CHAPTER - II

DIVERGENT APPROACHES TO THE SOCIAL PROBLEM

Political awakening in India, in fact, was a part of general awakening in the nineteenth Century. However, it can be said that in the first phase it was social awakening that dominated the scene. But from the very beginning it was in the name of political upliftment and emancipation that social reforms were justified. It was argued that without some basic social reforms we as Indians will not be fit to shoulder higher political responsibilities.

FOUNDATION OF NATIONAL CONGRESS :

It should however be stressed here that the political activity, in whatever form it was then, was started separately and independent of the social reform activity. Some educated individuals in different provinces organised separately independent of the social reform activity going on in these provinces. To begin with it was Bengal British India Society which was organised in Calcutta in 1843. It was followed by a number of similar organisations being formed in other provinces, namely the Bombay Association, the British India Association (1851), The Indian Association (1876), the Sarvajanik Sabha (1870) etc.¹ These organisations prepared the ground for the creation of some all
India Organisation. The leaders of these organisations had already started talking about the need of national organisation in order to be in a position to tackle the problems better.  

Surendranath Banerjee toured northern India to popularise the idea of having an All-India Organization.  

In the same period conferences were held to discuss the question of establishing an all India Organisation.  

Finally it was in 1885 that the much desired all India Organisation was founded and was named as India National Congress (INC). It proved a great instrument for rousing national consciousness and guiding the national movement all through the twentieth century till the final attainment of Independence in 1947.  

It is strange that Mr. A.O. Hume, an I.C.S. Officer took initiative and lot of interest in the foundation of the political association for the Indians. Because of his official position, he could know about the political unrest that was brewing around. 'Lord Lyton's repressive measures had brought India within measurable distance of revolutionary out-break.'  

Mr. Hume felt that an association of all-India level of the educated Indians provide a ventilation to the grievances of the masses and stop them from accumulating only to violently outburst at some moment later.  

However, the Congress consisted of intellectuals and politicians from upper middle classes having
no contact with Indian masses. That is why instead of speaking precisely about the points and issues that caused mass discontent, they spoke of the difficulties of the upper middle classes, the educational problems, problems of jobs and promotions, I.C.S. examination, etc.

**LIBERAL DOMINATION:**

However, from 1885 to 1905 the I.N.C. was dominated by the liberals who were subsequently dubbed as 'moderates.' They were all western educated people bleethed deep in western morals, outlooks and way of life. As a result they had a soft attitude towards India's plural culture and a tolerance for divergent faiths. They were also alive to the Indian social problem and had developed a feeling that the social structure needs to be humanized in the interest of India's advancement. Dadabhai Naoroji made it clear in the Second Conference of I.N.C. that all the delegates here present are not just as deeply, nay in many cases for more deeply interested in these (social) questions' then in the questions they generally discuss."

It can also be said that the early Congressmen like Dadabhai Naoroji, Surendranath Banerji, Gopal Krishna Gokhale etc., were all loyal to the British Government. They never demanded self-government in any form. What in all they desired was gradual political advancement by securing
for them progressive representation within the frame-work of British Imperial system of government.  

10 Ramesh Chandra Dutt, the President of INC in 1890 observed that 'Indian people are not found of sudden changes and revolution. They desire to strengthen the present government and to bring it more in touch with the people. They desire to see some Indian members in the Secretary of States' Council and in the Voiceroy's executive council, representing Indian agriculture and Industries ... They seek that the administration of the Empire and its great provinces should be conducted with the co-operation of the people.'  

11 G.K. Gokhale too subscribed to the same view. In political matters they believed in the sense of justice free-play and a accommodation of the British rulers, and hence in gradual advancement by strictly following constitutional methods. As seen earlier they were also sympathetic to the question of social reforms.

Thus it can be said that the early Congress men were liberal in politics and progressive in social matters. Secular attitude was throughly imbibed in them.

**SOCIAL REFORMS : SYMPATHY WITH A DISTANCE :**

However, with all their sympathy for the social reforms activities, they did not favour taking social problems on Congress agenda for various reasons. In the first
session the members of INC had agreed to take up the discus-
sion of social problem after they finish the formal polit-
ical agenda, but it could not be discussed because of the
lack of time. In the second session of INC it was argued
that Congress being a comprehensive body of various castes
and communities formed for political purposes, it cannot
take social issues for discussion. Dadabhai Naoroji assert-
ed that the INC along with him was alive to the social prob-
lem. But he said, 'we are here as a political body to
represent to our rulers our political aspirations and not
to discuss social reforms.' His argument was that Congress
consists of different castes and communities. It is not a
solely Hindu or solely Muslim body. These communities have
their own different variety of social problems. How can a
Muslim be interested in a Hindu social problem and vice-
versa? Again, this body represents Parsis, Sikhs, Boharas
and what not. How can this gathering discuss social reforms
needed in each individual community. Moreover among the
Hindus themselves there are sections who want to co-operate
with Congress but are opposed to social reforms. In short,
he was not for Congress taking up social problem on its
agenda. Badruddin Tyabji also held identical views. He
said that the INC should confine to the discussions of
such questions which affect whole of India and should abstain
from all others that affect a particular community of section thereof. 14

FORMATION OF INDIAN NATIONAL SOCIAL CONFERENCE:

In this background it was decided, by those who felt the urgency of the social problem, to start a separate movement to be called 'Indian National Social Conference'. 15 They proposed that the sessions of this Conference should be held annually in the Congress Pandol and the Congress men agreed to the proposal. Accordingly the first session of the Indian National Social Conference (INSC) was held in the Congress pandol at Madras in December 1887. M. G. Ranade and Raghunath Rao were the moving spirit. The INSC discussed the problems related with the evil practices of the Hindu society like child marriage, forced widowhood, the dowry system with its attendant evils, prohibition of education to women, caste system breaking the social body into exclusive parts, untouchability etc. They resolved that the social reform agenda should include all such items. Thereafter M.G. Ranade undertook the task of popularising and spreading the work of the Social Conference (INSC). Even in those days of its foundation it was not without its critics. 17 But Ranade did not waver from his chosen path. He firmly believed in its infallibility. He said, "you cannot have a good social system when you find yourself
low in the scale of political rights, nor can you be fit to exercise political rights and privileges unless your social system is based on reason and justice ..... This inter-dependence is not an accident but is the law of our nature."\textsuperscript{18}

