CHAPTER - IV

DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR: A DISCURSIVE WRITER - I

A BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND:

One-fifth of India's population was degraded as 'Untouchables' for centuries. These 'untouchables' had been following hereditary occupations such as street-sweeping, scavenging, shoe-making, skinning carcasses, and tanning. Having no end to their miseries owing to their untouchability and utter penury, they had remained poorest of the poor, illiterate and ignorant; being deprived of social, religious and even civic rights they lived a totally segregated life. Bhimrao Ambedkar was born in 1891 in such an 'untouchable family'. However, his grandfather Maloji Sakpal belonged to a good Mahar community in Konkan in Ratnagiri district; he was a retired military man. The family belonged to the Kabir cult. Education was compulsory then for the children as well as the relations of military servants and Maloji's son too got educated. He, Bhimrao's father, Ramji Sakpal, was a full-fledged teacher trained at a Normal School then established by the government for turning out teachers to teach in government schools. Ramji Sakpal had served as head-master in the military school and had attained the rank of Subedar-Major in the Second Grenadiers. He retired when Bhim was two years old. Ramji Sakpal was a friend and admirer of the noted social reformer, Mahatma Jyotirao Phooley and was greatly concerned with the fate of his community. When the government of India issued orders
banning the recruitment of the Mahars in the Indian Army in 1891, Subhedar-Ramjl Sakpal took a leading part in protesting against it and with the help of M.G. Ranade, got a petition drafted insisting the government to rescind the unjust orders. Bhimrao inherited from his father his pains-taking spirit, the intense interest in the welfare of his community and his tenacity of purpose.

After Ramjl's retirement, the family shifted to Satara where he secured a job and Bhimrao completed his primary education. Even during his boyhood Bhimrao had to experience humiliation in school and outside for being an 'untouchable'. However, when the family moved to Bombay and came to reside in a labour area in Lower Parel Bhimrao was put in the Maratha High School. Under his father's guidance Bhimrao came to be 'well-grounded in translation exercises which resulted in an increase in vocabulary and which laid the foundation on which he could subsequently build up his fame as a first rank author of India.¹ And yet he had to undergo humiliating experiences even while studying in, Elphinstone High School at Bombay. For instance, at his approach boys rushed to remove their lunch-boxes from behind the blackboard lest his touch of the blackboard should pollute their boxes. But he felt the 'unkindest cut' when he was denied the study of Sanskrit; he and

All the incidents of ill-treatment meted out to him are narrated in B.R. Ambedkar's Waiting For a Visa, (Bombay: Siddarath Publications, 1990).

his brother were compelled to take Persian as the 'second language'.
Sanskrit was a key to the study of the Vedas and Vedas were neither to be heard nor read by the Shudras and the Atishudras - the untouchables. And yet, when he passed his matriculation examination in 1907 the event was celebrated by his community and social reformers like Krishnaji Arjun Keluskar and S.K. Bole encouraged the 'upcoming untouchable youth'. However, Ramji ran out of funds while educating his son who had now joined the Elphinstone College. Fortunately, Keluskar, a true teacher, prevailed upon the kind ruler the Maharaja of Baroda Sayajirao Gaikwad who had promised help to any worthy untouchable in pursuit of higher studies. Bhimrao was granted Rs.25/- per mensem. In the college too he was treated as an 'untouchable'; even the hotel keeper who was a Brahmin refused to give him tea or water. After his graduation in 1912 he began to serve as lieutenant in Baroda but had to give up the service on the death of his father in 1913. Ramji had left his son behind after 'having infused in his son a strength of will to resist worldly temptations and a depth of spirituality very seldom found in his son's contemporaries'.

Another rare opportunity came his way when Bhimrao was chosen among a few others by the benevolent Maharaja, to be sent to Columbia University for higher education. Life in New York was

2. Ibid., p. 25.
for him a life of liberty and revelation; no more being treated as an untouchable he could for the first time in his life live with others as an equal. An industrious and painstaking Ambedkar obtained his M.A. degree in 1915 from Columbia University adopting the method of 'hard study and spare diet' and relentlessly studying for eighteen hours a day. He also read an interesting paper on 'Castes in India; Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development' before the Anthropology Seminar of Dr. Goldenweizer in 1916. Another thesis of his, 'National Dividend of India - A Historic and Analytical Study' was accepted by the University in 1916. This was awarded officially the degree of Ph.D eight years after its publication, in London, under the title 'The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India'. He pursued his studies at London with the permission of the Maharaja by getting himself admitted in October 1916 to the Grays Inn for Laws, and for the study of Economics, to the London School of Economics and Political Science. However, his study was disrupted by the expiry of the period of his scholarship.

Back in India, political developments were taking place; Montagu, had visited India. Before him, among other organisations, appeared for the first time in the political history of India, some associations of untouchables. Ambedkar, at the time, fresh from foreign lands, was a 'political nobody'. The Maharaja of Baroda had intended to appoint him Minister of Finance in his State after
he had gained some experience in the administration of different departments. Ambedkar began as Military Secretary. But very soon he began to realize the difficulty in serving for he was once again treated by all the others as an 'untouchable'. He was treated as a social leper even by his staff and peons; the peons flung files at him and rolled the carpet as he rose to go lest his touch pollute them; he was denied drinking water. Above all, he was denied shelter by Hindus and Muslims alike for being an untouchable. Even the Parsees drove him out of the hostel when his caste was known. Ambedkar wrote to the Maharaja to this effect and he in turn referred him to the Diwan who expressed his inability to do anything about the matter. Thus, although Ambedkar was a man of learning and was definitely better than those around him in every respect, he was reduced to utter helplessness due to his low birth, due to his untouchability.

Even at this juncture, Bhimrao Ambedkar did not enter politics. He did not associate himself with any political party. Instead, he carried on with his intellectual conquests. He wrote a review article on Bertrand Russell’s book *Reconstruction of Society*; it appeared in *The Journal of the Indian Economic Society* Vol.1, in 1918. His paper on 'Castes in India' appeared in book form. He wrote another thought-provoking paper on 'Small Holdings in India and Their Remedies'. In 1918 he was appointed on a temporary basis as Professor of Political Economy in Sydenham College, Bombay.
Though he proved an efficient, successful teacher, even students from other colleges also sought to attend his classes—he had to experience the humiliation yet again for being an untouchable—his colleagues objected to his drinking water from the pot which was reserved for professorial staff. About this time he was called for evidence before the Southborough Committee; Ambedkar demanded separate electorate and reserved seats for the Depressed Classes in proportion to their population. Besides being a learned man with coveted degrees from noted universities abroad and an intellectual of high order, Ambedkar was a journalist too. Through the fortnightly papers which he started—Bahishkrit Bharat, and Mook Nayak and also through his articles in the Samata and Janata, he expressed his views on the Hindu Social organisation. His oratory too was such that it drew the Maharaja of Kolhapur to his two-roomed residence. Ambedkar's thirst for knowledge had not quenched with the studies abroad and his degrees. Again he left for London to complete his studies in Law and Economics, with the money he had saved from his salary as a Professor, some help from the Maharaja of Kolhapur and a loan of Rs.5,000/- from his friend Mr. Naval Bhathena. Ambedkar, with great frugality, is said to have starved himself for want of time to study. His hard study bore fruit when in June 1921 he was awarded the M.Sc. degree for his thesis 'Provincial
Decentralization of Imperial Finance in British India'. However, his writings such as 'Responsibilities of a Responsible Government in India' revealed his fearless intellect, but they caused much furore; and for such reasons he had to rewrite his thesis - 'The Problem of the Rupee' without changing the conclusions. He submitted the thesis from Bombay and obtained the degree of D.Sc in 1923. Thus well equipped as a 'Barrister reinforced by a London Doctorate in Science, an American Doctorate in Philosophy and studies at Bonn University Ambedkar was to challenge the scholars in India and to storm the Indian citadel.3

Though a barrister from London, his path in the profession of a lawyer was thwarted by his low-birth, the stigma of untouchability. However, he would not accept any government service which he felt, would hinder him in his pursuit of achieving the betterment of life of his brethren. Hence, at the same time as Gandhiji or Veer Savarkar, Ambedkar launched a social movement in 1924. The institution which he established, 'The Bahishkrit Hitakarani Sabha' under Act XXI of 1860 had these aims and objects:
1. To promote the spread of education among the Depressed Classes by opening hostels or by employing such other necessary means.
2. To promote the spread of culture among the Depressed Classes by opening libraries and classes or study circles.

3. Ibid., p. 50.
3. To advance and improve the economic conditions of the Depressed Classes by starting Industrial and Agricultural Schools and

4. To represent the grievances of the Depressed Classes to the government.

Through his writings and speeches Ambedkar made relentless efforts to uplift his brethren. He made a clear distinction, with regard to social evils, between social reforms in the sense of the reforms in the Hindu family only such as widow-remarriage and removal of 'Sati', and social reforms in the sense of reorganization of the Hindu society which related mainly to the abolition of Caste system and reconstruction of Hindu society on the basis of equality. With fire and fury in his word he exhorted his brethren to self-elevation through self-help and self-respect. In aiming to obtain religious, political and civic rights for his down-trodden brethren, he was in fact aiming at revitalising and strengthening the Hindu society, indeed the Indian society. He himself led into action those unfortunate people who were suffering from inequality. In order to assert human, civic rights to drinking water thousands of men and women followed him to drink water from Chowdar Tank at Mahad which was open to the people of other religious such as Muslims and Sikhs but not for the so called 'untouchables' who, for numerical strength, were claimed by Hindus as co-religionists. However, the aftermath of the agitation and the purification of the tank by the Caste Hindus
moved Ambedkar to righteous indignation. In his leadership even the 'Manu Smriti' came to be burnt, for it was held to be a symbol of injustice and Ambedkar believed that 'deadly diseases - required drastic remedies' and that only such drastic steps opened the eyes of the members of Hindu society. His theory of Caste and untouchability was not in words merely but was put into action. His views and his stand were action-oriented. The resolution passed in the Conference which was held in connection with the Mahad Satyagraha was the declaration of human rights. The bonfire of 'Manu Smriti' not only shook the Hindu community which had been habitually practising inequality basing it on 'Manu Smriti' but it also brought about unity, courage and an awakening among the untouchables. This courage came out of Ambedkar's courage of conviction; it revealed his discontent in and hatred of slavery practised in the form of untouchability; it also revealed Ambedkar the rationalist, Ambedkar the social revolutionary and Ambedkar the iconoclast.

On the political plane too he fought for justice. When he was nominated as a Member to the Bombay Legislative Council he utilised every opportunity for the amelioration of the condition of the poor. His speeches were vigourous and convincing in his arguments during the introduction of the Bill on Maternity benefits.
for women labourers and at the Amendment to the Bombay Hereditary Offices Act, the Mahar Watan Bill. *Mahar Watan* was another name for slavery, for according to it, in the absence of a Mahar a member of his family had to serve the Government for the negligible payment of two annas and a piece of land called 'watan', with 'baluta', some corn from the villagers. Ambedkar introduced the 'Watan Bill' in order to break the shackles of slavery owing to which these untouchables under 'watan' had developed lethargy and had lost self-respect and stimulus in life.

