claims of the minorities for self-preservation have sometimes led to militant movements leading to the creation of a separate state for the minority group. This has been particularly manifest, of late, in Asia and Africa.

The prevalence of inequalities among different groups within a state was, almost, accepted as traditional, and was not inflamed by national or revolutionary passion. But with the growth of democratic spirit and the nation-state
concept, such inequalities among the dominant groups and the minorities came to be resented. As Prof. Gilbert Murray opines: "It is the war (the First World War) which has changed the situation, and turned the old distress into an acute and dangerous disease." The new national states, created after the First World War by dismembering the old Empires and states, developed vindictive attitude towards the people of their former rulers. "Drunk with the new wine of national freedom, and burning with the patriotic enthusiasm which had carried them through the terrible strain of the war, these new nations were not likely to show much consideration for the alien... So anti-alien brutalities were widespread and the need for providing protection to them became all the more urgent." Such a situation could not have been averted in view of the fact that the Peace Treaty could not have created frontiers which "could have produced, or could now produce, a series of nations without alien minorities; no human power could have made good feeling between what one side regarded as the oppressed and the oppressors, the other as the betrayers and the betrayed." In the circumstances, one is forced to find a way out of this difficult situation. Either they should be allowed to secede or adequate protection should be given to the minorities.

The best approach to minority problem should be through modest and unpretending methods. A government cannot expect loyalty from those minorities whom they plunder and persecute. A minority, on the other hand, cannot expect fair and equal treatment from the government when they keep feeling that they are aliens and have loyalties outside the frontiers of a country. Forgiveness, generosity and humanness on both sides is a prerequisite for a harmonious co-existence of two or more groups. Of course, the dominant group has a greater responsibility and duty. As it is not safe always to depend on the good sense of a people, it was thought proper to provide for International Treaties, which also can be effective up to a point.

Minorities in India:

The problem of minorities in India has been of special significance. It has its origins in her peculiar historical circumstances and development. A student of the constitutional history of India is aware of the special role the problem of minorities played in their constitutional evolution. It has not been just a tributary in the national movement. It was, in fact, in the main stream of the national movement, occupying a central place in the Indian national politics since the beginning of the twentieth century. As we will be seeing, the problem of
minorities, particularly the religious minorities, was responsible for several deadlocks in the course of the Indian freedom movement. Indian politics of the period could be described as largely communal politics. In fact, as Mr. Nehru writes: "The communal problem as it was called, was one of adjusting the claims of the minorities and giving them sufficient protection from majority action. Minorities in India, it must be remembered, are not racial or national minorities as in Europe; they are religious minorities. Racially India is a patchwork and a curious mixture, but no racial questions have arisen or can arise in India. Religion transcends the racial differences, which fade into one another and are often hard to distinguish." It became particularly manifest because the British used the minority issue as a counterpoise to Indian national movement. The minority politics of the Muslims was guided and encouraged by the British statesmen from the days of Lord Minto, leading ultimately to the partition of India into two Dominions of India and Pakistan.

In fact, there is nothing in Indian History to compare with the bitter religious feuds and persecutions that prevailed in Europe. As Mr. Nehru thought, in India

we had religious and cultural toleration, which were inherent in Indian life. In regard to individual and political ideas of the French and American revolutions, as also by the constitutional history of the British Parliament. Socialist ideas, and the influence of the Soviet revolution, came in later to give a powerful economic turn to our thoughts. With such a turn, as Nehru saw it, the religious tinge attached to the minorities problem could have been eliminated. But it did not happen. Still the problem of minorities was in the forefront of our national politics, because of the British attitude and policy towards it. Ambedkar figured in it prominently as the leader of one of the minorities - the depressed classes.

Indian nationalism, as pointed out already, was the product of the British rule itself. It developed out of the resentment, among Indians, to an alien regime which was not, and could not be dynamic enough, in spite of the administrative and political unity it brought about. The alien rule could not generate co-operative and constructive goals. In this direction an alien rule, however enlightened, can never be a substitute for a vigorous national leadership. However, it must be admitted, the British rule in India served as the principal means by

which a strong national consciousness was fostered. The resentment to foreign rule made Indians to become conscious of liberal principles of political philosophy such as rights of man for self-government, etc.

In a study of the minority problem in India, we cannot afford to ignore the influence of tradition and culture of the land. As pointed out already, India was known for her religious tolerance. Besides these, the historical events, such as the Muslim and British conquests of India, and the role they played during the period of their occupation, are also matters of great importance. These events produced a class of people in the country, who came to form the minority groups. The Depressed Classes or the Untouchables, who were over fifty million, constituting nearly one-fifth of the Hindu population; the Muslims, who were about ninety million, constituting about one-fourth of the Hindu population of pre-partition India; the Christians, who were about eight million; and the Sikhs were considered as the more important and the cognisable minorities of India. All these groups obviously are religious minorities. The Muslims, the Christians and the Depressed Classes were, in fact, national minorities in as much as they were interspread all over the country. Ambedkar, the leader of the Depressed Classes, naturally, was their powerful spokesman and represented their interests.
at various conferences and negotiations with the British. He formulated his own proposals for vindicating the rights of the Depressed Classes as a minority, that was not only miserable but was subject to severe social, economic, political and religious disabilities and indignities for nearly 2500 years in our history. The problem of these people, as already discussed, was the outcome of the so-called traditional and cultural elements and values that constituted the Hindu religion. The religious taboos and prohibitions sanctioned by the Hindu religious scriptures, created a wide cleavage between these people and the caste-Hindus. The attitude of the dominant group, the caste-Hindus, towards these oppressed people came to be resented by them. They were organised under a leader, rising from among their own ranks, when once they became conscious of the indignities and discriminatory treatment to which they were subjected. The problems faced by this particular minority group, that was a part of the Hindu religion itself, were all the more serious as their disabilities were deep-rooted in the religious beliefs of the Hindus resulting in severe social discriminations. Ambedkar had to launch a fierce fight on behalf of this minority group to which he belonged and whom he led.