However, Ranade believed in changing the hearts rather than merely modifying the social institutions. He said, "the issue is not this or that particular reform about which people have so much of controversy but the general spirit of purity, justice, equality, temperance and mercy which should be infused into our minds and which should illumine our hearts ...."\textsuperscript{19}

The work of the Social Conference proceeded silently along with that of the Indian National Congress. The members of these two important organizations had no malice against each other. In fact to much extent the membership of the two organizations overlapped. Prominent among them always regarded the task of the two to be complementary. They regarded the Social Conference as a humble sister of the National Congress.\textsuperscript{20} Ranade, Bhandarkar, Chandavarkar, Jaykar, Sheshadri Rao, Narayan Pantulu and many others regarded that political progress, and social reform were interdependent.\textsuperscript{21}
In the initial stages, the National Social Conference discussed the social problems mostly related to upper middle classes and higher castes. The problem of the down-trodden classes attracted its attention for the first time in its ninth session. They resolved in this session that 'the education and social amelioration of outcastes in all parts of India was duty which devolved on those who had the permanent good of their country at heart, and every effort should be made to raise those classes to a position where by education and industry they might rise above the disadvantages of their conditions.' Note was also taken of the fact that the Maharashtra Education Society of Baramati and Prarthana Samaj of Satara had started 'efforts to educate the lower castes and to raise their status in Hindu Society.' It was estimated that in 1899 the M.E.S. Baramati had nine educational institutions and Boardings for the children of the low castes.

The National Social Conference of Ahmedabad highly deplored the indifference of the society towards the moral and material advancement of the lower castes and recorded its conviction that the prosperity and progress of the country was deeply involved in effective measures being taken towards the amelioration of their conditions. The Dharwar Conference in 1903 appealed to the well-wishers of the
country to do all they could to raise the moral and social conditions of the lower castes by providing them facilities for education and employment. The National Social Conference Madras, 1903 again deplored the neglect and indifference to moral and material advancement of the low castes.

Thus provincial bodies of Social Conference were started in different provinces under the auspices of the All-Indian National Social Conference in the last quarter of the 19th Century and they started work in all earnest. The Central Provinces Social Conference emphasised in 1907 the elevation of the condition of low castes and backward communities. It also started the reclamation of such outcastes who sincerely repented and wished to return to their old faith. In Maharashtra Mr. V.R. Shinde started the Depressed Classes Mission under the Prarthana Samaj and did good work.

Thus the social reform movement started under the auspices of All-India National Social Conference played an important role in arousing social awakening in India. Mr. Ranade guided the activities of the INSC from 1887 to 1901 and Chandavarkar thereafter until 1920.

We have already noted that during this period the Indian National Congress was reluctant to take the problem
social problem on its agenda, but it was not opposed to the social reforms. In fact the liberal leadership of Congress during that period was aware of the urgent need of social reconstruction. They sympathised with the reformers and their work. They did not in any way oppose the activities of the Social Reform Conference. This has helped the burgeoning social activity throughout the country. A small group of young nationalists in the Congress was opposed to the reform activity. They did not matter in those days because they constituted a small minority within the Congress. Later they succeeded in prohibiting the Indian National Social Conference from holding its sessions in the Congress pandol. They were small in number, but articulate and insistent. Their number in INC witnessed a spectacular increase in 1905-07 and thereafter. Their rising influence in the Congress and on the people at large definitely affected the goal of social reforms.

**THE EXTREMIST PHASE**

The young nationalists who constituted a small minority in the Congress soon became popular in the urban lower middle-class as also among the masses by adopting populist tactics and slogans. Prominent among these young nationalists in Maharashtra was Bal Gangadhar Tilak. During
Hindu-Muslim riots of 1893-94 in the cities of Bombay, Pune and Nasik he came to prominence in Pune as he spearheaded the movement to protect Hindus from possible Muslim-attack. Pune public (lower middle-class of Pune) was divided on the issue of social reforms. It was the highly educated elite that was advocating and propagating social reform activities. The majority below, as generally happens, preferred to stick to the tradition. They suspected the intentions of the educated elite and opposed their reform proposals. The old generation had stakes in retaining native custom and tradition intact. They were not prepared to listen any rational argument against the religion or social traditions. Tilak put his finger right on the pulse of the people. When he said that these Anglicised reforms will destroy both our native culture and religion, majority applauded. Some illustrations will not be out of place. The age of Consent Bill was introduced in Imperial Legislative Council on 9th January 1891. Reformers like Malbari and others started arousing the people in its favour. Tilak opposed it. He called it an intervention in our religion and for about three months wrote articles against it continuously. That year Congress held its annual session in Pune in the month of May. Tilak told the members of the Congress that people were opposed to this bill and compell-
ed the Congress to pass a resolution against it.\textsuperscript{31} This gratified the majority.

Tilak was an inveterate controvertialist. He pursued the matter till both the opposer and the opposition are finished. It was because of his tactics he could dictate terms to Congress even when his group was in minority.

He picked up controversies with liberal Congress men on their policies as well. He criticised their understanding of political problem as being based on wrong assessment of the British empire, its intentions and power, and dubbed their method as one of mendicancy. He said that this miscalculation about the strength and intention of the enemy and a strategy based on it will lead India nowhere. He wrote articles to arouse the people against these policies. His heroic pronouncement in 1896, 'Swaraj is my birth right and I will have it' endeared him to the masses. His pampering of the native religion and culture in an atmosphere when reformers were criticising it, gratified the ego of the conservative masses including urban lower middle classes. His impeccable arguments against the policies of the Indian National Congress and the social reformers impressed the learned. In an atmosphere full of the rapacious policies of the British rulers, the
repressive measures adopted ruthlessly against the innocent natives by the wanton administrators, native religious faith and social practices being criticised by the Christian missionaries and the Westernized social reformers, and the Indian National Congress, the body in which the masses could pin their faith, calling the British as "God sent" and adopting the mendicancy methods, Bal Gangadhar Tilak appeared as the only Massiha, the prophet, capable to lead the Indian masses to their ultimate destiny of emancipation. No wonder if he 'became the real symbol of the new age. There was no doubt that the vast majority of political minded people in India favoured Tilak and his group.'

On the basis of this sympathy and appreciation Tilak decided to revolt against the liberal old guards within the Congress and the social reformers working in collusion with them.