Realising the grave need of education for the untouchables Ambedkar established the Peoples Education Society and started two hostels also. Later, considering the fact that political equality and political power will automatically solve the problem of education through governmental efforts, Ambedkar devoted his time and talent to secure political rights for the untouchables. He also exhorted them to get material relief and comfort and to attain equal status with others. Ten days before the 'Dandi March' of Gandhiji, Ambedkar's temple-entry movement took place at Nasik. The movement was meant to assert the right of the untouchables to enter the temple. Speaking at the Depressed Classes Conference held at Nagpur in 1930, he reasserted the equal human rights of the untouchables. Like Ranade he regarded the advent of the British in India as Providential and responsible for the intellectual awakening and the concept of liberty, equality and fraternity, though he accused the British government in India for the
general penury. He represented the Depressed Classes at the Round Table Conferences in London to uphold the demand of 'Swaraj' and what was due to the untouchables. Giving an impressive picture of Dr. Ambedkar while he rose to speak at the Round Table Conference, his biographer D. Keer writes: there "...rose a man, stout, sober and confident, with scintillating eyes and tight lips. Arisen from the lowest rung to the highest by dint of his mental and moral force alone, he sat there in the assembly of the princes and the potentates, legal celebrities and great brains representing great thrones, jahagirs, institutions and interests. He represented the poorest of India's poor who were half-fed, half-nude and dumb. ...There was in the Assembly the prince who had financed his education. There was one amongst them who was his teacher in his school. All eyes were riveted upon the speaker. He was not the least agitated. He knew his mind.... There were highlights in the Conference, pandits and literateuse, but he was the only leader who had attained the highest degree in the academic world... This man was Dr. Ambedkar, the leader of the suppressed humanity in India". 4
He brought before the world at large the problem of the suffering humanity in India, the untouchables; in a fearless tone he blamed the British Government for the continued plight of these people and demanded 'Swaraj'. His brilliant speech despite the

4. Ibid., p. 149.
bold criticism of the British in their own land was so impressive that it won appreciation of one and all present there. The Indian Daily Mail described the speech as one of the finest bits of oratory during the whole conference.

However, his efforts of winning a separate electorate for the Depressed Classes were thwarted by Gandhiji's 'fast unto death' for he held that it would perpetuate untouchability. Ambedkar, in order to save Gandhiji's life, was compelled to sign an Agreement with the latter at Poona; the Agreement became well-known later as the 'Poona-Pact'.

Ambedkar, realizing the need for self-government for the overall improvement in the condition of the Depressed Classes, urged them to devote their energies to gaining political power. With a sense of satisfaction that at last these classes who had been denied political equality also for nearly 2500 years would soon be invested with the right to vote, Ambedkar reverted to legal profession; he became a part-time professor in the Government Law College, Bombay, from June 1934. At this juncture he built a bungalow, named it 'Rajgraaha', only to house his large collection of books. He rejected even the post of a High Court Judge for he felt it would be a hindrance in his own independent efforts towards fulfilment of his mission in life. For, the India Bill was before the British Parliament and he was determined to work the constitution aiming at getting benefits for the downtrodden. In the meantime he

* ibid., p.151.
accepted the post of the Principal of the Law College.

Through his movements Ambedkar had been endeavouring to awaken the conscience of the upper caste Hindus but in vain. Hence at the Yeola Conference in 1935 he made a moving speech: He exhorted his brothren to carefully choose a new faith; as for himself, though he was born a Hindu for he could not help it, he thundered, "I solemnly assure you that I will not die a Hindu." The decision stormed and shook the Hindu society; even Gandhiji and Savarkar could not but react to it. Soon appeared Ambedkar's 'Annihilation of Caste' (1936) a thesis the English edition of which ran out within two months and was translated into prominent Indian languages such as Punjabi, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Malayalam and Kannada.

Before the inauguration of the Provincial Autonomy under the Government of India Act, 1935, Ambedkar founded a new political party, the Independent Labour Party while other parties were preparing to fight the elections: His party won a considerable number of seats. He resigned his post as Principal, Law College; among other things the institution gratefully remembered how he enriched the college library. Amid political upheavals appeared Ambedkar's Thoughts on Pakistan in 1940 which, "written at a psychological moment (it) fell like a bombshell..... India's man

5. Ibid., p. 272.
of great learning, great constitutional Pundit and politician of varied experiences gave out his reflections on the problem of India. 6 While he was engaged in solving the problem of the recruitment of untouchables in the army, the Viceroy expanded his Executive Council and appointed him on the Defence Advisory Committee. As a Labour Member also he proved an efficient person. At this time another dream of his was realized - the People's Education Society which he had established, started the Siddarth College on June 20, 1946.

The Muslim League joined the Interim Government and he thought it was a Government of one country by two nations. He wrote a Memorandum stressing on due representation of Scheduled Castes in the Executives and Legislatures, and got it printed in London. In this connection he held talks with Prime Minister Attlee, saw Churchill and Lord Templewood (formerly known as Sir Samuel Hoare), but was advised to seek solace in the Constituent Assembly. Even amid the political developments in the country, his intellectual pursuit was marked by the publication of his book Who Were the Shudras? He also wrote another Memorandum which was published under the title States and Minorities, a Model Constitution. The British Parliament passed the Act of Indian Independence in 1947 and the Constituent Assembly became a supreme body. An intellectual of high calibre, a great orator and emancipator

6. Ibid., p. 333.
that Ambedkar was he rose from dust to doyen by dint of hard work; he was selected Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly and then was chosen the First Law Minister in Jawaharlal Nehru's Cabinet. His industry and devotion in 'hammering out' the Constitution won acclaim of one and all in the Assembly. About the same year another book written by him, *Untouchables* was published.

Yet another thing for which he laboured was to see the Hindu Code Bill passed. He had revised and submitted it to the Constituent Assembly in 1948; the work of revising and codifying the Hindu Law was going on for ten years. However, the modification in parts of it relating to family and women's property was opposed by the Hindu opponents. The Bill, introduced by Ambedkar on 5th February 1951, was hotly debated for three days; subsequently the consideration of it was postponed to the next session i.e., October 1951. Even during that period part of it relating only to Marriage and Divorce could not be completed. In Ambedkar's words the Bill was "killed and buried unwept and unsung after four clauses were passed". Sorely disappointed at this, Ambedkar resigned from the Cabinet; thenceforth he worked as a constructive critic from the opposition.

He engaged himself with academic work - of the People's Education Society. The Columbia University conferred

7. Ibid., p. 434.
upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws on 5th June 1952; he was hailed as "a framer of the Constitution, Member of the Cabinet and of the Council of States, one of India's leading citizens, a great social reformer and a valiant upholder of human rights." The Osmania University in India followed suit and conferred upon him an honorary degree of Doctor of Literature.

A constructive critic of the Hindu society, Ambedkar, after studying different religions, preferred Buddhism to other religions, and as he had declared in 1935, now on 14th October 1956 embraced the new faith; he held that Buddhism was a true religion with the three principles of knowledge, right path and compassion. In an unprecedented historic event three lakhs of his followers embraced Buddhism along with their beloved leader. Only a few days after this event, however, on 6th December 1956 came to an end this unique life of Ambedkar and his Buddha and His Dhamma was published posthumously. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru paid condolences in the words:9 ".......The way he will be remembered most will be as a symbol of the revolt against all the oppressive features of the Hindu Society....... the main thing was that he rebelled against something which all ought to rebel..."

8. Ibid., p. 443.

Dr. Ambedkar became prominent in his own way and a most prominent symbol of that rebellion. I have no doubt that, whether we agree with him or not in many matters, that perseverance, that persistence and that, if I may use the word, sometime virulence of his opposition to all this did keep the people's mind awake and did not allow them to become complacent about matters which could not be forgotten, and helped in rousing up those groups in our country which had suffered for so long in the past. It is, therefore, sad that such a prominent champion of the oppressed and depressed in India and one who took such an important part in our activities, has passed away.

As the House knows, he was ...a Member of our Cabinet, for so many years.... he had played an important and very constructive role in the making of the Constitution.... a very leading and prominent personality, who has left his mark in our public affairs and on the Indian scene, has passed away." In the Lower House the Prime Minister, while condoling the sad demise, recalled about Dr. Ambedkar that ".... there can be no doubt about his outstanding quality, his scholarship and the intensity with which he pursued his convictions." The Speaker of the Lok Sabha said: "Dr. Ambedkar was a great and dynamic personality. He rose from humble beginnings and became a leader of the Scheduled Castes. He was a great scholar and writer, and, more than all, he was a powerful speaker.
He piloted our constitution. In the field of social reform, he initiated many wholesome measures. In his death, India has lost one of her great sons." The Deputy Chairman said: "...Many may not agree with him and his political philosophy, but he was one of our prominent Members and he was always listened to with respect. His speeches were marked by scholarship, erudition and deep study. He will, however, be remembered as one of the great architects of our Constitution."  

Indeed, several aspects of such a personality are worth studying as pointed out by his biographer, Dhanajay Keer: From the unique life of Bharat Ratna Dr. Ambedkar, "A new academy of knowledge, a new inspiration for poetry, a new place of pilgrimage and a new opportunity for literature have sprung up."  

10. Ibid., pp. 213-215.  
A profound social theorist that Ambedkar was, he was concerned theoretically as well as practically with the social order in which he was born - the structure of life in the Hindu Society. His writings dealing with the socio-religious aspects of the society throw a critical light on the organisation and structure of the Hindu Society in India in which caste and untouchability are institutionalised as divine dispensation. As such, Ambedkar's writings provide a fresh insight into these institutions, and foster a critical inquiry into them. The inquiry into the origin and development of caste and untouchability is made in a rational, analytical manner; the analytical criticism tends to be a corrective, to remould, reform and revitalise the Indian Society as a whole. The analysis, made with a keen sense of history, explains the contemporary reality in terms of its historical development.

Ambedkar began writing effectively on the socio-religious problems prevailing in the Indian Society from as early as 1917 when he was barely twentyfive. These writings, mainly pointing out the injustice of caste system and untouchability, consist of constructive criticism of such a society.
His essay entitled 'Caste in India - Its origin, Genesis and Development' was a paper which he presented at the Anthropological seminar of Goldenweizer in Columbia University in May 1916. In this scholarly essay he deals with the subject of caste system from the anthropological point of view. In simple, lucid prose he exposes 'caste', a 'human institution' with all possible objectivity and enquires into its origin and development. He examines the definition of 'caste' given by scholars viz., Senart, Nesfield, Sir H. Risley and Dr. Ketkar, and brings out the points which are common in them - that the idea of pollution as a characteristic of caste has a religious flavour, that caste is a self-enclosed unit and endogamy is the essence of caste. He points out the paradox that the homogeneous population of India has this peculiar institution of caste which is more natural for heterogeneous societies such as the American. He holds that "caste in India means an artificial chopping off of the population into fixed and definite units, each one prevented from fusing into another through the custom of endogamy," and holds up the 'remnants' of this social institution of the Indian Society as; ".... no civilized society of today presents more survivals of primitive times than does Indian society". He finds its religion essentially primitive, its tribal code operating 'in all its pristine vigour as also the custom of endogamy, a positive

12. *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches* (henceforth cited as BAWS), (Education Department, Govt. of Maharashtra, 1979), Vol.1., p. 9.
injunction even today'. The law of matrimony makes the clan-system obvious as it centres round the principle of exogamy; it is not only that 'sapindas' cannot marry, but even a marriage between 'sagotras' is regarded as sacrilege. The severity of this injunction is such that "there are more vigorous penalties for violating exogamy than there are for violating endogamy"; Ambedkar explains that "the superimposition of endogamy on exogamy means the creation of caste". He puts forth the novel theory that the problem of caste involves the problem of maintaining numerical equality between marriageable units of the two sexes. 'Sati' and 'Kulinism' employed as means for maintaining this numerical equality, themselves create endogamy which means caste. This is, in Ambedkar's opinion, the general mechanism of a caste in a system of castes. He further observes that in this hoary institution about which authentic or written records are not available, the customs like 'sati', enforced widowhood and girl marriage persist. Though enough of philosophy is there to explain why these customs are honoured, no writing explains the cause of their origin and existence. However, he warns against the philosophical arguments which represented them as ideal. As to the origin of castes he asserts that "the strict observance of... customs and social superiority arrogated by the priestly class in all ancient societies are sufficient to prove that they were the

13. Ibid.
originators....": In Hindu society too the priestly class originated "this unnatural institution founded and maintained through.... unnatural means." 14

As to the growth and spread of caste system Ambedkar asserts that caste existed long before Manu, the Hindu law-giver, who merely codified the prevailing caste rules; he holds that the growth and spread of the caste system "is too gigantic a task to be achieved by the power or cunning of an individual or of a class...." 15 As against the view which supposed 'nuclii' of various castes to be occupations or surviving tribal organisations, etc., Ambedkar holds that the caste system was essentially a class system in which individuals, when qualified, could change their class and thus classes did change their personnel. But, he assumes, that at some time in the history of the Hindus, the priestly class socially detached itself from the rest and through a closed-door policy became a class by itself. The other classes underwent differentiation: 'Some closed the door; others found it closed against them!' Hence, according to Ambedkar, these two complementary causes—one psychological, another, mechanistic—explain the phenomenon of caste formation.