This, however, does not imply that Ambedkar's concern was only with the Depressed Classes, though it was the

primary one. But as an intellectual, a great thinker and as one interested in the country's problems as a nationalist, he could not be indifferent to some of the relevant issues of the day. He, naturally, expressed his considered thoughts and suggestions from time to time. He discussed in his writings on matters such as the rights of the Minorities in the future constitution of India; the demand for linguistic reorganization of the provinces; the demand put forward by the Muslims for a separate home-land of their own and such other problems. It is, therefore, proposed to present and examine in the following pages, his thoughts on these problems and the solutions he thought feasible. In this, Ambedkar was not only championing the cause of the minorities as a whole, but was expressing his views without any reservations. As a spokesman for the minorities, he was contributing substantially to the Indian political thought of the period.

Ambedkar and the Minority Problem

Ambedkar's thoughts on the problem of minorities refer to the Depressed Classes in particular, and the minorities of India in general. His views on this problem were expressed in a more concrete form in the course of the memoranda he submitted to the Simon Commission, and at the Round Table Conferences. The Round Table Conferences were convened with a view to providing an opportunity for Indians to express their views on the framing of a
Constitution for India. This was an event of 'great significance' to Indians as it recognised "the rights of the Indians to be consulted in the matter of framing a constitution for India." 17 All the minorities, including the Untouchables, were represented along with the representatives of the Princes and others. The Untouchables were, for the first time, represented separately by two delegates of their own. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Rao Bahadur R. Srinivasan. By implication, "this meant that the Untouchables were regarded not merely as a separate element from the Hindus but also of such importance as to have the right to be consulted in the framing of a constitution for India." 18 This, however, was construed as a divisive tactics of the British.

The British government, as it is known, was following the policy of using some of the communal interests and groups to counter the development of nationalism among Indians. As a part of this policy they were providing for special representation to them from time to time. The Muslims were recognised as a statutory minority under the Government of India Act of 1909 itself. The demands of the Muslims "for separate representation by members

17. B.R. Ambedkar: What Congress And Gandhi Have Done To The Untouchables; p. 40.
chosen by themselves only were conceded, and the further concession was made that in assigning representation, regard should be had to its political importance and its services to the Empire as well as to its proportionate numerical strength. Such a decision was vital for more than one reason. In the first place it was to recognise the position of a religious minority in terms of its 'political importance' in any constitutional arrangement. In the second place, it encouraged this particular minority group, the Muslims, to clamour for more concessions, leading ultimately to the vivisection of India. Finally, it also provided an incentive for other minority groups to demand for similar statutory recognition for their also. The same principle of communal electorates was extended to the Europeans, Anglo-Indians, the Indian Christians and the Sikhs under the Government of India Act of 1919. The Depressed Classes were also recognised as a statutory minority. But nothing much by way of protection was given except giving them some token representation.

The work of the Round Table Conferences was divided into as many as nine sub-committees. The Minorities Committee, with Mr. Ramsay MacDonald as its Chairman, was one of those, and Ambedkar was a member on this Committee.

The Committee was assigned the most onerous and delicate task of finding a solution to the communal question of India. Ambedkar supported the demands made by the minorities for adequate and effective representation in the Legislatures, the Executives, the public services, and for statutory guarantees for preventing discrimination against the minorities by the majority. He said, unless this is provided for, there cannot be justice to the minorities.

In all his endeavours for them, Ambedkar proceeded on the assumption that national well-being and liberty would depend upon the rights enjoyed by the minorities. He visualised that with the establishment of the majority rule in India, it was bound to be the rule by the orthodox Hindus by virtue of their numerical superiority. He feared a "... great danger of that majority with its orthodox Hindu beliefs and prejudices contravening the dictates of justice, equality and good conscience ... the minorities may be discriminated against either in legislation or administration or in the other public rights of citizenship ..." Hence the need for special safeguards for the minorities in the future constitution of India.

Further, Ambedkar represented that the problem of the Depressed Classes had a special significance, in so far as they were not entitled to even some of the civic rights enjoyed by the other minorities by law. They were,

20. Round Table Conferences: Proceedings of Sub-Committees; Vol. III; Minorities; 1931; p.75.
moreover, subject to social persecution, unknown in any other part of the world. The economic discrimination they encountered in the hands of the caste-Hindus was the chief source of most of their difficulties. The caste-Hindus resorted to the most powerful weapon of social boycott, if the Depressed Classes chose to resist the tyrannical treatment. In the political field, "whatever representation they may be granted in the proposed legislature they will always be in a very small minority, and consequently, having regard to the apathetic attitude of the orthodox classes towards the Depressed Classes being neglected altogether ..." So he was convinced that there must be statutory or constitutional safeguards for the Depressed Classes, without which they would never be lifted from that position of ignominy.

It is already pointed out that Ambedkar's approach to the problem of the Depressed Classes was not a religious-social one, but was basically a politico-economic. He was not for social-reform-approach, all by itself, in the form of temple-entry, inter-dining etc. He was for providing adequate opportunities for the Depressed Classes to enable them to have an effective share in the political power of the country. He believed, once they capture political power, they can order for other things, without much difficulty. He was, therefore, demanding for political

21. Ibid, pp. 77-78.
and constitutional safeguards, so that the Depressed Classes would be brought on par with others. Any minority, as a matter of fact, should be in a position to participate in the life of the country. They should not be forced to such a position as to withdraw from such a participation. It depended largely on the attitude of the people who have been more fortunate in this regard, and the policies of the government towards the minorities.

Social Protections and Safeguards:

Ambedkar's scheme for special protections for his people was presented in a more specific and articulate fashion in a memorandum submitted jointly with Rao Bahadur R. Srinivasan to the Minorities Committee. He had outlined 'the terms and conditions on which the Depressed Classes will consent to place themselves under a majority rule in a self-governing India'.

