CHAPTER – IV

DR. AMBEDKAR’S VIEWS ON RESERVATION

Dr. Ambedkar, a constitutional expert, philosopher and statesman emerged on the national scene, firstly, as a great crusader for the oppressed and depressed but his laudable contributions in the process of nation building entitled him the exalted position of a top ranking nationalist leader, patriot and statesman of modern India for whom the country's interest was utmost. As a true nationalist he attached great importance to the unity and territorial integrity of India and always exhorted his fellow countrymen in general and his followers in particular to defend the hard won independence. His fervent appeal to his followers to shun narrow and sectarian outlook and identify their interests with the country's interests is an eloquent testimony of his deepest loyalty to the mother India.

It is true that in early years of his political career he saw the British as the saviour of the depressed classes and even in subsequent years was mild in his tone in his criticism of the British rule and gave first and foremost priority to the emancipation of millions of untouchables instead of ‘Poorna Swaraj’. this does not mean that he was pro-British and stooge of imperialism as some people described him in the freedom struggle days. He was certainly not that kind of patriot whose aim was to gain power and more power for himself and for his class. Ambedkar belonged to that class of patriots for which the practical realization of the ideal of 'one man, one value' in all walks of life, political, economical and social was the cherished goal of their political life. Again, he was against that notion of nationalism which would help the high caste Hindus in cheating the lower caste Hindus in free and independent India. In his view nationalism denotes 'the desire for a separate national existence for
those who are bound by this tie of kinship' and there cannot be nationalism without the feeling of social unity being in existence. Since in the caste ridden Hindu society the feeling of social unity was missing, he successfully fought for the abolition of untouchability and the guarantee of social, economic and political rights for the down-trodden before power was transferred to Indians.

His belief that without the freedom of the people, nationalism becomes a means of internal slavery, forced labour and oppression for the poor and the depressed classes informed his conception of nation-building. In his scheme of things India was to be an egalitarian society in which there would be neither any oppressed class nor suppressed class with all burdens to carry nor any class with all the privileges. The only way to achieve the goal of national integration was to provide the depressed classes its due share in the value processes, namely power, resources, education, skill series and alike. His demand for the reservation of the seats in legislatures and services for the scheduled castes was the external manifestation of his perception of nation-building. Political strategies which he used to secure constitutional safeguards for his community made him a controversial leader of his times. His mounting attack on Hindu religion and the confrontationist and uncompromising stand which he took on Hindu Gods and Goddesses under the belief that Hindu religion was responsible for the slavery and oppression of the untouchables, caused widespread resentment in the Hindu society. Similarly, his hostility to Congress and Mahatma Gandhi and his denunciation on the Congress Party's programmes and policies for the upliftment of Harijans and the abolition of untouchability was not only condemned by the nationalist forces but also led many to believe that his was dividing the society on the basis of castes on the behest of the Britishers to create impediments in the national liberation movement. The demand for separate electorates for the Scheduled Castes which Ambedkar for the first time spelt out in the memorandum presented to Minorities Committee of the Round Table Conference and which was eventually recognized in the Communal Award given by the then British
Prime Minister Ramsay Macdonald generated a lot of controversy as discussed in chapter three. Although he subsequently gave up this demand under the public pressure created by Gandhiji's fast unto death and agreed on a joint electorate with reservations raised to 151 from 77 seats recognised in the communal award, Ambedkar remained a controversial leader in the eyes of the majority caste Hindus. Similarly, his early opposition to the establishment of the Constituent Assembly out of fear that if Scheduled Castes joined it, they would be outnumbered by the Hindu majority also aroused suspicion about his credentials as a nationalist leader.

But his works and contributions as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly, as the union labour minister and as the leader of the opposition party proved all these suspicions and confusions about him unfounded. In fact, as Ambedkar himself claimed he was not against Hindu but against the evils of Hinduism because he believed that they were responsible for the pathetic plight and exploitation of the downtrodden. Again the demand regarding separate electorates for the scheduled castes espoused by him emanated from his concern to avoid the total dependence on the sweet will of the caste Hindus in matters affecting the destiny of millions of untouchables.

At a time when Dr. Ambedkar appeared on the political scene of India there were three types of minorities which were craving for special protection: (1) Religious minorities like Muslims, Sikhs and Christians and their problems were essentially political, (2) Linguistic minorities and their problems were mainly conservation of their language, (3) Depressed classes and their problems were basically social and economic.

Dr. Ambedkar belonged to this third socio-economic minority and had suffered terrible humiliating consequences of 'untouchability' along with an estimated sixty millions of his community at that time. Consequently, it was but natural that the socio-economic upliftment of this group from age-long bondage of quasi-human existence had the first priority in his thought and
practice. This was the main motivating force behind all his conceptualizations, actions and reactions. Nevertheless, it will not be correct to say that he was a minority leader. Dr. Ambedkar was a national leader who was visualizing an Indian society free from all inequalities and inequities. Thus, humanisation and secularization of the Indian political process stands out as the main contribution of Dr. Ambedkar.

According to Dr. Ambedkar genesis of depressed classes in India is the caste system of the Hindu religion and society. Consequently, he always held the view that the problem of depressed classes in India is religio-political and not socio-economic as advocated by other leaders including Mahatma Gandhi. Thus according to him, unless Hindu society is restructured and the depressed classes are given due share in the political power, their problem cannot be effectively solved. It is for this reason he found Gandhi's approach to the problem of 'untouchability' as cosmetic and superficial.¹ This vision of Dr. Ambedkar becomes absolutely clear from his undelivered speech which he had prepared for his presidential address for the Jat Pat Todak Mandal's Annual Convention at Lahore in 1936. Convention had to be cancelled because it was thought by the organizers that the views of Dr. Ambedkar are too radical. Though the Mandal (Society) was against caste system but it was not prepared to take on the Hindu orthodoxy for this purpose. Nevertheless Dr. Ambedkar published his speech in the form of a pamphlet.²

Dr. Ambedkar was a student of Sanskrit, so he had the access to the core Hindu texts which untouchables were not allowed to read. Therefore, with the help of theological facts he tried to transform 'emotional aversion' to caste into a 'intellectual challenge' by giving it a religio-political base.³ Accordingly he wrote: “Caste is not a physical object like a wall of bricks or a

¹ Dr. Ambedkar presented a Paper on "Castes in India, their Mechanism, Genesis and Development" before the Anthropology Seminar of Dr. Goldenweiser in May 1916.
line of barbed wire which prevents Hindus from co-mingling and which has, therefore, to be pulled down. Caste is a notion, it is a state of mind; destruction of caste does not, therefore, mean the destruction of a physical barrier. It is a notional change.... It must be recognized that Hindu observe caste not because they are inhuman or wrong headed. They observe caste because they are deeply religious.4

He further went on to write: “People are not wrong, in observing caste. In my view, what is wrong is their religion which has inculcated this notion of caste. If this is correct, obviously the enemy you must grapple with is not people who observe caste but the Shastras which teach them this religion of caste. Criticising and ridiculing people for not inter-dining or inter-marrying or occasionally holding inter-caste dinners and celebrating inter-caste marriages is futile method of achieving desired end. The real remedy is to destroy the belief in the sanctity of shastras.......”5

Explaining further that why a popular mass movement against caste system is not possible, he wrote: “castes form a graded system of sovereignty, high and low, which are jealous of their status and which know that if a general dissolution came, some of them stood to lost more of their prestige and power than other do. 'You cannot, therefore, have a general mobilization of Hinduism, to use a military expression, for an attack on the caste system.'”6

The first thing that Ambedkar says about Untouchability is that this kind of evil practice is unique to India. In other societies too, we find social inequalities, classification of people into superior vs. inferior people and free vs. unfree individuals: Slaves in Rome, Jews in Germany, Negroes in America, Viviens in Britain, and so on. Hierarchical differences of some sort have existed at every place in the past. Yet in no country do we find exact parallel caste system or Untouchability as we find in India.

4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.

151
Population figures were collected across India for the first time in 1881. Since then, census figures have been collected once in ten years. In 1891, an attempt was made to collect caste-wise figures. In 1930, it was declared that the population of untouchables was approximately four and half crores (44.6 millions). According to the 1951 census, the population of untouchables was 5 crores 13 lakhs. So many crores of people subjected to Untouchability!

It is a common practice that both natives as well as foreigners glorify or romanticize Indian villages thus: There is great purity of mind and innocence, beauty, unity and so on! As if there exists a great system of equality! In fact, the entire population there is actually split into castes. While people of the upper castes and Shudra castes live in the village, the untouchable castes live outside the village at its border. This is the case with most Indian villages.