15. Ibid., p. 16.
Though Ambedkar expounds elaborately his innovative theory of the origin, mechanism and growth of castes in India, yet he is modest in stating that his conclusions are not final but they are contributions to a discussion of the subject and he would willingly give up his 'theory of caste' if it is proved untenable.

The defence of caste system as a basis of division of labour in Hindu society in India is severely dealt with by Ambedkar in his Annihilation of Caste. He states in clear terms what marks off this 'division of labour' in Indian society; he asserts that caste system is not merely a division of labour but it is also a division of labourers: "Civilized society undoubtedly needs division of labour. But in no civilized society is division of labour accompanied by this unnatural division of labourers into water-tight compartments. Caste system is not merely a division of labourers which is quite different from division of labour - it is an hierarchy in which the divisions of labourers are graded one above the other, unlike in any other country;" moreover, "This division of labour is not spontaneous, it is not based on natural aptitudes... It involves an attempt to appoint tasks to individuals in advance, selected not on the basis of trained original capacities, but on that of the social status of the parents." 16

16. Ibid., p. 47.
argument renders Ambedkar's prose practical. His analysis of the caste system is objective and scientific, leaving no room for any counter-argument. Condemning the 'social stratification' as being 'positively pernicious', Ambedkar further analyses it only to show its evil consequences.

The inadequacy of its defence on economic basis is brought out by Ambedkar, showing the conflict between hereditary compulsion to follow a particular occupation and the individual sentiments, choice or preference of it. As the 'hereditary callings provoke aversion, ill-will and desire to evade,' Ambedkar observes, "As an economic organisation caste is therefore a harmful institution, in as much as it involves the subordination of man's natural powers and inclinations to the exigencies of social rules." He repudiates the arguments of those who give the caste system a 'biological trench' and thus defend it on the scientific ground that the object of this system was to preserve purity of race and purity of blood. Pointing out that 'ethnologists are of the opinion that pure race exists no where and that there has been a mixture of all races in all parts of the world', Ambedkar says that the caste system came into being long after the different races in India had co-mingled in blood and culture. He calls 'a gross perversion of facts' the opinion that distinctions of castes are really distinctions of race. He draws

17. Ibid., p. 48.
attention to the fact that there is no racial difference between the Brahmin and cobbler of Punjab as there is found no affinity between the Brahmins of Punjab and Madras, or the untouchables of Punjab and Madras. Observing that even scientists who believe in purity of races do not assert that the different races constitute different species of men, that they are only varieties of one and the same species, Ambedkar comments, "If caste means race then differences of sub-castes cannot mean differences of race because the sub-castes become 'ex hypothesa' sub-divisions of one and the same race... inter-dining cannot infect blood and therefore cannot be the cause either of the improvement or of deterioration of the race." In his reasoned argument he comes to hold that "Caste has no scientific origin and... those who are attempting to give it an eugenic basis are trying to support by science what is grossly unscientific" and that caste system is "a social system which embodies the arrogance and selfishness of a perverse section of the Hindus who were superior enough in social status to set it in fashion and who had authority to force it on their inferiors." He points out that the very name 'Hindu' was given by foreigners to the natives for the purpose of distinguishing themselves and the word does not occur in any Sanskrit work prior to the Mohammadan invasion. According to Ambedkar the

18. Ibid., p. 49.
similarity of habits and customs, beliefs and thoughts, all over India do not help Hindus to constitute a society, for, Ambedkar observes, "Society continues to exist by communication. Men do not become a society by living in physical proximity any more than a man ceases to be a member of his society by living so many miles away from other men."\textsuperscript{19} The Hindus, owing to the caste system lack fellow-feeling for millions of aboriginal tribes in India. He comments acidly and ironically that for a Hindu, "his whole life is one anxious effort to preserve his caste. Caste is his precious possession which he must save at any cost. He cannot consent to lose it by establishing contact with the aborigins, the remnants of the hateful 'Anaryas' of the Vedic days."\textsuperscript{20} He further brings out the features of caste: Caste not only divides the Hindu society into soprosto communities but it also places these communities in a graded order one above the other in social status so that each caste takes its pride and its consolation in the fact that in the scale of castes it is above some other caste.

In the expositary as also in analytical passages Ambedkar's prose becomes simple and direct. There is precision in what he propounds. Tracing the demerits of caste he repeats, "Caste does not result in economic efficiency. Caste cannot and has not improved race. Caste, however, does one thing. It has completely

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., p. 51.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., p. 53.
disorganised and demoralised the Hindus.... A caste has no feeling that it is affiliated to other castes.... Each caste endeavours to segregate itself from other castes. Each caste not only dines among itself and marries among itself but each caste prescribes its own distinctive dress... There is an utter lack among the Hindus of what the sociologists call 'consciousness of kind'.'21

According to Ambedkar although the Hindu religion was once a missionary religion, for - "It could not have spread over the face of India, if it was not a missionary religion"; with the growth of caste system it ceased to be one: "Caste is inconsistent with conversion. Inculcation of beliefs and dogmas is not the only problem that is involved in conversion. To find a place for the convert in the social life of the community is another and a much more important problem that arises in connection with conversion. That problem is where to place the convert, in what caste? .... Unlike the club, the membership of a caste is not open to all and sundry. The law of caste confines its membership to a person born into the caste. Castes are autonomous and there is no authority anywhere to compel a caste to admit a new comer to its social life.... So long as castes remain, Hindu religion cannot be a missionary religion and 'shuddhi' (purification) will be both a folly and futility.'22

21. Ibid., p. 50.
22. Ibid., pp. 54-55.
In this 'discourse' on 'caste' which has more than ephemeral value Ambedkar employs logic and reason in the argument; the evils of caste system are brought home in words which fall like hammer on an anvil: "The effect of caste on the ethics of Hindus is simply deplorable. Caste has killed public spirit. Caste has destroyed the sense of public charity. Caste has made public opinion impossible. A Hindu's public is his caste. His responsibility is only to his caste. His loyalty is restricted only to his caste. Virtue has become caste-ridden and morality has become caste-bound. There is no sympathy to the deserving. There is no appreciation of the meritorious. There is no charity to the needy. Suffering as such calls for no response. There is charity but it begins with the caste and ends with the caste. There is sympathy but not for men of other caste.... The capacity to appreciate merits in a man apart from his caste does not exist in a Hindu.... The whole morality is as bad as tribal morality. My caste-man right or wrong; my caste-man good or bad. It is not a case of standing by virtue or not standing by vice. It is a case of standing or not standing by the caste." 23 In Ambedkar's opinion, it is entirely due to the caste system that the Hindus have committed treason against their country in the interests of their caste.

Ambedkar refutes the arguments in which 'Chaturvarna' is

23. Ibid. p. 56-57.
held as an ideal. He held that 'caste' and 'varna' are not only fundamentally different but they are opposed to each other also; if the former is based on birth the latter is based on worth. But, according to him the protagonists of 'Chaturvarna' have to first grapple with the difficulty of reducing the four thousand castes to four 'varnas'. In order to make 'Chaturvarna' practicable all those who have acquired their status, high or low, through birth or worth have to vacate their places and occupy their respective places according to their 'worth'.

He compares the ideal of 'Chaturvarna' with the Platonic ideal. But as Plato lacked 'the perception of uniqueness of every individual, of his commensurability with others', his 'Republic' was subjected to criticism. According to Ambedkar, "the same criticism must apply to the system of chaturvarna in so far as it proceeds upon the possibility of an accurate classification of men into four distinct classes," for "pigeoning men into holes." Another reason, according to Ambedkar, for the impracticability of 'chaturvarna' is the categorization of women in it. In a logical argument he penetratingly enquires: "Are they also to be divided into four classes...? or are they allowed to take the status of their husband...? what becomes of the underlying principle of chaturvarna, namely, that

24. Ibid., p. 60.
the status of the person should be based upon the worth of that person? If they are classified . . . , the protagonists of chaturvarna must admit that their system does not apply to women. If it is real, are the protagonists of chaturvarna prepared to follow the logical consequences of applying it to women? They must be prepared to have women priests and women soldiers. Hindu society has grown accustomed to women teachers and women barristers. It may grow accustomed to women brewers and women butchers. But he would be a bold person, who would say that it will allow women priests and women soldiers. But that will be the logical outcome of applying chaturvarna to women." 25

Assuming that the system of 'chaturvarna' is practicable with the three upper classes functioning as guardians to the lowest class of 'shudras', the 'wards', Ambedkar thought the theory looked 'simple, elevating and alluring'; yet it is 'neither fool-proof nor knave-proof'. He rejects the system for its lack of provision to safeguard the interests of the 'ward' from the 'misdeeds' of the 'guardian'. According to the laws of Manu, the Shudra was prohibited from acquiring knowledge lest he should keep a steady vigil regarding his interests and he was prohibited from bearing arms lest he should have the means to rebel against their superiority. Thus deprived of the right to acquire wealth, weapons

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25. Ibid., p. 61.
and knowledge, 'the Shudras' "were condemned to be lowly, and not knowing the way of escape and not having the means of escape, they became reconciled to eternal servitude which they accepted as their inescapable fate"; hence Ambedkar asserts in righteous anger, "There is no code of laws more infamous regarding social rights than the laws of Manu. Any instance from anywhere of social injustice must pale before it." 26

An insight into the social organisation of the Hindu society can further be gained from Ambedkar's account of the life led by the 'Shudras' who comprise the last category of the Hindu social hierarchy. Ambedkar gives extracts from 'Brahmanas' and 'Samhitas' in proof of the disabilities and penalties of the Shudras, the dire system of pains and penalties to which a Shudra is subjected by the Brahmana law-givers. Such laws, as summarised by him, are: 27

1) That the Shudra was to take the last place in the social order.

2) That the Shudra was impure and therefore no sacred act should be done within his sight or within his hearing.

3) That the Shudra is not to be respected in the same way as the other classes.

4) That the life of a Shudra is of no value and anybody may

26. Ibid. p. 63.
kill him without having to pay compensation and if at all, of small value as compared with that for the Brahmana, Kshatriya or Vaishya.

5) That the Shudra must not acquire knowledge and it is a sin and a crime to give him education.

6) That the Shudra must not acquire property. A Brahmin may take away the property at his pleasure.

7) That a Shudra cannot hold office under the State.

8) That the duty and salvation of the Shudra lies in his serving the higher classes.

9) That the higher classes must not inter-marry with the Shudra. They can, however, keep a Shudra woman as a concubine. But if a Shudra touches a woman of the higher classes he will be liable to dire punishment.

10) That a Shudra is born in servility and must be kept in servility for ever.

Such rules were arbitrary. Hence Ambedkar analyses them and seeks rational explanation of and solution to the 'Shudra' problem. His Who Were the Shudras? How They Came to be the Fourth Varna in the Indo-Aryan Society is a scholarly treatise which is a significant work in that it deals with the socio-religious problem of more than 3/4ths of the Hindu population — the Shudras. According to Ambedkar the 'chaturvarna', not being an 'innocent
principle', makes the principle of graded inequality the basis for determining the terms of associated life as between the four 'varnas'. This graded inequality was not merely notional, 'it is legal and penal'.

At the outset Ambedkar holds that any attempt to discover the position of the 'Shudras' must begin with the origin of the 'chaturvarna' in the Indo-Aryan Society; this in turn involves the study of the 19th hymn of the 10th Mandala of the Rigveda which comprises 'Purusha Sukta'. Making a critical examination of the 'Purusha Sukta' Ambedkar finds in it the ideal of the social organisation i.e., 'chaturvarna' unique in that in it the real is elevated to the dignity of the ideal, because though the existence of classes is the 'de facto' condition of every society, no society has converted this 'de facto' state of affairs into a 'de jure' connotation of an ideal society. The cosmogony set out in it is different from that expounded in the ninetieth Hymn of the 10th Mandala of the Rigveda. He finds the primary concern of the 'Purusha Sukta' to be the explanation of the four classes of Aryan Society, thus differing even from Chapter - I of the Genesis in the Old Testament which concerns itself with the creation of Man; he also finds it in complete contrast with other theologies and other parts of the Rig Veda. In it 'chaturvarna' comes to be made sacred.