Tilak employed religion in the service of politics in order to provide a sudden phillip to nationalism. It was one of the reasons why a one time staunch social reformer should all of a sudden turn a bitter critique of all the reform activities. How could one criticise the religion and also think of using it for one's cause? This was indeed Tilak's dilemma. Tilak chose to use it and dropped criticising. He praised Hindu religious faith to boost pride of it in the minds of the people and then equated it with nationa-
ism. He said Swaraj is not only a right but a Dharma.\textsuperscript{34} He argued that 'a true nationalist desires to build on old foundation'.\textsuperscript{35}

Tilak also provided revivalistic tone to nationalism. He said, 'The Hindus hailing from different parts of the country and speaking different languages are permeated with the same kind of inner religious sentiments. The Gita, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are equally respected among the different sections of the Hindu population. The common allegiance to the Vedas and other sacred scriptures provide a common heritage.'\textsuperscript{36}

Another great personality among the extremists was Bipin Chandra Pal whose concept of nationalism was "Composite Patriotism" - appropriate to a nation composed of various races, cultures and creeds.\textsuperscript{37} He, nevertheless, admitted that Hinduism was "the original stock and staple of it."\textsuperscript{38} Referring the influence of Hinduism on the Indian nationalism, he said "Behind the new nationalism in India stands old Vedantism of the Hindus ... The ancient Indian philosophy, divided into many schools, has one general idea running through it from end to end. It is the idea of the essential unity of man and God ... The spiritual note of the present nationalist movement in India is entirely derived from this revived Vedantic thought."\textsuperscript{39}
Another towering personality in the extremist movement was Lajpat Rai. As a child he was brought up in Islamic culture and in his boyhood he was drawn towards Brahmo Samaj. However, later during 1880-82 he joined Arya Samaj and under its influence became a staunch Hindu nationalist. He wrote, "It was in those two years that I learnt to respect the ancient Aryan culture which became my guiding star for good."

Aurobindo Ghosh is regarded as the braintrust or 'think tank' of the extremists. He provided philosophical justification to all their thoughts and actions. He sought the foundation of Indian nationalism in the metaphysics of ancient Hinduism like B.G. Tilak. He did make no difference between nationalism and religion. He observed: "Nationalism is not a mere political programme; nationalism is a religion that has come from God. Nationalism is a creed which you shall have to live ... If you are going to be a Nationalist, if you are going to assent to this religion of Nationalism, you must do it in the religious spirit. You must remember that you are the instruments of God." This inter-related nationalism with spirit of religion. He further argued that such nationalism ought to be connected with Hindu religion in Indian context. He said, "I say no longer that nationalism
is a creed, a religion, a faith. I say that it is the Sanathana Dharma which for us is nationalism. This Hindu nation was born with the Sanathana Dharma, with it, it moves with it, it grows. When the Sanathana Dharma declines, then the Nation declines and if the Sanathana Dharma is capable of perishing with the Sanathana Dharma it would perish.\textsuperscript{43}

**POLITICAL V/s SOCIAL REFORMS:**

Obviously the newly emerging extremist nationalism built upon Hindu revivalism was a challenge to liberal politicians on the one hand and the social reformers on the other. Tilak conceived that 'political work must not only precede social reform, the latter must be held in abeyance until political progress reached the point of national independence.'\textsuperscript{44} He conceived political freedom as a panacea for all our evils. He said, "without first setting the question of political power we can secure neither social reform nor material welfare of the people. Further he said, 'without the power to shape our own destiny, our national regeneration, in a large sense, cannot, in my opinion, be effected and I have throughout my career tried to preach and I emphasize this view.'\textsuperscript{46} Tilak was convinced that 'political struggle was primary,
that social reforms were futile so long as power remained in the hands of the colonial rulers.\textsuperscript{47}

\textbf{TILAK'S OPPOSITION TO SOCIAL REFORM:}

In fact Tilak was opposed to social reforms based on Western ideals.\textsuperscript{48} This, he feared, would destroy our classical values. He also thought that the tradition bound Indian people would not accept such reforms. However, it is true that he too favoured reforms. What he opposed was the idea of total and immediate reforms.\textsuperscript{49} He said social reforms should not destroy civilization.\textsuperscript{50} He favoured gradual and peaceful change in society and opposed blind social limitation of the West.\textsuperscript{51} He conceived social reforms through gradual education of the people.\textsuperscript{52}

However, in this atmosphere the social reform movement had to suffer. Tilak's argument appeared brilliant but its net result was set-back to social reforms. He urged the Indians to concentrate all their energies against the alien rulers but in enthusiasm he opposed even the rational ideals of the West. There is no doubt that Tilak's speeches created unprecedented heat in the atmosphere whereby he could use even the orthodox for his political cause.\textsuperscript{53} Themselves, they were all reformers, (Tilak, Pal, Lajpatrai) but the way they denounced reform work, dealt a severe blow to the reform activity.
GANDHIJI'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEM:

Emergence of Mahatma Gandhi on the horizon of Indian National Movement in 1920 indeed heralded a new era. He openly rejected the legacy of the political thinking and action of his immediate predecessors, the extremist triumvirate popularly known as Lal-Bal-Pal and claimed to be the disciple of G.K. Gokhale. But in fact, in his way of thinking and action he followed neither in the footsteps of liberals nor in those of the extremists. He evolved his own outlook and style of behaviour which resembled and yet negated both. In the matter of abiding by the self-imposed morals and ethical principles he not only resembled but excelled Gokhale and all the liberals, but on the question of following constitutional methods versus politics of agitation and mass movement, he was not only closer but surpassed the extremists.

Liberals were strictly secular with respect to political thinking and movement whereas the extremists had little respect for the principle of secularism and in the zeal of popularising the national movement had gone to the extent of equating nationalism with religion and even beyond that did not hesitate to infuse spirit of revivalism into it. In contrast, it is difficult to categorize Mahatma Gandhi's thought as either. There is no doubt that he was
a religious minded man to the core and believed that there is Divine Plan in the way things and events unfold themselves to us. He longed to see a perfect unity between religion and politics and reiterated that 'politics bereft of religion is a death trap' \textsuperscript{54} That is why G.N. Sarma and Moin Shakir have stated, 'From the point of view of political strategy and realism Gandhi may be considered to have followed the example of Tilak but he was essentially the followers of Gokhale in his concern of truth and ethical standards in all spheres of life.' \textsuperscript{55} However, it can be said that he followed none. It is because he conceived the basic concepts and ideals differently. \textsuperscript{56}

When he spoke of unity between religion and politics Gandhiji conceived religion differently. It was not this or that particular denominational religion that he would like to inform and guide all political thinking and activities of men. It was above all these existing particular denominational religions the religion of all the religions. It was the essence of all the religions. His religion was the bunch of high moral and ethical principles upheld by all the religions. In the name of religion Gandhiji insisted on the unity of these ethical principles with all mundane political activity of the day. In this way he endeavoured to spiritualize politics. In fact his attempt was to see
that truth and cleanliness permeates men's way of thinking and behaviour. And to much extent, at least in his own times, he succeeded in it. As he believed more in precept than preaching his own personal life personified all the noble virtues cherished by mankind from times immemorial.