In the course of the memoranda, the following conditions were laid down in order to safeguard the interests of the Depressed Classes: (1) Equal citizenship, and Fundamental Rights declaring the practice of 'Untouchability' as illegal. (2) Free enjoyment of 'Equal Rights' protected by adequate constitutional remedies. (3) Protection against discrimination. (4) Adequate representation to the Depressed Classes in the Legislatures. They must have

the right to elect their own people to represent them through: (a) adult suffrage; and (b) separate electorates for the first ten years, and thereafter by joint electorates and reserved seats, "it being understood that joint electorates shall not be forced upon the Depressed Classes against their will unless such joint electorates are accompanied by adult suffrage." 23 (5) Adequate representation in the Services. The memorandum pleaded for the establishment of a Public Service Commission in each Province and in India to undertake recruitment and control of the public services. (6) Redress against prejudicial action or neglect of interests. An obligation should be imposed on the Legislature and the Executive to make adequate provision for the education, sanitation, recruitment and other matters of social and political advancement of the Depressed Classes on the lines of Section 93 of the British North America Act, 1867. (7) Special Departmental Care: It should be a statutory obligation for the setting up of a Department in charge of a Minister and "to appoint one Depressed Class Welfare Bureau in each Province to work under the authority of and in co-operation with the Minister." (8) Finally, the Depressed Classes should have a seat in the Cabinet to have an opportunity in framing the general policy of the government. The Instrument of Instructions should

place such an obligation on the Governor-General and the Governors.

Ambedkar elaborated these conditions in his speeches at the Round Table Conferences. Explaining his views on the question of 'weightage', he said, it should be conceded to a minority because it "is weak, either in numbers, or because its social standing is low or its educational standing is backward as compared with others or because its economic strength is not sufficient to place it on a fighting par with other communities." This was the criteria he suggested for minority protections.

Naturally, he was highly critical of the British policy of giving weightage on grounds of political importance. He said, "... I cannot understand, for instance, how weightage can be allowed on the ground of political importance, or loyalty, or services rendered either to the Empire or to the British Government. I think if we adopt that principle, we shall land ourselves in very difficult circumstances from which it will be difficult to extricate ourselves." He summed up his views on the question of minority representation, with a warning note, thus:

... this whole question of minority representation is really the crux of the situation, and if the majority community desires that all minorities should associate with them in having

24. Ibid, p. 79.
25. Ibid, p. 79.
or in claiming, a constitution which will give India what they call Dominion Status, or what we prefer to call Government by the people, for the people and in the name of the people, then I am afraid that the majority community must see to it that all fears of the minorities are set at rest. Otherwise it may not be possible for us to take what I do not conceal from myself is the risk that most of us are taking in claiming Dominion Status.

Ambedkar misunderstood:

This statement was interpreted to mean that he was not prepared to consent to any self-governing constitution for India, unless the demands of the minorities were met in a reasonable manner. Such a misapprehension was further strengthened, when Ambedkar declared:

... The Depressed Classes are not clamorous, they have not started any movement for claiming that there shall be an immediate transfer of power from the British to the Indian people ... but if the British Government is unable to resist the forces that have been set up in the country which do clamour for transference of political power ... then our submission is that if you make that transfer, that transfer will be accompanied by such conditions and by such provisions that the power shall not fall into the hands of a clique, into the hands of an

oligarchy, or into the hands of a group of people ... but that that solution shall be such that the power shall be shared by all communities in their respective proportions.  

Such an emphatic assertion on his part, exposed him to attacks by his critics questioning his nationalist stance itself. The charge was justified to the extent his statements went. But one will have to take into consideration the circumstances under which he made such statements. He had maintained always that unqualified transfer of power to Indians would mean transfer of power either to the Hindus or the Muslims, as it happened under the Provincial Autonomy scheme of the 1935 Act. In either case, he thought, the interests of the Depressed Classes would be at jeopardy. Weighing the question in the light of these considerations he, perhaps, thought that the transfer of power could be accepted only with the necessary provisions to protect the interest of the minority communities. In the absence of any such special provisions, he believed, the continuance of British rule would be preferable till such time as the Depressed Classes themselves will be in a position to get their interests protected. It would be uncharitable to question his patriotic fervour or the depth of his sincerity to the cause to which he was dedicated, on such counts.

27. Ibid, pp. 1357-58.
the other hand, the language he employed was only an outburst of his genuine feelings, and did not bear malice towards any one. Such a lack of moderation in his language was understandable.

It may not be out of place here to refer to another accusation that he was the stooge of the British government, as the British used leaders like Ambedkar to counterpoise the nationalist demands, in the name of the interests they represented. Such charges were made from very responsible quarters. Of course it was malicious and was calculated to denigrate Ambedkar in an effort to tarnish his image in the eyes of the whole nation. One need not be surprised at such insinuations. It is true that the interests of the British policy were served by the clamorous demands made by the Depressed Classes. But one should not forget that, after all, these people were pressing for their legitimate rights and their just demands. Ambedkar was, on his part, voicing the feelings of all the minorities when he was making statutory guarantees a pre-condition for transference of power to Indian hands, so that the health of the body politic under Swaraj may be sound; so that there could be a joint effort and cooperation in the more important tasks ahead. He was, naturally, prepared even to wait for some time, if need be, to attain the objective. On the other hand, the Indian National Congress thought that the problem of the minorities
need not hold up independence of the country. Once power is transferred, it maintained, Indians could settle all such problems amongst themselves. This point will be elaborated in the next chapter. Suffice to say here, it was only a difference in approach and timing that one finds in the approach of Ambedkar and that of the Congress. Nevertheless, Ambedkar was subject to scathing and denigrating criticisms from various quarters for his so-called obstructionist policy, which had no justification whatsoever. On the other hand, subsequent events leading to Indian independence strengthened his stand. His defence of the minority interests was derived, not from a philosophical postulate but based purely on a realistic approach. He believed that 'politics is nothing if not realistic' and judgement without a ground-plan-base is useless. By the ground-plan-base, he meant, the social structure of a community to which the political plan is sought to be applied. Such an approach on his part was prompted by 'cold blooded reasoning' that is evident in his utterances and writings. His thoughts on the problem of linguistic provinces, and his role in the making of the Indian Constitution etc..., bring to the fore his nationalist fervour. He was a nationalist in the true sense of the term and a democrat par excellence.

