CHAPTER IX

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION, INDUSTRIALIZATION AND URBANIZATION IN RELATION TO RELIGION AND UNTOUCHABILITY

Of particular interest to this study was to analyze the view of the students, towards religion and untouchability with respect to various reference and contexts. In the preceding chapter we discussed that in the view of students religion and untouchability have become part of the social mores and we also discussed that in the opinion of the respondents these mores can be shifted into the new mores of equality of status and freedom and secularism by various methods and techniques. Further, these methods are deliberately used to change the existing mores of society which compel or forbid us to act in a certain way.

In the present chapter the view of respondents is evaluated regarding changes in the attitudes towards religion and untouchability which have come into existence automatically in response to education, industrialization and urbanization in the country.

(i) The impact of education: Respondents (64.67%) expressed that the students belonging to scheduled caste are not well behaved and unable to cope with the society. Hence, in the opinion of 96.67% respondents schooling should be
compulsory in the childhood and some education regarding social manners and habits should also be given in primary schools.

In the interviewing process the respondents were probed on these statements. Majority of them (86.34%) informed that education is a factor which broadens the outlook of both the groups. It is the observation of researcher that with the spread of education the disabled class have become conscious of their rights. Moreover, they have become aware of the changes that are taking place in the country and they are trying to cope with them. Every individual is in favour of giving education to his children. In the opinion of the majority of respondents, the attitude of the upper caste towards religion and untouchability can be changed through changing the curriculum, by rewriting of the books by telling stories on equality and national integration and by educating masses through radio and television. With the increase of education, there is a noticeable improvement in the sense of hygiene, dress and food habits of the students of all castes.

The observational data has brought to light that lower castes have been trying to improve their social status and their material condition either by sanskritization,
or by westernization going to modern educational institutions, adopting western dress and style of living. This process has been increased by the removal of traditional legal and ritual sanctions through the Indian constitutions and the various social legislations. Through education and taking up new occupations in the professional and administrative areas they have now scope to improve their social status as well as the conditions of their living though they continue to belong to their respective castes. Western education, Urban residence and salaried employment have created new divisions within each caste on the one hand, and has reduced the social distance between castes on the other. Several studies in social mobility in India have also shown that there has been significant changes from caste based occupations. The 1954 Poona Survey showed that brahmins were to be found in all grades of occupations except in unskilled menial work. Mukherji (1965) has shown that people of any caste may be pursuing various occupations.

A few years back the UNESCO Research Centre, New Delhi organised in Coimbatore, to find out how the occupations fit into old social structure and the importance of the old criterion of ascription and the new criterion of achievement with respect to social stratification. Bopagamage (1967) conducted the study in the Poona area
and Veeraraghwan (1967) conducted in Coimbatore area, both using the same Methodology and design.

It was found that there has been a good relationship between caste, education and income. The ratio between education and income is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>Period of education</th>
<th>Yearly income per capita</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brahmins</td>
<td>13 years</td>
<td>2000 Rs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture caste</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>600 Rs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artisan and service class</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>400 Rs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harijans</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>300 Rs</td>
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</tbody>
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Another important result obtained in the study, was that in general the urban castes are superior to the rural caste, there was no difference with respect to the Brahmins. But now the position of the Brahmins is shaken, the whole upper caste is on the same level in the hierarchy.

The Coimbatore study also found that the people are of opinion that in every status group there has been in recent times an increase in income, education, clothing and a concern for community welfare. They asserted that there has been a great change in the low status group regarding cleanliness, dress and interest in education. Further, they have now become aware of their rights and privileges.

When they were asked to specify the qualities which enable one to rise in social status, the Poona group
gave the first three ranks to education, intelligence and honesty, the Coimbatore group specified, income, education, character and housing, caste was given the fifth rank by the Poona group and eighth or ninth rank by the other three groups. Thus the achievement characteristics of education, income and character were identified as the means to rise in social status.

One of the outstanding results of both the studies is that education is recognized by the rural as well as the urban groups as the prerequisite for social advancement.

To start with, the distinction should be made between the content of education, the educational institutions and the recipients of education. Content of education is the same everywhere and it contains a good deal of western influence. But this influence undergoes modification with a change of place and according to difference in social structure. In a city like Bombay different colleges have different traditions and one can observe the difference in the attitudes of students towards life in general and different social issues amongst the students of different colleges. With the opening of schools and colleges in the rural parts of the country, the lower stratum is beginning to receive education. But their minds are burdened by the uncertainties, responsibilities
and unknown dangers. On critical evaluation of this situation one is forced to conclude that it can not be accepted that education is having a uniform influence on persons belongings to different social strata. In the opinion of the respondents, here too the change is more superficial than deep and more apparent than real. Thus, education too, does not seem to be very effective in changing the caste system unless it becomes job oriented.

