CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: MINORITY, SCHEDULED CASTES

AND SCHEDULED TRIBES IN INDIA

MINORITY:

The term minority is defined as a distinct ethnic group, inhabitant of a state and dominated by another nationality broadly based and numerically large. It is clearly distinguished on account of its common traditions, culture and other traits significant in a heritage. All these basic traits find due place and expression in a separate language, literature, press and in numerous social, political, cultural, educational and religious activities connected with their day-to-day life.¹

The United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities have defined minority as 'only those non-dominant groups in a population which possess and wish to preserve stable, ethnic religious or linguistic traditions from those of the rest of the population.'² In fact, the minorities were reduced to the status of such groups as resisted such efforts of assimilation and thus remained distinctive groups in the nation. Thus, minority is that group of inhabitants who on grounds of language, religion or race consider themselves different from the general mass of population in a State.³ With this feeling of separateness as they demand some political claims for equality with the majority

². The Encyclopaedia of Americana; Vol.19, p.206.
³. "Minorities are groups held together by ties of common descent, language or religions, faith & feeling themselves different in these respects from the majority of the inhabitants of a given political entity". Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol.15, p.66
special treatment, autonomy or even separation.

A minority need not necessarily be the underdog. The case of the Union of South Africa is a fine illustration of the point, where a numerical minority of whites enjoys a highly privileged position as compared to the overwhelming majority of the coloured Africans and Asians. Thus it is clear that the concept of minority is a political rather than a numerical one.

Historically, it was only towards the end of the eighteenth century that the minorities became a serious political problem, and played an important role both in national and international spheres. The origin of minorities can be attributed to a variety of factors like past conquests, peaceful union of different groups, historical accidents, large scale migration and colonization. Examples of the formation of minorities due to the above factors can be seen in several countries: Negros in U.S., Jews in Germany and Muslims, Parsis and Eueasians in India. In the eighteenth century this minority problem in Central and Eastern Europe formed one of the most important issues in international relations.

The problem of 'non-at-home' groups has thus vexed the politicians and statesmen both as a national and international problem. Attempts have been made to solve this riddle through various agreements, pacts and treaties, political assurance and through constitutional and statutory safeguards. The important
and effectiveness of these measures have varied from country to country and from time to time. Poland, Germany, Russia, Italy, Austria, Turkey, India, Pakistan and the United States have trouble spots of this kind. These countries have undertaken elaborate measures for the protection of their minorities. Noteworthy among these are the March 1917 Revolution in Russia proclaiming complete equality for the minority; the Versailles Treaty of 1919 which enjoined Poland "to give a sure guarantee to the inhabitants", of the territory over which she had assumed sovereignty which triggered off a series of treaties with Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Greece.¹ In the United States, the problem gave rise to the Civil War over the abolition of enslavement of a small section of the population and guarantee of equal rights to minority has had to wait for relevant enactment in 1964.²

It thus appears that minority is a fluid concept that has varied meanings in different countries and in different times. In India itself certain communities were considered as a minority at one time but not so now as the meaning of the term minority has undergone considerable change. The communities that were recognised as minorities under the British are now no more treated as such. The Muslims before 1947 were a minority with statutory safeguards but after independence the Muslims have lost those safeguards. So too the Sikhs, Christians and Parsis. The Anglo-Indians who are now technically a minority were not so before the commencement of the New Constitution.

2. K.B. Krishna, Minority Problem in India, p.298.
The evolution of the British policy of minority in India was on the lines of counterpoise, concessions and strengthening of paramountcy. The growth and the activities of the professional classes of various faiths and communities and their demands is a history of struggle amongst themselves and against the Britishers.¹

The Britishers used minority as a lever to satisfy their own selfish ends in India. They had a peculiar view of the minorities. They were recognised promptly, given a longer rope than other communities and were set against one another and against the majority. This has been very lucidly expressed by K.B. Krishna in his book, "Minority in India".

"A minority in order to be called such must satisfy certain requirements of Government. It must not be disloyal element. It must be amenable to flattering. The more a minority possesses those qualifications, the more is its political importance enhanced. A minority is an indispensable nucleus in the mechanism of counterpoise of natives against natives. These are the necessary requirements demanded by Government for any religious group, class or interests to be called a minority".²

Apart from the essential qualifications of being loyal and amenable to appeasement as sharply pointed out above a

¹. K.B. Krishna: Minority Problem in India, p.293.
minority had at the same time, to be backward community. As a rule, it indicates a rising backward professional class, belonging to one of the various faiths and communities that demanded a share in the Government. It complained incessantly of its relatively backward position. It humbly petitioned the Government to redress the balance by giving it more posts in the higher cadre of the services.

It was in view of the above considerations that the Anglo-Indians were not treated as minority (as they are treated now), but the Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis and the Depressed Classes were listed as minorities. But it must not be concluded from the foregoing account that the problem of minorities in India was solely a creation of the Britishers or that it was accidental. Its roots were in Indian history; it had a historical evolution. The recognition of minorities in India was actually a recognition of the Socio-economic class structure in the country.