23. B.R. Ambedkar: *Thoughts on Linguistic States*
A Safe Polity for Minorities:

Ambedkar strove to secure for the Minorities their rights and special safeguards in the course of his writings and pleadings before several agencies that were concerned with the problem of reorganising the Indian polity. He elaborated his views on the question of minority protection etc., in a brochure *States and Minorities — What are their Rights and How to secure them in the Constitution of Free India* prepared on behalf of the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation for submitting to the Constituent Assembly. It was in the form of draft Articles of the constitution instead of being in general terms. It was almost in the form of a draft constitution. Ambedkar's basic philosophy of constitutionalism, economic and political democracy etc., found clear expression in this brochure of his more completely than the one that emerged from him as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly. He could not, perhaps, incorporate into that draft, his own philosophy, because there were certain serious limitations, which he could not ignore. He was not free to write the Constitution entirely as he wanted it to be. He himself gave expression to this difficulty more than once. This point will be discussed more fully in the course of another Chapter.

In this brochure, he refuted the argument that the
Scheduled Castes cannot have separate electorates, as they are a part of the Hindu religion, and that they are not a minority at all. The argument, further, was that separate electorates will perpetuate untouchability; that it is anti-national, and such a step will perpetuate British imperialism in India.

Ambedkar contended that 'social discrimination' should constitute the real test for determining whether or not a social group was a minority. According to this test the Scheduled Castes were the only group which was entitled to be treated as a real minority in India. He maintained that "to make religious affiliation the determining factor for constitutional safeguards is to overlook the fact that the religious affiliation may be accompanied by an intense degree of social separation and discrimination." 29 If it is not so why should there be separate electorates for the Europeans, Anglo-Indians, and the Indian Christians when they belong to the same religious group? - he asked. So what should be decisive is not 'religious affiliation', but 'social separation'. The argument that separate electorates prevent solidarity, was the result of confused thinking. "Nationalism and anti-nationalism ", he said, "have nothing to do with the electoral system. They are the result of extra-electoral forces." 30 Whatever electoral system that might be

30. Ibid, p. 47.
devised, it should have nothing to do with such questions. It should be intended to be a mechanism for enabling a minority to return its true representatives within the polity, because what a minority needed was not mere representation but an effective representation, and that obviously "depends upon it (the electoral system) being large enough to give the minority the sense of not being entirely overwhelmed by the majority." 31 While suggesting this new criteria for deciding the minority that should be entitled for special safeguards and representation he was proceeding on scientific lines. This suggestion was a distinct contribution of his to the theory of minority protection and representation.

In his proposed constitution for the 'United States of India', Ambedkar discussed in concrete terms the Fundamental Rights; Minority Rights; safeguards for the Scheduled Castes; a preamble and the position of the Indian Princely States in the proposed 'United States of India', which was obviously a Federation. In shaping this constitution, he drew heavily upon the Civil Rights Protection Acts, 1866; and of 1st March 1875, passed by the Congress of the United States of America, to protect the Negroes against unequal treatment. Ambedkar's preference for a unitary state was clearly manifest in this. But at the same time, he was providing for a federal polity

31. Ibid, p. 43.
with a unitary bias, as the conditions of the country would not permit the formation of a unitary state.

In his proposals Ambedkar had a larger view of the problem of fundamental rights, individual liberty, democracy etc., and his views were a departure from the existing practices. He thought, it was necessary to prescribe the shape and form of the economic structure of society as a part of the constitutional law. It should not stop with the establishing of a responsible government based on adult franchise and guaranteeing some fundamental rights. If the economic structure is not spelt out and is left untouched, the result would be that "the political structure is completely set at naught by the forces which emerge from the economic structure which is at variance with the political structure." 32 But later on he had to swerve from this stand, when he had to defend in the Constituent Assembly the inclusion of Directive Principles of State Policy. He pleaded in this brochure, further, that State Socialism in important fields of economic life should be established by the law of the constitution, so that it would be unalterable by any act of the legislature and the executive.

His concept of State Socialism comprised: (1) State ownership of agriculture with a collectivised method of

32. Ibid, p. 35
cultivation and a modified form of state-socialism in the field of industry; (ii) Nationalisation of the insurance business; (iii) Key industries to be run by the State; basic industries, which are not key industries shall be owned and run by the State or by Corporations, established by the State. He had envisaged a planned economy, to be guaranteed in the constitutional law itself. He was not a Marxist. He believed in democratic planning for an all-round development. He also realised that for the success of planned economy, the policy should be fairly stable and permanent. In a parliamentary democracy the risk for planned economy is all the more greater. With every election the possibility for a change in the majority party is there. Either the approach of planned economy itself may be abandoned, or may be diluted, at least. So the only way-out would be "to retain Parliamentary Democracy and to prescribe State Socialism by the law of the Constitution so that it will be beyond the reach of the Parliamentary majority to suspend, amend or abrogate it. It is only by this that one can achieve the triple object, namely to establish Socialism, retain Parliamentary Democracy and avoid Dictatorship." 33 As he could not stipulate the economic policy in a mandatory form in the new Constitution of India, he had to be satisfied with providing for non-justiciable Directives of State Policy.

33. Ibid, p. 34.
As to the type of Executive for his proposed United States of India, he had suggested a non-parliamentary type of executive as the best device for protecting the minorities against a communal executive. The executive he suggested, was more on the Swiss model than on the model of the U.S.A. He was of the opinion that Parliamentary executive of the British type was not suitable to India, as the majority in India would be a communal majority, and not a political majority. A political majority, to Ambedkar, is that which grows, and is changeable in its class composition; to which admission is open; and whose politics is free. While a communal majority is that which is born, whose doors are closed to others and whose politics is made by its own members born in it. So the introduction of the British type of executive in India, he thought, would be "full of menace to the life, liberty and pursuit of happiness of the minorities in general and of the untouchables in particular." Ambedkar also believed that the chances of success for the British type of executive were slender. He had clearly anticipated the clashes of castes and creeds and the birth of a plethora of parties and groups in the Legislatures in India. This would lead to the instability of the Executive. Even the solidarity (existing then) among the major parties may not continue and the cement that holds them together

34. B.R. Ambedkar: Thoughts on Linguistic States; p. 35.
35. B.R. Ambedkar: States and Minorities; p. 36.
may fall away, once the problem of 'the British India is solved'. The type of executive he suggested, was intended to obviate these evils.

