

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

The main contention of the thesis is to outline **historical, philosophical and economic impacts** of Indian caste system. We have developed these issues in various sequels. In the concluding chapter our intention is to revisit the proposal that we have preconceived at the very outset of this project. We do believe that caste system as a whole is a misnomer in every real sense of the term. It is a social curse, a social disease and it is purely psychological in nature. It is a form or a means of exploitation, a conscious effort comes from within. Ambedkar was a religious man. There is no question of doubt regarding religious inclination of Ambedkar. He elsewhere confessed that men cannot survive without religion. However, he was against the coercion of religion that he found in Hinduism. According to Ambedkar, true religion must ensure the trio concepts of justice, such as, *liberty, equality and fraternity*. A religion that would rob or deprive justice would not be *a true religion*. He found religious inequality and injustice in Hinduism. This actually distorted Ambedkar about his lawfulness towards Hindu religion.

We think that Hinduism is a series of jungle and it would be difficult to know who is a real Hindu. Within various religions, Hinduism is the most unorganised religion. Religious rules and sanctions available in Hinduism are all *fictitious in nature*. As a social reformer, Ambedkar's understanding of religion would be reformatory in nature. He called for a religion which gives equal shelter to everybody. Religion is a bond, a massive gathering where harmony and trust on one another is bestowed. According to Ambedkar, varna system of Hinduism actually gives birth all sorts of problems in Hinduism. The four fold divisions of caste should be maintained on the basis of quality (guna) and action (karma) and nothing else. Thus, for Ambedkar, the four-fold

divisions of caste should not be comprehended with regard to birth. Ambedkar felt that all sorts of religious sanctions in Hinduism are ridiculous in the sense that they are stringent and rigid and as a result, they cannot be modified with regard to the context or situation. As the concept of untouchability is purely psychological in nature, law cannot resist it. It is a social curse. It robs humanism, basic human rights of the Shudras. It rested on God, the invisible divinity. Ambedkar was in favour of philosophy of religion. His philosophy of religion encompasses the various ideas. For Ambedkar religion is necessary for man and society to manage the secular and moral affairs of mankind. In this regard, all religions are equally true. To maintain that God is an essential element of a religion is a mistaken faith. The most integral part of religion is the morality it professes for the welfare of mankind. The centre of religion is man, the base is morality, the aim is the secular welfare of mankind, and the means is the righteous conduct embedded in social responsibility that all human beings owe towards their fellow beings living in human society. In short, it can be said that a proper religion would be one where test of justice and utility must be applied to judge the relevance of a religion, and that would consist in the trinity ideal of liberty, equality and fraternity.

Ambedkar did not find any of these in Hindu religion. There is no liberty in Hinduism because hierarchism in terms of caste is the hallmark of Hinduism. The caste Hindus or the so-called Brahmins fixed the norms to the Shudras and untouchables. Any violation of norms fixed by the Brahmins was severely punishable. Where there is no liberty, there is no equality. Therefore, there is no equality in Hindu religion. Finally, where there is liberty and equality, there is no fraternity. Therefore, there is no fraternity in Hindu religion. And where there is no liberty, equality and fraternity, there is no justice. Thus, there is no justice in Hindu religion. There is only anarchism in Hindu religion. For Ambedkar, religion is a social force. Accordingly, to

ignore religion is to ignore live wire. As far as Hinduism is concerned, his whole discussion is a diatribe against its denial of the concepts of individual dignity and justice. Quoting extensively from the *Manusmriti*, Ambedkar showed that social and religious inequality were deep rooted in Hinduism. Manu did not stop at non-recognition of individual human worth; rather he advocated a debasement of it. This was clear from Manu's explanation of the origin of various castes and his condemnation of even the innocent practice of a low-caste child being given high-sounding names. Hinduism did not recognise human liberty. There could be no liberty without social and economic security. We taught it from history. Hinduism even did not recognise fraternity because fraternity could only be born of fellow-feeling and Hinduism with its unending process of splitting social life into smaller and smaller community-based fragments.