If we have to divide the entire population of Hindus according to the system described in the Hindu religious texts, we may divide them into 4 classes (4 layers). This is not a division of four varnas. The population of four varnas also comes under this division. The entire population belonging to the four varnas constitutes the 'caste Hindus' ('Savarna Hindus'). Those who do not have relationship with caste Hindus, are 'Non-caste Hindus' ('Avama-Hindus'). These Non-caste Hindus have such other names also as Antya, Antyaja, Antyavasin and Bahya.  

Showing the entire Hindu population in the form of a table, Ambedkar said: "Perhaps a diagrammatic presentation may be helpful. I give below one which, in my judgement, facilitates the understanding of the social structure of the Hindus."

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8 Ibid., Vol. 5, p. 112.
Ambedkar's explained his schematic representation as follows: "The diagram shows that although there are innumerable castes among the Hindus, they can all be grouped under four classes. Of these four, Class I forms the Herenfolk or the Ruling Class, Classes III and IV form the subject people... Those in Class I form the privileged classes of the Hindu society. The Hindu social order was created by them. They alone benefit by it while the aim of these in Class I is to save it."

What is Ambedkar arguing here? In Hindu society, not only Brahmins but all the 3 upper castes have privileges. They themselves created the 'caste system'. It is not simply one class that benefited from the caste system: all the 3 classes have benefited. They are the rulers. If we assume things like this, it will not be correct to consider every issue as the creation of Brahmins alone. It would be proper to view the issue in terms of how all the upper castes obtained privileges. Ambedkar's argument itself supports this point. As classified in the table, it is proper to show the first three Varnas-Brahmins,

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9 Ibid., Vol. 5, pp. 112-3.
Kshatriyas and Vysyas—as one class and the remaining population as different classes.

When four varnas are analysed one gets the impression that Shudras are the only occupants of the lowest stratum of society. But this classification shows that in fact there are people who are at an even lower social level than Shudras. Let the 'primitive' and 'criminal' tribes are considered and then return to the 'untouchables'.

Primitive tribes:

"They live in small scattered huts in forests. They live on wild fruits, nuts and roots. Fishing and hunting are also resorted to for the purpose of securing food. Agriculture plays a very small part in their social economy. Food supplies being extremely precarious they lead a life of semi-starvation from which there is no escape. As to clothes they economize them to a vanishing point. They move almost in a state of complete nakedness... They have very little indeed in the way of material effects... a few cooking pots and a basket or two... They put cock's plumes and peacock's feathers in their turbans. Many girls are profusely tattooed, especially on their faces, and some of them on their legs as well... Witchcraft, sorcery, animal and human sacrifice make up their religion. Without education, with no idea of science or of the knowledge of the working of nature, steeped in ignorance and superstition, these Primitive tribes have been living on the outskirts and in close conformity with civilization in a savage stage which has been their lot for ages".

These primitive tribes did not face the condition of 'Untouchability'.

The Criminal tribes:

The Criminal Classes at one time included such well organized confederacies of Professional Criminals as the Pindharies and the Thugs. The

10 Ibid.
11 Ibid., p. 130
Pindharies were a predatory body of armed gangsters. Their organization was an open military organization of freebooters who could muster 20,000 fine horses and even more. They were under the command of brigand chiefs. Chintu, one of the most powerful commanders had under his single command 10,000 horses, including 5,000 good cavalry, besides infantry and guns....They were subject of none. They rendered loyalty to none. They respected none and plundered all high and low, rich and poor without fear or compunction.... The Thugs were a well organized body of professional assassins, who in gangs of from 10 to 200 travelled in various guises throughout India, worked themselves into the confidence of wayfarers of the wealthier class and.. when a favourable opportunity occurred, strangled them by throwing a handkerchief or noose round their necks and then plundered and buried them....Assassination for gain was with them a religious duty, and was considered a holy and honourable profession.... It was not until the British became rulers of the country that any attempt was made to suppress the Thugs. By 1835, 382 Thugs were hanged and 986 were transported or imprisoned for life. Even as late as 1879 the number of registered Thugs was 344..."12

These criminal tribes did not count as untouchables. These murderers too treat untouchables as inferior to them. These people are not primitive tribes who live in forests, nor criminals making a living out of crime. They are labourers who live entirely on their own labour. They do not generally possess either lands or other resources. When they do, it is very little. It is negligible. Their only means of survival is labour on the lands of the upper castes in return for whatever the upper castes are pleased to give.

Civilization is a gradually accumulated store of knowledge concerning nature, crafts and arts. Indians boast that their society had reached a very high degree of civilization in the ancient times itself when people of other societies in the world were leading a primitive life and moving naked.

12 Ibid., pp. 131-32.
The Hindu civilization kept some part of their population in the jungle like animals; turned some into bandits, and murderers, and it gifted Untouchability to the labouring people.

Words like 'Chaturvama' (four varnas), Savarnas (Caste varnas) and Avarnas (Non-caste varnas) to an extent represent archaic usage. It is not the language used in the present day society. The modern forms of the archaic classification are classes 'Hindus-Untouchables'. In Ambedkar's words: “Those whom Manu included within the Chaturvarna correspond to the modern composite class called Hindus. Those whom Manu called Bahayas (outside the Chaturvarna) correspond to the present day untouchables of India. The dividing line between the four classes-Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra – included within Chaturvarna have in modern times become some what blurred and there has been some degree of amalgamation between them. But the line which Manu drew between those within Chaturvarna from those outside the Chaturvarna is still clear and is not allowed to be effaced or crossed.” 13

This means that in this sense the Shudras became one with the first 3 varnas because they did not have to experience Untouchability. It also means that there is a wide gulf between the untouchables and others who do not experience Untouchability.

Ambedkar never claimed high caste status for Untouchables, since such claims implied an acceptance of upper caste superiority, nor did he invoke another common claim - that Untouchables were pre-Aryan, the original settlers of land. While Untouchables in Madras and Punjab were to base their demands for separate political status on a claim to pre-Aryan origin, Ambedkar argued that the Untouchables’ position in Indian society was of social, not racial, origin and therefore subject to change.

Ambedkar’s views as to the origin of untouchability are presented in The Untouchables published in 1948, late in his political career. According to

13 Ibid., p. 279.
this account, untouchability originated in the practices of separation and
denigration imposed on those who remained Buddhists during an earlier
period of renascent Hinduism. Despite the repressive role attributed to Hindus,
Ambedkar's attitude toward Hinduism remained ambivalent for much of his
life. In the early 1920s he participated in efforts at "Sanskritization" in which
Untouchables imitated high caste religious ritual. But he soon found that the
performance of Vedic style weddings, the donning of the sacred thread, and
similar efforts to emulate upper caste ritual practice had little effect on the
attitudes of others. Such innovations were dropped in the 1930s. However,
from 1927 to 1935 Ambedkar helped organize campaigns to force the opening
of Hindu temples to Untouchables. This also proved to be ineffective and in
1935 Ambedkar decided to reject all claims to Hinduism by converting to
another religion. At about this time, he presented in The Annihilation of Caste
a list of reforms for Hinduism that appears naive and legalistic, based on
abstractions rather than possibilities. The cardinal reforms listed were: there
should be one standard book of the Hindu religion, acceptable to all Hindus;
priests should receive their office not by heredity, but by state examination,
priests should be limited in number by law and should be subject to
disciplinary action by the state. Ambedkar's final resolution of the
untouchables' religious dilemma was adopted in 1956 when he converted to
Buddhism in an attempt to link the Untouchables to the greatness of India's
past while denying the contemporary concept of caste. This solution was in
keeping with Ambedkar's pride in India's culture, a theme that appears
intermittently throughout his writings, and his admiration of such religious
reformers as the Buddha, Kabir, and Mahatma Phule.

Ambedkar, therefore, did not find Gandhi's condemnation of
untouchability radical; he was in close touch with reformers who not only
condemned untouchability, but the varna concept of caste as well, and who
accepted his leadership in determining solutions to the problem. Not only as a

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highly educated Untouchable to whom pity was anathema, but also as a Maharashtrian reformer, Ambedkar found Gandhi's general ideology unappealing. Joshi's latter-day evaluation of the Maharashtrian urban intelligensia's attitude toward Gandhian reform describes the milieu in which Ambedkar worked: "They disdained Gandhi's traditional outlook and modes of behaviour.... They considered his philosophy outdated and rejected his program, which was based primarily on a concern for the rural masses. . . . In any case, they had no interest in a . . . drab reform program which could neither stimulate their intellect nor excite them to revolutionary action"15

Ambedkar's programs were intended, to integrate the Untouchables into Indian society in modern, not traditional ways, and on as high a level as possible. This goal stood in marked contrast to Gandhi's "Ideal Bhangi"16 'who would continue to do sanitation work even though his status would equal that of a Brahman. Ambedkar's ideal for the depressed was "to raise their educational standard so that they may know their own conditions, have aspirations to rise to the level of highest Hindu and be in a position to use political power as a means to that end".17 Both reformers had a vision of equality, but for Ambedkar equality meant not equal status of the varnas, but equal social, political, and economic opportunity for all. Ambedkar planned his programs to bring the Untouchable from a state of "dehumanization" and "slavery" into one of equality through the use of modern methods based on education and the exercise of legal and political rights. At the same time, Ambedkar's modernizing ideology was tempered in practice by a clear perception of the tenacity of caste and tradition. He sought to awaken in the Untouchables an awareness of their debased condition and common interests that would promote the unity needed for the development of effective

17 Thakkar, A. V., Thakkar Baba Eightieth Birthday Commemoration Volume, 1945, p. 7
organizations and mass action. For such reasons Ambedkar advocated a separatist policy accentuating caste distinctions as an initial stage in creating a society in which identities would be unimportant.