Though he believed in essential goodness of all religions personally he believed in end loved Hindu religion more than others. However, in the matters of faith he was absolutely non-insistant. He would say, if Hindu religion is good, so are others.

This unique strategy evolved by Mahatma Gandhi could easily consume all the seemingly unresolvable dichotomies and controversies of the preceding generation, like social versus political, secular versus religion permeated politics. Gandhiji insisted that both social reform and political movement can go hand in hand, nay he said they must. They are just like the two sides of the same coins. He would say that politics permeated by religion does not essentially mean communalism. It can be and should be thoroughly secular.

Gandhiji had unwavering faith in Hindu religion and a great respect for its scriptures. This has impose Hindu idiom on his language and discourse. But he conceived it
differently. He was liberal in interpreting Hindu religion and could, therefore, launch a life long crusade against the custom of untouchability. He was unusually hard on the high caste Hindu and reprimanded them unequivocally for nurturing false notions like untouchability. It was he who imposed upon unwilling congress men the task of their upliftment.

However, his views regarding Varna Vevastha, caste system and untouchability have evolved over a long period during national movement. From the time he returned from South Africa he had started expressing frankly his views on these institution. As stated earlier he had faith in Hindu religion and respected its scriptures. He called himself a Sanatani Hindu who believed in the Vedas, Upanishadas, Puranas, Avatars, rebirth, Varnashram Dharma, divinity of cows and disbelief in idol worship.\(^{57}\) He believed that Varnashrama is inherent in human nature.\(^{58}\) He regarded caste as a great power and secret of Hinduism. He believed that caste has not done any harm to the country,\(^{59}\) and was convinced that it is essential to improve the condition of untouchables. He also believed that our society could survive numerous difficulties over the period because of the discipline imposed on it by caste and Varna-Vevastha.\(^{60}\) He opposed the movement aimed
at the destruction of caste. He thought it advisable 'to improve rather than uproot it.' He was of the opinion that the caste system has promoted national well-being and said that the belief that inter-dining or inter-marriage and necessary for the growth of nationalism is essentially a "superstition borrowed from the West." So also he said it is erroneous to regard caste as responsible for our slavery. The truth is that it is the loss of virtues which should be regarded as the real culprit. He believed that caste has fact saved Hinduism from destruction.

However, later on he came to believe that the present state of caste system is not natural and that many unwanted abnormalities have developed there in over the ages. He felt that the innumerable castes and sub-castes are more a hindrance to development than asset and that some kind of 'fusion' of these castes and sub-castes is desirable. He justified this 'fusion' on the grounds that such 'fusion' is simply the part of the process and that there is nothing new about it.

But it should also be clear here that by 'fusion' Gandhi never meant total abolition of caste distinctions. Perhaps his idea of fusion meant abolishing sub-caste
distinctions but not the caste itself. This, he felt, could be achieved through pressure of public opinion and that no such programme that would antagonise the Hindu mind was necessary. He also argued that the principle of inequality is not inalienably associated with the caste system and wherever such notions are developed they should be checked and discouraged.65

Mahatma Gandhi regarded that it is not necessary to destroy the caste system for the promotion of democracy. The basic tenet of his thinking was that the change in the promotion of democracy not the abolition of caste. He observed: "If caste is a bar to the spread of that spirit (democracy), the existence of five religions in India-Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, and Judaism - is equally a bar. The spirit of democracy requires the inculcation of the spirit of brotherhood ... Hinduism that is responsible for the inculcation of the essential brotherhood not merely of man but even of all that lives."66

Gandhiji did not find any spirit of arrogant superiority behind the caste. To him it was simply "classification of different systems of self-culture, the best possible adjustment of social stability." He compared it with a "family", just as the spirit of the family is inclusive of those who love each other and are wedded to each other.
by ties of blood and relation, caste also tries to include families of a particular way of purity of life." However, he said some hierarchy is inevitable.

Like the caste system Gandhiji defended Varnashrama Dharma. His concept of Varnashrama Dharma was based on occupation, having given equal status to each section or group as mentioned in the laws of Hindu scriptures. He observed: "The divisions define duties, they confer no privileges. It is, I hold, against the genius of Hinduism to arrogate to oneself a higher status or assign to another a lower. All are born to serve God's creation, a Brahmin with his knowledge, a Kshatriya with his power of protection, a Vaishya with his commercial ability and a Shudra with bodily labour."

In the earlier phase, Gandhi confused Varna Vevastha with caste and used the two terms almost inter-changeably. He defended both. Either in caste or Varna what he insisted upon was sticking up to one's own hereditary occupation. He wrote, "The correct thing would be that the son of a carpenter should be a carpenter and not a blacksmith. It was because he believed that man inherits from his fore-fathers qualities required for a particular profession. He observed: "I believe that just as every one
a particular form so does he inherits the peculiar characteristics and qualities of his progenitors, and to make this admission is to conserve one's energy." 72

Gandhi opposed inter-changeability of occupations of the Varnas as he thought it would lead to worst competition. According to him, in Varnashrama Dharma, the bar was not against mental development but it was against practicing others professions for material gain. 73 He regarded it as "Hinduism's greatest gift to mankind" and told that, "with observance of this Dharma, the entire community will be saved and it will become invincible." 74

In the late 20s he started distinguishing between Varna Vevastha and caste system. He then called caste as a "travesty of the original four-fold division." 75 Soon thereafter he argued that "Varna has nothing to do with caste. Down with the caste ... that has degraded Hinduism and India."

Even as he started distinguishing between caste and Varna, he retained his respect for Varna Vevastha. This distinction was used by him to concentrate fire on caste system and to absolve Varna Vevastha of all the blame. 76 Ultimately, without touching Varnashrama Dharma, Gandhiji thus arrived at the conclusion of abolishing caste distinct-
ions. However, in the matter of social reform or the abolition of caste system he regarded precept as better and more effective a way than preaching. Reformers must practice, rather than talk of abolition of caste and patiently bear the consequences.