Instead of casteless society, Hinduism emphasizes more on a secular as well as religious hierarchy, completely discouraged the emergence of fellow feeling. Hinduism thus was inimical to equality, antagonistic to liberty and opposed to fraternity. Thus, for Ambedkar, if Hinduism were to lay a claim to justice, it could only be in the purely legal not moral sense. In moral sense, justice involved recognition of human equality. Thus, following Ambedkar it may be concluded that inequality is the soul of Hinduism. The morality of Hinduism is only social. Secondly, we think after Ambedkar that caste in Hinduism dissociated work from interest by making occasional hereditary. It disconnected intelligence from manual labour by denying the labourer access to knowledge. It denied him the right to cultivate vital interests and in modern context, caste obstructed the mobilization of workers. In this regard, Ambedkar concluded by saying that 'caste was not merely a division of labour but also of labourers.' In this regard, we can say that the conclusions of *Manusmriti* were based on Hindu law rather than Hindu philosophy. Ambedkar equally found something wrong even in Upanishadic philosophy. For Ambedkar it is

a philosophy of withdrawal from the struggle for existence. For Ambedkar, Hindu had no 'conscience' as Hindu was brought up more to conform to his caste practice than to face problems of individual conscience. He felt that it deprived moral life of freedom and spontaneity and reduced it to conformity or externally imposed rules. He wanted such a religion to be abolished. He indeed had struggle throughout his life to abolish Hindu religion. But he did not succeed for its historical background. It has long historical background and it had passed various historical catastrophes over the course of times. I think even though Ambedkar was in favour of abolishing religious rules, but at the same time he realised that there was a perennial need for religion. In this regard, he agreed with Edmund Burke that true religion is the foundation of society, the basis on which all civil government rests. Cate, he said, mediated simultaneously on issues of religious-moral correctness and secular justice. The concept of value Hindu society is talking of was a misnomer. For Ambedkar, individual freedom and equality were not the value on which the Hindu social order was based is valid. In this regard Ambedkar said, " Whether you do or do not [follow my suggestions for reform] you must give a new doctrinal basis to your Religion- a basis that will be in consonance with *Liberty, Equality and fraternity*, in short, *Democracy*". Thus, for Ambedkar, a true religion would be like this that would ensure democracy based on liberty, equality and fraternity. In our sense, liberty does not merely mean social liberty, it actually means social, economic, and political liberty. The same is true in the case of equality and fraternity as well. Accordingly, Hindu must decide whether or not to adopt a new morality which would be practiced universally within the notion. Hindu must decide what part of their heritage was worthy preserving and what part needed to be given up. Hindu must realise that nothing is permanent, nothing *sanatan*.

The genesis of Hinduism lies in caste and Ambedkar considered caste not only an anarchism, but simply unjust and unethical. True religion should above all be a set of moral principles that would sustain society. Caste did not provide these principles. Hindu society for Ambedkar was an amalgam of castes, which stood in a hierarchical relationship to one another and did not really form a unified, cohesive society. Ambedkar was not against the existence of groups in society, he was against the exclusivism of groups. A society is condemned if the groups are isolated, each leading an isolated exclusive life of its own and which produces the anti-social spirit which makes co-operative effort so impossible of achievement.

### **The impact of Hinduism**

We think that the impact of Hinduism is prolific. It creates negative impact in social life, in political life and above all in economic life. It creates around discrepancies in every sphere of life in society. Most of our economic problem centred around it. As a reformer of dalit class, Ambedkar put much emphasis on unproductive and economically unviable structure. For Ambedkar, dalit people cultivate the small piece not because their standard of living is low, but because it is the only profitable thing for them to do at present. If they had something more profitable to do, they would never prefer the small piece. According to Ambedkar, the caste system is not merely division of labour, it is also division of labourers. It is a hierarchy in which the labourers are graded one above the other. Those who were at the bottom were known as untouchables and were not allowed to socialize with others and denied basic civil and economic rights. The practice of untouchability has ruined the nation and the economy as a whole. Ambedkar observed that 'as an economic system', the caste system permits exploitation without obligation. Untouchability is not only a system of unmitigated economic exploitation but it is also a system of uncontrolled economic exploitation.