The class struggle is a fact but it could not find full opportunity to achieve its object because the Britishers always tried to suppress its growth for their own ends. The frustration of the struggle led the classes to be exploited under the stimulation and situation circumscribed by the British interests. Thus failing to achieve the common goal of independence, their communal forces were allowed to be spent up and at the same time bolstering up the Government.

In this sense the problem of minorities is the child of British despotism and of class struggle in India. The alien
rulers can be accredited for creating a rift between the majority and the minority and then trying to 'bridge the unbridgeable'. Thus, in India, as in every other country, when new classes have gained new economic power, they have demanded a share in political power equivalent to their new economic status.

Now after this introduction of the problem, let us study that minority of India which has been recognised by the Constitution of the Indian Republic.

THE ANGLO-INDIANS

The Constitution of the Republic of India has recognised the Anglo-Indians as a minority in India. After a number of names such as 'East Indian', 'Indo-European', 'Indo-Briton' & 'Eurasian', the name Anglo-Indian came in for common use and was finally accepted by the Community as such.

The term Anglo-Indian was generally used with reference to those Britishers who came and stayed in India as servants of the East India Company and afterwards of the British Government. Early historians such as Mitra, Adams and D.Kincaid have used the term in this sense.

The Anglo-Indian Community was known by different names in different periods of history. From the very beginning the

2. E.Thruston, Caste and Tribes in South India, p.219.
community was searching for a respectable name for itself.
In the early days, the members of this community were referred
to by derogatory epithets such as 'half-caste', half-breed',
mixed blood' or 'country born'. During the Dutch regime they
were known as 'Wallandez' or 'Oallanday'. The name 'Mestico'
(Portuguese for mixed) was also used for some time to describe
these people. The terms 'Calkar', 'chi-chi' and 'chattaker'
( chatta = trouser; kar = a person who wears them ) were the
common names in the past in Kerala.2

The history of this community gives an impression that
except for a few soldiers, officers, novelists, politicians &
educationists, the community has not produced many outstanding
persons in the past in India. In the eighteenth century,
there were Anglo-Indian soldiers like Skiners, Hearsay, Froster,
Gardner who became very famous for their valour and military
skill. During and after 1857, the Anglo-Indians played an
important role in consolidating the British Government.
Undoubtedly, the image of the A.Is. in popular mind is that they
are responsible for construction and running of the railways
and the Post & Telegraph Department in India till the end of
the 19th century.

The term Anglo-Indian was officially recognised by the
Indian Government in 1911, as descriptive of persons of mixed

2. Ibid., p. 222.
descent. ¹ By the Franchise rules of the Indian Act of 1935, an Anglo-Indian was defined as, 'a person whose father or any of whose other male progenitors in the male line is or was of European descent but who is a native of India.' (A native of India meant one who was born and domiciled in India, of parents primarily resident in India and not established here temporarily, in contrast to the European who comes to India for a term, short or long, of his life.) The framers of the Constitution of India recognized the same definition of this community as it had been accepted in the Act of 1935.

From the definition above it can be clearly seen that the term 'Anglo-Indian' cannot be used for anyone whose father is an Indian and mother a European. Such person is known simply as an Indian.

The Anglo-Indian community seems never to have been a stable community for there has been a systematic evaporation from the upper layers of the while coloured Anglo-Indians who were trying to pass as Europeans or at least as domiciled Europeans. This instability is also due to the Indian Christians getting into the Anglo-Indian community. A correct census of the Anglo-Indians could never be had because of this unstable condition.² While there has been a tendency among many Indian Christians to proclaim themselves as Anglo-Indians to get the privileges given to the members of this community and to improve

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¹ Rhodes: General Information, p. 148.
² Malcolm, John: Sketch of the Political history of India, p. 260.
their social status, the Anglo-Indians, especially those who had risen above the general level of the community, were reluctant to call themselves as Angli-Indians.

In the country as a whole, the total population of the Anglo-Indians, according to the 1951 census, was 1,11,637. They are scattered all over India and are mainly concentrated in big cities like Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Madras and Bangalore. A fairly large number of them live in cities and towns which are on the main railway lines and junctions like Agra, Jhansi, Itarsi, Jabalpur and Bilaspur which reminds one of their association with the Indian Railways.

In the year 1949, it was for the first time constitutionally accepted as a distinct minority community of India and certain safeguards were guaranteed to it. The Constitution of India has recognised the community's rights for political representation, educational grants and quotas in services. Such safeguards have not been given to any other community as a minority in India. We will discuss in the following chapters the concessions and safeguards to this community as provided by the Constitution.

SCHEDULED CASTES

A caste is "an endogamous and hereditary sub-division of an ethnic unit occupying a comparison with other such subdivisions". It is a social unit within a larger political

2. Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, p. 256.
or cultural whole.

Caste, in fact, is a special form of social class, which has a tendency to grow in every society. Castes, however, differ from social classes in that they have emerged into social consciousness to the point that custom and law attempt their rigid and permanent separation from one another. Social classes are the springboard from which caste systems spring at various time and places.

India is the classic land of castes. Caste is said to be in the air, and even Muslims and Christians have caught this infection. There are approximately three thousand castes and tribes in India and there are rather so many theories of caste origins as there are writers on the subject.