These observations of Ambedkar can be reflected upon with much interest in the light of the Congress-Politics in India to-day. In spite of the influence exerted by the towering personality of the late Prime Minister Nehru, groupism and rivalries that the Congress party exhibited even during his lifetime is something very serious. The 'groupism' or factional politics in the Congress has led to a situation that was anticipated by Ambedkar. The rivalry between the organisational and the ministerial wings of the Congress party, particularly at the State level, is no secret. In fact, the role of an opposition is being fulfilled effectively within the Congress party itself!

Linguistic States:— their implications:

The reorganisation of the Provinces in India on linguistic principle was another important measure of reform that was being demanded by the Indian National Congress during the British rule itself. The British Indian Provinces, it was thought, were formed on exigences

36. Ibid. p. 37.
than on any rational basis. So they were not natural units with an element of stability. The Congress party was already committed to the linguistic reorganisation of the Provinces for over thirty years. In the wake of India's independence, the problem had to be tackled and the Government set up a Commission 37 to report on the demands for linguistic provinces. The Dar Commission reported against the creation of linguistic states. Subsequently, the 'JVF' Committee 38 also decided against linguistic states. In view of these findings, and also of the more serious problems that were facing the country at that time and other difficulties, the demand could not be conceded and the new Constitution provided for States which were not at all based on the linguistic principle of 'one language one State'. But the demand for linguistic states was accelerated with vigour from year to year. The creation of Andhra in 1953, as a sequel to the 'martyrdom' of an Andhrite-Potti Shiramalu, who fasted till death, to get the linguistic state of Andhra created, the demand became all the more widespread and strong, with even violent repercussions in some States. Consequently, the Government of India appointed a three-man High Power Commission 39 in

37. The Commission presided over by Justice S.K. Dar was called the 'Dar Commission'.

38. Committee appointed by the Congress Party late in 1948, consisting of Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel and Pattrabhi Sitaramayya. Hence the name 'JVF'.

39. The Commission had Justice Mr. Faisal Ali as its Chairman, Sardar K.M. Panikkar and Pandit Hridayanath Kunaru as Members.
December 1953 to examine and report on the question of the reorganisation of States on linguistic basis. Hence, it was also called the States Re-organisation Commission. The Commission recommended the reorganisation of States largely on linguistic basis, taking also into consideration, administrative convenience, geographical contiguity and economic viability. It submitted its Report in September 1955. The Constitution of India was suitably amended to give effect to these recommendations when the States Reorganisation Act, 1956 was passed by the Union Parliament. As a result of this and the related Bombay Reorganisation Act, 1960, the States of the Indian Union today stand reorganised, and boundaries demarcated largely, and not solely, on the linguistic principle.

Ambedkar had expressed, from time to time, his views on this important problem since its genesis itself. He was not favourably disposed towards this demand for linguistic provinces in the form it was made. He had, in fact, opposed a Resolution on the creation of a separate Karnataka Province, moved in the Bombay Legislative Assembly in the year 1958. The Resolution, moved by V.N. Jog (Dharwar North) ran as follows:

This Assembly recommends to the Government to move His Majesty's Government to issue an Order-in-Council creating a new Governor's Province to be called the 'Province of Karnataka' by amalgamating all the Kanarese-speaking areas
Ambédkar tried to oppose the introduction of the Resolution on technical grounds saying that, as the Resolution affected the status of other Provinces, it cannot be discussed by the Bombay Legislative Assembly. Still the Resolution was taken up for discussion. Ambedkar opposed the creation of a separate Province of Karnatak as it was untenable and was, as such, a 'dream' and 'ideal'. It would not be possible "for anybody to get Kanarese-speaking people who are living in Indian States, as it is, to have their allegiance transferred from the States to any British Indian Province." It was true that without the areas that were under the princely state of Mysore, the largest single Kannada-speaking area, the proposed Karnatak Province would not have financial viability. Besides such a danger, the Province would also encounter certain other difficulties. He said: "... Our strength lies in a polyglot administration. I do not say, but I have my fears that if Karnatak is created a separate Province, it would be a Province of all the Lingayats against everybody else. I am not mincing matters, but if, for instance, there was separation there would be a combination of the Marathas against the Kanarese — we don't


41. Ibid, p. 1718.
want this kind of thing and there cannot be a common front which we at present enjoy. *42 He had also his objections to the creation of linguistic states, as it would lead to the disintegration of the land. He drew the attention of the Members to the unifying role of the British rule and appealed for its preservation. He said that though 'the British failed to do' many more things because "their self-interest probably did not permit them to do — have done two things which I am generous enough to admit as being two monuments of their rule in this country which will survive even when they go away. The one thing that they have done for us is a common code of law ... The other thing the British have done is that they have given us a common central Government. Such a thing we did not have before." *43 He believed that it was because of this positive effect of British rule that India was able to develop a common nationality. It was his belief that the linguistic states would, in the last analysis, affect the unity of the country.

But there was a complete transformation and change in his views on the subject at a later stage. This is what he said in the course of a memorandum he submitted to the Commission on Linguistic Provinces (Dar Commission).

42. Ibid, p. 1722.
43. Ibid, p. 1723.
appointed in 1948:

A Linguistic Province produced what
democracy needs, namely, the social
homogeneity, and makes democracy work
better than it would in a mixed province.
There is no danger in creating Linguistic
Provinces. Danger lies in creating Linguistic
Provinces with the language of each
Province as its official language. 44

So, his objection was not so much to the creation of the
linguistic states as such, but he did object to the
provincial languages becoming official languages in the
respective states. If provincial languages were to
become official languages, he thought, there would be
'provincial nationalities' which would lead to a breaking-
up of India instead of remaining united. This has been
our experience since the birth of linguistic states.