Ambedkar's commitment to education as a major means for Untouchable advancement led him to initiate in the 1920s a program for the creation of hostels for Untouchable students. This effort resulted in the development of a system of colleges organized by the People's Education Society, founded by Ambedkar in 1945. While Ambedkar exhorted numerous conferences of Untouchables to expand their educational opportunities at every level, much of his own effort was aimed at producing highly educated men, capable of raising the image of the Untouchable through their ability to function at the highest level of Indian urban society. He also advocated the abandonment of customs and practices associated with the stereotype of the Untouchable, including the consumption of alcoholic beverages and carrion beef. Such pronouncements on the need to live clean and moral lives sound very much like Gandhi's. However, Ambedkar's vision of the Untouchable's future role went far beyond that of Gandhi, or indeed that of any other Untouchable leader.

Ambedkar maintained that the untouchables were an element separate from Hinduism and went to great lengths to prove it. He went to the root of the matter when he said that the Hindus had much to lose by the abolition of untouchability, though they had nothing to fear from political reservations leading to this abolition. The matter was economic rather than religious. His resounding words need to be quoted extensively:

The system of untouchability is a gold mine to the Hindus. In it the 240 millions of Hindus have 60 millions of Untouchables to serve as their retinue to enable the Hindus to maintain pomp and ceremony and to cultivate a feeling of pride and dignity befitting a master class, which cannot be fostered and sustained unless there is beneath it a servile class to look down upon. In it the 240 millions of Hindus have 60 million of Untouchables to be used as forced
labourers.— In it the 240 millions of Hindus have 60 millions of Untouchables to do the dirty work of scavengers and sweepers which the Hindu is debarred by his religion to do and which must be done by non-Hindus who could be no others than untouchables. In it the 240 millions of Hindus have 60 millions of Untouchables who can be kept to lower jobs. — In it the 240 millions of Hindus have the 60 millions of Untouchables who can be used as shock absorbers in slumps and dead-weights in booms, for in slumps it is the Untouchable who is fired first and the Hindu is fired last and in booms the Hindu is employed first and the Untouchable is employed last. Untouchability is not a religious system by an "economic system which is worse than slavery".18

For the removal of untouchability the Congress prepared the Temple-Entry Bill. Ambedkar pointed out some drawbacks in it, because it was not unequivocally accepted that banning temple entry to the Untouchables was something to abhor. As Ambedkar decided to use political means for the betterment of the Untouchables, he told the Sawarna Hindus in a clear-cut manner — "to open or not to open your temples is a question for you to consider and not for me to agitate. If you think it is bad manners not to respect the sacredness of human personality, open your temples and be gentlemen. If you be a Hindu than be a gentleman then shut the doors and damn yourself for I don't care to come."19

Ambedkar realized that temple-entry was not a key to solve the problems of the Untouchables. He was convinced that the Congress had no programme for the Untouchables after the temple entry. Ambedkar wanted egalitarian Hinduism. It needed intensive religious reforms which would result in the annihilation of four varnas. Ambedkar called Gandhi's religious reforms showy. Gandhi planned a programme for opening Guruvayur (Kerala) Krishna

19 Ambedkar, B. R., What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables?, op. cit., p. 107.
temple for the Untouchables but left it. On the Temple-Entry Bill the Congress followed retreat. Senior leaders like Ranga Ayyar criticised, "...are not only betraying the cause of Untouchables but they are betraying the principles of Mahatma himself for we know that Mahatma's fast was directed toward the uplift of the Untouchables by giving them concession in regard to the Communal Award." He did not spare Rajgopalachari. Ambedkar expected that Gandhi should have questioned Rajaji because of his waived stand, instead Gandhi took Ranga Ayyar to task. Gandhi seems to have taken legal stand. He explained, "it was not a measure in which Congress, Hindus were more interested than the other Hindus. To have, therefore, dragged the Congress name into the discussion was unfortunate. The Bill deserved gentle handling." As per the wording of the pact, Gandhi's argument was irrefutable. The responsibility of making the pact success rested with all the Hindus, however the target of criticism was the Congressmen.

With the initiation of Gandhi, Anti-untouchability League, was founded on September 30, 1932 which on December 9, 1932, was converted into the 'Harijan Sevak Sangh'. It was to work for the social, economic and educational development of the Untouchables. In the Tilak Swarajya Fund Rs. 1 crore were collected while in the Kasturba Memorial Fund Rs. 1 crore and 15 lakhs were collected. However, in 8 years only Rs. 27,67,307 were expended on the welfare of the Untouchables. He alleged that his disciples were not given help by the Harijan Sevak Sangh. Madan Mohan Malviya tried to refute Ambedkar's allegation and said that all the beneficiaries of the Harijan Sevak Sangh were the disciples of Ambedkar and had as bitter feelings about the Sawarna Hindus as had Ambedkar.22

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20 Ibid., p. 117.
21 Ibid., p. 121.
22 Ibid., p. 128.
Ambedkar had a peculiar approach to the problem of the removal of untouchability and insisted the Hindus to model their programme on it. He made the following suggestions to the Harijan Sevak Sangh:

1. to try to get civil rights to the Untouchables
2. to try to provide equal opportunity to the Untouchables
3. to spread communication between the Untouchables and the Sawarna Hindus and
4. to operate the organisation speedily.

1. To try to get civil rights to the Untouchables - In order to achieve this objective it was necessary to throw open schools, wells, chavadis (village panchayat office), means of transportation for the Untouchables. The path might prove sanguine but it was a must. There was possibility that the courts might be resorted to and the police would take the side of the Sawarna Hindus. The Harijan Sevak Sangh should have a battalion of the social workers to support the Untouchables. Ambedkar did not believe that the Sawarna Hindus would undergo a gradual change. Crisis was necessary for it and it could not be created in Gandhian way. Ambedkar's argument that violence was inevitable in the Hindu and Untouchables' strife and government would safeguard the Hindus does not suit his democratic thoughts. The basic relationship between the Sawarna and Untouchables was to be modified. In case, he had expressed this philosophy in a broader perspective and had maintained continuity, the entire framework of his philosophy would have been changed. He made loose use of the concepts of class and caste. He put the Shudras and Untouchables in a 'Servile Class'. In India near about 80% people fell in that category. The Brahmin class used to exploit the other classes with the help of (a) creating inequality (b) disarming the Shudras and Untouchables (c) preventing the Shudras and Untouchables from education, power, wealth and (d) enslaving women.

Ambedkar's attempts during 1927-1929 to abolish the untouchability assumed a peculiar shape. In his writings in the Bahishkrit Bharat he had put
the objective of Hindu Sanghtan (Hindu Unity) before the Untouchables and Sawarna Hindus. He might have guessed that with the help of Brahmin caste and process of Sanskritisation removal of untouchability did not remain a distant dream. Ambedkar was convinced that if the Brahmins initiated the social reforms, it was easy for the commoners to follow. The commoners never bothered to read the scriptures and the question of their interpretation did not arise what the Brahmins interpreted was plainly accepted by them. Ambedkar, wanted the Brahmins to interpret the Hindu Dharmashastras to invalidate the untouchability and to declare it excrescence. He sought the help of the Hindu organisations and Hindutvavadi leaders. The organisations functioning for the removal of untouchability were a few in Maharashtra. In 1923, the Congress handed over this mission to the Hindu Mahasabha. The Hindu Mahasabha was an organisation having some background of this work and naturally Ambedkar depended on it. He might have been convinced its sincere and honest work.