The castes in India differ from one another in structure and, in many cases, it is difficult to say by what criteria they can properly be regarded as a unit at all. Such a conceptual difficulty usually arises because the caste system here bases on occupation and when, for an example, a Gwala (hereditary occupation of animal husbandry) takes to shoe-making, the traditional job of a chamar, it is difficult to name the real caste of that person.

THE CASTE SYSTEM AND THE ORIGIN OF THE SCHEDULED CASTES:

The caste system is of immemorial antiquity. Some kind of caste structure has been traced in the Rigveda, as the

Purusha-Sukta in describing the origin of the four varnas, support this view. Though doubt exists about the status of Purusha-Sukta being an integral part of the Rigveda, it is certain that a functional division of society was known at that time.

The actual mention of the caste system in Aryan literature as comprising of the priest, the charioteer, farmer and artisans, and an identical division of society in ancient India may point to a common origin of the system since the Indo-Aryans are only a branch of the same original race which moved towards Persia.

The Rigveda often mentions the classes of population as Brahman, Ksatra and Vaishya but, as Apte has argued, the fact that the fourth or lowest class has not been mentioned anywhere except in the Purusha-Sukta does not prove its non-existence.

The Sudra, according to Apte, existed in the Rigvedic Age though mention of it is found only twice. The inclusion of the natives of the country (known as Dasas or Dasyus) in the Sudra class had given them an inferior status. And hence Ghurye's theory that the cradle of caste was in the land of the Ganges from where it was transmitted to other parts of

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4. Ibid, p. 213.
5. G.S. Ghurye: Caste and Class in India, p. 51.
India by Brahman prospectors.  

The caste lines were hardened during the period following the Rigveda to the time when Buddhism challenged the caste order. The tyranny of the Brahmins had developed in the absence of a strong central government, as they enjoyed sacerdotal leadership of Hindu society. Secular affairs were, however, controlled by the Rajanyas or Kshattriyas, the second order of the varna structure.\(^2\)

The theories of caste origins are many but broadly speaking there are three views of it. The mystical view believes in the divine descent of man and explained the caste system as derived from the person of the Supreme Creator Brahma.\(^3\) This theory has been propounded by the Hindu law-giver Manu in great detail and is still accepted by the orthodox section of the population in India.

The second view is partly historical and partly functional. The fact that many of the castes are hybrid, resulting from intermarriages on the principles of 'Anuloma' or prescribed and 'Pratiloma' or forbidden unions (as they are found even now) has given support to the view. Some writers have so far as to claim that "function and function alone is responsible for the origin of the caste system".\(^4\) The social distance between castes, according to them, springs from the

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2. Ibid, p. 239.
superiority or inferiority of the occupation followed by the caste.

Western writers on the subject caste origins have on the other hand concentrated their attention on racial difference. J.T. Wheeler wrote that the whole history of India, from earliest times, has been one long story of colour prejudice and that more cruelty has probably been displayed here than in the rest of the world. He believed that the caste system was a device of the Aryan races for preventing the undue mixing of the white (Aryan) with the black (Dravid) race. W.J. Thomas has found marked physical contrast in different castes and correlates it with superior and inferior cultures, and this according to him is the basis of caste distinction. Dually Buxton is another supporter of this thesis.

Alburani, writing in about 1020 A.D. grouped together Dom and Chandala as two of the groups not included in any caste. They did dirty work and were a separate class. Hemchandra, writing about a century later in his 'Desinamasamala' tells us that Dumba (Dom or Dumb) was a 'Desi' word for 'Srapacha'. The 'chandalas' carried a stick in their hands to warn people to avoid their touch. Kalhan of Kashmir (1150 A.D.) has narrated how King Chakravarman fell into evil ways being caught in the whirlwind of passion for two daughters (Hansi and Naglata) of a Domba who were clever musicians.

2. Ibid. p. 198.
3. "They are occupied with dirty work, like the cleaning of the villages and other services. They are considered as one sole class distinguished only by their occupations". Majumdar, D.N. Caste in India, p. 366.
4. Ibid. p. 356.
5. Ibid. p. 367.
However, there were two more classes. One called Antyajas, were not allowed to mix freely with the superior four classes. The Antyajas forming the fifth class included the 'Dom' and 'Chandala' and did dirty work.¹ The sixth class was constituted of various craftsmen like shoemakers, weavers, fishermen, hunters and basket-makers, which ranked higher than the fifth class of Antyajas and had further subdivisions within itself.²

AND

THE BRITISHERS & THE CASTES

As Christians, the Britishers could not have much sympathy for the institutions of the Hindus, but as prudent foreigners wishing to consolidate their power over a strange land and people, they decided to leave the peculiar institutions of the country alone except where they clashed with their cherished ideas of government. They introduced a system of education which did not require the learners to change their religion. Ideas, philosophies and behaviour patterns were thus presented as isolated from religion.