On the question of Varna Vevastha as well Gandhiji’s views had come of a change. In 1932 he said, 'I do not believe in the four Varnas. There should not be any restrictions regarding inter-marriages and inter-dining. There is nothing in the Shastras that says that different Varnas cannot inter-marry.' However, compelling an individual either to inter-marry or to inter-dine did not fit in well with Gandhiji’s way of thinking. He would rather like to leave such matters to free choice of individuals. He said martial or dining restrictions have never been a distinguishing feature Varna Vevastha. In 1946 he boldly declared, 'If I had my way I could persuade all caste Hindu girls coming under my influence to select Harijan husbands.'

Mahatma Gandhi had criticised untouchability as excre scene on Hinduism, a poison, a snake, a cancer, a hydra-headed monster, a great blot, a divice of Satan, a hineous un-truth etc. There is also no doubt that he
wanted to remove this social evil. But he wanted to accomplish this within the Hindu framework, without hurting the basic Hindu social frame.

Gandhiji's objective was to unify different sections of Hindu community as well as other communities together in the cause of national movement. He wanted all these different sections and communities to join hands in the national movement without exception. Thus he appealed one and all to join national movement. The Harijans should make no exception. He was criticised as attempting national unity by patching-up and not irradiating social differences.

Gandhiji was fighting the British Empire with moral force, and he was convinced that unless we concede equal rights and human dignity to the untouchables on the same moral grounds, our argument with the British will carry no weight. He said, 'the slave owner is more heart than the slave.' We shall be unfit to gain swaraj so long as we will keep in bondage a fifth of the population of Hindusthan'. He further wrote, "A Hindu lover of Swaraj will as assiduously work for the amelioration of the lot of the 'depressed' classes .... treat them the rights that we claim for ourselves."

Opponents of Gandhiji argued that as long as they were slaves (under empire), they were powerless to remove untouch-
ability. To them Gandhiji replied, 'If we were powerless today, shall we be less powerless under Swaraj?' Gandhiji viewed Swaraj and removal of untouchability as simply inalienable questions. He observed, "For me ... there is no swaraj ... without the removal of untouchability. But without Swaraj there will be neither communal unity nor removal of untouchability."

Gandhiji thus conceived Hindu-Muslim unity, removal of untouchability and wearing 'Khadi' as conditions of Swaraj. He reiterated, "There is no Swaraj without the removal of untouchability." Thus it is beyond doubt that Gandhiji had taken the problem of untouchability as an integral part of his political strategy.

He made touching appeals to caste Hindus to shed their arrogance and to accept the Harijans as equals. He said "Varnashrama is not a religion of superiority and inferiority. No son of God can consider another as inferior to himself. He must consider every man as his brother. It is the cardinal principle of every religion." At times he became very sentimental on this issue. He observed, "I do want to attain Moksha. I do not want to be reborn. But if I have to be born, I should be born as an untouchable so that I may share their sorrows and suffer-
ings and affronts levelled at them, in order that I may endeavour to free myself and then from that miserable condition. I, therefore, pray that if I should be born again, I should do so not as a Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya or a Shudra but as an Ati-Shudra." 92 Again he wrote, "I have failed to find a single warrant for the existence of untouchability .... in all those books which we call Hindu Shastras. But .... if I find that 'Hinduism really countenanced untouchability I should have no hesitation in renouncing Hinduism itself." 93

He was convinced that Harijans were at the lowest rung of the ladder not because of some inherent defects but simply because they have been kept down by the so called higher castes. 94 Also he was convinced that given full opportunity the Harijans also can equal others in different fields. 95

**GANDHIJI'S APPROACH TO THE SOCIAL PROBLEM:**

Like his understanding, Gandhi's approach to the problem also was peculiar. He disapproved legal enactment as a way to solve the social problem and believed in appealing to the conscience of the caste Hindus. 96 He also could not accept the use of force for this purpose. 97 He had not an iota of doubt in his mind that (untouchability) can be removed only by rousing conscience of touchables against it and was fully convinced that this can be achieved by 'Satya-
graaha. The Satyagraha for this purpose was to be undertaken by the touchables at the proper time but never by the untouchables.\textsuperscript{98}

Gandhi believed more in the theory of the change of heart rather than the economic and educational advancement of the untouchables as a means for the removal of untouchability.\textsuperscript{99} He felt that even to accelerate educational and economic advancement temple entry was the best starting point.\textsuperscript{100} Thus for the removal of untouchability, he discarded the ways that are generally suggested like legal enactment, use of force or undertaking of Satyagraha by the untouchables. It was the responsibility of the touchable to remove it, to undertake Satyagrahas to convert the hearts of those who would not accept to do so. The untouchables were to wait patiently until the hearts of the touchables were changed.\textsuperscript{101}

Gandhi also did not accept inter-dining and inter-marrying to be effective means of removing untouchability. He regarded it to be the matter of mind and heart.\textsuperscript{102} And wherever there is a question of mind and heart these methods are neither essential nor effective. After all dining and marrying are the matters of personal concern.\textsuperscript{103} In his personal life he did not observe restrictions of
dining of marriage, but may be as a matter of strategy he did not propagate it.

In the last phase of his life Gandhiji's views and approach to the question had radically changed. He admitted that earlier he did not regard inter-dinning and inter-marriage as essential for the removal of untouchability, but later he regarded it a must. He said, 'I tell all the boys and the girls who want to marry that they cannot be married at Sevagram Ashram unless one of the parties is a Harijan.'

His ideal of post-independence socially that he visualized in his last phase is indeed worth noting. When untouchability is rooted out, these distinctions will vanish and no one will consider himself superior to any other. Naturally exploitation too will cease ... no untouchability ... no scheduled classes .... no caste divisions whatsoever in the eyes of the law ... Hindus are all one, no high, no low. All the neglected classes such as the Scheduled Classes or the so called aboriginal classes should receive special treatment in the matter of education, housing etc.'