His ideas about the struggle between Yavani Sanskriti (Muslim Culture) and Hindu Sanskriti (Hindu Culture) had been consistent right from this period to the period of the creation of Pakistan (1927-1947). Ambedkar continuously built up a theorem that the contradictions in the freedom movement were in fact the contradictions of the Hindu and Muslim cultures. He further stated that in this struggle if Hindus wanted status quo - to continue their dominant position over the Muslims - they had to keep the Untouchables in their fold. He frightened the Hindus that if the Untouchables embraced Islam, the Hindu culture would be vanquished. He cautioned that the caste system among the Hindus would destroy the foundation of their unity. He wrote that the caste system gave birth to communal differences, which further alienated one caste from the other and kept them grooming their own parochial interests at the cost of others. This unjustifiable practice created distrust.

among them eventually leading to a strange situation that people remained contented only under the foreign ruler. The destruction of the caste system was to bring about the exit of untouchability and a solid, unified Hindu society. The occasional conversions of the Hindus and particularly of the Untouchables went on making Hindu society moribund. Though Ambedkar suggested the Hindus to spread the Shuddhi movement, his mainstay was the destruction of caste system so that the problem of accommodating newly convert Hindus would not arise. Ambedkar advised to simplify this conversion process.

Ambedkar analysed the process of Hindu Rashtra degeneration. The caste system set forth many difficulties for the downtrodden and pushed them in the asylum of the foreigners. Without the support of the Mahar, Mang and other low castes the Muslims and the British were not in a position to run this country. Ambedkar pointed out that the reason of the existence of caste system was not its merits but the only thing that the foreigners did not crush it down.

Ambedkar unleashed criticism on the Chaturvarnya system and called it a four-storied building without a staircase. Sarala Devi Choudharani was the chairperson of the Sixth Social Conference and was a Brahmin. In her address she insisted that the Chaturvarnya system should be founded on merit. According to her the then existing Brahmin class was not competent to called Brahmin, because of its utter degradation. Even the antyajas were not so degraded. She opined that any person who possessed the knowledge of the Dharma-Shastras was qualified to become Dharmadhikari, and that the mission of the Brahmin was to lead a philanthropic life and not a lusty one. If the Brahmins opted for mundane gains, they should vacate their Brahmin places of pride for the competent Vaishyas and Shudras. Ambedkar admired

24 Ibid., p. 18.
25 Ibid., pp. 22-23.
Ambedkar visited the temple of Phanaswadi (Bombay) so there was a hue and cry against it and the incharge of the temple purified it. Reacting to this Ambedkar suggested to restrict the 'varnisya behaviour'; the people of the upper varnas might take pride for their varna, caste and clan but that did not mean that they should underrate and hurt others, particularly the Untouchables when, they were in a delicate situation of rising consciousness. Ambedkar even seemed to have a compromise that the people on the caste basis might establish their separate identity but not superiority.27

In Ambedkar's affection for Hinduism latent lies his urge the welfare on the Untouchables. He wanted to absorb them in the Hindu Sanghatan; and that's why he attached more importance to Sanghatan than to Shuddhi. Ambedkar had a realistic approach that there was no need of increasing the number of the Hindus, because even if their numerical strength was more, Muslims used to beat them.28 Hence to unite them was the real key to the problem.

He suggested that the funds collected during the Ganesh festival should be used for uniting the Hindus. But in such celebrations unfair treatment was given to the Untouchables and rifts were created in Hinduism. But the interdining at Chinchpokali made the Hindu consolidation process nascent. Ambedkar brought to the notice that the Hindus forgetting their religious distinction participated in the Muslim celebration like Muharrum but the Muslims did not respond in the same way. One has to note that many a scholars have criticised Lokmanya Tilak for making such statements as made by Ambedkar. Tilak has also been accused of spreading anti-Muslim spirit; Ambedkar's thoughts do not differ even in any degree. Ambedkar wrote, every year the Hindus cooperated with the Muslims in their celebrations but Muslims used to butcher them. Taking lesson from this fact Tilak in order to

27 Ibid., ‘Yacha Parivan Changala honar nahi’, p. 79.
28 Ibid., ‘Hindu Mahasabhechi Turkasthanavar Swari’, p. 92
dissuade Hindus from the Muharrum and to enthuse them to find out certain means of entertainment, initiated the Ganesh festival. Against this background it is natural that the Ganesh festival is directed against the Muslims." The Chinchpokali episode was historic because the Untouchables cooked food and served the Sawarna Hindus.

Ambedkar stated that interdining movement should be geared up for effecting social reforms. His objective was not restricted to the social reforms, but was extended to the Hindu Sanghatan. Ambedkar held the 'brahmanya' responsible for the degeneration of Hinduism. He hoped that Hindu Sanghatan would remove the drawbacks from Hinduism.

Ambedkar concluded that Hinduism was flexible and progressive. The predominance of handful of the Aryas proved the progressiveness. They adjusted nicely with the people racially quite different from them. Then Ambedkar posed a question as to how such progressive a religion turned retrograde. He furnished a logical answer that till Hinduism had unity: oneness of the varna - it remained progressive and found no difficulty in its function of shuddhi. Ambedkar throughout his life tried to analyse Hinduism. However, it could hardly be believed that achievement of unity of varna was the only antidote. The Hindu Sanghatan was not even a part of Ambedkar strategy, it was his plain and serious attempt. He was that way ready to greet the social reforms, nonetheless in the broad and flexible framework of Hinduism. He allured, the Hindu Sanghatanwadi and at the same time wanted their help in abolishing untouchability.

Ambedkar informed that the Untouchables protected the Hindu temples and obliged the Hindus.

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29 Ibid., ‘Chinchpokali Ganeshotsavatil Sahabhojan’, p. 97.
30 Ibid., p. 98.
32 Ibid., ‘Hindu Mahasabhechi Turkasthanavar Swarf’, p. 92.
33 Ibid., ‘Hindu Devalayanche Sanskshan Karanare Asprishya’, p. 178.
to counterattack with lethal weapons protected the temples.\textsuperscript{34} The leaders of other Hindutavavadi organisations appreciated this. Ambedkar had a dig at them that in crisis the Sawarna Hindus always sought the assistance of the Untouchables.

Ambedkar made distinction between Brahmin and Brahmanya, which on abstract level is understandable. However, on practical plane. it is very difficult to grasp. Ambedkar once delivered a lecture on Justice Ranade, which was afterwards brought out in a booklet form. Ambedkar gave an interesting instance about the notions which even the social reformers like Ranade developed about the Untouchables. He says, "Bhaskar Vithoji Jadhav stood first in his matriculation examination and he took a degree in law. Chhatrapati Shahu the head of the princely state of Kolhapur appointed him as magistrate. Ranade inquired of Jadhav with Sabnis, the Diwan of the state, whether Jadhav could do well as the Brahmin officers.\textsuperscript{35} Ranade was not sure that the non-Brahmins could work as smoothly as the Brahmins.

When Ambedkar declared that the 'brahmanya' should be done away with, Belgaon's District Magistrate objected to Ambedkar's statement. Even Chhatrapati Shahu's mainstay was to relegate the Brahmin dominance and bring Kshatriya dominance.\textsuperscript{36} Though Ambedkar read the drawbacks in the non-Brahmin agitation, he did not evaluate other dimensions of Hinduism. Phule had wider perspective when he assessed Hinduism. While criticising the brahmahya, Phule put efforts to unite all the non-Brahmins. Phule and Ambedkar's approach to the Vedas and Upanishadas was different. The prehistoric literature and culture fascinated Ambedkar and not Phule. The concept of the 'Creator' in Phule's analysis is missing in Ambedkar's literature. Due to inclusion of this concept Phule's appeal became a more pervasive. After this

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., p. 178.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 'Brahmanya Mhanaje Brahman Navhe!', p. 1.
\textsuperscript{36} Vora, Rajendra, “Maharashtra Dharma and the Nationalist Movement in Maharashtra” – (Research paper read at the Third International Conference on Maharashtra Sanskrit ani Samaj at Heidelberg.)
period (1927-29), Ambedkar suggested that the Purohits should be appointed by the Government on some merits. For reforming Hinduism it was necessary, besides, suggestions to accept one religious sacred book, and conduct examinations for the Purohits. Ambedkar charged that the Brahmans deprived the non-Brahmins of their rights. He took the side of the non-Brahmins and hoped that they would be generous to the Untouchable. He argued that overtly it appeared that the non-Brahmins and the Untouchables were communal but their communal attitude according to Ambedkar was defensive. Ambedkar argued that the Brahmans wished to enslave non-Brahmins; the latter did not. Aware of the fact that the non-Brahmins were also communal, but that could be obliterated with the guidance of sensible leadership. He wrote, "it is acceptable that the non-Brahmins have not shed their touch me-not policy but it is easy to pursue them. The Lokhitwadi Sangh celebrated the Nav-Ratra and Untouchables and Hindus participated in it. The Untouchables offered pooja to the Goddess with none objecting.... If the Hindus really mean it, in no time the untouchability will be driven away."  

The Satara District Mahar Conference was held at Rahmatpur. Speaking there he said, "If the non-Brahmins and Untouchables come together, their emancipation from the yoke of the middle class people will come nearer. To induce them to accept progressive programmes Ambedkar commented on them. He said the non-Brahmins boast of being Satyashodhak progressives still they are spiritually and mentally possessed by the Brahmans."