In the early stages the practice of the rulers in the three Presidencies of Bengal, Madras and Bombay was not uniform. In Bengal one of the Regulations empowered the ordinary courts to entertain suits for resolution of caste. It was held that cases of expulsion from clubs or voluntary associations were of an entirely different nature from excommunication. In Bombay Presidency, however, the relevant regulations expressly provided that no

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¹ Bains & Athelstanes, Anthropology, Caste & Tribes, pp. 84-85.
² Ibid., p. 63.
court shall interfere in any caste question beyond the admission and trial of any suit instituted for the recovery of damages on account of the alleged injury to the caste and character of the plaintiff arising from some illegal act of the other party. Social privileges of the membership of a caste were held to be wholly within the jurisdiction of the caste.

This recognition of the integrity of caste for internal affairs did not protect the institution from attacks on its vital powers. The establishment of British courts, administering a uniform criminal law, removed from the purview of caste many matters that previously fell within its jurisdiction.

As early as 1826 the first British administrators on the Bombay side employed officials like Boradaile and Steele, who compiled various usages and customs of the many castes of the Presidency. But such compilations were not done in other parts of the country, with the result that the widow-remarriages Act of 1856 relying on them contained clauses violating the customs of some of the lowest castes. In Bengal & Northern India generally, the office of the priest was not recognised as such in law, and a house-holder could employ anyone he liked for the performance of any priestly service and pay the fees to him.

A similar view had been taken in the Madras Presidency. The High Court of Bombay decreed that people could engage any priest they chose but, unlike the High Court of Madras, they
decree that the hereditary priest must be paid some fees by
way of compensation in case his services were not utilized.

The Caste-Disabilities Removal Act of 1850 gave another
blow to the integrity of caste. The Act did not, as may be
expected from its title, remove civil disabilities existing
between the caste and caste but facilitated conversion to
another religion or admission into another caste. The Act
provided that a person will not forfeit his ordinary rights
of property by loss of caste or change of religion.

To legalize intercaste marriages, a Special Marriage
Act of 1872 was passed, making it possible for Indians of
whatever caste or creed, provided the parties registered
the contract of marriage, declaring inter alia that they did
not belong to any religion. The members of the Brahmo Samaj,
who were regarded as outside the purview of this Act, were
held, by a decision of the Privy Council to be Hindus for the
purposes of the Act. Certain gaps in the legislation were
removed by a subsequent Act known as the Special Marriage
Amendment Act of 1923 passed at the instance of Sir Harising
Gour.

Under the old regime of caste certain sections of Hindu
society which were regarded as untouchable were without many
civil rights.

The Madras Government had on its statute-book as late
as the end of 1923 a law empowering village Magistrates to
punish the offenders of the lower castes by imprisonment. In
1925 a bill was introduced in the Madras Legislative Council to throw open all public roads, streets or pathways, giving access to any public office, well, tank or place of public resort, to all classes of people including the Depressed Classes.

In the Reformed Constitution of 1935 the Depressed Classes got special representation in local and legislative bodies by nomination.

However, the British Government refused to recognize caste as a unit empowered to administer justice. Caste was thus deprived of one of its important functions as a community. Individual members, therefore, could not have the same feeling of respect and solidarity for their caste-group.

On the whole the activities of the British Government had gone very little towards the solution of the problem of caste. Most of these activities, as must be evident, were dictated by administrative considerations and not by a desire to reduce the rigidity of caste. The most important step taken in this respect was the provision in some of the provinces to fill certain posts in various services from the members of the non-Brahmin or the intermediate castes, provided they satisfied certain minimum qualifications.

However, the British rulers of India, who throughout professed to be the trustees of the welfare of the country, never seem to have given much thought to the problem of caste, in so far as it affected the nationhood of India. Nor did they
show willingness to take a bold step towards rendering caste harmless. Their measures were administered piecemeal and with due care to ensure the safety of the British domination.

**MOVEMENTS OF LOWER CASTES:**

Apart from the efforts of the said reforms the lower castes have got themselves organised to fight for the removal of disabilities and to get special privileges from Government and society. The movements of lower castes suffering from social, religious and legal disabilities, due to the undemocratic caste system, had two aspects; one progressive, and the other reactionary and anti-national. When a lower caste organized itself even on a caste basis and fought for democratic freedoms, its struggle automatically helped the general struggle for the unity of the Indian people on a democratic basis. But when a lower caste organized itself for securing specific reservations in the Constitution of the country, when it demanded separate electorates, it acted in an essentially reactionary and anti-national manner.\(^1\) If a caste demanded the removal of special obstacles put in its way for the manifestation and development of their talent as a result of hierarchical structure of society, it helped to increase the creative vitality of a people.\(^2\) But if a caste asked for special rights, it acted in an undemocratic and anti-national

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   "Special representation only perpetuated communal divisions just as the democratic movement of the Non-Brahmins for social, legal & religious equality paved the way for the dissolution of communal divisions". A.R. Desai, *Social - Background of Indian Nationalism*, p. 226.

manner.

Besides, the non-Brahmin blocs of castes had no common positive interests. They were composed of artisans, landless labourers, factory workers, tenants and others. The interests of these groups were widely divergent. Even within the same caste of the bloc, there were groups pursuing different occupations.

The role of nationalist movement in weakening the caste bond has been significant. It is true that the basic pillar of caste, viz., endogamy, practically remained intact, but collaboration of members of different castes in economic, political, secular and cultural movements steadily grew. The national movement which gathered mass support affected the narrow caste bonds. The national movement unified the people while caste kept them divided.