According to Ambedkar norms are good and are necessary; but a norm must change with changes in time and circumstances. In propounding the doctrine of 'chaturvarna', the 'Purusha Sukta' raises the real to the status of an ideal. He finds this double game of idealizing the real and realizing the ideal a kind of political jugglery 'the like of which... is not to be found in any other book of religion.' The deliberate comparison of classes to the parts of the body of the Creator implies the fixity of functions of the four classes and the gradation of the four classes.

Ambedkar further examines the two later developments of 'chaturvarna' viz., the creation of the fifth class below the 'Shudras' and the separation of the 'Shudras' from the first three 'varnas'. These changes have given rise to terms such as 'savarnas', 'avarnas', 'dvijas', 'non-dvijas' and 'Trayarnikas' which indicate sub-divisions of the original four classes and the degree of separation between them. Giving a detailed analysis of the Brahmanic texts such as 'Yajur Veda' which is divided into 'Vajasaneyi Samhita' or the 'white Yajur Veda' and the 'Taittariya Samhita' or the 'black Yajur Veda', the 'Satapata Brahmana' and the 'Taittariya Brahmana' and quoting at length the commentary of Prof. Max Muller on the Brahmanas, Ambedkar remarks that in the variety of explanations there is found 'imagination running riot', that 'there is in them neither history nor sense'.

29. Ibid., p. 32.
30. Ibid., p. 65.
However, not finding in the Brahmanic law books any clue to the mystery of the origin and degradation of the 'Shudra' class, Ambedkar turns to the Western writers and finds some common points in what they say:

1) The people who created the Vedic literature belonged to the Aryan race.

2) This Aryan race came from outside India.

3) The natives of India were known as Dasas and Dasyus who were racially different from Aryans.

4) The Aryans were a white race and the Dasas and Dasyus were a dark race.

5) The Aryans conquered the Dasas and Dasyus.

6) The Dasas and Dasyus after they were conquered and enslaved were called 'Shudras'.

7) The Aryans cherished colour prejudice and therefore formed the 'chaturvarna' whereby they separated the white race from the black race such as the Dasas and Dasyus.

In this Western theory Ambedkar finds 'a natural explanation of a social fact'. Delving further into the relevant material,

31. Ibid.
Ambedkar quotes from the 'Rig Veda'. He finds the verses convey the idea that there were two different communities of Aryans who were inimical to each other. As an evidence he points out to the delay made in recognizing the sacredness of 'Atharva Veda'. With the support of the anthropometrical survey made by Sir Hurbert Risley in 1901 and Dr. Guha's Report of 1936, Ambedkar concludes that there is solid foundation in anthropometry and history in support of the Rig Veda that there were in India two Aryan races and not one. Referring to Prof. Max Muller again Ambedkar rejects the etymological explanation of the word 'Shudra' as given in 'Vedanta Sutra' and 'Vayu Purana' and holds that there is direct evidence in support of the proposition that Shudra is the proper name of a tribe or a clan and is not a derivative word as is sought out to be made. He supports this with historical evidence also that during Alexander's Invasion of India, the republic of Solaras was among many others encountered by him and even Lessen identified them with the ancient 'Shudras'. Referring to 'Manu Smriti', 'Vishnu Smriti' and the Mahabharata, and observing that even during the post-Vedic period and the period of Brahmanas, Shudra was one of the 'Ratnis' who consecrated the king with holy water and conferred sovereignty, Ambedkar holds that Shudras were not poor and lowly but were rich, were themselves kings, and hence he rejects the notion that Shudras were originally slaves.
Ambedkar goes to the root of the problem and analyses the word 'race'; he analyses 'Aryan race' anthropometrically. As to the original home of the Aryans, Ambedkar quotes Isaac Taylor, Prof. Ripley and Mr. Tilak, and finds that 'there is not a particle of evidence suggesting the invasion of India by Aryans from outside India', and quotes P.T. Srinivas Iyengar in this connection. He examines the Rig Veda and the 'Zend Avesta' and summarises his findings as follows:

1) The Vedas do not know any such race as the Aryan race.
2) There is no evidence in the Vedas of any invasion of India by the Aryan race and its having conquered the Dasas and Dasyus who were supposed to be natives of India.
3) There is no evidence to show that the distinction between Aryans, Dasas and Dasyus was a racial distinction.
4) The Vedas do not support the contention that the Aryans were different in colour from the Dasas and Dasyus.

In order to expose the hollowness of the Aryan theory 'expounded by Western scholars and glibly accepted by their Brahmanical fellows', and the futility of the 'Invention of invasion',

Ambedkar (in Chapter-VII) enquires into the mystery of Shudras being made slaves and their place, the last, the fourth, in 'Chaturvarna'.

Of the nine relevant passages in the 'Shanti Parva' of the Mahabharata, Ambedkar finds six describing 'Paijavana' as a Shudra, one as a 'Shuddha' and two as 'Pura'. Regarding the name, he finds disagreement between any two of the nine manuscripts and observes that the change from 'Shudra' to 'Pura' is not accidental but deliberate. From the table he provides of the ancestry of Sudas mentioned in Rig Veda and Vishnu Purana, Ambedkar makes it clear that there were three Sudasas. Referring to the 'Dasharajna Yudh' or the battle of the ten kings described in the Rig Veda in which king Sudas was victorious, Ambedkar remarks, ".... gleaned from the most authentic source, namely, the Rig Veda.... we know that his (Paijavana's) real name was Sudas... that he was... a mighty king." He further establishes that of the three tribes that Sudas was connected with—Purus, Tritsus and Bharatas—Sudas' father belonged to the Bharata. With the support of the Bhagvat Purana, Ambedkar holds that India or 'Bharata Bhumi' is named after the Bharatas of the Rig Veda and not after the Danshanti Bharatas. Hence he concludes that the Bharatas being Aryans, Sudas also must have been an Aryan.

35. Ibid., p. 127.
As to the number of 'varnas' prevalent in the Indo-Aryan society, Ambedkar holds, with the support of the Brahmanic literature, that there were only three 'varnas'. According to him the matter must be decided in the light of canons of historical criticism, such as sequence of time and intrinsic criticism. Ambedkar quotes scholars like Colebrooke, Max Muller and Prof. Weber in support of his observations and the conclusion that he arrives at after giving a table of the Vedas and the number of verses referring to the Purusha Sukta and their order, is that

1) If the Purusha Sukta was not incorporated in the Taittariya, Kathaka and Malaryani Samhitas of the block Yajur Veda, it follows that the Purusha Sukta was a later addition to the Rig Veda.

2) That it had to be put in the miscellaneous and supplementary portions of the Vedas shows that it was composed at a later stage.

3) That the freedom which the authors of the different Samhitas took in adding, omitting and recording the verses shows that they did not regard it as an ancient hymn which they were bound to reproduce in its exact original form.

He observes that verses 11 and 12 which were even later additions after the fourth 'varna' came into being, were included to give the system of 'Chaturvarna' the sanction of the 'Veda'.

37. Ibid., p. 137.
According to Dr. Ambedkar, the degradation of the Shudras was the result of a violent conflict between the Shudras and Brahmins. He has no doubt that through the technique of refusing to perform the 'upanayana' of the Shudras the Brahmins 'wreaked their vengeance' on Shudras. He also gives details as to how the simple ceremony of 'upanayana' came to be an elaborate one. Pointing out the absence of reference to 'Yajnopavita' in the details of ancient times, Ambedkar holds that 'Upanayana' means only the teaching of the Vedas by the Vedic Brahmins. With ample direct and circumstantial evidence he asserts that at one time even Shudras and women had the right to wear the sacred thread and that the ancient Aryan society treated all its classes on the same footing. He quotes further the forty 'sanskaras' as given in the 'Gautama Dharma Sutra' and observes that 'Upanayana' as a 'sanskara' among the Indo-Aryans, had spiritual significance like the 'sanskaras' of Christianity such as Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Communion, etc., the sacraments 'which are purely spiritual drawing in God's grace by particular rites, (which) had no social significance.' Bringing out the socio-religious significance of the 'upanayana' (sacred thread) ceremony Ambedkar observes that once it was denied to the Shudras 'its possession became a matter of honour and its denial a badge of servility' thus introducing a new factor in Indo-Aryan Society. Hence in a way the loss of 'upanayana' brought about the degradation of the Shudras.

38. Ibid., p. 170.
Also, as laid down in 'Purva Mimamsa', the right to property and right to knowledge were two most important incidents of 'upanayana' without which a person was doomed to social degradation, to ignorance, to poverty, and the stoppage of Upanayana was a most deadly weapon discovered by Brahmins to avenge themselves against the Shudras, for the ceremony performed by Brahmins only was considered valid.

'The Theory in the Crucible' (Chapter - XII) of Who were the Shudras traces the origin of the Shudras and discovers the causes of their degradation. Ambedkar claims to have put forth a novel thesis "after an examination of historical material and of theories suggested by various writers - orthodox as well as modern": it can be summarised in his words as:

1) The Shudras were one of the Aryan communities of the Solar race.
2) The Shudras ranked as the Kshatriya 'Varna' in the Indo-Aryan society.
3) There was a time when Aryan society recognised only three 'varnas' viz., Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas. The Shudras were not a separate 'varna' but a part of the Kshatriya 'varna'.
4) There was a continuous feud between the Shudra kings and the Brahmins in which the Brahmins were subjected to many tyrannies and indignities.

39. Ibid., p. 172.
40. Ibid., p. 204.
5) As a result of hatred towards the Shudras due to their tyrannies and oppressions, the Brahmins refused to invest the Shudras with the sacred thread.

6) Owing to the loss of the sacred thread the Shudras became socially degraded, fell below the rank of the Vaishyas and came to form the fourth 'varna'.

Ambedkar puts his social theory to test in order to assess its validity. Repudiating the attack that the theory is built on the weak foundation of a single statement from the Mahabharata in which Pailavana is described as a Shudra, he argues that the statement on which the theory rests is true; it was a record of true tradition, which, he holds, cannot be expected to be recorded in the 'Rig Veda', a book of religion. Secondly, the word 'Shudra' in connection with 'Sudas' was unnecessary because marks of identification such as Kula, gotra, tribe, etc., are unnecessary in case of famous men like Bimbisara and Pasenadi, the Kings who lived in the time of Buddha. Hence he holds that what he says of Sudas is not mere speculation but is a historical fact and instances can be quoted in this regard.

In another notable work, The Untouchables: Who Were They and Why They Became Untouchables? (1948) which is a sequel to his treatise The Shudras: Who Were They and How They Came to be the Fourth Varna of the Indo-Aryan Society (1946), Ambedkar draws
attention to the existence of three more classes, besides and below the Shudra class — the Criminal Tribes numbering about 15 million, the Aboriginal Tribes, about 15 million and the Untouchables, about 50 million. He wonders at the lack of enquiry into the origin and existence of the untouchables who are the most numerous of the three classes and claims that the book is a pioneering attempt in the exploration of a field so completely neglected by everybody.

He deals at length with the life of the classes and masses in India, the social and economic terms of their associated life and the influence of religion on these. He says, "... the enormity of the 'sunken humanity' is such that comprising these three categories, it amounts to over 60% of the population of the United States, but exceeds the population of White in the British Empire by 9½ millions.... exceeds the population of Japan by 9½ millions, (that of) Italy by 37 millions, (that of) Germany by 13½ millions, and of France by 37½ millions. It is ten times the population of Belgium and twenty times the population of Denmark".

He advances the novel thesis in terms of these propositions:
(as given in Vol.7 of his Speeches and Writings, Preface)
1) There is no racial difference between Hindus and the Untouchables.

41. Ibid., p. 241.
42. BAWS., Vol.5., p. 134.
2) The distinction between the two, before the advent of untouchability, was the distinction between Tribesmen and Broken men from alien Tribes. It is the Broken men who subsequently came to be treated as Untouchables.

3) Just as untouchability has no racial basis, so also it has no occupational basis.

