Chapter III

Dr. B. R. AMBEDKAR AND THE SCHEDULED CASTES
This Chapter addresses the profile of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who believed that only by destroying the caste system could untouchability be destroyed, besides his earnest and genius hard work that brought renaissance to the so called untouchables. This Chapter is divided into five parts. First part presents profile of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Vision and Mission of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar is explained in Part II. Part III deals with the role played by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar as the architect of Indian Constitution.

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, also known as Babasaheb, was an Indian jurist, political leader, Dalit leader, philosopher, thinker, anthropologist, historian, orator, prolific writer, economist, women emancipator, human rights profounder, an eminent and erudite scholar, editor, revolutionist and a revivirist for Buddhism in India. He was also the chief architect of the Indian Constitution. Dr. Ambedkar made a frontal assault on caste using the brilliance of his legal expertise and his access to the political negotiating tables in London and New Delhi in the days preceding the transfer of power from imperial Britain to independent India. Dr. Ambedkar was an intellectual giant and India's great reformer.

Born in a poor Mahar, then Untouchable, family, Ambedkar spent his whole life fighting against social discrimination, the system of Chaturvarna — the categorization of Hindu society into four varnas — and the Hindu caste system. The leader, throughout his life, fought for the rights of the dalits and other socially backward classes untiringly. His efforts to eradicate the social evils and for the upliftment of the deprived classes were remarkable. He was appointed as Law Minister in the first Cabinet of Jawaharlal Nehru. He was also known as the “Father of Indian Constitution”. Many Indians and even people from other countries revere him as a great social revolutionist.

By overcoming numerous social and financial obstacles, Ambedkar became one of the first "Dalit" to obtain a college education in India. Eventually earning law degrees and
multiple doctorates for his study and research in law, economics and political science from Columbia University and the London School of Economics, Ambedkar returned home as a reputed scholar and practiced law for a few years before publishing journals advocating political rights and social freedom for India's untouchables.

Ambedkar, the Dalit icon, was unquestionably the first Untouchable leader of India. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had faced discrimination throughout his life. Although he is such a great personality as discussed above and has countless of unpublished editions of his writings to his credit, there have been few studies of his life, his work and his thought. In 2000, Upendra Baxi could still write, ‘Ambedkar remains a totally forgotten figure’. Indeed nothing conveys better this neglect than the small number of books which had been devoted to him till 1990s. If many regional Congress leaders have been the subject of more than one biography – not to mention the countless books about ‘Gandhi’ and ‘Nehru’ – for a long time there were only a few books on Ambedkar of the same calibre in English. Similarly the publication of Ambedkar’s collected works did not begin before the 1970s – in contrast to those of Gandhi, Nehru, Patel and Pant.

This anomaly is partly explained by the poverty of biographical writing in general in Indian social sciences, partly by disapproval – even fear – which Ambedkar still arouses within the Indian establishment and partly by the ostracism in which those who are accused of having collaborated with the British are readily held. The credit still goes predominantly to the leaders of the freedom movement. Ambedkar’s struggle was different but vital nonetheless.

3.1 Life of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

Ambedkar’s life, on the face of it, appears to confirm the fairly tale of the self-made man. Bhimrao Ambedkar was born to Bhimabai and Ramji Sakpal on 14th April 1891 in the
British-founded town and military cantonment of Mhow, a garrison town close to Indore – the capital of a princely state of the same name which was to be incorporated into the province of Madhya Bharat (contemporary Madhya Pradesh after independence) in a caste, namely, Mahar, considered low and outcaste. He was the fourteenth and last child of his parents. His first name was Bhimrao Ambavadekar. His family was of Marathi background from the town of Ambavade in the Ratnagiri district of modern-day Maharashtra and Ambedkar’s real name, Ambavadekar came from there. They belonged to the Mahar caste of Hindu, who were treated as so called untouchables and subjected to intense socio-economic discrimination. Ambedkar's ancestors had for long been in the employment of the army of the British East India Company, and his father Ramji Sakpal served in the Indian Army at the Mhow cantonment. Ramji Sakpal retired in 1894 and the family moved to Satara two years later.