The national movement synthesised the love and respect of anti-Hindu civilization with an unqualified support and completely democratic programme for universal equal citizenship, without distinction of caste, creed or sex, abolition of all special privileges or titles, universal adult suffrage and universal and free compulsory education and freedom of speech, press, conscience, assembly and organisation.¹

THE UNTOUCHABLES:

The castes have been hierarchically graded, each caste

¹ R. P. Dutt, India Today, p. 500.
being considered inferior to those above it and superior to those below it. The status of a man born in a particular caste was determined by the rank of that caste in this hierarchy.

The untouchables have been the out-castes of the Hindu society. Though belonging to the Hindu society, they were its proscribed parts.

Historically, untouchability was the social consequence of the Aryan conquest of India. In the process of social interaction, a portion of conquered indigenous population was incorporated into the Aryan fold. The most backward of this incorporated population, it appears, constituted the hereditary caste of the untouchables.

In Hindu society, the hereditary untouchables were assigned such low functions as those of scavengers and removers of dead cattle. They were socially and legally denied any other profession. They had no right to use public wells, tanks, etc. An untouchable was more severely punished for a crime by the law of a Hindu State or the Village Tribunal composed of the caste Hindus than a caste Hindu was.

Thus, under no institution were human beings so deeply humiliated and suppressed as under that of untouchability. It is true that a respectable section of the Hindu community tenaciously opposed the abolition of untouchability and
general disabilities from which these depressed classes of the Hindu Society suffered. Various groups aiming at social reformers like All India Harijan Sevak Sangh, Bharat Dalit Sevak Sangh, Ishwar Saran Ashram and Bhartiya Depressed Classes League; have done their bit to eradicate it.

SCHEDULED CASTES IN DIFFERENT STATES:

The expression of the word 'Scheduled Caste' was first coined by the Simon Commission and embodied in the Government of India Act, 1935, section 309. The Commission, its 'Education Committee' and the Franchise Commission studied the cases of untouchables, the depressed classes or the backward classes separately. It is an irony that while Mahatma Gandhi had, through his weekly 'The Harijan', or through the 'Harijan Sevak Sangh' and other similar organisations, his propaganda and his fast, tried to designate these classes as the Harijans, the framers of the Constitution, the largest bulk of whom were staunch followers and devotees of Gandhi, adopted the term coined by the Simon Commission.

There are so many groups of scheduled castes in the different provinces in India. In 1901 the whole group totalled 5.32 crores, and formed 27.4 per cent of the Hindus in India. Between 1911 and 1941, half a dozen estimates of the persons belonging to the untouchable or exterior or excluded castes were made, and are presented in the report of the Franchise
or the Lothian Commission which worked in connection with the Simon Commission, and its report was accepted by the Government of India Act, 1935. The Census of 1951 provide with a total enumeration of all the persons belonging to these castes specified in the relevant Constitution Order as Scheduled Castes.

By far the largest group appearing under a single name, though widely distributed, being represented over the whole of the Northern India and sporadically even in Madras, is the chamar or the chambar, whose name indicates that he is a worker in leather. It is a profession as old as the Vedic Age, but it is not certain that it was not an object of contempt. Manu also speaks of two groups or castes (Karavana & Dhigvana) concerned with leather working, both of them being very mixed in origin.¹

The largest contingent of Chamar or Kochi or Muchi from Uttar Pradesh forming about 52.6 per cent of the total chamar of India. Muchi or Kochi is more or less an urban caste and is not usually separated from the Chamar. However, not all Mochis have the same status which is indicated in the dropping out of the Mochis of Gujarat division from the list of the Scheduled Castes of Bombay under the Scheduled Tribes Order (Amendment) Act, 1956.

Among the alternative names assumed by this casta group are Ramdasi, Satnami and Raisasi, Rohit, Rohidas, Ruidas, Ramnami and Rishi. The Chamars is counted among the unclean untouchables because of the fact that the flesh of dead animals or beef or both entered into his diet. Yet in some parts of the country, he is served by some kind of Brahmin.

The worst sufferers of the caste system have probably been the Doms and Chandals (Namsudra) though they are much smaller in number as compared to the chamars. In 1901 the Chandals numbered 18.5 lakhs and were mostly concentrated in Bengal. The same year Doms totalled 8.5 lakhs and were largely spread over U.P. and Bengal. The Chandals live also in Madras, Orissa, Punjab and Assam. The Doms are found in the States of Bihar, Madras, Orissa, Rajasthan and West Bengal also. The status of Chandals has been very low in social scale and like the Doms are considered the lowest among the untouchables. Their occupation is scavenging and other unclean jobs. The Chandals or Chandala caste of Simla Hills in the Punjab appears to bear similarity of name with the chandals but were concerned with skinning of dead animals and leather-working.