4) There are two roots from which untouchability has sprung:
a) contempt and hatred for the Broken men as for Buddhists by the Brahmins,
b) continuation of beef eating by the Broken men after it had been given up by others.

5) While searching for the origin of untouchability care must be taken to distinguish the Untouchables from the Impure. All orthodox Hindu writers have identified the Impure with the untouchables. This is an error. Untouchables are distinct from the Impure.

6) While the Impure as a class came into existence at the time of the Dharma Sutras, the untouchables came into existence much later than 400 A.D.

Ambedkar examines the question whether untouchability was practised in societies other than the Hindu. It is agreed that what underlies untouchability is the notion of defilement, pollution, contamination, and ways and means of getting rid of that defilement. That
the Hindus recognised pollution like the people in primitive and ancient societies, he observes, is "abundantly clear from Manu Smriti", which in turn lays down tabus and restrictions only for Brahmans, whose failure to observe them makes them 'impure'.

Ambedkar points out that another form of untouchability observed by the Hindus is the hereditary untouchability of certain communities. He gives an exhaustive and authentic list of communities which are regarded by the Hindus as hereditary untouchables: The terrifying list includes 429 such communities, whose population was above 50-60 million (as in 1953), 'whose mere touch causes pollution to the Hindus'. Ambedkar observes that this type of untouchability among Hindus stands in a class by itself for 'even the phenomenon of untouchability among the primitive and ancient societies pales into insignificance before this....'. He points out that by reason of the colossal numbers involved which exceed the number of great many nations in Asia and in Europe and also on other grounds this unparalleled untouchability is not to be found in the history of the world. A sad Ambedkar remarks that unlike in the primitive society in which the defilement for a temporary duration vanished after purificatory ceremonies were performed, ".... the impurity of 50 - 60 millions of the untouchables of India, quite unlike the impurity from birth, death, etc., is permanent. The Hindus who touch them....

43. Ibid., p. 257.
become pure by undergoing purificatory ceremonies. But there is nothing which can make the untouchables pure. They are born impure, they are impure while they live, they die the death of the impure, and they give birth to children who are born with the stigma of untouchability affixed to them. It is a case of permanent hereditary stain which nothing can cleanse." Moreover, while the non-Hindu societies merely isolated the affected persons for a short duration, the Hindu society segregates untouchables numbering millions. Ambedkar points out to the 'ghettos' or separate quarters of untouchables which form a fundamental feature of untouchability. Dealing with the existence of such 'ghettos' Ambedkar observes that the laws of Manu lay down that the 'chandalas' i.e., the untouchables should live outside the village; their dress - the garments of the dead, their wealth-dogs and donkeys, their ornament-black iron; social intercourse with them barred; they should eat in broken dishes the food given by others; they should carry out the corpses of persons who have no relatives; they should execute criminals at the king's command and take their belongings.

Ambedkar asserts that untouchables are Broken Men although the study of the totemic organisation of Hindus and untouchables of a village has not been undertaken. Analysing etymologically the word 'anta' he asserts that it means, in such words as Antyaja or

44. Ibid., p. 266.
45. Ibid., pp. 271-2.
'Antyavasin', not end of creation but end of village. Considering the case of Mahars (untouchables) in Maharashtra typical of untouchables throughout India, he holds the theory of Broken Men possible at a stage of history of India.

After bringing out an analogy between the untouchables of India and Fuidhirs of Ireland and the Alltudes of Wales, Ambedkar proceeds to examine how the separate settlements for Broken Men disappeared elsewhere through 'the rule of enablement': During the process of transition of the nomadic tribe becoming the settled tribe if a non-tribesman lived next to the tribe or married within a tribe for a given number of generations he became their kindred. Such a rule existed in India too as it did in Ireland and Wales. Ambedkar observes that Manu prescribed that a Shudra can become a Brahmin if he married in the Brahmin community for seven generations; but the rule of heredity in 'Chaturvarna' being strong Manu had to apply the rule of untouchability to the Shudra or else segregation of untouchables would have ceased to exist: "... the notion of untouchability supervened and perpetuated difference between kindred and non-kindred, tribesmen and non-tribesmen in another form, namely, between Touchables and Untouchables", thus making the

46. Ibid., p. 285.
system of separate quarters a perpetual and permanent feature of the Indian village.

While explaining this aspect of the origin of untouchability Ambedkar examines the racial theory put forth by Mr. Race as containing two elements:

1) the untouchables are non-Aryan, non-Dravidian aboriginals, and

2) they were conquered and subjugated by the Dravidians.

Propounding new theories of the origin of untouchability Ambedkar, (in Chapter -IX of his Untouchables), draws attention to the Census Reports for India published by the Census Commissioner which, before 1910, classified the population under religions such as:

1) Hindus,  
2) Muslims,  
3) Christians, etc., and after 1910 it divided the Hindus under categories -

1) Hindus,  
ii) Animists and Tribal, and  
iii) the Depressed classes or untouchables. However, what is important is the differentiation, in a circular issued by the Census Commissioner, between 100% Hindus and those who were not. The

47. Ibid., pp. 289-290.
Castes and Tribes coming under the latter category were those who

1) Deny the supremacy of the Brahmins

2) Do not receive the Mantra from a Brahmin or other recognised Hindu Guru,

3) Deny the authority of the Vedas,

4) Do not worship the Hindu gods,

5) Are not served by good Brahmins as family priests,

6) Have no Brahmin priests at all,

7) Are denied access to the interior of the Hindu temple,

8) Cause pollution
   i) by touch,
   ii) within a certain distance,

9) Bury their dead and

10) Eat beef and do no reverence to the cow.

According to Ambedkar an inquiry into groups 2), 5), 6), 7) and 10) in the above list, which divides the untouchables from the Hindus, gives a clue to the origin of untouchability.

Drawing attention to the writings of Abbe Dubois, Mr. Hemingsway the editor of the Gazetteer of the Tanjore district, and Capt J.S.F. Mackenzie, Ambedkar points out that contrary to the

48. Ibid., p. 314.
common belief, it is a fact that untouchables shun Brahmins and look upon them as impure. However, the hypothesis on which Ambedkar bases his explanation of the antagonism between Brahmins and the untouchables is that those considered as untouchables were Broken Men who were Buddhists. As majority of Hindus were Buddhists, Ambedkar takes it that the Broken Men were also Buddhists; and these Buddhists did not revere the Brahmins, did not employ them as priests and regarded them as impure and on top of which they preached contempt for and hatred against Brahmins so that the latter came to regard them despisingly as untouchables. In support of his views regarding the mutual hatred of Brahmins and Buddhists, Ambedkar refers to Nilkant's Prayaschitta Mayukha, Apararka's 'Smriti' and Sanskrit dramas like Mrichchakatika. Regarding the question as to why the non-Brahmins gave up beef-eating, though emperor Ashoka prohibited animal sacrifice but did not prohibit cow-killing or beef-eating and Manu 'made the eating of cow's flesh on certain occasions obligatory', Ambedkar holds, following Gabriel Tarde's explanation, that the non-Brahmins gave up beef eating in order to imitate the Brahmins, for "culture within a society spreads by imitation of the ways and means of the superior classes by the inferior classes".

49. Ibid., pp. 215-16.
50. Ibid., p. 333.
51. Ibid.
Examining the strife between Buddhism and Brahmanism as a crucial fact in Indian history, Ambedkar observes that a glaring difference came into view when the Brahmins and non-Brahmins stopped beef-eating and only the Broken Men persisted in doing so. Beef-eating was made a matter of religion as the cow was made a sacred animal and hence beef-eating became a sacrilege: 'The Broken Men being guilty of sacrilege necessarily became beyond the pale of society'. Secondly, law made by the Gupta emperors later, against killing of the cow, did not apply to the Broken Men because they did not kill the cow but only ate its flesh. Ambedkar describes the position of the untouchables in the Village Republic thus: "They are not merely the last but are also the least... (An untouchable) is stamped as an inferior and is held down to that status by all ways and means which a majority can command. This inferiority is the destiny not merely of an individual but of the whole class.... The established order is the law made by the Touchables. The Untouchables have nothing to do with it except to obey it and respect it. The Untouchables have no right against the Touchables. For them there is no equal right, no justice by which that which is due to the Untouchables is allowed to them... (They) must not insist on rights. They should pray for mercy and favour and rest content with what is offered." 

52. BAWS., Vol.5., p. 25.
In a stunning revelation - 'India's Ghetto' - Ambedkar presents the realistic picture of a village which runs shockingly contrary to those who hold an Indian village as an ideal unit, as an ideal form of social organisation. He enumerates the 'code of conduct' and the rules to be followed by the inhabitants of a village which is divided into two sections - Touchables and Untouchables - the touchables forming the major community, economically strong and powerful, occupying the position of a ruling race in opposition to the untouchables who form a minor community, living outside the village in separate quarters. Being poor and dependent, they occupy the position of a subject race of hereditary bondsmen with no other means of livelihood.

Ambedkar gives a detailed account of the life of the three categories who form the enormous bulk of the 'Sunken humanity' in India. He gives details of the food habits of the first category, the Primitive Tribes, an account of their scanty clothes and few possessions, their meat-eating and their religion which is "the worship of demons of all denominations and dead ancestors of all antiquity. 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. Instead of marching along, they
Ambedkar takes note of the life of the Criminal Tribes, the Professional Criminals such as the Pindharis and the Thugs also.

He throws light on the life led by the third category—the Untouchables: "Like the Criminal Tribes the Untouchables also live in the midst of civilized Hindu Society and possess a degree of culture and morality which completely separate them from the Primitive Tribes and Criminal Tribes. The untouchables have the culture of the Hindu community. They observe the religious rites of the Hindu community. They recognize the sacred as well as the secular laws of the Hindus. They celebrate the Hindu festivities. But they derive no benefit from this. On the contrary they are segregated and shunned because their physical contact is held by the Hindus to cause pollution. There is therefore an interdict on all social intercourse with them except for unavoidable purposes." And what a punishment awaits an untouchable who passes off as a Touchable! Ambedkar cites the illustration of two such who "were subjected to barbarous indignities; their moustaches on the left side and eyebrows on the rightside were shaved, their bodies besmeared with soot mixed in oil and also with dirt, garlands made of old shoes were put around their necks, and one of them was asked to hold a placard on which it was written that the punishment was

53. Ibid., p. 131.
54. Ibid., p. 133.
moted out to the culprits for venturing to touch the high caste
touch the high caste people... (and the two) were taken in procession... a drum being
beaten in the front".55

However, Ambedkar notes that, while the isolation of Primitive
Tribes is voluntary and geographical, and the state of the Criminal
Tribes is being improved through governmental efforts, the
Untouchables stand on a different footing; their disabilities are
imposed upon them. Their isolation is really segregation which is
enforced upon them. Ambedkar observes that the problem of the
slaves was one of denial of political and economic rights. If the
problem of the untouchables was the same it could be solved by legal
and constitutional methods. But the problem being the result of the
social psychology of the Hindus, it can vanish only when Hindus
change their mentality. But the enormity of the problem is such
that to solve it the Hindus have to unlearn their way of life. But
then it is "no small matter to make a whole nation give up its
accustomed way of life..... which is sanctioned by their religion,
at any rate they believe it to be so... to change their way of life
is almost to change their religion"; and according to him this can
happen only when it is realized that what is a tragedy for the
untouchables is a crime of the Hindus.56

55. Ibid., p. 141.
56. Ibid., p. 144.
As to the difference of status between Touchables and Untouchables, the lawlessness of the former towards the latter as though it is lawful, Ambedkar provides a catalogue of the rules of Hindu Law which relate to the law of persons: These rules give an idea of the basic conceptions which underlie the 'Hindu Law of Persons'; Ambedkar provides a list of these rules which are grouped under certain heads: The whole thing is cast in the form of a digest divided into sections, each section being an assembly of rules dealing with one definite matter. Thus, these follow:

'Different Classes: Their origin and Their Duties',

'Equality Before Law:' 'Status, Dignity, Position of Each Class:'

'Inter-relationship Between the Classes' and 'Mode of Life'

He illustrates from newspapers to bring out the tyrannies and oppressions practised by Hindus against the Untouchables, in order to show how the Hindus do not hesitate to suppress them in their determination to maintain the established social order at all costs. Even an ordinarily non-violent Hindu does not hesitate to use the utmost violence against those Untouchables who try to upset it in the slightest degree. The untouchables were punished for desecrating the Shiv temple by going near it, for attempting to take water from the Hindu well; for daring to get admission in the village school for education. Quoting reports from Free Press of 7-6-1946,

57. Ibid., pp. 64-74.
Savadhana of 22-4-1945 and Milap of 6-6-1924, an angry Ambedkar writes that though the Hindus claim untouchables as Hindu, a dead body of an untouchable cannot be cremated in the Hindu cremation ground! He cites numerous instances that appeared in the newspapers and magazines to illustrate the inhuman illtreatment suffered by the Untouchables at the hands of the Touchables. Ambedkar also gives instances where-in the untouchables are forced to serve the high-caste people under the system known as 'Begar' or 'forced labour'.