As the Sawarna Hindus made efforts to remove untouchability Ambedkar's hopes of the Hindu Sanghatan raised. At the time when there were some cases of intercaste marriages at Madras (Sita Devi and Naresh Ayyar), he thought that the time for such frequent marriages was not remote.

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Ambedkar quoted one statement of Ramachandra Rao that the spread of casteism had enfeebled the Hindu society.\textsuperscript{40} In the Narsoba Wadi, the ‘devdarshan’ was permitted to the Untouchables. That indicated that the relations between the Sawarna and the Untouchables could be improved. Jayakar was the president of the Hindu Rashtriya Samajik Parishad. His presidential address was published in Bahishkōit Bharat. Jayakar expressed the same hope and zeal as that of Ambedkar. The social reforms existing then were not fundamental and confined to dowry, education and remarriage of the women. Jayakar said that the social approach of the people was undergoing a drastic change. He demanded that the marriage institution was to be overhauled. The marriage acts were to be suitably amended and inter-caste marriages should be sanctioned by the society.\textsuperscript{41} Jaykar’s speech also carried objective of Hindu Sanghatan.

On September 4, 1927 Ambedkar founded Samata Samaj. The Hindu Sabha was working for the Hindu Sangh. But Bhai Parmanand and Swami Shraddhanand resigned from the Hindu Mahasabha. Ambedkar was convinced about their sincerity and hard work. When they resigned from it, Ambedkar did not think it fit to join the Hindu Mahasabha. Ambedkar made an appeal that any broad minded, equality loving person could become the member of Samata Samaj Sangh.\textsuperscript{42} He made it categorically clear that the Samata Samaj Sangh was not antagonistic to Hinduism, on the contrary, he declared that only the Sangh which reanimates the Hinduism lying on death-bed.\textsuperscript{43} The Samata Sangh insisted to perform Vedic rituals in the marriages of the Mahars. These rituals were monopolised by the Brahmins and were not even open to the upper caste like Maratha.

\textsuperscript{40} Ganaveer Ratnakar (ed.), op. cit, ‘Brahman Adi-Draveed Vivaha’, pp. 204-205.
\textsuperscript{42} Khairmonde, C. B., op. cit., p. 156.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., p. 158.
Almost all Hindu social reformers fell hurt when they observed that the Hindus showed respect to the non-Hindu people and gave equal treatment (even though they belonged to a different culture) but the same treatment was not extended to the Hindu Untouchables. Those Untouchables who embraced other religions were also given good treatment. Khairmode points out that Shri Hazari, who was Untouchable embraced Islam; he became professor in the Aligarh University and wrote an autobiography 'An Indian Outcaste'. He narrated that the wives of the Hindu ICS officers observed strict untouchability but they were invited for lunch or dinner at the European officers, they used to relish the food prepared by the Muslim or Mahar butlers.44

Ambedkar felt that the classes which were classified in the servile category could not be united because the impact of religion on them was profound. The Communists attempted to surmount this difficulty but Ambedkar avoided facing it. He confined his analysis to the demands of the Untouchables. It was possible for him to avoid the drawbacks in the Congress and build an organisation for 80 p.c. people. The exploited people who participated in the freedom struggle would have joined his organisation. But Ambedkar seems to have followed the path of the Muslim League. Ambedkar criticised the Congress Brahmin leadership. He stated, "Is there any doubt that the Brahmins form the governing class of India? Is there any doubt that the Congress fight for freedom is for the freedom of governing class? Is there any doubt that the Congress is governing class and governing class is Congress? Is there any doubt that when Swaraj came in 1937 in the form of provincial autonomy, the Congress shamelessly put the governing class in places of power and authority?"45 Ambedkar tried to safeguard the interests of the Untouchables and the ‘issue of 80 p.c. people’ lagged behind. Ambedkar

44 Ibid., p. 27.
45 Ambedkar, B. R., What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables?, op. cit., p. 206.
retreated just from the starting point of communism and took shelter under the umbrella of nationalism. He made an appeal to the Indian people that as in Japan the upper-class people sacrificed their interests for the lower classes the Indian upper castes should do.

(2) To try to provide an equal opportunity to the Untouchables — The Untouchables were not allowed to sell milk, fruits and vegetables. In the industrial sector low payment was given to the Untouchable workers. The Harijan Sevak Sangh should try to form public opinion against such inequality.

(3) To spread communication between the Untouchables and the Sawarna Hindus - Ambedkar opined that there should be constant communication between the Sawarna Hindus and Untouchables. He remarked that the Sawarna Hindus would not like it. Ambedkar appealed that as North America waged a civil war against South America the progressive Hindus should wage war against the orthodox Hindus.

(4) To operate the organisation speedily - Ambedkar pointed out that the organisations could not be run by the mercenaries but by the devoted social workers.

These four means were addressed in a letter Ambedkar wrote to Thakkar.46 'Annihilation of Castes' was the objective of Ambedkar. He preferred to "social revolution even if it was sanguine. This was a new point added by Ambedkar. He might have expected that numerous Sawarna Hindus would come forward to support the cause of Untouchables. If there were only handful Sawarna Hindus to support the Untouchables they would have been easily crushed by the majority. In fact the Harijan Sevak Sangh was the organisation which became instrumental to the Congress objectives. The Congress and its allied organisations, were committed to the principle of non-violence. More importantly the Harijan Sevak Sangh never upheld the principle of the annihilation of castes, and the civil war which America

46 Ibid., pp. 129-135.
witnessed was not feasible in India. Gandhi and the Congress both had left imprint on the functioning of the Harijan Sevak Sangh. Considering Ambedkar's attitude towards Harijan Sevak Sangh one is led to believe that Ambedkar did not want to work on it. One more point that arises in this discussion is that if Ambedkar was sceptical about the working of the Harijan Sevak Sangh and the Congressmen were looking after it, Ambedkar should not have shown willingness to entrust such huge responsibility on it. Ambedkar did not give such a radical programme to the organisation he himself created. With all this in view, one has to see with what seriousness Ambedkar gave this responsibility to the Harijan Sevak Sangh. Its limitations were clearly drawn; it was not even to encourage the inter-caste marriages. It was to work for the economic, social and educational development of the Untouchables. The nature of this work was so mild that it would not have been opposed by the most orthodox Sawarna Hindus.

Ambedkar's satyagraha caused awakening amongst the Untouchables. The wave of bringing equality among the Hindus was observed. As the French people called a national meeting in 1789 to unite themselves, Ambedkar also called a satyagraha meeting of all the Hindus. The French society consisted three layers; the people organised them into one. But without permitting inter-caste marriages, the solidarity among the Hindus was not possible. The self-interests and national interests, according to Ambedkar, were to be served by the Hindu solidarity. The chart of the Hindu Rights was prepared in the Mahad satyagraha meeting. The meeting protested against the Hindu Dharma Shastra which upheld inequality. One resolution demanded individual freedom and throwing all public places open to all. It was also provided that the people who would oppose the resolution should be deemed to be the enemies of the society. The second, resolution was about the burning of the Manu-Smriti; the third resolution ran to call persons of all ‘Varnas' 'Hindu'. Fourthly, it was resolved that the Purohits should be appointed by the Government on
remuneration and the Purohits had to pass the examination of the Purohit. Such examinations were to be conducted by the Government.

The Mahad Satyagraha was the first, organised by Ambedkar. Though it could be accepted that Ambedkar took 'inspiration of satyagraha from the Geeta, the Gandhian model of satyagraha was before him. And he in principle accepted the utility of satyagraha for awakening the people. Some of his instructions given to the satyagrahi resembled with Gandhi's. Ambedkar said, "Satyagraha is an ordeal. While restraining their emotions, the satyagrahis have to endure pains. On our own we should, be ready to sacrifice ourselves. You should not carry with you arms. You should obey the officers. When you are arrested and sent to gaol you should not beg for release and apologise and tell the Government what you did was correct."  

The Mahad Conference which Ambedkar addressed demanded that Hindu society "should be reorganized on two main principles equality and absence of casteism." The Conference adopted a declaration of human rights: an innovative enunciation proclaiming that "all men were born equal and continued to be so till death". The Manusmriti, which was denounced by Ambedkar and his compatriots on December 24, 1927, as a monumental historic repudiation of human equality in India, was actually set to fire on December 25, 1927; Dhananjay Keer is not far off the mark when he describes this event as "one of the greatest sacrilegious blows ever since the days of Luther upon the egoistic bigots, custom-mongers and no-changers on the earth". Keer was to describe this event in 1954 by the statement: "Mahad thus became the Wittenberg of India".  