The Doms eat unclean food. Neither any Brahmin could perform their religious duties nor would the common barber nor

2. R.G.Bhandarker, Early History of India, p. 493.
even the common washerman would work for them.

The Dom, one of the Scheduled Castes and traditionally concerned with the task of scavenging, is also worthy of consideration in this connection. The other castes were the chuhra in the Punjab, the Bhangi (Mehater) in Rajasthan and Bombay, the Bhuinmali and Hari in Bengal and the Haddi in Orissa.

The Maharastri Mahar, Andhra Pradesh's Mala, Madrasi Pariyan (Pallan and Sains), West-Bengali Bagdi and Bihari Mushar are generally lumped together as field labourers because of their menial status and their being generally landless. They are supposed to convey pollution even without touch, either by coming with a specific distance or by their shadow, and are classed among impure untouchables.

Some artisan castes have been relegated to the class of pure untouchables. The most interesting case of such castes which is the largest in number, is the Kori of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar which is a weaver caste of Northern India. The Pasi, the Thiyam and the Sanam complete the survey of important scheduled castes. The Pasis class in the country have their concentration in the States of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. State-wise, in Uttar Pradesh, the Pasis numbered over 12 lakhs in 1901 and the Kori numbered about 10 lakhs and these two were the largest single units among the 25 or so castes which were

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1. R.G. Shandarker, Early History of India, p. 495.
listed under this category.

In Bihar, among the 17 castes of this group the numerically most important were the Dusadh, over 12 lakhs, and the Mushar, over 6 lakhs.

The largest bulk of the castes of this group, numerically speaking, came from Bengal where there were 25 such castes.

In Madras, the principal castes of this group were the Pallan, the Shamam and Thiyam, numbering over 8 lakhs.

SCHEDULED CASTES AT PRESENT:

The term 'scheduled caste' occurs in the Constitution of the Republic of India, but it does not contain a definition of the term. Article 341 of the Constitution empowers the President, after consulting the heads of the particular States, to modify by an order the castes, races, or tribes, which shall for the purposes of this Constitution be deemed to be scheduled castes in relation to the State. And the second clause of the Article empowers Parliament to pass a law to indicate or include in or exclude from the list so modified by the President "any caste, race or tribe or part of a group within any caste, race or tribe".

The scheduled castes, formerly known as depressed classes

and forming the fourth order of the fourfold division of Hindu society, have in the Republican Constitution been provided with special privileges in the matter of recruitment to services and also with special provision for representation in the legislative bodies.

The State Government have recognised the following scheduled castes. The details of it can be seen in Appendix No. 1. A State-wise break up of the Scheduled Caste is like this: Andhra Pradesh 60, Assam 16, Bihar 22, Maharashtra 46, Gujrat 53, Kerala 70, Madhya Pradesh 35, Madras 79, Mysore 72, Orissa 94, Punjab 37, Rajasthan 92, Uttar Pradesh 66, West Bengal 63, Delhi 45, Himachal Pradesh 52, Manipur 7, Tripura 37, and Jammu & Kashmir 13.

SCHEDULED TRIBES:

Although castes, tribes, sects, racial and social groups and classes of various kinds are found in India, it is the caste and the tribes which dominate - the former in Hindu society and the latter in primitive communities.

When one looks into the definitions¹ of the tribes put forward by the anthropologists, one is bound to be bewildered by the dissimilarity of their views as regards what constitutes a tribe. Kinship ties, common territory, one language, joint

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¹ The smallest definition of a tribe as suggested by W.J. Perry is - "a group speaking a common dialect and inhabiting a common territory". D.N. Majumdar, The Fortunes of Primitive Tribes, p. 27.

"A tribe is a collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a common territory and is not usually endogamous, though originally it might have been so". D.N. Majumdar, Op. cit., p. 27.
ownership, one political organisation, absence of internecine strife, all have been referred to as the main characteristics of a tribe.

Some anthropologists have, however, not recognised some of these characteristics. For example, Rivers does not mention habitation in a common territory as a necessary feature of a tribal organization.

D.K. Majumdar defines a tribe as a social group with territorial affiliation with no specialization of functions, ruled by tribal officers, hereditary or otherwise, united in language or castes, following tribal traditions, beliefs and customs, and on top of everything conscious of ethnic and territorial integration.

In India a tribe is definitely a territorial group; it has a traditional territory, and emigrants always refer to it as their home. The Santals, for example, working in the Assam tea gardens refer to particular regions of Bihar or West Bengal, from where they migrated, as their home.

Though not all members of a tribe are invariably kins of each other, but within every Indian tribe kinship operates as a powerful associative regulation and integrating factor. The result is tribal endogamy and the division of a tribe into class and sub-class. A tribe is a political unit in the sense that the tribal society owns a political organisation administered either by hereditary tribal chiefs, or when
various sections are welded into a territorial unit, by hereditary kings. Each section of a tribe, has a council of elders to assist the hereditary headman in tribal affairs.¹

Politically, Indian tribes are directly under the control of the State Governments and they have been accorded proper and due representation in their tribal 'Panchayats'. Thus they are proving themselves instrumental in the welfare activities concerning the community as a whole.²

There are certain other distinguishing features of Indian tribes. They have their own dormitory institutions, and as a result there is institutional 'schooling' for boys and girls. There are distinctive customs regarding birth, marriage and death. Their moral code is different from that of the general mass of the Hindus & Muslims and their religious beliefs and rituals stand out distinctly and completely³ from the rest.