The caste system prevailing in India is really a serious threat to economic development. Ambedkar also believed it as a major obstacle to economic development. It generally did not allow people to teach professional skills to any other than their own caste members. Even if an individual did possess the skill necessary for a job, he would be reluctant to take up a profession of a caste lower than his own. In a caste minded society, there is thus no willingness on the part of the individuals to seek employment where they may be best suited. This actually hampers economic development because it inevitably reduces mobility of labour leading to inefficiency in production, thus impeding economic development. In view of this impediment, Ambedkar made every possible effort to eradicate untouchability in a very democratic and successful manner. In this regard, he had further suggested a number of provisions for solving the problems of Indian labourers.

### **Annihilation of Caste**

Ambedkar felt it very well that so long caste system is prevailing the masses, untouchables, Dalit and downtrodden people could not enjoy basic human rights. As a result, he proposed annihilation of caste. Annihilation of caste enables to revive educational social, political and economic rights of the untouchables. Many would say that caste system is nothing but the division of labour and it is prevailing in everywhere. From economic perspective division of labour opens up the effectiveness of efficiency and it is good for economic development. But Ambedkar thought that the caste system is not merely division of labour, it is also division of labourers. The division of labourers divides the caste into various categories on the basis of their birth and in this process the quality and action are ignored in such division. We think that civilised society from economic perspective welcome division of labour but no civilised society accepts division of labour accompanied by this unnatural division of labourers into water-tight

compartment. It is an hierarchy in which the division of labourers are graded one above the other. Even though the division of labour is prevailing in the developed countries, but nowhere it is accompanied by any hierarchical gradation of labourers. Moreover we do think after Ambedkar that the division of labour is not spontaneous, it is not based on natural aptitudes, it involves an attempt to appoint tasks to individuals in advance mere on the social status of the parents. An individual irrespective of caste and creed must be free to change his occupation that we notice at present, but in the past it was completely ignored. There was a time when everything was determined on the basis of caste and Ambedkar himself is the glaring example of the victim of untouchability. Without freedom one cannot enjoy his livelihood. Unfortunately, the caste system did not allow untouchables and downtrodden people to choose their own occupation. The occupation was predetermined on the basis of caste.

### **Is caste system eugenic?**

Historical date reveal that there are many occupations in India which on account of the fact that they are regarded as degraded by the Hindus provoke those who are engaged in them to aversion. There is a constant desire to evade and escape from such occupation. As an *economic organisation* thus caste is therefore a harmful institution as it involves the subordination of man's natural powers and inclinations to the exigencies of social rules. Those who have in favour of caste system would like to say that caste system preserves purity of race and purity of blood. This is required for good society and it has been justified by our rishis by citing various arguments. Ambedkar denied it as he thought that the caste system cannot be said to have grown as a means of preventing the admixture of races or as a means of maintaining purity of blood. If caste is eugenic in origin, then the origin of sub-castes must also be eugenic. Can we then say that the origin of sub-caste must also be eugenic? If caste means race, then differences of sub-

castes cannot mean differences of race because sub-castes become *ex hypothesia sub-divisions* of one and the same race. Accordingly, the bar against intermarrying and interlining between sub-castes cannot be for the purpose of maintaining purity of race or of blood. The point is that if sub-castes cannot be eugenic in origin, then there cannot be any substance in the contention of caste in eugenic in origin. Again, if caste is eugenic in origin, one can understand the bar against intermarriage. This clearly reflects that caste had no scientific origin and that those who are attempting to give it an eugenic basis are trying to support by science what is grossly unscientific. Even today eugenics cannot be a practical possibility unless we have definite knowledge regarding the laws of heredity. Even Professor Bateson in his *Mendel's Principle of Heredity* says, "There is nothing in the descent of the higher mental qualities to suggest that they follow any single system of transmission. It is likely that both they and the more marked developments of physical powers result rather from the coincidence of numerous factors than from the possession of any one generic element." Thus to say that the caste system was eugenic in its conception is to attribute to the forefathers of present day Hindus a knowledge of heredity which even the modern scientists do not possess. A tree should be judged by the fruits it yields. If caste is eugenic what sort of a race of men it should have produced? Physically speaking, the Hindus are a C3 people. They are a race of Pygmies and dwarfs stunted in stature and wanting in stamina. It is a nation nine-tenths of which is declared to be unfit for military service. This clearly reflects that the caste system does not embody the eugenics of modern scientists. It is a social system which embodies the arrogance and selfishness of the previous section of the Hindus who were superior enough in social status to set it in a fashion and who had authority to force it on their inferiors.