His thoughts on linguistic states were contained
in a brochure issued consequent to the publication of the
Report of the States Reorganisation Commission. 45 Since
he could not participate in the discussion and debate
in the Parliament, and in the campaign for Linguistic
states due to his illness, he chose to set out his views
on the subject in this brochure. He thought, the question

44. Quoted in Dhananjay Keer, op. cit., p. 404.
45. Thoughts on Linguistic States; 1955-56.
was so important that he could not afford 'to sleep over in silence'. He accepted that there was a certain degree of inconsistency in the views he expressed in this brochure and the ones expressed earlier on the subject. The change in his views was due to the changed circumstances in independent India, and also due to the fact that he got a complete picture of the problem, on the publication of the Report of the States Reorganisation Commission. He thought, responsibility was more important than consistency. Moreover, he was examining the entire problem de novo from the point of view of the minorities also.

**Linguistic States and the Minorities:**

Ambedkar, ultimately, accepted the necessity and soundness of a state being organised on the basis of one language. In fact one of the reasons as to why Article 3 in the new Constitution of India empowered the Union Parliament to change or alter the name or boundaries of States of the Indian Union was to enable the re-organisation of States at a suitable time. An unilingual state, as it would be built on 'fellow feeling' and a corporate sense of oneness, will be 'the foundation of a stable and a democratic state'. He felt that bilingual or multi-lingual states will not be suitable to India, as 'the genius of India is to divide' and not to unite. Then how is it that the composite states worked all those years? They could work because of the Congress party that was in
Ambedkar did not agree with all the recommendations of the States Reorganisation Commission. His conception of linguistic states was not to have always and everywhere 'one state only for one language'. He was for 'one language, one state'. That is to say, he was pleading for the creation of more than one state for each language, if necessary, as he was suggesting in the case of Maharashtra, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh, for example. He said, the principle that people speaking one language should be brought under one government alone "irrespective of area, population and dissimilarity of conditions among the people speaking the language ... is an absurd formula and has no precedent for it. A people speaking one language may be cut up into many states as is done in other parts of the world." 47

Such an arrangement was particularly necessary to protect the minorities. His theory was "as the area of the state increases the proportion of the minority to the majority decreases and the position of the minority becomes precarious and the opportunities for the majority

46. B.R. Ambedkar: Thoughts on Linguistic States, p.11.
47. Ibid, p. 30.
to practice tyranny over the minority becomes greater. The states must therefore, be small.* 48 Ambedkar was totally opposed to the creation of big states just to accommodate one state only for one language. Another implication of accepting the principle of one state only for one language would be that it results in the creation of states that will be unusually big in the case of some, and smaller states in the case of others. It would have serious repercussions on the life of the country as a whole. The variation in the size of the states is not healthy from the standpoint of national harmony. The disparity in the size of the states, and in turn between South and North India, would be dangerous. Though such a disparity is seen even in the United States of America, it is not dangerous there, because of the 'preventive provisions' in the U.S. Constitution, like equal representation to states in the Senate, the co-equal authority of both the Houses of legislature, etc.

The States Reorganisation Commission did not avail of the opportunity for creating states of nearly equal size in the Indian federation. It must be noted here that a Member of the Commission, Sardar K.M. Panikkar expressed, in the course of his note of dissent to the Report, that there should be states of nearly equal size.

He was particularly opposed to the creation of an unduly large state of Uttar Pradesh. He was for dividing it and making it smaller. Mr. Panikkar had opined that it was "essential for the successful working of a federation that the units should be fairly evenly balanced." He had pointed at the undesirability of a single state having a preponderating position in the Central Government as that was bound to happen with a big state like that of Uttar Pradesh. It has been, in fact, the position all these years. Mr. Panikkar's note of dissent substantiates the arguments of Ambedkar regarding large states. Ambedkar thought that by leaving U.P., and Bihar as they were, and adding to them a new and a bigger Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan, the States Reorganisation Commission had created a new problem of North Vs South, resulting in 'the consolidation of the North and the balkanisation of the South'.

Such a tendency for balkanisation would be further strengthened by the question of a national language for India. It may be recalled here that Hindi was adopted as the national language by a single-vote majority in the Congress Party; with about a population of 48% speaking Hindi language; and with larger number of seats

in the Parliament being held by the Northern States, North India would be in a position to exert 'a disproportionate influence on the politics of India'. In view of the cultural differences between the North and the South, the possibility of a civil war between these two cannot be ruled out. The movement for Dravidasthan in the South, powerfully sponsored by the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in Madras State, can be pondered over with interest in the light of the warnings given by Ambedkar, much before the event.

Remedial Measures:

Ambedkar put forward some concrete suggestions to thwart such a danger. In the first place, he suggested that the Northern States of U.P., Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh should be broken into smaller States, because he ruled out the possibility of enlarging the southern States to meet the menace of the Northern States. He had also disapproved of the Principle adopted by the S.R.C., 'that one language, one state is a categorical imperative from which there is no escape'. On the other hand, he had evolved a more realistic principle that "people forming one language can divide themselves into many states,"