TRIBES IN INDIA

The high castes and the tribes are at the extreme ends of the Indian social structure, the intermediate rungs being filed by a large number of castes which either have progressed from the tribal stage or have been demoted from


2. The existence of informal Panchayats in tribals is not something limited to them. Most of the lower castes in India possess a caste government in the Panchayat system which is now fast being replaced by the caste sabhas or associations with a working committee.

their initial status by non-observance of customary rites and practices by forbidden intermarriages and by adopting new customs and novel occupations and eating forbidden food.

The Kharwars of Palamn and Mirzapur who claim a higher origin and wear the sacred thread, and the Pulas of Dinajpur, Rungpur, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar who claim to have originated from Kshatriyas and call themselves 'Rajbanshis' afford instance in point.

Thus there has been a larger degree of mobility for tribes to higher caste and the other way round than is generally realised. As the tribes enter into caste economy, as the lower castes emerge with occupational status, the primitive attitude to life undergoes significant change, and tribal customs and practices lose their value. Such a transformation is now under way with a greater momentum than probably there ever was.

Both geography as well as tribal demography permit a regional grouping and a zonal classification of tribes in India. On the basis of Geographical propinquity, three tribal zones can be demarcated in India. These may be called the North- North Eastern, the Central and the Southern Zones.

Of these three zones, the least explored is the North- North Eastern. But it is of immense strategic and political importance as it has a common border with China, Burma, and

Pakistan. It also includes the famous Naga tribes, the only tribe in the Indian Union to fight for and get a separate state of Nagaland for itself. The Central Zone is most densely populated. Next to it in area, numbers and available ethnographic knowledge is the Southern Zone.

Fixation of racial origins of tribal communities in India has been a complicated task and, due to lack of evidence regarding the nature and routes of migration, their racial history is largely conjectural. Inter-mixture and migrations make the reconstruction of racial history and origins very difficult.

The Scheduled Tribes that have been recognised by the State Governments are: Andhra Pradesh 33, Assam 35, Bihar 30, Maharashtra 73, Kerala 38, Madhya Pradesh 62, Madras 42, Mysore 63, Orissa 62, Punjab 3, Rajasthan 30, West Bengal 41, Himachal Pradesh 6, Manipur 29, Tripura 19 and the Laccadive, Minicoy and Amindivi Islands 13.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF SCHEDULED TRIBES:

The social organization of a small group is the organization of inter-related roles at a particular time within it as expressive of certain permanent or semi-permanent structural principles. Hindu social organization consists of the pattern of intra and intercaste relations. Tribal social organization is different from the social organization of castes in that

there is not so much inter-connection and communications among tribes were geographical contiguity has forced it upon some. The Munda and the Oraon of Chhota Nagpur afford an excellent example.

Social organization would consists of the inter-relations between particular type of groups, that is, those which make social life possible like the family, school (if any), dormitory clan and men’s club. The inter-relation between these would present the total pattern of tribal organization.

T.C. Das has discussed seven types of tribal organizations in India. The classification has been made on the basis of difference in the type of units found in a tribe, and the nature of their inter-relations. It is believed that regulation of marriage is the most important function of these units, and, therefore these groups have been characterized as either monogamous, or endogamous, or exogamous, or orthogamous.

THE KADARS

Perhaps the most primitive of the South-Indian forest tribes is that of the Kadars of Kerala. The Kadars depend on food-gathering and hunting but do not do fishing because of the absence of water. The Kadar family is strongly bilateral in character - each side is equally stressed. Though residence is patri-local, high regard is shown for the maternal relation. The important social position of the maternal uncle is supposed to be possibly due to diffusion from the

matrilineal Kerala people.

Among the Kadors property is meagre and ownership too vague. There are no formal inheritance laws. The Kadors live in bamboo-made huts. Fifteen or twenty huts form a village.

THE HO, THE MUNDA AND THE KHOND:

The village of the Ho built on high ground or a ridge, in the midst of an uneven surface, is placed within a 'Pir' division. The Hos as a tribe are strictly endogamous. The tribe is divided into exogamous clans known as Killi. Among the Munda tribes of Chhota Nagpur (Bihar) several totemic groups or territorial units constitute a 'Parha' or 'Pir'.


The Khond tribe in Orissa and in the Ganjam Agency tracts, is divided into a large number of exogamous village units or 'Goshi' which organize into small or big territorial units so that affiliation to the village does not exclude loyalty to the larger territorial units.


THE KHASI:

Living in the hills of Assam, the Khasi are a matrilineal tribe. They are divided into various social classes. There is a definite order of social precedence among the clans but


inter-marriage between them is not prohibited. The Āhāsi are an endogamous tribe divided into exogamous clans subdivided into exogamous matrilocal families.