Mahatma Gandhi's role was two-fold, one of a politician and the other of a social reformer, a Mahatma. As a leader of INC he obviously attached more importance to
his political role.\textsuperscript{107} His role as a social reformer naturally appeared secondary. For the attainment of political goal it was necessary to take different sections of Indian people in confidence. He, therefore, could not afford to injure religious sentiments of any section. This caution was invariably reflected in his stand on social questions like those of abolition of caste or untouchability.\textsuperscript{108} His identification with Hindu social order was a source of strength for him.\textsuperscript{109} That is how he could endear himself to the religious minded masses.\textsuperscript{110} Explaining his success John V. Bondurant remarks, "He reinterpreted tradition in such a way that revolutionary ideas clothed in familiar expression, were readily adopted and employed towards revolutionary ends."\textsuperscript{111}

Gandhiji attained miraculous success on political side but on social side he encountered failure. It reflects not so much the weakness of his intentions but definitely the weakness inherent in the theory of change of heart. Dr. J.R. Shinde writes that Gandhiji's theory of change of heart had one inherent weakness. One cannot be converted into a moral being against his own interest. Commenting on Gandhiji's world view Nalini Pandit wrote that he never felt need to scientifically examine his own theories.\textsuperscript{113} N. Subrahmanyan wrote, "He failed because he
misunderstood human nature; he was utopian in the sense that he believed in the existence of that virtue in human beings which would make utopic possible.**114**

All said and done, with all inherent weakness of his approach, it goes to the credit of Mahatma that he alone had the vision and courage to see clearly the nexus between social and political problem of the country and had an invincible courage to state boldly to the people charmed by the conservative preachings of the extremists that unless they do justice to the Harijans, their claim to justice vis-a-vis the British imperialists will carry no moral force and their dream of Swaraj will not be realized.

**DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR:**

Even as Mahatma Gandhi's saintly world view, his perception of India's socio-political problem combined with his unique style of behaviour had started influencing the Indian masses, another epoch making figure, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar emerged on the scene. Highly educated as he was, in his manners, style, taste, outlook and way of thinking he was thoroughly westernised.

In the company of Western scholars and their ideas he was deeply imbued with the modern western liberal
values, ideas and institutions. He had developed a kind of obsession for the western liberal outlook of life.

Back-home in India he had to face humiliating treatment at the hands of the high-caste Hindus, simply because he was a Mahar by caste. He could not tolerate this. He could clearly realize the miseries of millions of his poor, illiterate low caste brothers. These degrading incidents compelled him to take up the cause of social reforms. He decided to fight for regaining their lost rights.

Under the influence of liberal ideas, in his earlier phase, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar too believed like the liberal social reformers, in the possibility of converting high caste Hindu mind. He believed that by rational argument and by pointing out the follies in their faith and social custom the high caste Hindu mind could be converted in favour of social reforms in general. Reasoning behind this was simple. Hindus are victims of wrong faith and as a result they have become slaves of irrational social custom. One of these irrational social customs is Untouchability. In order to eradicate this as well as other pernicious social notions of Hindus, it is necessary to emancipate their minds from the shackles of wrong faith and irrational beliefs. By reasoned discourse and rational argument their ignorance can be wiped out where by they willingly throw out the bondage.
This reasoning lead him to make a most rational critique of Hindu religion and social custom. It also inspired him to undertake temple entry Satyagrahas. He believed that once the doors of the temple are opened for the untouchable castes, entire force in the logic of Varnashram Dharma and caste system will be lost. But these attempts met with stiff resistance on the part of the caste Hindus particularly the priests. These attempts failed. They could not make any perceptible impact on the caste Hindu minds.

Dr. Ambedkar thus realised that Hindus are not prepared to listen to any rational argument against their beliefs and social custom. Even Satyagrahas failed to rouse any wave of sympathy in the Hindu mind.

Thereafter he stopped to work for Hindu social reforms and looked for other ways and means for the emancipation of the untouchables. By now he had come to the conclusion that emancipation of the untouchables cannot be achieved by attempting to change high caste Hindu minds, and that it could be achieved by political means only. Hereafter, he started organising the untouchables themselves as a separate political pressure group independent of the ongoing national movement led by Mahatma Gandhi. He organized the untouchables as a separate pressure group with a
view to demand to the British rulers statutory guarantees of equal rights for the untouchables. This threw Dr. Ambedkar and his men in face to face opposition with the caste Hindu national leaders, particularly, Mahatma Gandhi.

Even earlier his radical views on Hindu social reform did not tally with those of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji obviously was cautious on the point of social reform and hesitated to take any stand that would antagonise or alienate any section of Hindu community. This would mar the national unity. It was perhaps because of this reason that like a shrewed politician he had decided to work within the framework of Hindu socio-religious milieu. Dr. Ambedkar could have no such hesitation as his was not the two-fold role of a politician-cum-social reformer. His goal was clearly social emancipation and none other. He, therefore, had no reason to be cautious not to alienate any section or community. He could freely apply his rational mind to the question of social malady and suggest remedies thereto. These straightforward rational views clashed with Gandhiji’s views coated in religious idiom finding cautious expression.

It is worthwhile to note Dr. Ambedkar’s analysis of Hindu social custom based on religious faith.
VARNA-VEVASTHA:

Dr. Ambedkar regarded the Varna-Vevastha to be the most cardinal feature of Hinduism. It divided the society in unchangeable four classes which are linked together in order of graded inequality, the Brahmins being at the top and Kshatriya, Vaisha, Sudra below them in order of preference. The occupation of these four classes are also fixed, according to which the Brahmins are to practice learning and teaching, the Kshatriya to fight, the Vaishyas to trade and the Shudras to serve as menials. "This is called by the Hindus, the Varna Vevastha. It is the very soul of Hinduism." 116

Dr. Ambedkar argued that this graded ordering of society was artificial, and therefore had to face the problem of transgration perpetually. It was felt that unless some penalty is attached to the act of transgration men will not keep within their respective limits and the whole system will collapse. They knew it fully well that being contrary to the human nature the chaturvarnya could not survive on the strength its own goodness. 117 It was therefore made 'legal and penal.' 118

Dr. Ambedkar further said that the Shudras constituted an integral part of original Indo-Aryan society having three-folds. However, with the passage of time they were
According to Dr. Ambedkar the Indian population consisted of Aryans, Dravidian, Mangolians and Scythians who had come from different directions centuries ago. During their long stay they had open intercourse with each other. The rule of exogamy is followed even today by the Indians. This explains the cultural homogeniety despite ethnic heterogeneity among the Indian people. According to Dr. Ambedkar it is this cultural homogeneity among the Indians that makes caste a phenomenon difficult to explain.

Caste is a group of people separated from other by the custom of indogamy. Thus Dr. Ambedkar came out with a theoretical explanation that it is the artificial imposition of the rule of indogamy at some later time that has lead to the creation of caste system. He said, 'indogamy is the only peculiar characteristic of caste system' and he regarded this unnatural custom to be the root cause of the origin of caste system.