(ii) **The impact of urbanization and industrialization:** For the purpose of this study, the role of urbanization and industrialization will be evaluated together because the growth of towns and cities in modern times as forces of social change are dependent on industrialization.

(a) **The role of urbanization:** As it was not possible to cover every area of inquiry related to this study in the scale, some questions were asked during the interview. Respondents were inquired whether urbanization meaning thereby growth of cities and towns has influenced caste system and religious dogmatism in any way? 84% respondents gave positive answers to the question. In their opinion urbanization has influenced caste system and religious dogmatism in so many ways. In the opinion of the majority (83.33%) of the respondents when people migrate from villages to cities they come into contact with the people
of different caste and religion. Outside their home, it is not the caste and religion, but the class, the level of education, tastes and interests that count to make their social circle. It broadens their outlook. They learn new and modern style of dress and dining. They become acquainted with new opportunities of jobs and can learn many new skills. For example many people come from villages to Delhi and other urban centres for various economic transactions and employment. They come across new ways and ideas in respect to social interaction and intercaste relations which they try to practice when they return to village. Finding the city dwellers observing less of untouchability, many of the educated ones, being partly oriented to city life, do not take it seriously at village level also.

It is observed that in urban centres like Delhi, some low caste people with their caste status unknown from south India and other states like Rajasthan take up the job of maid servants, dish washers and lunch delivery to caste office workers. These are the areas of work which are now not regarded as subject to pollution. 82% respondents reported that they have observed that due to urbanization new service opportunities and occupations further helped in breaking the pressure of caste rules. Finding new occupations useful and profitable the higher caste persons start
adopting them. A few of them take up tailoring and running tea stalls, traditionally not meant for them because locally it is considered as low caste professions.

The views of the respondents were also taken about the changes in religious outlook due to urbanization and industrialization. 75% respondents gave their opinion that urbanization and industrialization in the nation has affected the religious values also. The observation of the researcher substantiate the fact that with the changes in the society from the traditional agriculture to a modern industrial one, the outlook has changed from orthodox religious to humanistic. The people from the different corners of the country get the chance to come into contact with each other irrespective of the feelings of caste and religion. In a new situation every one has a brotherly attitude. The result is the promotion of humanistic outlook so that the poverty and sufferings of any individual is not tolerated and those individual who are better off exert themselves to render help to those who are in excessive poverty, ignorance and superstition. The study has revealed the fact that religious dogmatism is disappearing due to mixing of people from different castes, culture, religion and creed. However due to the rapid growth of cities and industries, slowly and gradually the relations are becoming very formal and only working relationship is developing,
which is the characteristic feature of any modern society.

(b) The role of industrialization: There are three questions in the scale which express the relationship between occupation and caste and occupational aspect is the part of industrialization. We will see how the attitude towards religion and untouchability is related to the occupation and industrialization. 77% respondents believe that untouchability can be removed if the difference of occupation is eliminated. These respondents informed that difference of occupation can be abolished if all the menial work is done by machines. In the opinion of 69% respondents very high salary should be paid to the workers doing manual work, so that every one tries to take up that occupation. 96.67% respondents believe that in comparison to mental work preference of recognition should be given to menial work.

During their discussion on the occupational aspect the respondents have expressed occupations are now gaining prestige due to rapid industrialization. Hence, it can be inferred on the basis of the view of the respondents and on the basis of observation of the researcher that the effect of industrialization on the attitude towards religion and untouchability is indirect. As the economic emphasis of a society changes from agriculture to industry and people become more urbanized in outlook, the values
attached to particular occupations tend to change. Though
in India, the deeply rooted traditional attitudes to
certain occupation have not radically changed as yet.
For example manual labour is still considered as fit only
for the low caste workers. Attitude of high caste Hindus
towards sweeping, scavenging, tanning of leather and shoe
repair remain scornful and depreciating. The study indicates
that this attitude of high caste persons towards certain
manual work is due to the personal handling of the
material. The shoe repair and shoe making was considered as
a low grade work when it was done by hands. Now many shoe
industries have opened and thousands of persons irrespective
of caste and religion are engaged in these factories and
this occupation has gained prestige. However, as the present
study as well as other study have shown that (cited earlier)
changes in attitude which have occurred towards certain occupations
probably affected only a small number of urban people.
Majority of the low caste people are still engaged in unskilled
labour work in the industries, very few of them are working
in the offices and administration. Thus, the industrial
revolution and urbanization in India has given a new meaning,
dignity and prestige to various types of works which were
higher to considered as fit for untouchables only. Western
educated Indian leaders also instilled among Indian people
a sense of dignity for manual work. However, the general
status of low caste people has not improved to the desirable
level.
Moreover, it is observed that rapid industrialization of the country has opened many new occupational opportunities which can be availed by every person of any caste and religion. This view of the respondents is well supported by Dhurjati Mukerjee (1948).