Keer forgets that while there is something in the Christian traditions which allows its own Luther and Wittenberg, the Hindu tradition has a way of organizing amnesia of heretical discourse, even of the most daring variety that Ambedkar manifested at Mahad.

There was no occupation of the Chowdar Tank in December 1927; in fact, the protest was silenced by the British rule of law. Ambedkar, ever so ready to believe in the British as having the better potential to ameliorate the plight of atisudras, yielded to the District Magistrate’s request not to storm the tank in view of a stay order obtained from the court at the behest of the Mahad caste notables. The historic and symbolic significance of the Mahad satyagraha lies in four features. First, it establishes the emergence of Babasaheb Ambedkar as a leader of the atisudra masses. Second, it symbolizes protests at the worst aspect of Hindu hegemony which denies access to the basic human needs to the untouchables; access to drinking water. Ambedkar thus inaugurates the discourse of equality in access to satisfaction of the most minimum basic needs in the history of Indian jurisprudence. Third, the Mahad satyagraha testifies to Ambedkar’s submissiveness to the concept of the rule of law, even when he perceives that the rule of law is no flaming sword to liquidate any of the manifold existential horrors and tragedies affecting his people. Fourth, the Mahad satyagraha innovates a tradition of protest (more cogently than the temple entry protests) of challenging the very foundations of the Hindu hegemony.

As compared with temple entry, which only affects the spiritual sentiments of the priests as the keepers of the deity and of the devotees as emaciated spiritual beings, the Mahad satyagraha strikes at the very root of temporal power of caste Hinduism which denies to untouchables the right to be recognized as human beings.

For the Mahad Satyagraha, the women also gathered in a big number. It was a spectacular thing. It was the concrete proof of the awakening caused by Ambedkar. He specially addressed them and suggested— (1) to put aside dirty traditions (2) to dress like Brahmin women (3) not to use ornaments of trivial metals (4) not to eat carcasses and (5) educate children. The address had an Instant effect. The women changed the style of wearing sarees and followed the Brahmin style. Ten thousand young Untouchables showed
willingness to stage satyagraha and to court arrest. They left eating dead animals. The Parvati Satyagraha was patterned on the Gandhian principles. Two hundred and fifty Untouchable men and women participated in it. Some Sawarna Hindu Congressmen also joined them.

The Kalaram Mandir Satyagraha was very important. Ambedkar was not favourable to it when its proposal came to him. Ambedkar shifted his emphasis from social rights of the Untouchables to their political rights. But he wanted to wake up the Untouchables with the help of satyagraha. One difficulty was involved in the satyagraha. While launching satyagraha against the Sawarna Hindus: confrontation with the British Government became inevitable. Ambedkar did not want to fight on two fronts, (hence) he postponed satyagraha and was content with the consciousness caused thereby to reinforce it for some other purpose.... Gandhi who was embarking upon nation-wide movement did not encounter such difficulties. Ambedkar no doubt gave priority to political rights but in this period he was not keeping sound health. Khairmode informed, "The court cases and the social movement affected his health adversely. In a month twice or thrice he used to confine to bed. He was treated with medicines and injections." The Mahad case continued for three or four years. Many witnesses against Ambedkar were presented in the court. Ambedkar had to present his witnesses. Palaye Shastri was ready to stand as a witness. Ambedkar requested N. C. Kelkar and Dr. Kurtkoti, Shankaracharya. Kelkar supplied Ambedkar with suitable information. The Hindu Mahasabha was sympathetic towards the Mahad satyagraha. At the time of the Parvati Satyagraha Savarkar tried to effect compromise, but he tailed. The Sawarna Hindus teased Ambedkar and that discouraged him. During this time he was busy with the Simon Commission also.

49 Phadke, Y. D., Dr. Ambedkar Ani Kalaram Mandir Satyagraha (Purogani Satashodhak), 1986, pp. 11-12.
He was aware of the faction in the plank of Untouchable leaders. Ambedkar planned to stage a satyagraha at Bombay also. But considering the religious importance of Nasik his choice fell on it. The Satyagraha exposed the rivalry between two Mahar groups. The leaders became envious and competition was set as to who was nearer to Ambedkar. One group was led by Gaekwad and the other by Kale, Chandramore. They were working against one another. Both groups were trying hard to overcome each other. Ambedkar tried to make compromise. But the efforts were not successful. Shivatarkar caused rift from the period of the Mahad Satyagraha. In the meeting held in Degadi Chawl Ambedkar had to refer to the rift and tell that he was going to remove it.\(^5^1\)

At the time of the Nasik Satyagraha (Kalaram Mandir) the Collector took adverse stand. The workers of the satyagraha committee were in fix. The satyagraha was resisted by the Savarna Hindus. The enthusiasm of the Untouchables abated. When Gaekwad informed the situation to Ambedkar who was then in England, Ambedkar advised Gaekwad not to budge from the position. For some time after 1929 Ambedkar supported the Satyagraha. He also admired the counterattack made by the Untouchables at Mukhed.

On 23rd February 1934, Gaekwad again sought Ambedkar's advice to restart satyagraha. Ambedkar in his reply of March 3, 1934 advised to stop it. While explaining his stand he said that the Untouchables should not go for temple entry in order to achieve salvation but before getting assimilated in the Hindu fold they should try to radically change the Hinduism. He further guided them to channelise their energy to the political and educational field. He did not insist on achieving salvation. This is to be noted that while writing this letter also, he was willing sincerely to get Untouchables assimilated in the Hindu fold.

\(^{51}\) Ibid., p. 382.

\(^{52}\) Ibid., p. 389.
When Ambedkar says that the satyagraha was launched to make the Untouchables conscious, then, the question arises - was Ambedkar's programme of realizing Hindu Sanghatan of little importance? In fact he was becoming increasingly hopeful about the Hindu Sanghatan, because of the whole-hearted support of the Hindu Mahashbha in removing untouchability. The conclusion that removal of untouchability was going to strengthen Hindu Sanghatan, was derived by both Ambedkar and the Hindu Mahasabha and it was not misplaced. The programme designed by Ambedkar and other Hindu organisations in that direction was radical.

Ambedkar's hope about the removal of untouchability was founded on some ground. When the census of 1910 was conducted the Muslims insisted that the Untouchables should not be included in the Hindu category. The Hindus and Untouchables, both then declared that the Untouchables were the Hindus, Ambedkar knew this history. He noted it while presenting his ideas on satyagraha. Ambedkar stated, "The feeling that we the Hindus and Untouchables belong to the one and the same religion has been prominent since ancient times. The Untouchables are, however, thinking that why they can't enjoy those rights which the Hindus do." Ambedkar might have considered the efforts for the removal of untouchability in 1922. On November 1, 1922, Laxman Balwant Bhopatkar (brother of 'Bhalakar' Bhopatkar) while addressing a meeting in Ray Market (Phule Market), Pune, stated that if given due opportunity to the Untouchables some of them might have reached the height of Shivaji Maharaj. He said, "By my experience I can tell you that a common Mahar was more intelligent than the common Kunbi. If one observes the Mahar, it looks that he bears an imprint of a towering ancient culture on his face." In 1922, the sub-editor of Dyan-Prakash took initiation

53 Ibid., pp. 110-111.
54 Ibid., p. 141.
55 Ibid., p. 288.
and called meeting of all castes, in which L.B. Bhopatkar and N.C. Kelkar made an appeal that the temples should be thrown open to all.

In Akola a conference of Brahmins was convened. In the 9th resolution the conference declared that all castes had 'Vedadhikar'. The news was published in 'Vijayee Maratha' (19-12-27). On December 23, 1927 Ambedkar wrote in Bahishkrit Bharat- '4... it is the prime duty of the Hindu leaders to persuade the small number of the Hindus in favour of observing untouchability. This task to some extent, has been carried out by the Brahmins. A Punalte leader and sub-editor of Kesari R.S. Karandikar some days ago intentionally came to Mahad. On November 30, they called the meeting of the citizenery of Mahad and communicated the message of the Hindu Mahasabha to support the Mahad Satyagraha. It will have its good impact on the Brahmins of Mahad.

Under the title, 'if willed, anything can be done' narrated the episode of Badalpur in Bahishkrit Bharat. Badaipur witnessed an enmity between the Hindus and Muslims. Ambedkar wanted to mend the things by attempting the Hindu Sanghatan by organising a ceremony under the chairmanship of Palaye Shastri. That time Ambedkar put up at Palaye Shastri. No body objected. Ambedkar derived a conclusion that if by using their social authority the Brahmins could interdine with the Untouchables and the Brahmins persuaded the non-Brahmins, the non-Brahmins would not be an obstacle. Ambedkar admired the speech of Saraladevi Choudharani and wrote in 'Bahishkrit Bharat', "We are happy to note that what we have been saying about the Brahmins, she has said the same thing in a clear and chosen words. Our Brahmin brethren now pay attention to what Brahmins (Like Saraladevi) are saying."