Dr. Ambedkar firmly believed that social institutions cannot be the volitional creation of one person of group. They grow over time. Thus he was convinced that it was not and could not be Manu who gave the law of caste. Caste existed long before Manu. He simply upheld, philosophised and codified the established laws of the caste system.
Dr. Ambedkar also gives an explanation about how indogamy could be imposed. He said that some of the groups closed their doors against others and the others in imitation closed their doors too.\textsuperscript{128} It was Brahmins who first closed their doors against others. There is a general tendency among men to imitate those who are regarded as higher to them. Brahmins constituted highest section so other below them imitated and closed their doors against other. The infection of imitation caught all the sub-divisions subsequently 'in their onward march of differentiation' and they were turned into castes.\textsuperscript{129}

For the innumerable divisions of castes and subcastes also Dr. Ambedkar attempted an explanation. According to him the caste rules were inexorable and did not make nice distinctions between kinds of offences. Innovation may be of any kind but they had to suffer the same penalty. 'Castes have no mercy for a sinner who has the courage to violate the code. The penalty is excommunication and result is a new caste.'\textsuperscript{130} The excommunicated are compelled to form their separate caste.\textsuperscript{131}

Thus according to Dr. Ambedkar there was no caste to start with. The classes have become castes through imitation of indogamy and excommunication.\textsuperscript{132}
UNTUCHABILITY:

According to Dr. Ambedkar long back when Indian society was transforming from nomadic tribal stage to settled one it was torn by dissention and feuds between the tribesmen and the settled community. Even at times the nomadic tribes had quarrels among themselves. Some times the defeated tribes were routed. The defeated tribes broke into groups and wandered in search of good and shelter. As a consequence of this there always existed in primitive times a floating population consisting of broken tribesmen roaming in all directions.¹³³

The primitive society was fundamentally tribal in its organization, which means that an individual must belong to some tribe, he cannot leave outside. Again a tribal organization has a kinship bond. Those who do not have kinship or blood relation with the tribe are not allowed into it. In the primitive times when society was torn by perpetual fights, the broken tribesmen needed shelter to avoid fear of being attacked and annihilated. Shelter and protection was the problem of the broken men.¹³⁴

At the same time the settled tribes needed men who would protect their lives and property from outside attack and plunder which was not uncommon. Thus the two groups, settled and the broken men exactly complimented each others
needs. The broken men agreed to do the job of watch and ward for the settled men and in return the settled men agreed to give them food and shelter.\textsuperscript{135}

According to Ambedkar the broken men who agreed to do the work of watch and ward for the settled community was asked to stay outside the village probably for two reasons. Firstly, the broken men had no blood relations with the settled community, and secondly living outside villages facilitated their job of watch and ward against outside attack.\textsuperscript{136}

\textbf{ON THE ORIGIN OF UNTOUCHABILITY :}

Dr. Ambedkar examined two theories proposed earlier by sociological scholars namely 'Racial distinction theory of the origin of untouchability,\textsuperscript{136} and the occupational theory of untouchability\textsuperscript{137} and discarded both as untenable. He then advanced another theory namely 'contempt of the Buddhist as the root of untouchability.' He cited the Census Report of 1910 that classified untouchables into a category separate from Hindus in support of this theory.

According to this Report the untouchables are separated from Hindus on the grounds, inter alia, that they reject the cardinal beliefs of Hinduism, such as supremacy of Brahmins, authority of Vedas, Brahmin priests
and because they are denied access to the inferior of Hindu temples, also because they eat beef and bury their deads.\textsuperscript{138}

Before these broken-men were called untouchables the two (settled community and the Broken-men) regarded each other as impure. Brahmins preached hatred and contempt of the Broken-men and hence gradually they came to be regarded untouchables.

Dr. Ambedkar agreed that there was no concrete evidence to show that the Broken-men were Buddhist. But he said that under the sway of Buddhism majority of Hindus had accepted it and when the settled communities returned back to Hinduism, the Broken-men did not.\textsuperscript{140} It is obvious that they had contempt against each other and the majority Hindus under the influence of Brahmins started regarding them as untouchables.\textsuperscript{141}

Buddhists were against animal sacrifice, but the Buddhist Bhikkus did eat meat.\textsuperscript{142} The Hindus under Buddhist influence left meat eating.\textsuperscript{143} Even the Hindu Kings enacted laws against cow killing at the instance of Brahmins advice.\textsuperscript{144} Hindus started cow worship. Still the Buddhists continued meat eating. This exacerbated Hindu contempt and hatred, against the Buddhist which finally
culminated in treating them as untouchables.\textsuperscript{145}

Dr. Ambedkar had come to following conclusion regarding the origin of untouchability:

1) There is no racial distinction between Hindu and the untouchables.
2) Untouchables are the broken tribesmen belonging to more or less the same stock as Hindus.
3) Untouchability was not in existence in the Vedic period.
4) Root of untouchability lies in the Hindu contempt against Buddhist.
5) Meat-eating was one of the causes that accelerated the process of alienation that finally led to untouchability.

\textbf{STRATEGIES:}

Clearly with this perception of the problem, Dr. Ambedkar's approach to the solution of the problem was bound to be different from that of Mahatma Gandhi. Even in the earlier period, when he believed in the possibility of changing the hearts of the caste Hindus in favour of the abolition of both the caste system and untouchability, his techniques did not accord with those of Mahatma Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi's desire was to effect the changes within the Hindu frame-work without hurting Hindu faith. He would justify
his reforms on the basis of Scriptures. Again, though he was in favour of opening temples for Harijans, he did not favour the idea of their undertaking Satyagraha for this. Rather he would advise them to wait patiently until the Hindus are converted favourably. In order to create sympathy in the minds of the Hindus he advised them (Harijans) to join the national movement. Thus self-abnegation and suffering was, Gandhiji’s method. Dr. Ambedkar on the contrary believed in fighting for regaining the lost rights. As a mild way he would suggest the untouchables to undertake temple entry Satyagraha themselves. He organised such Satyagrahas of the untouchable castes.

Earlier he had suggested radical reforms in the Hindu religion and social custom. These reforms were not based on Hindu sacred texts but on purely rational thinking. He desired equality and justice to inform social structure. It was after encountering failures in both these attempts that Ambedkar thought of using other techniques.