"Rapid industrialization of the country has opened many new occupational opportunities which act as incentives to lure the educated unemployed youth to the city, and also give him vision of the possibility of getting a better and highly paid job." Desai (1957) shows that with the development of modern industry based on the foreign economic system and the parallel growth of new educational institutions in India, the following four urban classes gradually arose from the traditional rural caste system. The modern working class, engaged in industry, transportation, mining and other similar enterprises, second the modern class of industrial, commercial and financial capitalists, third the class of petty traders and shoe keepers, and fourth the professional classes. Thus the picture of occupational groupings changed from a local rural village to a national one.

It is observed that in India due to industrialization a growing number of occupational opportunities have opened to which young people from all walks of life are directed.
In his analysis of the social background of Indian Nationalism, Desai (1957) refers to the common interests and ways of life which came to India when the industrial revolution developed new occupational classes. He states that "These classes were unknown to past Indian society since they were primarily the offspring of the new capitalist economic structure, which developed in India as a result of the British conquest and the impact of her on the British and world economy. The Indian people were reshuffled into new social groupings, new classes as a result of the basic capitalist economic transformation of Indian society. The emergence of new social class in India was the direct consequence of the establishment of a new social economy, a new type of state system and a state administrative machinery, and the spread of new education during the British rule."

In the opinion of the respondents industrialization provided a large number of schemes to diversify the occupational structure of the untouchable castes. Now it can be said, on the basis of the views of the respondents, as well as on the basis of the observation of the society that due to the rapid industrialization and urbanization of country, at present, the traditional cast system which used to be a 'closed system' is now appreciably shifting
towards a social class or an "an open class" system. But still a bulk of the untouchables remain tied down to the traditional occupations. 70% respondents suggested that an improvement in the economic life of these people would require strengthening the technological and economic base of occupations.

Ross (1961) writes "In Indian society a modern trend is observed that the new occupations are creating the ambition of the younger generation and it is anticipated that these new occupations will continue to excite the ambitions of the young men. "Also, youth may pickup "attitudes toward these occupations from western movies, magazines and novels. At the same time, it is expected that the incorporation of new occupations into the Indian economy will tend to change the prestige ratings of the older ones."

Prasad (1969) conducted a study among the urban middle class in the five big cities of Uttar Pradesh. He found that though urbanization and industrialization have had no effect on these aspects of life associated with the core values of the culture, yet the people are aware that education and the starting of industries are essential for progress.
Probably it is this awareness that is responsible for the great enthusiasm generated in the people of all the castes, religion and class. Moreover, this awareness gave rise to the democratic liberalism and rationalism that transform the cultural pattern and lead to the emancipation of the individual in India. This gave rise to a new concept of rights, personal, social, economic and political liberty. Another significant consequence of liberalism and rationalism was the establishment of the principle of autonomy of the individual in society. Now the individual becomes free to pursue any occupation he liked because he is now educated and self-reliant. With the rise of occupations and professions, as a result of the new administrative and economic order in the nineteenth century, people of different castes took up the new professions and occupations. As Chhibar (1968) writes "The outstanding feature of the change is that Brahmins and Kshatriyas, who once regarded business as a degrading occupation, have now no hesitation in taking up this mercenary pursuit. At the same the vaishyas and Kshatris are posing a potent challenge to the monopoly of the Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Kayasthas over the learned arts and professions. Perhaps the most significant is the entry of the Harijans into the social arena."
On the basis of above analysis the point emphasized is that the industrial revolution and urbanization in India have given a new meaning, dignity and prestige to various types of work, including traditional occupations which has enhanced its prestige besides the new ones. And these changes in economic pattern of India have affected the traditional caste system though not very much.

It might be good to point out that discussions with the respondents of the present sample led us to believe that since the introduction of western philosophy and liberal education in modern India, and with the increasing industrialization and urbanization, people are becoming secularized and liberal in their thinking and way of life. The religious base has nearly gone in the young generation but political and economic interests may sustain caste system. However, as cited earlier due to the slow progress of literacy, due to lack of capital and due to the lack of initiative to enter into enterprising careers, the vast masses continue to be not only poor but bound down by the caste tradition.