Ambedkar was a victim of caste discrimination at his childhood. Due to his parents hailed from the Hindu Mahar caste, which was viewed as “untouchable” by the upper class, he had to face severe discriminations from every corners of the society. The discrimination and humiliation haunted Ambedkar even at the Army school, run by British government. Fearing social outcry, the teachers would segregate the students of lower class from that of Brahmins and other upper classes. The untouchable students were often asked by the teacher to sit outside the class. After shifting to Satara, he was admitted to a local school but the change of school did not change the fate of young Bhimrao. Discrimination followed wherever he went.

A small incident noted here brings a clear picture of discrimination faced by young Bhimrao. Once, Bhimrao Ambedkar and his brother, who were studying at school, went to see their father. They alighted at the Masur Railway Station, engaged a cart and continued
their journey. They went some distance; then the cart driver came to know that they belonged to the Mahar caste. He at once stopped the cart and raised one end of it; the poor boys tumbled down and fell on the ground. He shouted at them and scolded them as he pleased.

It was afternoon. The boys were thirsty. They begged for water but no one would give them a drop. Hours passed. Still no one gave them water. They were not allowed even to go near tanks and wells. Bhim felt unbearable thirst. He drank water from a well nearby. Someone noticed it. A few people gathered and beat the boy mercilessly. When the boy had to get his hair cut, even a barber who used to cut the hair of a buffalo would not touch the boy’s hair. On another day, the boy was going to school. It was raining heavily. He took shelter near the wall of a house. The lady of the house saw this. She was very angry. She pushed him into the rain. The boy fell into the muddy water. All his books fell into the water too. In this way, again and again, the young boy was humiliated. His mind became a volcano of bitter feelings.

He had experienced caste's depravity first-hand. When he was still at school, he felt the sting of ‘untouchability’. He could not sit with the other students of the class. He had to drink water only when others poured it for him; and even then he had to cover his mouth with one hand. The boy could not understand why. Although the boy had not committed any sin, he was ill-treated by the people in the above ways. Happened to born in the Mahar caste was not his fault. It was the belief of many Hindus that this Mahar caste is low and those born in this caste should not be touched by people of the other castes. Like the people of the Mahar caste, people of many other castes are called ‘untouchables’ and have suffered injustice for hundreds of years. These insults and pains gave him a very deep impression on the young boy’s mind. The boy felt ‘untouchability’ was a black mark on Hindu Dharma; he made up his mind to remove it.
Even from his boyhood Ambedkar had a mind of steel. Fighting was in his very blood. The Mahars had the soldier’s blood in them. That’s why Britishers also realized it and they established a separate regiment exclusively for Mahars. Ambedkar’s Father Sakpal too had served in the army as said earlier.

When Bhimrao was a student at the High school, a Brahmin teacher admired Bhimrao’s lively mind. With the recommendation and faith of Mahadev Ambedkar, who was the Brahmin school teacher to Ambedkar, who was impressed by Ambedkar’s intellect and personal qualities and who decided to give his own name to Ambedkar, Ambedkar changed his name from Ambavadekar to Ambedkar in 1900.

3.1.1 At the High School

He joined the Elphinstone High School in Bombay. The family found a house in a locality where the poorest of the poor lived. There was just one room for the entire family. This was at once the kitchen, the bedroom and the study. There was not space enough even for two to sleep. Bhim would go to bed early. Near his head there was a grinding stone and at his feet a goat. The father would be awake till two in the night. He would then lie down. The boy would get up, light the kerosene lamp without a chimney and began to study.

In the high school he received a wound he could never forget in his life. It was Bhim’s desire to learn sanskrit. Other Hindus of the School could learn Sanskrit. But it was ordered that he should not learn Sankskrit because he belonged to the Mahar caste. People born in other countries, people not Hindus at all were allowed to read the Vedas. No one objected. This injustice made him all the more bitter.