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56 Ibid., p. 147.
57 Ibid., p. 148.
58 Ganaveer Ratnakar (ed.), op. cit, ‘kele tar kay hou shakate?’, p. 35.
59 Ibid., ‘Sarladevi Kay Mhanatat?’, p. 75.
The interdining programmes were held frequently. Some examples from Ambedkar's Bahishkrit Bharat could be given. In Chinchpokali the Untouchables cooked food and served it to the Sawarna Hindus, that was the historic, incident.60 Else it was observed that the Sawarna Hindus cooked food and served it to Untouchables. One who has experienced the sting of the Brahmanya would understand the moral strength the Sawara Hindus have displayed in interdining with the scavengers. The credit of organising such programmes was to go to my friend Dr. Apte.61 The programmes of interdining were taken in Chipmun, "The temple of Narsoba's wadi was thrown open to the Untouchables; particularly this temple administration in its sacrosanctity was more staunch than that of Pandharpur. The opening up of this temple would help the process at other places also."62

On the basis of all these incidents Ambedkar derived a conclusion that the necessary background for social change was created. Ambedkar did not think in terms of separating Untouchables from the Sawarna Hindus. Only to speed up this process and putting pressure on the Sawarna Hindus, he did not object Untouchables' embracing Islam. And also, at the same time advised them to wait for more time.63 Ambedkar continued to pressurize by cautioning the Hindu society, as "If Hindus do not try to attempt unity of varnas and discourage this cause, and if the breakdown of Arya Samaj is effected then the Untouchables fed up with the chaturvamya would embrace either Christianity or Islam. The Arya Samaj and the Hindu Mahasabha should note it." 64

The non-Brahmin movement had a royal support of Shahu Maharaj, Ambedkar hoped that this movement would also help to solve the problems of the Untouchables. However, the movement after Shahu's death lost its

60 Ibid., 'Chinchpokali Ganeshotsavatil Sahabhojan', p. 98.
61 Ibid., p. 98.
62 Ibid., 'Narsobachya Wadit Asprishyana Dev Darshan', p. 238.
63 Phadke, Y. D., op. cit., p. 25.
direction. It tried to replace the Brahmin dominance by Maratha dominance. Ambedkar was disappointed to see the non-Brahmin movement going astray. Ambedkar for some time was convinced that if the Brahmins took initiative in removing untouchability the non-Brahmins did not object. On the contrary they would follow them. There is possibility that the Hindu Mahasabha might have not extended the expected cooperation to Ambedkar. In the legal case of the Mahad Satyagraha, except Palaye Shastri nobody showed willingness to record witness. Ambedkar requested Kurkoti Shankaracharya and N.C. Kelkar to offer their witness.\footnote{Khairmonde, C. B., Vol. III, op. cit., pp. 263 and 270.}  

Consisting the claim of Gandhiji that the problem of untouchability is socio-economic, Dr. Ambedkar wrote: “What the Mahatma seems to suggest is that Hindu society can be made tolerable and even happy without any fundamental change in its structure if all the high caste Hindus can be persuaded to follow a high standard of morality in their dealings with the low caste, Hindus. I can respect those of the high caste Hindus who try to realize a high social ideal in their life. Without such men India would be an uglier and less happy place to live in than it is. But . . . anyone who relies on an attempt to turn the members of the caste Hindus into better men by improving their personal character is in my judgment wasting his energy ... Can personal character make the maker of armaments a good man . . . . If it cannot, how can you accept personal character to make a man loaded with the consciousness of caste a good man, a man who would treat his fellows as his friends and equals? . . . \footnote{Ibid.}  

Thus he concluded that the moral consciousness of the evil of caste is meaningless if the basis of relationship between high and low caste is fundamentally wrong. Clarifying his point further, he wrote: “The best man cannot be moral if the basis of relationship between them and their fellows is fundamentally a wrong relationship. To a slave his master may be better or
worse. But there cannot be good master . . . A high caste man cannot be a
good man insofar as he must have a low caste man to distinguish him as a high
caste man. It cannot be good to be a low caste man to be conscious that there
is high caste man above him. 67

Thus considering the problem of caste from religious perspective Dr.
Ambedkar concluded that so long Hindu scriptures including Vedas remain
unquestioned, caste system cannot be annihilated.

By this logic perhaps Dr. Ambedkar was trying to prove that depressed
classes are not the part of Hindus and thus as a separate class they must be
given a separate statutory and constitutional recognition like Muslims and
Christians. When he did not succeed in his mission, he exhorted the depressed
classes to convert to Buddhism so that they may have separate recognition as a
religious minority for the purpose of representation. It was this strategy of Dr.
Ambedkar which led many of his critics to dub him as a British stooge who
wanted to thwart the growth of nationalism in India.

Standing on the premise that caste system in India is not a socio-
economic but a religio-political problem. Dr. Ambedkar had clear vision about
the place of depressed classes in the constitution of free India. He gave
specific contents to his vision in the Memorandum he submitted jointly with
Rao Bahadur R. Srinivasan, another leader of the depressed classes, to the
Minorities Committee. 68

67 Annihilation of Caste by B.R. Ambedkar-An undelivered Speech, Edited by
Chandigarh, Aug. 11, 1990.
68 To facilitate the work of the Round Table Conferences 9 sub-committees
had been established. Dr. Ambedkar was made a member of the Minorities
Committee which was headed by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. The
Committee was given the task of finding a solution to the communal
problem in India. Dr. Ambedkar was invited to the Round Table
Conference as a representative of the depressed classes. This was
interpreted as giving separate status to depressed classes in order to divide
Hindu community.
Dr. Ambedkar processed on the assumption that justice will not be done to the depressed classes by orthodox Hindu majority in free India, therefore, for a healthy growth of society depressed classes must have separate electorate along with special constitutional safeguards and protection. Hence, his demand for the protection of depressed classes included:

I. Equal citizenship.

II. Fundamental Rights including a declaration making the practice of untouchability illegal.

III. Equality of rights and status protected by adequate constitutional safeguards.

IV. Protection against discrimination.

V. Adequate representation to the depressed classes in legislatures. Depressed classes must have the right to elect their own people to represent them through:
   i. adult suffrage; and.
   ii. separate electorates for the first ten years and thereafter by joint electorates and reserved seats.

VI. Adequate representation in services: For this a Public Service Commission be established in each Province and at the Centre.

VII. Redress against prejudicial action or inaction. For this purpose an obligation be imposed on legislature and the Executive to make adequate provision for the education, sanitation, recruitment and other matters of social and political advancement of the depressed classes on the lines of Section 93 of the British North America Act, 1867.

VIII. Statutory Department in-charge of a minister at the center and Depressed Class Welfare Bureau in each province.

IX. Depressed classes should have one seat in the Cabinet in order to give opportunity to the depressed classes to have a say in the policy planning of the government. The Instrument of
Instruction should place such an obligation on Governor-General and Governors.

X. Weightage to the minorities should not be given on the basis of ‘political importance’ but on the basis of socio-economic backwardness.

While visualising the basics of the Indian Constitution Dr. Ambedkar was clear in his mind about the place of the depressed classes in constitutional structurization. In March 1947, Dr. Ambedkar prepared a memorandum which was published in the form of a brochure entitled "State and Minorities". It was in fact the constitutional vision of Dr. Ambedkar for free India. It amply testifies that as a constitutionalist he was not a dogmatic but pragmatic. He was aware of the law-life mutuality and hence while defining the basics of the constitution he was conscious that it must be related to the interests of the weaker sections of the society.

Democratic Structure

Dr. Ambedkar visualised a democratic political structure for India. However, to him 'democracy' meant something more than a mere form of a political society. According to him 'democracy' was less a form of government but more a form of society. In his view democracy in order to be complete must encompass social and economic organization of a particular order that would strengthen political liberty. He said: "A democratic form of government presupposes a democratic form of society. The framework of democracy is of no value and indeed be a misfit if there were no social democracy. The politicians never realized that democracy was not a form of government it was essentially a form of society."69

Thus emphasising more, social and economic contents of democracy than political contents. Dr. Ambedkar was trying to relate democracy as a

basic content of the constitution in order to improve the weak socio-economic conditions of the depressed classes.

He further emphasised that democracy is the only form and method of government whereby revolutionary changes in the economic and social life of the people are possible without bloodshed. Amplifying it further he said that democracy is always changing in form, it undergoes changes in purpose not so much to curb autocracies as to bring out the welfare of the people. Thus he clearly emphasised that democracy cannot be an end but only a means to an end which is socio-economic equality and growth.