Dr. Ambedkar's writings on the subject of Untouchables and untouchability are expository in the sense that in these writings he discusses the various aspects of this subject especially in comparison with slavery. The analogy that he brings out, between the Hindus and the Gentiles, makes evident his vast reading and knowledge.

He says, "Though the problem of the Jews and of the Untouchables is similar in nature - in as much as the problem is created by others - it is essentially different. The Jews' case is one of voluntary isolation. The case of the untouchables is that of compulsory segregation. Untouchability is an infliction and not a choice". He compares slavery with untouchability too. He observes that slavery, a very ancient institution of the Hindu recognised by Manu, the Hindu Law - giver, and systematized by other Smriti writers who followed him, continued to be practised through Indian history down to the year 1843 when it came to be abolished by the

58. Ibid., p. 5.
British Government by law. He quotes at length from Mr. Harrow's *Slavery in the Roman Empire* showing that the slaves were socially well placed; from reasons both of display and genuine literary interest, the rich families attached to their household slaves trained in literature and art; there were slaves who were educated, there were slaves, also, engaged in trade and commerce. Ambedkar also quotes from Charles C Johnson's *The Negro in American Civilization* in order to bring out the de facto position of the Negro in the USA; a noted Negro ran a school for white students; the more intelligent of the Negro slaves were trained as artisans; a Census of free Negroes in Richmond Country, Georgia, in 1819 showed carpenters, barbers, boatcorkers, saddlers, spinners, holsters, weavers, steamboat pilots, etc. Ambedkar points out that the Untouchables in India are completely shut out from any of the avenues in which the slaves found so large a place. He remarks, "The pity of the matter is that most people condemn slavery simply because they hold that for one man or class to have by law the power of life and death over another is wrong. They forget that there can be cruel oppression, tyranny, and persecution, with the train of misery, disappointment and desperation even when there is no slavery". In simple English he makes a clear distinction between slavery and untouchability: "Slavery was never obligatory. But untouchability is obligatory. The law of slavery permitted emancipation. ....Once

an untouchable always an untouchable. The other difference is that
untouchability is an indirect and therefore the worst form of
slavery. A deprivation of a man's freedom by an open and direct
way is a preferable form of enslavement.... It makes the slave
conscious of his enslavement and to become conscious of slavery is
the first and most important step in the battle for freedom". Untouchability being an indirect form of slavery, it deprived the
untouchable of his liberty. Slavery proves to be far better than
untouchability when judged by the test whether education, virtue
happiness, culture and wealth is possible within slavery or within
untouchability. The Untouchables, their personal growth refused,
incurred all the disadvantages of an unfree social order: unlike the
slaves, they have neither entry in the higher arts of civilization
not any way open to a life of culture. Ambedkar convincingly
exposes the problem of untouchability in a lucid, distinct language:
"In a free social order the responsibility for survival in the struggle
for existence lies on the individual. This responsibility is one of
the greatest disadvantages of a free social order; whether an individual
is able to carry out this responsibility depends upon fair start,
equal opportunity and square deal. The Untouchable, while he is
a free individual, had neither (of these). From this point of view,
untouchability is not only worse than slavery but is positively cruel
as compared to slavery.... To put it shortly, in this competition
with the scales always weighing against him by reason of his social

60. ibid.
sLiymu, ho Is Iho last to bo omployod oncl Lho first to bu llrod"*. He sums up: "... the Untouchables, unlike the slaves are owned by the Hindus for purposes which further their interests and are dis-owned by them, when owning them places them under burden. The untouchables can claim none of the advantages of an unfree social order and are left to bear all the disadvantages of a free social order".61

One of the ways to eradicate these social evils of 'caste' and 'Untouchability', according to Ambedkar, is social reform. He advocates social reform in the sense of the re-organisation and re-construction of society in the Indian context. In support of his argument that social and religious problems have a bearing on political constitutions Ambedkar quotes what Ferdinand Lassalle, the friend and co-worker of Karl Mark said in 1862; he also cites the examples of the social division between the Patricians and Plebians 'who formed two distinct castes' in Rome, and of the Ulterman in Ireland, and points out that "generally speaking history bears out the proposition that political revolutions have always been preceded by social and religious revolutions".62. That Ambedkar draws copiously from his vast knowledge and reading is evident from the illustrations he provides in support of his views, as when he says, "The religious revolution started by Luther was the precursor of the political emancipation of the European people. In England Puritanism

61. Ibid., pp. 17-18.
led to the establishment of political liberty. Puritanism founded the new world. It was Puritanism which won the war of American independence and Puritanism was a religious movement. The same is true of the Muslim Empire. Before the Arabs became a political power they had undergone a thorough religious revolution started by the Prophet Mohammad. Even Indian history supports the same conclusion. The political revolution led by Chandragupta was preceded by the social and religious revolution of Buddha.... The political revolution of the Sikhs was preceded by the religious and social revolution led by Guru Nanak. These will suffice to show that the emancipation of the mind and the soul is a necessary preliminary for the political expansion of the people.”

He also gives the example of the oracle at Delphi to which the Consul was bound.

Ambedkar convincingly clarifies the true meaning of social reform, considering the urgency of modifying the Hindu social order. He refutes the argument of the socialists who advocate economic equality. To him, if socialism is to be made a reality, the problem of social reform has to be recognised and dealt with. The socialist has to take account of caste as it prevails in the social order in India, for, "...turn in any direction you like. Caste is the monster that crosses your path. You cannot have political reform, you cannot

63. Ibid., p. 44.
have economic reform, unless you kill this monster". The metaphor
used here speaks of the enormity of the problem and how essential
it is to solve it for the progress of the society.

Ambedkar held the view that social reform should precede
dpolitical reform. According to him the reform ought to be in terms
of the reformation of the entire society, its structure and functioning,
and not merely the reformation of the Hindu family. Referring to
the Presidential address of W.C. Bannarji, in 1892 at Allahabad
at the 18th session of the Congress, he remarks that it 'sounds like
a funeral oration at the death of the Social Conferences' which aimed
at social reformation and had been running parallel to the Political
Conference. W.C. Bannarji had said, "I for one have no patience
with those who say we shall not be fit for political reform until
we reform our social system. I fail to see any connection between
the two. Are we not fit because our widows remain unmarried and
our girls are given in marriage earlier than in other countries?
...because our wives and daughters do not drive about with us
visiting our friends?.... because we do not send our daughters to
Oxford and Cambridge?...."; Ambedkar gives facts, and states the
other side of the case enquiring in the same vein: "Are you fit
for political power even if you do not allow a large class of your
own countrymen like the untouchables to use public schools,
....public wells .... and public street? Are you fit for political

64. Ibid., p. 47.
power even though you do not allow them to eat any food they like?...". In rightful anger he asserts that every man who repeats the dogma of J.S. Mill that one country is not fit to rule another country must admit that one class is not fit to rule another class. He refutes the argument of the reformist Arya Samajists for their ideal of 'Chaturvarna'. He is against the very labelling of men as Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. In a reasoned argument he asks, "If European society honours its soldiers and servants without giving them permanent labels, why should Hindu society find it difficult to do so?" To him all reform consists in a change in notions, sentiments, and mental attitudes of the people towards men and things. As the names of the four classes are associated with the notion of hierarchy based on birth, to continue the old names is to make all reform futile. Ambedkar further proposes to enquire into the 'prescription for the disease', that 'caste will cease to be an operative force only when inter-dining and inter-marriage have become matters of common course', a view held by the Jat-Pat-Todak-Mandal, an organisation for Reformation of Hindu society at the annual function of which Ambedkar was supposed to express these views of his as the President. According to him this 'prescription' is repugnant to the beliefs and dogmas which the Hindus regard as sacred. Convincingly he puts forth the forceful argument: "Caste is not a physical object like a wall of bricks or a line of barbed wire which prevents the Hindus from

66. Ibid., p. 59.
Caste may be bad. Caste may lead to conduct so gross as to be called man's in-humanity to man. All the same it must be recognised that the Hindus observe caste not because they are inhuman or wrong-headed. They observe caste because they are deeply religious.... What is wrong is their religion which has inculcated the notion of caste." He does not blame the Hindus for their strict adherence to caste-rules but examines caste as an operative force in Hindu society and points out to the 'Shastras' that inculcate the notion of caste in the minds of the Hindus. His argument in this regard is both rational and convincing. If his analysis is correct, he holds, then the real remedy to the problem of caste is to destroy the belief in the sanctity of the 'Shastras'. He goes to the root of the matter and makes a rational analysis of it. In an argument which has pursuasive appeal he inquires: "How do you expect to succeed, if you allow the 'Shastras' to continue to mould the beliefs and opinions of the people? Not to question the authority of the 'Shastras', to permit the people to believe in their sanctity and their sanctions and to blame them and to criticise them ..... is an incongruous way of carrying on social reform." In order to effect this, his line of emphasis is, "It is no use seeking refuge in quibbles. It is no use telling

67. Ibid., p. 68.
68. Ibid.
people that the 'Shastras' do not say what they are believed to say, gramatically read or logically interpreted. What matters is how the 'Shastras' have been understood by the people. You must take the stand that Buddha took. You must take the stand which Guru Nanak took. You must not only discard the 'Shastras', you must deny their authority, as did Buddha and Nanak. To him more important than knowing the ideal is knowing the proper ways and means of destroying caste, a Herculean task, which is well-nigh impossible first of all because of the hostility of the Brahmins who, he asserts, 'will not take up cudgels on behalf of those who want to break the caste'. According to Ambedkar the remarks of Decey that the Pope does not introduce reforms because the revolutionist is not the kind of man who becomes a Pope, and that a man who becomes a Pope has no wish to be a revolutionist, applies to the Brahmins of India; the Brahmins form the intellectual class in India, and as he holds, "In every country the intellectual class is the most influential class, if not the governing class... (it) is the class which can foresee.... which can advise and give lead. In no country does the mass of people live the life of intelligent thought and action. It is largely imitative and follows the intellectual class. There is no exaggeration in saying that the entire destiny of a country depends upon its intellectual class." But then, "an intellectual man

69. Ibid., p. 69.
70. Ibid., p. 71.
can be a good man but he can easily be a rogue. Similarly an intellectual class may be a good band of high-souled persons, ready to emancipate erring humanity or it may easily be a gang of crooks or a body of advocates of a narrow clique from which it draws its support."

Advocating social reform by means of the denial of the sanctity of 'Shastras', the 'annihilation of caste', and the adoption of democratic principles, Ambedkar says that it would mean "a complete change in the fundamental notions of life. It means a complete change in the values of life..... It means conversion... a new life. But a new life cannot enter an old body that is dead. ....the old must cease to be operative before the new can begin to enliven and to pulsate." His views on the eradication of caste rules imply the corrective measures towards the strengthening of society; the 'annihilation of caste' thus becomes a significant step towards a real democratic way of life which again implies strengthening and vitalising of the Indian society.

Secondly, according to Ambedkar, the Hindus must consider whether they should conserve the whole of their social heritage or select what is helpful and transmit to future generations only that much and no more. In support of his view Ambedkar quotes from Prof John Dewey and Burke. Again, regarding the baneful effect

71. Ibid.
72. Ibid., p. 78.
of the 'Worship of the Past' as supplying its ideals, he quotes Prof. Dewey: he agrees with Dewey that a knowledge of the past and heritage is of great significance when it enters into the present, but not otherwise.