### **Caste-system and economic efficiency**

Caste system creates a stumbling block before economic efficiency. For Ambedkar, caste does not result in economic efficiency. Caste cannot improve the race. From economic front, caste system completely disorganised and demoralized the Hindus. Therefore from economic perspective annihilation of caste is a must. Caste is based on myths and there is mysticism in economic development. There was no Hindu society; it is only a collection of castes in which each caste is conscious for its existence. Castes do not even form a federation. A caste has no feeling that it is affiliated to other castes. That is why the Hindus cannot be said to form a society or nation. Thus, within caste system, economic development in the real sense of them is a far cry.

### **Some strategy for economic development: A Contrast between Marxism and Ambedkar**

Ambedkar believed that the main strategy of Indian's economic development should be on eradication of poverty, elimination of inequalities, and on ending exploitation of the masses. Poverty and economic development are corollary in the sense that the diminution or reduction of one leads to the increase of other and vice versa. In this regard, Ambedkar **accepted** the Marxian view that there is exploitation in the world. The poor are exploited by the rich, the proletariats are exploited economically by the bourgeois, the enslavement of the masses by the privileged few, leads to perpetuation of poverty and its attendant sufferings. Having said this, Ambedkar was not sympathizing with the Marxist paradigm of development. In his essay 'Buddhism and Communism', Ambedkar expressed his view on communism. However, unlike Marx, he did not accept economic relationships as the be-all and end-all of human life, and rejected the economic motive as the driving power behind all human activity. Ambedkar emphasised economic, the social, religious and political dimensions of exploitation. According to Ambedkar, social and

religious exploitation is no less oppressive than the economic exploitation in India. Ambedkar believed that communism stands for revolution and not for reformation. Ambedkar just think the other way round. He calls for better economic development for social reformation rather than revolution as we observed in Marxism.

According to Ambedkar, communism advocates revolutionary methods for overcoming dictatorship. He disliked it. Instead he believed that constitutional provisions and democratic means should be relied upon for the desired economic reformation. In this regard, he rejected the totalitarian approach of Marxism progress, which thinks that the State is a temporary institution that will 'wither way' in course of time. He believed in a casteless society but not in a stateless society. He maintained that the State would continue to exist as long as human society survived. In fact, in his book *States and Minorities*, he has entrusted the share with 'an obligation to plan the economic life of the people on line which will lead to highest point of productivity without closing every avenue to private enterprise, and also provide for equitable distribution of wealth. Thus, it seems to me that Ambedkar advocated State ownership of agricultural land with democratic collectivized methods of cultivation and limited control of industries. As a result of that he perceived an active but well-defined role for the State in the economic life of the country. However, he did not favour the imposition of arbitrary restraint on the economic progress.

The economic programme of Ambedkar is revolutionary not only in the sense that it would ensure and protect the interest of the masses; it has also been marked as an impetus to today's economic development as well. Under the New Economic policy the public expenditure on infrastructure, education and other development activities are also reduced. But Ambedkar suggested increased expenditure on these items while reducing un-productive expenditure. While considering the fate of the masses, Ambedkar suggested that trade and industry should be

encouraged with price stability, but not through exchange rate stability. Trade should improve by improving the competitiveness of our industry. Foreign direct investment would not flow unless there was exchange stability and price stability. Presently, the Indian Government can mobilize the necessary revenue to solve the problem of fiscal crisis through agricultural income tax, as suggested by Ambedkar. Thus, I can conclude by saying that the economic program of Ambedkar not only helped the downtrodden and masses at large, it also appears as a viable paradigm on the basis of which even today's economy can function.