According to him democracy in order to be valid must live up to its principle of not only 'one man one vote' but also 'one man one value'. Consequently democracy to him meant two things: (1) An attitude of mind of equality for all, (2) social organization free from rigid social barrier. Thus he was firmly of the view that democracy is incomplete and inconsistent with isolation and exclusiveness, as it will result in distinction between privileged and under-privileged ... privilege for few and disabilities for majority. He concluded that success of democratic structure for India would depend on certain factors:

1. Absence of glaring inequalities social and economic.
2. Equality before law and in the administration.
3. Functioning of a moral order and public conscience.

Thus Dr. Ambedkar was visualising a democratic society for free India where abhorance to untouchability and socio-economic: inequality and inequity would be its hallmarks.
Constitutional Economic Structure

Dr. Ambedkar was clearly of the view that if a constitution of any country lays down a political structure but does not lay down an economic structure then danger is that vested interests may subvert the political structure by subverting economic structure. He visualized a strong relationship between individual liberty and economic structure, and thus related constitutional economic structure with the condition the depressed classes. He visualised the need of providing an economic structure in the constitution itself. He argued that it is necessary to plan economic life of the people on such lines that would lead to high productivity with equitable distribution without closing the options for private ownership.

Dr. Ambedkar was a staunch believer of state socialism therefore, he wanted state socialism through the law of the constitution as to make it unalterable by the legislature or the executive. But he wanted 'socialism' to be practiced through parliamentary democracy which was a proper form of government in a free society. According to him this arrangement would achieve three basic objectives:

1. Establishment of socialism in the country.
2. Retention of parliamentary democracy.
3. Avoidance of dictatorship.

He believed in state socialism because, according to him, it was necessary for rapid industrialization which private ownership cannot do and further that the private ownership would bring in economic inequalities of the order which Europe had witnessed before the advent of communism.

A necessary corollary to his vision of state socialism was the absence of a fundamental right of property because he was of the view that this would not only generate economic inequality but would further widen the gap between haves and have-nots. He said: “We must organise ourselves. Arouse
the disinherited to fight against private ownership of land. No landlord means, no tenants and no landless labourer.\(^70\)

He further went to say: “If every one can have the right to till the land from the state . . . . There won’t be any exploitation.”\(^71\)

However, there was an extreme form of difference of opinion on this point. The extent of difference of opinion can be judged from the fact that the Drafting Committee had to leave a blank in the draft constitution. This was done with an idea that this could be finalized by the Congress Party. Later on in the Congress Party except Nehru all gave support for making property as a fundamental right.\(^72\)

Specific contents of Dr. Ambedkar’s constitutional vision of state socialism included:

1. State ownership of basic industries.
2. Insurance as state monopoly.
3. Agriculture as state industry organized on collective basis.
4. Land be vested in the government and be given on lease to every one without distinction so that there is no landless. According to him land is a source of all power and if this economic power is equalized it will be the cure of all other evils.
5. Planned democratic economic development.

In this context it is pertinent to note that Dr. Ambedkar was firmly of the view that no economic reform is possible without social reform and

\(^{71}\) Ibid.
therefore, he emphasised that with economic reform social reform must not be ignored.

Dr. Ambedkar in his model constitution had provided a separate clause on 'protection against economic exploitation'.73 He emphasised the idea of including specific economic rights like right to work, right to adequate living wage and better standard of living in the list of fundamental rights. Dr. Ambedkar could not incorporate his total vision of economic structure in the Constitution. He had to be satisfied by incorporating them as principles that are fundamental in the governance of the country. Circumstances permitted him only this much but even this by no means is insignificant.

Constitutional Executive Structure

Dr. Ambedkar was of the view that neither parliamentary executive of the British type nor Presidential executive of American type is conducive for the protection of minorities because in both of these systems an executive which may be communal is possible. Further he was of the view that while Presidential type of executive smacks of autocracy-rule of one man, parliamentary executive may be instable because of polarization of people on regional, religious, caste and interest lines. He held these views because he had visualised that the cementing commonality then existing may not last long after independence.

Therefore, in the interest of stability and the protection of depressed classes, he preferred an executive structure of Swiss type wherein executive authority rests neither in the king, president or prime minister but in a council elected by the parliament for a fixed term and which manages the affairs of the state in the manner a Board of Directors manages the corporation in a business like fashion. In a Memorandum submitted to Constituent Assembly on behalf of All India Scheduled Castes Federation Dr. Ambedkar provided in Art. 11

Sec. III: "The union and state executive shall be non-parliamentary (not removable before the term of legislature). He feared that parliamentary form of executive would give power to a communal majority besides being instable. It is pertinent to note that while suggesting executive structure Dr. Ambedkar had the interest of minorities uppermost in his mind.

Separate Electorate System for Depressed Classes

Dr. Ambedkar pleaded for separate electorate system for the depressed for the sake of political equality in India. He firmly believed, that the problem of depressed classes is religio-political rather than socio-economic. Therefore, in his opinion separate electorate system for the depressed classes was essential in order to achieve Political equality. Cabinet Mission did not allow separate electorate system and left it to the Constituent Assembly to take care of the problem of political equality of the depressed classes. Constituent Assembly did not favour separate electorate system on communal lines as had been granted by the British government, however agreed to grant political safeguard to the depressed classes in order to ensure their representation in the legislature. Therefore, Arts. 330-342 provided 'guaranteed reservation' instead of 'separate electorate'. Constituent Assembly decided:

"(1) that all elections to the Central and Provincial legislatures will be held on the basis of joint electorate with reservation of seats for certain specified minorities on their population ratio. The reservation shall be for a period of ten years at the end of which the position will be reconsidered. There shall be no weightage. But the members of the minority communities for whom seats are reserved shall have the right to contest general seats."

However, after partition this reservation was confined to Scheduled Castes and Tribes only so that polarization on communal lines may not be repeated again. Dr. Ambedkar was not happy with ten year's limitation, but he

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relented when it has decided that after ten years the situation will be reconsidered again.

Constitutional Social Structure

Dr. Ambedkar visualized a classless and secular society for free India where there are no socio-economic and religio-political discriminations and inequalities and inequities. He wanted to create this society through the law of the constitution. Therefore, he wanted not only equality before law and administration but also a specific constitutional provision for the abolition of untouchability and for making all disabilities on account of untouchability an offence. He differed with the Indian socialists who maintained that social reform will automatically follow economic reforms. According to Dr. Ambedkar no economic reform is possible without social reform.

Another important aspect of Dr. Ambedkar's vision of the Indian society was secularism. He maintained that the state should be religion neutral which is a matter of individual conscience.\(^7^5\) In his Model Constitution in Art. II Section 1, Dr. Ambedkar provided that every one shall have freedom of conscience and the right to profess and preach any religion within limits compatible with public order and morality and that state shall not recognize any state religion.\(^7^6\)

In his view, like property, religion is also a source of power. To prove his point he quoted from the history of Plebians who gave material gains rather than their religion which they thought it a real source of power.

Ambedkar's role in framing of the Constitution of India brought him in the forefront of the top ranking makers of modern India. It is true that he was not the father but the 'mother of the constitution'.\(^7^7\) Yet, the legal acumen, the

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\(^{7^5}\) Ambedkar, B.R., State and Minorities (Hyderabad: Dr. Ambedkar Memorial Society), 1970, p. 12.

\(^{7^6}\) Ibid., p. 46.

untiring industry, the consummate skill and the firmness tempered with moderation with which as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee drafted and piloted the Draft Constitution won the hearts of all and he came to be recognized as one of the best patriots of the country.\textsuperscript{78} He explained the provisions of the draft constitution, suggested changes and accepted amendments. As one scholar has rightly remarked, 'Dr. Ambedkar treated the Constituent Assembly ... like a teacher holding a tutorial class where students should be given a free chance to think and express their opinions, while the teacher should have the last say'.\textsuperscript{79} To quote Pattabhi Sitaramayya "steamroller intellect" Dr. Ambedkar "brought to bear upon his magnificent and tremendous task: irresistible, indomitable, unconquerable, leveling down tall palms and short poppies: Whenever, he felt to be right, he stood by regardless of consequences."\textsuperscript{80} According to Professor Paylee whenever Ambedkar "spoke in the House, usually to reply criticism advanced against the provisions of the draft constitution, there emerged a clear and lucid exposition of the provisions of the Constitution. As he sat down, the mist of doubts vanished as also the clouds of confusion and vagueness."\textsuperscript{81}

Thus Dr. Ambedkar wanted to lay down the foundation of a just and secular society which he thought was necessary for the creation of an ethos in which depressed classes can fell safe and secure.

\textsuperscript{78} The Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. XI, p. 682.
\textsuperscript{79} Rao, K. V., op. cit., p. 19
\textsuperscript{80} The Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. XI, p. 946.
\textsuperscript{81} Pylee, M. V., Constitutional Government of India (New Delhi: Asia Publishers), 1960., p. 138