With profound intellectuality as the essay is invested, the exposition and analysis of the subject is clear and convincing at the same time. His deep intellect matches the depth of the matter. His deep study and deep concern for the future of the nation are reflected in the examination of the 'national malady' - caste - which is assessed and given a solution to, with a view to strengthening and revitalising the Hindu society in particular and Indian society in general. In his own words, his views expressed in this regard, "are the views of a man, who has been no tool of power, no flatterer of greatness. They come from one, almost the whole of whose public exertion has been one continuous struggle for liberty for the poor and the oppressed."73 Such is his sincerity to the cause that, he urges that efforts must be made to uproot caste "if not in my way, then in your way". According to him the cause is a national cause which is more important than 'swaraj' because "In the fight for swaraj you fight with the whole nation on your side. In this (cause) you have to fight against the whole nation and that too your own...

More important than the question of defending swaraj is the question

73. Ibid., p.80.
of defending the Hindus under the swaraj". For in his opinion, "only when the Hindu society becomes a casteless society that it can hope to have strength enough to defend itself". 74

In his 'vindication of caste' Mahatma Gandhi himself complimented Ambedkar. He wrote, "The (Jat-Pat-Todak) Committee (by cancelling the conference) appears to have deprived the public of listening to the original views of a man, who has carved out for himself a unique position in society. Whatever label he wears in future, Dr. Ambedkar is not the man to allow himself to be forgotten... No reformer can ignore the address... Dr. Ambedkar is a challenge to Hinduism.... the author (of Annihilation of Caste) of the address has quoted chapter and verse in proof of his three fold indictment—inhuman conduct itself, the unabashed justification of it on the part of the perpetrators, and the subsequent discovery that the justification was warranted by their scriptures.... Dr. Ambedkar...... is its most uncompromising exponent and one of the ablest among them". 75

Dr. Ambedkar's writings do form 'sociological literature' making a critical analysis of the Indian society; they form 'literature of thought'. 'Caste' and 'Untouchability' as forming unique features of the Indian society are fully exposed and examined by Ambedkar. The thematic treatment receives intellectual analysis made in an innovative way.

74. Ibid.
75. Ibid., pp. 81-84.
Driving home the social reality in the Indian context, Ambedkar says, "The separation which Hinduism has brought about between the Hindus and the untouchables by its dogma of untouchability, is not an imaginary line of separation, as the one which the Pope once drew in a quarrel between the Portugese and their rivals for colonial possessions; it is not like the colour line which has length but no breadth and which one may observe or one may not observe; it is not like the race line, which involves distinction but no discrimination. It has both depth and width. Factually the Hindus and the untouchables are divided by a fence made of barbed wire. Nationally it is 'cordon sanitaire' which the untouchables have never been allowed to cross and can never hope to cross." Segregated from the rest of the Hindu population they are bound down to a code of behaviour which is appropriate to a servile state. He depicts the deplorable state of the life of the untouchables in order to bring home their socially servile position and subject economic poverty.

A passing Ambedkar remarks: "The saddening and if, one may say, annoying part of the story is that the state of these unfortunate human beings should be what it is although they are surrounded and fed by a high civilization."  

Civilization, according to Ambedkar, 'is a rare prize' as comprising and accumulated store of knowledge of man and nature,

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of arts and crafts, an ethical code regulating the conduct of man towards his fellows, a social code laying down the forms and conventions to be observed by individuals, a civil code prescribing the rights and duties of the rulers and the ruled and a religious creed relating the natural to the supernatural..."; however, he observes that "It has not been the good fortune of all races to develop it in all its fullness. Many have stood where they were at the start. Many took one or two steps and have boon at a halt. Others have only revolved round and round." He cites the examples of the primitive races of Australia and Polenasia, the Alllapascuous-a Primitive Tribe of the Hudson Bay Territory, the Indians of the valley of Columbia, all in their beginning stage, while "The Civilization of Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria and even of Rome and Greece had only been a revolving civilization. Their progress and achievements are only the elaboration of the details of methods and intentions handed down by man when he was in a Barbaric State." Adding little to the civilization of their predecessors, "Equally little in doubt is it that other long ages of Barbarism have preceded the final ascent to the lowest stage of civilization. The precise period of time covered by these successive 'ages' is of course only conjectural, but something like one hundred thousand years may perhaps be taken as a safe minimum estimate." Ambedkar considers

78. Ibid.
79. Ibid., p. 135.
80. Ibid.
civilization as a vital social heritage absolutely essential for each generation. And yet, "it is also true that those who are possessed of civilization, their civilization may be a hindrance rather than a help. It might have gone on a wrong track, it might have based itself on false values and false premises. Such civilization might easily cause stagnation of the Community and the stunting of the individual." Thus flows his 'discourse' on civilization as a boon and a curse. In assessing the Hindu civilization as the oldest, Ambedkar holds that the missing point in its inherent strength for survival is its plane of survival; is its social heritage a burden or a benefit? What is its contribution to the knowledge of man and nature?

In the light of the deprivation of civilization to 79½ million population he evaluates the Hindu civilization. He cites proof of reports in the papers regarding this. Observing that even in the domain of science, arts and crafts the contribution of the Hindu civilization is of the most primitive character, he says, "Many patriotic Hindus like to believe that the knowledge of man and nature began with the Hindus. Granting that it is so it certainly did not advance beyond the most rudimentary stage. Can any Hindu doubt that the Hindu Philology, right or wrong, has remained where Panini and Katyayana left it? Can he deny that Philosophy right or wrong has remained where Kapila and Gautama left it? Can he doubt that literature remained where Vyasa and Valmiki left it," though "In the field of Religion and Ethics the Hindus have made their

81. Ibid., p.136
greatest efforts. Of their contributions, these are the most elaborately developed. They are undoubtedly the most vital to man for the simple reason that they help to install in man the springs of thought and action."  

He examines the Hindu civilization, in the matter of its religious content, in application to the existence of the great number of the 'sunken humanity'. Giving a detailed account of the hardships and ignominy not only of the untouchables but also of the most pitiable plight of the 'unseeables' and 'unapproachables' in India, Ambedkar laments, "How must they be passing their lives? If their sight or their approach even is not tolerated, what work can they obtain? What else can they do except to beg and to live on dog's meat? Surely no civilization can be guilty of greater cruelty."  

However, he finds relief in the fact that their population is very small. For the denial of civilization to 50 million untouchables, Ambedkar's reasons are: "...the caste system prevents the Hindu religion from becoming a missionary religion and caste is a fundamental part of the Hindu civilization... the system of 'Chaturvarna' limits the opportunities which a person can have for earning an honourable living.... Those outside (the four 'varnas') being nothing honourable left, have been driven to dishonourable and criminal ways of earning a livelihood."  

Such degrading system of social organisation, according to Ambedkar, "deadens, 

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82. Ibid., pp. 136-138.
83. Ibid., p. 140.
84. Ibid., pp. 142-143.
paralyses and cripples people from helpful activity".85

After attacking the defenders of the caste system and 'Chaturvarna' for the social evils, Ambedkar deals with those who have an attitude of 'armed neutrality' towards the problem of caste, those who take comfort in the idea that non-Hindus also have castes among them. He observes that groups exist in all societies, that "nowhere is community life one single whole. It is always plural. In the world of action, the individual is one limit and society the other. Between them lie all sorts of associative arrangements of lesser and larger scope, families, friendships, co-operative associations, business combines, political parties.... These small groups are usually firmly welded together and are often as exclusive as castes.... The question to be asked in determining whether a given society is an ideal society; is not whether there are groups in it,...(but) How numerous and varied are the interests which are consciously shared by the groups? How full and free is the interplay with other forms of associations?..... What social significance is attached to this group life?"86 Bringing out the difference between the position of an individual in Indian society and in the West, Ambedkar says, "..... the American or European belongs to groups of various kinds, but he 'joins' most of them. He of course is born into a family, but he does not stay in it all his life unless he

85. BAW'S., Vol.1., p. 63.
86. Ibid., p. 64.
pleases. He may choose his own occupation, residence, wife, political party and is responsible generally speaking to no one's acts but his own. He is an 'individual' in a much fuller sense because all his relationships are settled by himself for himself. But touchables or untouchables are in no sense individuals because all or nearly all of his relationship are fixed when he is born in a certain group. His occupation, his dwelling, his gods and his politics are all determined for him by the group to which he belongs. When the touchables and untouchables meet they do not meet as man to man, individual to individual but as members of groups or as nationals of two different States."^87

Examining community life in society Ambedkar enumerates the fundamental differences between the Hindu and non-Hindu groups. According to him "the strength of a society depends upon the presence of points of contact, possibilities of interaction between different groups which exist in it. These are what Carlyle calls "organic filaments" i.e., the elastic threads which help to bring the disintegrating elements together and to reunite them." He finds the 'organic filaments' to be absent among the Hindus. While the idea of excommunication is foreign to non-Hindus, while caste among them has no religious consecration, among the Hindus 'most decidedly it has'. With regard to the longevity of Hindu society Ambedkar quotes

from The Hindu View of Life by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan who, according to him "is big enough to invest with profundity whatever he says and impresses the minds of the readers...": Yet with the courage of his conviction Ambedkar remarks, "I must not hesitate to speak out my mind. For, I fear that his statement may become a basis for a vicious argument that the fact of survival is proof of fitness to survive..... the question is not whether a community lives or dies; the question is on what plane does it live. ....For an individual as well as for a society, there is a gulf between merely living and living worthily"; he brings home the idea metaphorically: "To fight in a battle and to live in glory is one mode. To beat a retreat, to surrender and to live the life of a captive also is a mode of survival." Hence he holds that instead of taking comfort in the fact that the Hindu has survived, he must consider the quality of his survival. In his opinion unless there is a change in the Hindu social order, little progress can be made, for nothing can be built on the foundation of caste, no nation, no morality, anything that is built so will crack and will never be a whole. Hence he advises the Hindus that "...there is nothing fixed, nothing eternal, nothing, 'sanatan': ....everything is changing ....change is the law of life for individuals as well as for society. In a changing society, there must be a constant revaluation of old values and the Hindus must realize that if there must be standards to measure acts of men there must also be a readiness to revise those standards." 

89. Ibid., p. 66.
90. Ibid., p. 79.
Ambedkar asserts that although the Hindu religion is held to be 'sanatan' and is believed to be static even by European scholars, it is not so; it has changed from time to time; often times the change is of the most radical kind. In his opinion, if the Hindu intellect is to grow, the dogmas and the Brahmanic theology ought to be exposed and an explanation to the 'riddles' be demanded. His analysis of the Hindu philosophy reveals the sharpness of his probing intellect. The scathing analysis and merciless criticism only express his rational attitude. His constructive criticisms are only a corrective to the blind faith of the masses. The book (Vol.4), abounding in quotations from Brahmanical texts is an evidence of his wide reading, vast knowledge and piercing intellect.

Ambedkar does not blame the individual for practising untouchability. For he holds that "It the Hindu observes untouchability it is because his religion enjoins him to do so. If he is ruthless and lawless in putting down the untouchables rising against his Established Order, it is because his religion not only tells him that the Established Order is divine and therefore sacrosanct but also imposes upon him a duty to see that this Established Order is maintained by all means possible. If he does not listen to the call of humanity, it is because his religion does not enjoin him to regard the untouchables as human beings. If he does not feel the qualms of conscience in assaulting, looting, burning and other acts of atrocities against the Untouchables, it is because his religion tells him that nothing is sin which is done in defence of the social order."^91

91. BAWSS, Vol.5, p. 90.
To those who regard this as a travesty of their religion, Ambedkar replies by quoting the 'Commandments of Manu,' the architect of Hindu Society, regarding untouchability.