51. To Ambedkar, if the North is conservative, superstitious, ancient and educationally backward; the South is progressive, rational, modern and educationally forward. — Ibid, Ch.5.
that will be unilingual in their composition. Such an arrangement would have prevented the domination of one or two states in the politics of the country, but also would have facilitated proper economic development of the areas which were more backward than others, as in the case of Maharashtra. In his scheme of linguistic states: the State of U.P., was to be divided into three states: (a) Western U.P., with Meerut as Capital; (b) Central U.P., with Kanpur as Capital; and (c) Eastern U.P., with Allahabad as Capital. Each one of these would be having a population of 2 crores, which should be regarded as the standard size of population for an effective administration. Bihar was to be divided into 2 States: (a) North Bihar, and (b) South Bihar, with Patna and Ranchi as capitals respectively; each with a population of little over one and a half crore which "is not a small population for one government to administer". Madhya Pradesh, as created by the S.R.C., was to be divided into 2 States: (a) Northern, and (b) Southern Madhya Pradesh, with Gwalior and Indore as capitals respectively. Incidentally, according to Ambedkar, the question as to why the S.R.C. created such a big and monster State of Madhya Pradesh was a matter of great surprise even to Mr. Nehru. Ambedkar, as can be expected, was not at all in favour of a bi-lingual Bombay State, created by the S.R.Act. In his last days he was planning an agitation to get the bi-lingual state of Bombay
recoind. He was, in fact, suggesting the creation of four unilingual states of Maharashtra, instead of one. They were: (a) Maharashtra City-State of Bombay city along with such areas of Maharashtra as would enable it to be a good and strong city-state; (b) Western Maharashtra; (c) Central Maharashtra; and (d) Eastern Maharashtra. The setting-up of four unilingual, instead of one unilingual state of Maharashtra would facilitate the removal of economic, educational and such other disparities in these different regions of Maharashtra. He advised, in fact, the people of Mahathawada or central Maharashtra to have a state of their own so that they will have power in their own hands to improve their lot. 52

The second remedial measure he suggested was that Hindi should 'be the official language of the State' and until India becomes fit for this purpose, English should continue. The Constitution should provide that the regional language shall not be the official language of the state in order to avert such a danger. He feared, if regional languages are made the official languages, the states may develop into independent nationalities. It would contribute to the dis-integration and balkanization of India. As Ambedkar put it: The road between an independent nationality and an independent state is very narrow. He added a note of warning: "If my suggestion

52. Ibid, p. 23.
is not accepted, India will then cease to be India. It will be a collection of different nationalities engaged in rivalries and wars against one another." 

The States Reorganisation Commission was alive to this danger that would follow the creation of linguistic states. The Commission had, therefore, provided for two institutional checks on the immanent linguistic patriotism on the part of the linguistic states. The setting-up of the five Zonal Councils and the establishment of a Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities were thought of to counter the parochialism of the states. In spite of these institutional safeguards, the problems of minorities and that of parochialism have not been set at naught. The tragic events of 1960 between the Assamese and Bengalese in Assam; the Mysore-Maharashtra boundary disputes and several such problems only strengthen this statement. As Morris-Jones observes: "disintegrative factors and tendencies have thus been at work, often as causes of major events in the nation's recent history. The forces of integration ... tend to work less obtrusively. Their silent ways have been in many eyes their great defect and leaders have searched for means of increasing this force by providing more explicit institutional forms ..." 

We know that a vigorous campaign to bring about 'emotional integration' among the people was launched long back. The late Prime


Minister Nehru was very much shocked at the parochialistic and dis-integrative forces that were gaining ground in the country since independence and particularly after redrawing the map of India on linguistic lines. He gave an impassionate call for 'National Integration', which, for the first time, appeared in a resolution of the Congress Working Committee in 1958. The campaign for national integration received its most concrete expression when the National Integration Council was set up in 1961.

The legacy of the States reorganisation in India has been, therefore, parochialism, linguistic chauvinism and national disintegration and disruption which have very often held back economic development of certain regions. If only the proposals of Ambedkar were to be accepted and appreciated at the right moment, perhaps, such a calamity would have been averted or at least minimised.

A third suggestion that Ambedkar made to remove tensions between the North and the South was to have a 'second capital' for the country. A second capital is necessary because of not only climatic variations but also from the point of view of: the convenience to the people; the feelings amongst the Southerners towards the North; and above all from the point of view of Defence of the country. He thought, New Delhi is vulnerable from defence
point of view. 55 So, also Calcutta which is within the bombing range from Tibet. What Ambedkar had remarked then sounds so fresh, so correct and so significant in the light of the events since 1962, when the Chinese aggression on India took place and the Indo-Pak armed conflagration. This is what he had written: "Although India and China are friends, how long the friendship would last no one can definitely say. The possibility of conflict between India and China remains." 56 He had made this observation in 1955 when the relations between India and China were at their peak. He had, therefore, suggested Hyderabad as the ideal place to be the second capital of India. He was cautious enough to exclude it from the administrative control of a state, when he laid down that the areas of Hyderabad, Secunderabad and Bolarum cities should be constituted a separate Chief Commissioner's Province. The opportunity provided by the states reorganisation was not utilised for providing a second capital. It may be pointed out here that it is now the practice for the President of India to sojourn at the 'Rashtrapati Nilayam' at Bolarum, where he spends a few weeks every year. Ambedkar's plea for a second capital

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55. It may be recalled here that New Delhi was, as a matter of fact, exposed to aerial bombings by Pakistani planes during September 1965. There were reports of parachute-landings round about Delhi and quite some Pakistani planes were chased away from the Delhi area by the I.A.F. planes.

has been fulfilled in this very limited way and that too as a convention.

Finally, he had suggested an amendment to the Constitution of India to provide adequate protection to the minorities in the reorganised states. In order to prevent... the tyranny of the majority over the minority, provisions must be made in the Constitution itself for a system of plural-member constituencies (may be double-member or multi-member constituencies, with cumulative system of voting. The evils of caste system were sure to be sharpened everywhere with the creation of Linguistic States, and the consequences of casteism on politics are too obvious to be overemphasised. Ambedkar was very much alive to the deeper implications of caste in the changed political, social and economic atmosphere of the country. His belief that the political and economic plan of a country should be based on its social structure, had emanated from such an awareness on his part. In the last decade or two, caste has come to be looked upon as 'jati' and not as 'varna'. The 'jati' which is "the small local strata formerly dismissed vaguely as sub-castes ... is the basic unit of social stratification in traditional rural India." 57 As Morris-Jones observes further: "Seen thus, castes are not five but innumerable; in each small region — varying in area

57. Morris-Jones: The Government and Politics of India; p. 56.
in different parts of the country but always to be thought of as a cluster of villages rather than a region — there is a distinctive constellation of castes ..." 58

In such a situation the constellation of these castes understood as 'sati' come to possess, control and influence power in relation to the political process of the country. Leadership will "come from the ranks of the locally dominant caste who will regard themselves and be regarded as natural hereditary repositories of such political status." 59 Ambedkar's concern too was to prevent such classes of persons from monopolising power. Such a class of people in each village or a cluster of villages would, naturally, be the repositories of power and control over it. A political behaviour of this character is bound to influence substantially the elections and their outcome, which form the very foundation of our representative government.