According to Ambedkar, besides social and religious equality, economic and political equality was essential. Without ensuring economic and political equality, the concept of humanism does not bear any sense. He opined that the problems of untouchables, landless labours, relied exclusively on the agricultural problems. Therefore, their problems should be visualized and tackled in the wider spectrum of national economic development. As a renowned economist, Ambedkar laid a great stress on the nationalization of economy. For him the state should manage the economy so that the production might reach to the optimum level and the capitalist might not grab the entire benefits and the hard earned money should be distributed equally. He was of the firm view of that the capitalist economy cannot in any way remove the economic crisis of the suffering people. It goes against the downtrodden as well. In capitalist economy there are more chances of unemployment, inhuman treatment of labourer, long hours of workings, vicious working conditions and numerous repressive measures.

While analyzing the economic relations under the caste system, particularly, that between the high and low castes in the economic sense, the Hindu social order involves **a slave-like character** for the lower castes. In Ambedkar view, a slave is a person who accepts from another the purpose which controls his conduct. In this sense, a slave is not an end in itself; he or she is

only a means of fulfilling the end desire of others. In their economic significance, the rules put an interdict on the economic independence of the deprived castes. They were required to serve others, not themselves. It means that they were not allowed to strive for economic independence, but had to forever remain economically dependent on others. Besides this, the Hindu social order also recognises economic slavery in a more direct form. Manu recognises seven types of slaves, Narada recognised thirteen types. According to Ambedkar, both brought graded inequality into the system of slavery, and therefore, it was not a free system. In the Hindu scheme of slavery, Shudras could be made slaves of the three higher castes, but the higher castes could not be slaves of Shudras. How did this social order sustain and maintain? I think that the caste system provided the mechanism, through social and economic penalties, to sustain and maintain the system. Thus, the instruments of social and economic boycott are the main forms of penalties laid down against the violation of the codes of the system. It seems to me that Ambedkar's interpretation of the Hindu social order as a system of governance in general, and a system of production, organisation, and distribution in particular is based on three inter-related elements. These include fixed rights, unequal and hierarchical division of social and economic rights across castes, and provision of strong instruments of social and economic organisation to sustain the rigid system with a philosophical justification in Hindu religion.

It was thought that whatever may have been the purpose behind the origin of caste system, it certainly involved an economic motive, the main purpose of which was exploitation rather than economic efficiency of any sort. The manner in which the rules concerning the right to poverty, occupation, employment, wages, education, social status of occupation, dignity of labour, rules governing graded slavery, and other economic relations were defined, these involves essentially an element of economic exploitation, particularly of caste located at the bottom of the caste

hierarchy. Thus, it implies that the caste system was primarily based on *the principle of economic inequality and exploitation*. The economic inequality under the Hindu social order has not emerged as a matter of indirect historical consequences, but as a direct outcome of its growing principles.

### **Caste, Humanism and Democracy**

Caste system denies humanism. When caste system creates a bar before educational rights, social rights, economic rights and political rights, there is no question of preserving humanism. Instead of preserving humanism, it robs humanism. We think that the Hindus made no effort for the humanitarian cause of civilizing the savages but the higher caste Hindus have deliberately prevented the lower castes who are within the pale of Hinduism from rising to the cultural level of the higher castes. The effect of caste on the ethics is simple deplorable as caste has killed public spirit, it has destroyed the sense of public charity; it has made public opinion impossible and thereby seizes the right to speech. Hindu's public is a caste and everything is restricted only to his caste. Even virtues, morality became caste bound. There is no charity for the needy, charity if there be any, begins with caste and ends with the caste. If there is humanism in Hinduism, it is restricted to caste and nothing else. While envisaging an ideal society, Ambedkar said that an ideal society should be mobile, should be full of channels for conveying a change. In an ideal society there should be many interests consciously communicated and shared. There must be social endosmosis, the so-called fraternity, another name of democracy. We need democratic taste in every sphere of life. Thus, Ambedkar calls for humanism in the form of democracy. Democracy is not a form of government; rather it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoined communicated experience. It is an attitude of respect and reverence towards fellowmen.