THE GOND:

The Gonds are divided into a number of clans. Some clans like the Goha, Tekam, Loha, Tirgam are totemic groups. Some other clans like Subhadar, Jujur, Padam, Lonchatis are nickname clans. The Bahadadia, Jampuris, Sargulis, Ratnapuris clans are local or territorial units. Others are named after gotras such as Shandilyas, and Kashyapa etc.1 The Gonds are found to be grouped into the three classes of aristocrats, tenants and labourers. The Raj Gonds, including Malguzars and Patels, represent the aristocracy. The Dhur Gonds are the tenants along with the Pardahans and the Āhās.

THE TODA AND THE GARO:

The Todas are an endogamous tribe divided into three clans such as endogamous moities, Taivalioi and Tarttaroi. The endogamous moieties are further divided into six endogamous totemic clans and the tarttaroi into twelve. Polygyny and polyandry are practised, giving rise to group-marriages. The family is patrilocal and descent is patrilineal, but enough recognition is given to either line or descent.2

The matrilineal Garo society of Assam are divided into

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1. Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, pp. 2-3.
2. Ibid, p. 4.
two phratries, Marak and Sangna, which do not inter-marry.

THE NATURE OF TRIBAL ECONOMY IN INDIA:

Economic organization consists of the ordering and organization of human relations and human efforts in order to procure maximum necessities of day to-day life as possible with minimum effort. The economic activities pursued by tribals are mainly six hunting, trapping, cattle-breeding, trading, farming and various arts and crafts.

Money as a store and measurement of value and medium of exchange is not widely used in primitive society, and intra-tribal economic relations are always based on barter and exchange.

The profit motive in economic dealings is mostly absent. Incentive is here provided by sense of mutual obligation and solidarity. Cooperative and collective endeavour is one of the main characteristics of tribal economic organization in India.

The regular market as an institution is missing. What comes nearest to it is the weekly market or the festival and seasonal meets.

Most of the economic activities of a primitive people are directed towards the manufacture of consumption rather

than production goods, and even there specialization is small.

The notion of property is closely related to display and expenditure of wealth rather than to its accumulation. Among the Naga Tribes the importance of giving feasts of mert is supreme. Still land and personal effects are owned as property.

Among the tribes of India, both types of ownership are known, collective as well as individual, although, generally speaking, the emphasis nowadays is on individual ownership.

The vast numbers of tribal people in India (totalling up to nearly 20 millions) are found at various levels of economic under-development. Tribal economy is essentially an economy of mixed activities. Tribals use all kinds of occupations to eke out a subsistance, and combine hunting with honey-gathering, lumbering with chase, shifting cultivation with the domestication of animals which shows the complexity of economic existence in the lower cultures.

In 1951, of the 1.9 crores of total tribal population, 1.7 crores were dependent on agriculture. Men and women are nearly equal participants in agricultural pursuits. Agriculture, thus, gets the central place in the economic activity of the tribal people in India. Examples of agricultural tribes are the Oraon, the Munda, the Bhil, the Santhal, the Majhwar, the

Kharwar, the Baiga, the Korwa, the Gond, the Ho and the tribes of Assam.

In tropical zones all over the world is practised some form or other of what is called shifting cultivation. Among the tribes of India, shifting cultivation is widely prevalent, though it is known by different names. The Naga call it 'Jhum', the Bhuiya distinguish two forms of it - 'Dohi' and 'Koman', the Maria of Bastar call it 'Penda', the Khond call it 'Podu' and the Baiga, the 'Bewar'.

Certain sections of the Naga people, like the Rengama Naga, are experts in terrace cultivation which is possible on a hill slope. The Bhil, the Gond, the Munda, the Santhol and the Khadi are not food gatherers like Kamar, Reddy and Baiga, but perform plough-cultivation, similar to that practised by the non-tribals.

In the North-Eastern Zone, terrace agriculture of a more or less settled kind is the dominant type of economic pursuit. In the Central zone, shifting axe cultivation is the method of agriculture. In the Southern Zone, economic organization of the tribes is of the elementary food gathering stage. Shifting cultivation may also be seen in the North-Eastern as well as the Southern Zones.

Among subsidiary occupations are hunting, fishing, basket-

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making, and working as agricultural and industrial labourers in certain areas. Certain tribal groups like the Pardhan live on music and singing. Employment by the government in road building and in forest is also a regular mode of occupation for these tribal people.

Supplementary occupations include many types of works. Certain classes among the Saora, the Khond and the Gond devote themselves to cow-herding, metal working, weaving and cane-making. The Chasi make gut from the fibrous tissues of animals. The Theru live on farming and are the manufacturers of furniture, household utensils, musical instruments, weapons, rope and mats.

Indian tribal people have come into contact with industrial life in two ways. Either they have migrated to industrial areas or industries have sprung up near them. On the other hand, the Santhal, the Khond and the Gond have migrated in large numbers to Assam and have taken up various jobs in tea plantations. Certain tribal areas in Central India have been found rich in natural ores, coal, iron and steel, and other industries have sprung up in these areas. Tribal labour is also employed by labour contractors in collecting forest produce, lumbering and road building.

The disabilities imposed by the caste system, the backward economic and social position of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes and their consequent ignorance in

the political field in relation to other developed communities have proved detrimental to these communities. Their backwardness in all these fields has kept them far away from the conditions of social-economic development. Therefore the Constitution of India provides them some special facilities for their development which would be dealt in the following chapters.