The evil effects of communalism, that is so rampant in Indian politics today, were summed up by Ambedkar as follows: (1) Voting is always on communal lines irrespective of merit. (2) The majority community will carry the seats by sheer communal majority. (3) There is always the possibility of the minority community being coerced to...

58. Ibid, p. 56.

vote for the candidate of the majority community. (4) The minority community, in view of its limited strength, cannot hope to win a seat. (5) In view of the graded system of social inequality, the voters of the higher communities are not prone to condescend to give their votes to a candidate of a minority community. On the other hand, the voters of a minority community take pride in voting to the candidates of the majority community. 60 Such a tendency would lead to the formation of a communal majority with the assumed title of a political majority. "... To give such title deeds to a communal majority", said Ambedkar, "is to establish hereditary government and make the way open to the tyranny of that majority." 61 The remedy to such an undesirable political process is not to have too large states; and "to have plural-member constituencies with cumulative voting in place of the system of single-member constituency embodied in the present constitution. This will allay the fears which the minorities have about Linguistic States." 62

Conclusion:

The foregoing discussion has made an attempt to examine the problem of minorities as viewed by Ambedkar,

60. Thoughts on Linguistic States; Ch. 10.
61. Ibid, p. 35.
62. Ibid, p. 35.
at various stages of our political development and from different angles. It also throws much light on his deep concern for the minorities in whatever he wrote and said. It would be a mistake to consider his views as those concerning the problems of the Depressed Classes only and exclusively. His thoughts on this problem were comprehensive enough to cover other minorities also in the country within the scope of his consideration. One cannot miss sight of his deep sincerity and humanistic approach in his concern for the minorities. He thought systematically and scientifically, and the suggestions he made were based more on the 'ground plan' of the society than being merely in the form of speculative philosophical observations of an idealist arm-chair philosopher. His thoughts on another important issue of Indian politics — the demand for Pakistan — have been reserved for another chapter of this thesis. However, the preceding discussion itself warrants certain conclusions, which it is hoped, would in turn provide the required perspective to the forthcoming discussion. The conclusions are:

The minority problem in India is something different from that in other countries. It has certain peculiarities. In considering the position of a social group as a minority, the criteria should be social discrimination, besides its size, social, racial or cultural affinities. What should be decisive is not religious affiliations but social
separation. Judged from this criterion, scheduled Castes in India constitute the real minority, whose position is different from that of other minorities, in view of the fact that they are not entitled to the enjoyment of certain rights that are enjoyed by other minorities such as, the Christians, the Sikhs and the Muslims. All minority communities in general, and the scheduled Castes in particular, should be protected under special safeguards provided in the Constitution itself. It should guarantee to them fundamental rights; adequate, real and independent representation in the legislature, executive and the public services. Their representation should never be by nomination but by election with weightage etc. Mere paper-guarantee of these safeguards in the constitution would not be adequate. The constitutional guarantees should be so incorporated as to provide ways and means by which the minorities are to be protected in the exercise of those rights. The minorities could not consent to any self-governing constitutional arrangement for India unless their demands were met in a reasonable manner.

The creation of Linguistic States in independent India was bound to sharpen the evils of casteism and linguistic chauvinism. It would foster fissiparous tendencies and the balkanization of the South and the North. To the already existing groups of religious minorities, a new class of minorities, the linguistic
minorities, will be added on in every state. Such dangerous trends notwithstanding, unilingual states are necessary for the development of a free and democratic life. The dangers of linguistic states can be averted by wise statesmanship, whereas the dangers of a multi-lingual state are greater and beyond control or remedy. It is possible to avert the evils of unilingual states by creating smaller states, nearly equal in size and population based on the needs of economic development; and by creating more than one state for each language instead of there being one state only for a particular language, irrespective of its size. The minorities can be better protected by providing for plural-member constituencies with cumulative voting for them instead of single-member constituencies.

The creation of a second capital for India would, not only bridge the gulf of mistrust and misunderstanding between the North and the South, but would also be wise from the point of view of defence. A carefully considered and a shrewd policy on the question of national language of India is necessary.

Though Ambedkar sounded too sceptical and apprehensive in his thoughts on the minority problem and linguistic states, they were not without grounds. His apprehensions have come to be true. His demands on behalf of the minorities in the form of adequate safeguards
have been fulfilled to a certain extent. But the more serious problem, which he feared would come to pass in the form of centrifugal and centripetal forces after the states reorganisation could have been largely minimised if the opportunity offered by the states reorganisation was to be utilised for putting through some of his proposals, particularly for creating smaller states. Smaller States would have provided opportunities for more leaders, thereby the factionalism that we witness today would have been minimised. The fact that even to-day the country is facing problems of casteism, social incohesion etc., is proof positive for his farsightedness, political shrewdness, and capacity to anticipate the events. The call for 'National Integration' is still there in the country and the people of India exhibit a great sense of integration at times of national emergencies like the Chinese aggression and the Indo-Pak conflict. One cannot expect such a grave situation to come often to bring about integration. Once the emergency is over, people tend to relax. National integration should be accomplished on a more secure and enduring basis through an emotional integration among the people all over the country. It can be achieved only by erasing from the minds of the people their regional or parochial attitude to the problems of development and security of the nation. Ambedkar's suggestions would have gone a long way in accomplishing this task, if they were heeded to betimes and with the spirit in which they
were made. It was rather unfortunate that for some reason or the other, they were not adopted by those at the helm of affairs in the country. The benefits of his thinking, which he had placed at the disposal of the nation were not appreciated at all, which, to say the least, was most unfortunate.