## About Chaturvarnya

Even though Hinduism is thought a series of jungles but no one can deny the *histro-philosophical* perspective of the concept of *Chaturvarnya*. *Chaturvarna* is the genesis of Hinduism. It is the philosophical and spiritual cult or craze of Hinduism. It has its prolong history. Thus, it has historical relevance as well. Within many noted historical turmoil, the caste system in the name of Chaturvarnya is still prevailing in Hindu religion. Accordingly, the philosophical foundation of Chaturvarna can be envisaged by collecting the literature from history. Whether the concept of Chaturvarna prevails in Hindu religion is a science or not a matter of highly debatable issue. Even there is no ground in saying that Chaturvarna has to be a science. We find many defaults in science. Science at times gives us miseries as well. Therefore, the meaning of life can be evaluated other than science as well. Why then there arises so many controversies about the very perception of *Chaturvarna*? In this regard, it can be said that if *Chaturvarna* is interpreted in the same sense as appeared in Gita of Mahabharata, then the problem of *Chaturvarna* would be comparatively lesser that what we observed today. In true sense, *Chaturvarna* is based not on birth but on guna. If it would be the case they where there are four-fold divisions of caste based on birth? Why the concept of *Chaturvarna* based on guna does not allow inter-caste marriage, inter-dinning association? According to Ambedkar, the concept of *Chaturvarna* over the course of history actually has been misinterpreted by the so-called upper caste Brahmins community in their own favour. Perhaps, the concept of untouchability does not appear in the society if the concept of *Chaturvarna* has been taken into account as the genesis of Hindu religion.

The argument that can be given in favour of the caste system is that of **divine justification** for the origin and sustenance of the Hindu social order. Ambedkar observed that religious ideals as a

form of divine governance for human society fall into two classes, one in which 'Society' is the center and the other in which the 'Individual' is the center. The former would test right or wrong, while for the latter the test is justice. Hinduism falls neither of these categories. It can be observed that the consequence of caste system is prolific. It robs humanism by way of seizing the educational, social, political and above all economic rights. It ignores the basic human rights of the masses, the untouchables, downtrodden in the name of religion. This is the tragedy of Hindu religion. As religion there is nothing wrong in Hinduism, otherwise our great contemporary thinkers were not the believers of Hindu religion. Hindu religion has been misinterpreted for fulfilling the vested interests of the upper caste Brahmins and the mischievous priests who were not the real priests of Hindu religion. In Buddhism, in Jainism, in Islam and even in Shikism, religion was developed on the basis of the written documents and the practice of the written scriptures. We do not have such authenticated religious priests in Hindu religion. The book *Manusmriti* written by Manu is again controversial and Ambedkar was against the religious sanctions proposed by Manu. It should be kept in mind that the religious text on which one comes to know about the insight of that religion normally should not be controversial. If it would be the case then the concerned religion would be treated as subjective.

Having said this, we are very much optimistic that the social curse of untouchability is diminishing or weakening in every passing moment. The present society is much focusing on economic development and to earn bread and butter is the main contention instead of thinking in which caste one belongs to. Having said this, the caste system is still prevailing in India and one caste neglects the caste simply on the basis of caste. The caste itself sets aside the educational and other qualities. This is really bad for the progress of the society, social integration and social harmony. It can be concluded that just by remembering the message of Swami Vivekananda who

once remarked that the real progress or development of our country would be at bay so long the people of India cannot overcome 'untouchability' from their mind. It is a psychological disease that cannot be overcome by treatment, it requires proper education through which an inner quality of the soul of an individual be enlightened and widen.

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