In 1907, these intellectual qualities enabled him to obtain his matriculation certificate at Elphinstone High School in Bombay. He was then seventeen years old. The same year his
marriage with Ramabai was celebrated. Their marriage took place in a shed in Byculla Fish Market, Bombay.

Ambedkar passed his Intermediate Examination from Elphistone College. He obtained his B.A. degree in 1912. Ambedkar’s father died in 1913. After graduation he went to Baroda in 1913. He was appointed to the post of a Lieutenant in the Baroda State Force. In Baroda he was treated in a bad way.

3.1.2 In America

The Maharaja of Baroda sent Bhimrao Ambedkar to America by sanctioning scholarship on 4.4.1913 and Ambedkar joined the Columbia University in New York as Faculty of political science. In America, Ambedkar had experience of a new life. There was no ‘untouchability’. In this atmosphere, he quoted in a letter he wrote to his friend a few lines from Shakespear, a great dramtist; they mean, ‘In the life of man now and again there is a swelling wave; if a man uses this opportunity, it will carry him towards his fortune.

Ambedkar wrote very learned and theories obtained his M.A and Ph.D. degrees. He returned to India on the 21st of August 1917. There is one thing to note in the years of Ambedkar’s education. He studied English and Persian languages in India. In America he studied Political Science, Ethics, Anthropology, Social Science and Economics. In this way he studied many subjects and obtained doctorates. Even at that time Ambedkar had a revolutionary mind. He had made an unshakable resolution to wipe out the injustice done to the people of the low caste. In this way he wanted to bring about a revolution in the Hindu Society. This enabled him to pay a very effective part in framing the Constitution of India.
3.1.3 Injustice and Humiliation

In conformity with the agreement he came to Baroda in September 1917 and stayed in cognito at a Parsee Dharmashala. He was appointed as Military Secretary to the Maharaj. He had a doctorate, he held a high office – but from the moment he set foot in India he felt the sting of ‘untouchability.’ No one came to welcome him, when he reached Baroda. Worse still, even the servants in the office would not hand over the files to him; they threw the files at him. No one in the office would give him water to drink. He could not get a house to live in. Even though he complained to the Maharaja, it was useless. Even non-Hindu did not treat him properly. The fire of wrath against the Hindus blazed in Ambedkar’s mind. He returned to Bombay in a few days. On 11.11.1918, he joined his duties as a Professor of Political economy in the Sydenham College of Commerce, Bombay. He held the post till 1.3.1920.

3.1.4 Southborough Committee

Ambedkar’s academic achievements brought him to the attention of the British who saw in him a future representative of the Untouchables. As a leading Indian scholar, Ambedkar had been invited to testify before the Southborough Committee, which was preparing the Government of India Act 1919 and had been set up to revise the qualification criteria for voting rights and thus allow more Indians to vote during the elections to the assemblies established in the provinces and in Delhi. The stakes were very high as the 1919 reforms were intended to devolve greater power to the governments and to the provincial assemblies of British India. At this hearing, Ambedkar argued for creating separate electorates and reservations for Dalits and other religious communities.
3.1.5 ‘Mook Nayak’(The Leader of the Dumb)

In the field of journalism also Dr. Ambedkar’s contribution cannot be exaggerated. He started Marathi Weekly Mooknayak on 31st January, 1920 in Mumbai with the financial support of the Sahu Chatrapati, Maharajah of Kolhapur, who was none other than the descendant of Shivaji, to speak for the mute Dalits of the time. He started it to proclaim and to bring to light the humiliations suffered by the ‘untouchables’ and to fight for equal rights. He wrote in the first issue of this paper that the Hindu Society is like a tower of many stories. It has neither a ladder nor a door to go out. Attaining popularity, Ambedkar used this journal to criticize orthodox Hindu politicians and a perceived reluctance of the Indian political community to fight caste discrimination. By this time there were signs that the Hindu Society was beginning to understand that ‘untouchability’ is unjust.