Dr. Ambedkar was no less a nationalist than his caste Hindu national leaders. Still he felt the need of social reforms more urgently. He asked the caste Hindu leaders struggling for Swaraj ‘what right they have to demand Swaraj to the British in the name
human rights and development when they were denying the same rights to the sixty million untouchables.\textsuperscript{147}

As a nationalist he was prepared to support the demand of Swaraj on the condition that the rights and interests of the untouchables must be guaranteed.\textsuperscript{148} He was of the opinion that the mission he had undertaken i.e. emancipation of untouchables was a very difficult task and more important than that of Swaraj.\textsuperscript{149}

On the social matters Dr. Ambedkar was not prepared to believe the caste Hindus' efforts. Unless the movement stands on its own footing, he felt, it had no future. Therefore, he organised a separate and independent movement of the untouchables. This was different from the strategy of Gandhiji and earlier social reformers, who tried to convince the caste Hindus to work for the amelioration of the condition of untouchables. They believed that the spread of education will prepare the Hindus to behave in a rational manner and that constant preaching against the custom of untouchability will lead to moral transformation and rousing of conscience. Dr. Ambedkar regarded such argument as deceptive propaganda. He had come to believe that 'Hindus have a vested interest in untouchability' and said that where it is a matter of vested interest, precepts and moral
preachings invariably fail. He was convinced that the lost rights cannot be achieved without struggle and the battle should be fought by those classes only who have lost their rights.

In view of social economic and educational backwardness of the untouchables it was indeed a Herculean task to make them aware of their slavery and to arouse them to revolt against it. Dr. Ambedkar knew it. So besides the satyagrahas that he organised to create an awareness among them of their slavery, he also stressed disseminating formal learnings and education among them. He urged them to take full benefit of the opportunities created by the British raj and get more and more education. To speed up, the process he established 'Depressed Classes Education Society' in June 1928. He was convinced that the dissemination of education among the untouchables would create the awareness regarding their slavery and facilitate organising them to fight for the lost rights.

Thus until 1930, he worked on different alternative techniques to make a dent in the steel frame of rigidly stratified Hindu social order and to create an awareness among the untouchables. The first was to appeal to the caste Hindus with rational arguments to accept untouchables on equal footing. But he soon realised that rational argument has no place in Hindu social structure. Then he took
to organising satyagrahas by the untouchables for temple entry with a hope that this would lead to the arousing of sympathy in the minds of the caste Hindus' towards untouchables. However, it created an awareness among them regarding their slavery and facilitated the task of organising them. The third technique that Dr. Ambedkar worked upon simultaneously was that of disseminating formal education among them and here, to much extent he succeeded. He could create among them a desire to acquire education and to rise above. Hundreds and thousands of untouchable boys and girls joined schools and colleges to get formal education as much as possible.

Later he decided to use politics as a means for the redemption of the untouchables. It was the time when nationalist leaders were anxiously endeavouring to attain freedom from the British. The British rulers on the otherhand were looking for effective ways and means to counter manœuvre the nationalist attempts. Strategy of divide and rule was adopted by them to perpetuate their rule. They treated a dent between the Hindus and the Muslims. Dr. Ambedkar thought it to be the opportune time to bargain equal human rights for the untouchables. He insisted on political safeguards as the condition for the untouchables participation in the National Movements. Unlike Gandhiji he
was not prepared to believe that the representative political bodies after independence would undo the social and economic injustice and instead insisted on statutory guarantees. Dr. Ambedkar crossed swords with Gandhiji on many occasions thereafter.

Dr. Ambedkar was fully convinced that Hindu minds cannot be converted to abandon the custom of untouchability. He had realized that they would never accept them on equal footing. They had vested interests in continuing the pernicious custom. If Hindus do not abandon the custom the untouchables should abandon the Hindu religion to get out of the curse. Thus he started thinking on the lines of conversion to some other religion. But getting out of one obscurantism based on religious superstition Dr. Ambedkar would not like to get hooked to another. This explains his choice of Buddhism.

All religions are based on faith in supernatural invariably leads to superstitions. It is difficult to point at one religion that is absolutely free of irrational myths and superstitions. Now the question remains why a man, a rational thinking man like Dr. Ambedkar think of embracing some religion after giving up one. Dr. Ambedkar himself has tried to clarify his position on this question. He said, "Religion is a must for poor and the oppressed. He lives on hope that religion provides." He told the
untouchables, "If you want to organise yourself, change your religion. If you want to gain self-respect, change your religion. If you want to create a society which ensures co-operation and brotherhood, change your religion. If you want equality change your religion. If you want to make the world in which you live happy, change the religion." Thus it appears that it was a panacea for all social evils.

Dr. Ambedkar intended to raise the mental and moral height of his community. He has studiously decided to embrace Buddhism and no other religion. To Ambedkar Buddhism was a Dhamma and not a religion, as there was no belief in God, or soul, no worship of God by prayers, no ceremonies, no sacrifices, etc. He was convinced that the contents of Buddhism were 'rational and scientific.' There is no Chaturvanya and it is based on equality and pure logic. His ultimate aim was to convert all Hindus to Buddhism and believed in its possibility.

Untouchables also are divided into several castes and sub-castes Dr. Ambedkar believed they this tendency of stratification has purcolated from above, i.e., from the Hindu caste system. By coming out of Hindu religion, he believed, the untouchables would be free to shun this tendency and would willingly merge their castes and sub-castes. He advised them to merge their castes and unite.
But, herein we find, Dr. Ambedkar's dream did not come true. Only people belonging to his caste embraced Buddhism along with him. Other sub-castes among the untouchables did not follow them. Caste distinctions among the untouchables still persist, not to speak of caste Hindus.

Another controversial point in his strategy of eradicating untouchability was his advise to move to the urban areas or to new villages where cultivable land was available. His argument in this regard was that villages in India are the den of ignorance and superstition. The villages cling fast to the customs and the traditional way of life. They are prone to perpetuate the custom of both caste and untouchability. So the untouchables must migrate to the cities or inhabit new villages consisting exclusively of themselves.\(^{164}\)

Right or wrong, his stand on various questions created a stir. Obviously they did not fit well in Mahatma Gandhiji's style of function. The two clashed against each other on different occasions. His views and moves embittered quite a few of the caste Hindus. None the less if forced Mahatma Gandhi and the I.N.C. to change their views on the question of untouchability and the strategies to be adopted for its eradication.
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Compare -

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100. Ibid, p. 275.
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