Asserting that the main cause which is responsible for the fate of the untouchables is the Hindu religion and its teachings, he brings out a comparison between Paganism and Christianity in relation to slavery, and Hinduism in relation to untouchability. The comparison reveals "how different has been the influence of the two religions on human institutions, how elevating has been the influence of the former and how degrading that of the latter."; pointing out the glaring paradox he says, "Legally the slave was not a free man. Yet socially he had all the freedom necessary for the growth of his personality. Legally the untouchable is a free man. Yet socially he has no freedom for the growth of his personality." He explains, "....while religion was on the side of the slave, religion has been against the Untouchables. The Roman Law declared that the slave was not a person. But the religion of Rome refused to accept that principle, at any rate, refused to extend that principle to the social field. It treated him as a human being fit for comradeship. The Hindu Law declared that the untouchable was not a person. Contrary to Paganism, the Hindu religion not only accepted the principle but extended it to the social field." He observes that one of the ways

92. Ibid., pp. 91-92.
by which the Roman religion saved the slave from degradation was by keeping the most sacred place open for the slave to occupy. Thus he observes that there was no gulf, social or religious, which separated the slave from the rest of the society. He brings to light the fact that during the period of slavery in America, Christian priests were not prepared to convert Negro slaves to Christianity because of their view that it would degrade Christianity if the convert remained a slave.

In lucid prose Ambedkar generalises the particular: "Law and Religion are two forces which govern the conduct of men. At times, they act as handmaids to each other. At other times, they act as check and counter-check. Of the two forces, Law is personal while religion is impersonal. Law being personal, it is capable of being unjust and inequitable. But religion being impersonal, it can be impartial. If religion remains impartial, it is capable of defeating the inequity committed by law. This is exactly what happened in Rome in regard to the slave. That is why religion is believed to ennoble man and not to degrade him." 93

Writing of the social evils in the Indian context, a wrathful Ambedkar remarks: "The acts and omissions are not mere inequities; they are not mere indignities. They are gross instances of man's inhumanity to man. For a doctor not to treat a patient

93. Ibid., p. 93.
because the patient is an Untouchable, for a body of Hindu villagers to burn the houses of the Untouchables, to throw human excreta in their well if these are not acts of inhumanity, I wonder what can be?." In his view the Hindus lack conscience because "The class compositions in other countries were based on economic and social consideration. Slavery and serfdom had no foundation in religion. Untouchability though it can give and does economic advantages to the Hindus, is primarily based on religion." For, he holds, "there is nothing sacrosanct in economic and social interests. They yield to time and circumstances. This is the broad explanation why slavery and serfdom have vanished and why untouchability has not." He draws a distinction between 'religion of rules' and 'religion of principles'. In clear, simple diction he observes that "Rules are practical; they are habitual ways of doing things according to prescription. But principles are intellectual; they are a useful method of judging things. Rules seek to tell an agent just what course of action to pursue. Principles do not prescribe a specific course of action. Rules, like cooking recipes, do tell just what to do and how to do it. A principle, such as that of justice, supplies a main head by reference to which he is to consider the bearings of his desires and purposes ....the rule may be right but the act is mechanical. A religious act may not be a correct act but must at least be a responsible act. To permit of this

94. Ibid., p. 89.
95. Ibid.
96. Ibid.
responsibility, Religion must mainly be a matter of principles only. It cannot be a matter of rules. The moment it degenerates into rules it ceases to be Religion, as it kills responsibility which is the essence of a truly religious act." Examine in the light of this argument, the Hindu Religion, in his view, is 'really law or at best legalised class ethics.... (it is a) code of ordinances... (which) tends to deprive moral life of freedom and spontaneity and to reduce it (for the conscientious at any rate) to a more or less anxious and servile conformity to externally imposed rules. Under it, there is no loyalty to ideals, there is only conformity to commands. But the worst evil.... Is that the laws it contains must be the same yesterday, today and forever... The objectionable part of such a scheme is not that they are made by certain persons called Prophets or Lawgivers..... (It) is that this code has been invested with the character of finality and fixity." 

He holds that Hindus have no such base as the Christians or Muslims or Parsis, who belong to their respective religions, who are staunch adherents of the religion to which they belong. The Hindus being further divided among themselves as monotheists, polytheists and even atheists, they have no definite creed and hence, according to Ambedkar, 'A complex congeries of creeds and doctrines is Hinduism.' With illustrations from the Brahmanic literature

97. BAWS., Vol.1, p. 75.
98. Ibid., pp. 75-76.
Ambedkar shows the ignorance of the Hindus about the origin of their own scriptures. Regarding the question of infallibility of the Vedas too he makes a detailed examination of the Brahmanic literature only to prove the contrary. The entire Brahmanic literature comes under his scathing critical analysis. He finds "scarcely any indication or doctrinal or philosophical speculation, no allusion to the later notions of the several schools, nor is there any hint of metempsychosis.... of the repeated renovation of the world."\textsuperscript{100} According to him the Vedas may be useful as a source of information regarding the social life of the Aryans, but there is nothing elevating in them. Ambedkar’s examination of the Vedas, Upanishads, the Puranas, the Shruti and Smriti is indeed astounding in its sweep and depth. His scholarly examination of the meaning of 'Vedanta' and the position of the Upanishads in relation to the Vedas reveals his deep understanding of the matter in hand as also his critical and analytical capability. A detailed examination of the Brahmanic literature, the riddles that he comes across in it such as the exclusion of Sutras and Upanishads from the Shruti, the superiority of the Smritis to the Vedas, the motive behind bringing Smriti on equal footing with Shruti, and Vedas and Upanishads being complementary, lead Ambedkar to conclude that the Brahmans "spent their ingenuity to invest strange arguments to support the doctrine of infallibility."\textsuperscript{101}

\textsuperscript{100} Ibid., p. 44.

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., p. 60.
Ambedkar's preference for the religion of the Buddha to that of the Hindus is evident in his examination of the laws of the Buddha and the laws of Manu in 'The Rise and Fall of Hindu Woman'. He expresses his views on religion while discussing the position of women in society. As with all his writings, here too he goes to the root of the matter. In a reply to the charge made against the Buddha as the cause for the downfall of Hindu woman, he probes for the probable grounds; he finds them in a question put by Ananda to the Buddha regarding the conduct towards women in Chapter-V of the Mahaparinibhana Sutta which, he states, is a later interpolation because the Sutta Pitaka was written by Monks for Monks 400 years after the death of the Buddha. Further, he holds that from the very fact that women of all classes met him for religious instructions makes it clear that the Buddha did not shun women. He maintains that though the Buddha was dreadfully keen on maintaining celibacy, he did not shun, nor did he advise the Bhikkus to shun, all contact with women but told the Bhikkus to regard a woman as their mother, sister or daughter. Ambedkar cites the analogy of nunneries working in subordination to monasteries, in justification of the Bhikkuni Sanghas being subordinated to the Bhikku Sanghas and justifies Buddha's forming two separate sanghas: "The Buddha knew what a great force sex instinct is with life of both man as well as woman. To use the Buddha's own words it is this instinct which drives a man in woman's bondage and a woman in man's bondage. This force, if given an opportunity to have its
Ambedkar refutes the charge levelled against the Buddha, that is, he placed the Bhikkunis under the authority of the Bhikkus. In his view it was a revolutionary act on the part of the Buddha to have allowed woman to take Sanyas or Parivraja (Monkhood) as against the Brahmanic theory of denial of Sanyas to woman. He quotes Manu and condemns him for the view which was 'both an insult and injury' to the women of India: "It was an injury because without any justification she was denied the right to acquire knowledge which is the birth right of every human being. It was an insult because after denying her opportunity to acquire knowledge she was declared to be as unclean as untruth for want of knowledge and therefore not to be allowed to take Sanyas which was regarded as a path to reach Brahma. Not only was she denied the right to realize her spiritual potentiality she was also declared to be barren of any spiritual potentiality by the Brahmins". 103 Quoting the words of Prof. Max Muller, Ambedkar asserts that by admitting women to the life of Parivarajaka, the Buddha by one stroke, removed both these wrongs.

Ambedkar observes that there was a sure downfall in the

103. Ibid., pp. 17-18.
position of women in India from what it once was, and that earlier, though not in the political, certainly in the intellectual and social life of the country, they occupied a very high position. He illustrates from Panini's *Ashtadhyayi*, from Patanjali's *Mahabhashya* and the Atharva Veda that women were entitled to 'Upanayan', that they too attended Gurukul and studied Vedas, and that they taught Vedas to girl students. He also gives examples of public disputation in which learned women participated and mentions the fact that among the 'Ratnis' who were present at the time of King's coronation the queen too was present to whom the king made an offering. For the downfall of woman from this very high position Ambedkar holds Manu responsible. In evidence of his view he quotes the relevant laws, clearly bringing out that Manu held women in very low esteem, holding that they were seducers, hence must be guarded against; that with no right to divorce they were not to be free under any circumstances. Quoting and interpreting the relevant laws of Manu, Ambedkar observes: "Many Hindus.... keep on idealizing it by comforting their conscience with the thought that Manu regarded marriage as sacrament and therefore did not allow divorce." This of course is far from truth. His law against divorce had a very different motive. It was not to tie up a man to a woman but it was to tie up the woman to a man and to leave the man free".

104. Ibid., pp. 22-28.
105. Ibid., p. 24.
Referring to the law that 'Neither by sale nor by repudiation is a wife released from her husband', Ambedkar observes, "If this is not monstrous nothing can be. But Manu was not worried by considerations of justice or injustice in framing his law. He wanted to deprive women of the freedom they had under the Buddhistic regime. Manu was outraged by her licence and in putting a stop to it he deprived her of her liberty.... Manu's laws never allow a woman to have any dominion over property"; they subject her even to corporal punishment and in fact in the matter of property reduce her to the level of a slave. Her slavery to husband and household is held by Hindus as ideal; even killing a woman is a Upapataka (a minor offence) whereas killing a Brahmin is a Mahapataka, a grave offence. All these evidently show the degradation of women in India by the laws of Manu which, Ambedkar holds, are in fact "the views of the Brahmins ever since Brahminism was born in India. Before Manu they existed only as a matter of social theory. What Manu did was to convert what was a social theory into the law of the state. The second thing ....(is the reason) which led Manu to impose these disabilities upon women. Shudras and women were the two chief sections of the Aryan Society which were flocking to join the religion of the Buddha and thereby undermining the foundation of the Brahmanic Religion. Manu wanted to stem the tide of women flowing in the direction of Buddhism."106 In illustration of his view

106. Ibid., p. 27.
Ambodkar again quotes the laws of Manu.

While discussing the polytheism of the Hindus and that of the Romans and Greeks Ambedkar accuses the Hindus for the levity with which they treat their gods. In 'Riddle No.13' (Vol.4) he quotes extensively from Rig Veda, Satapatha Brahmana, the Chulu Niddessa in which various sects were classified on the basis of creeds and cults, the Bhagwat Purana, the Chandogya Upanishad, the Bhagawat-Gita and the Mahabharata, and traces the rise and fall of different gods and wonders at the levity with which the Brahmans treat their gods. With reference to the 'Griha Sutras' he observes that the ancient Aryans, the ancestors of present day Hindus, were not only meat-eaters but they were beef-eaters also.

Dr. Ambedkar's scholarly analysis of the Hindu philosophy, his interpretation of Hindu Religion made in historic perspective and his examination of the Brahmanic texts such as the Vedas, Upanishads, the Shruti, and Samhitas, are aimed at revitalising the Hindu society. A product of the intellect of the highest order, the book (Vol.4) easily forms 'literature of thought'. As Dr. Ambedkar himself states in the 'Introduction', "This book is an exposition of the beliefs propounded by what might be called Brahmanic theology. It is intended for the common mass of Hindus who need to be awakened.... and to lead them on to the road of rational thinking". In his opinion, if the Hindu intellect is to grow, the dogmas and the Brahmanic theology ought to be exposed and an
explanation of the riddles demanded. For, to him, the destruction of the dogma is very essential for the progress of the country. His entire 'socio-religious literature' - contained in Vols. 1,3,4,5, and 7 - points towards the upliftment of the downtrodden and the integration of the masses into the national mainstream.

Ambedkar's writings are not restricted to Indian Society and Religion only; he has left behind his views and thoughts regarding the Indian economy and Indian politics also besides covering other topics in his essays and reviews. A further glimpse of his discursive writings can be gained from the next chapter.