3.1.6 Mangaon and Nagpur Conferences

On March 21, 1920 he presided over the Mangaon Conference at Kolhapur State. Shahu Chatrapati attended the Conference and appreciated Ambedkar. Later, Dr. Ambedkar attended the first all India Depressed Class Conference held at Nagpur during 30.5.1920 to 1.6.1920. Shau Chatrapati presided over this Conference. This was the first all India conference convened by untouchables.

3.1.7 Again back to London

His desire to resume his studies at London had remained unfulfilled. Shahu sanctioned him Rs.1500/-. He left for London on 5.7.1920. On 30.9.1920, he took admission in London School of Economics and Political Science for Master of Science. He also enrolled his name in Gray’s Inn for Law. The British Museum in London has a very good library. It used to open at eight in the morning, and every day Ambedkar would be there by
eight. He read till five o’clock. He submitted his Theses to the University of London and they were accepted and then obtained a Master of Science in 1921 and he presented his thesis entitled ‘The Problem of the Rupee’ in 1922 and in the next year he came back to India.

### 3.1.8 Legal Practice

After returning to India from London, in June 1923, he decided to settle down as a Lawyer in Bombay High Court. He was financially so badly off that he did not have money to pay for the *sanad*. He took up appellate work. The stigma of untouchability continued to dog him, and solicitors refused to have any working relationship with him on the usual ground that he was an untouchable. He was forced himself to confine himself to mofussil work. Being an untouchable, he found it hard to attract clients also. He then decided to devote his life to campaign against the caste system.

### 3.1.9 Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha

On 20\textsuperscript{th} July 1924, Dr. Ambedkar set up the Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha (Association for the Welfare of the Ostracised) to promote education and socio-economic uplifting of the depressed classes which he had till 1928. The aims of the Sabha were educate, agitate and organise. The era of self respect dawned with the birth of the Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha.

On 10.6.1925, he was appointed as a Lecturer at Batliboi’s Accountancy Training Institute. On 27.8.1925, the Royal Commission on Indian currency was appointed under the Chairmanship of Edward Hilton Young. On 15.12.1925, Dr. Ambedkar gave evidence before the Royal Commission on Indian currency.
3.1.10 Member of Bombay Legislative Council

Dr. Ambedkar had been nominated by the British rulers to the Legislative Council of the Bombay Presidency in December 1925. Here Ambedkar worked hard to secure for the Untouchables legal access to wells and entry into temples. The agitation that Ambedkar led on the latter issue was to continue sporadically till 1935. In the Council, he delivered a good number of speeches. The content of his speeches was the welfare of Indians.

3.1.11 Chowdar Tank Satyagraha (Mahad Satyagraha)

Ambedkar had personal experience of the humiliation and the injustice of ‘untouchability’. He did not want the pity of other for the ‘untouchables’. In his view, others could not uplift the ‘untouchables’. Justice cannot be granted by others. Those who suffer because of injustice should themselves secure justice.

Ambedkar felt that the ‘untouchables’ had lost their individuality for centuries; it was impossible to wake up such people through speeches and slogans. He decided to revolt against the blind beliefs of the Hindus. The Chowdar Tank Satyagraha was a result of this decision.

The Bombay Legislature had already passed a bill. According to this, the government had decided that all people could use public tanks to wells. On the basis of this decision, the Mahad Municipality in Colaba district had resolved that Chowdar Tank could be used even by the ‘untouchables’. But they had not given effect to it.

Ambedkar resolved to raise the flag of equality by using the water of this tank. On the appointed day Ambedkar touched the water first. Then, many of his followers drank the water. Till then the ‘untouchables’ had not been allowed to go near the tank. Ambedkar proved that nature created water belongs to all. But after a couple of hours someone spread
the rumour that Ambedkar’s men would enter even the Veereshwara Temple. The other caste Hindus attacked Ambedkar and his men. In this clash, Ambedkar was injured.

This incident opened a new chapter in the social life of India. Many sensible Hindus condemned these actions. They began to say that there was nothing wrong of the ‘untouchables’ taking water from wells and tanks. This was Ambedkar’s rock-like decision. He was prepared to oppose anybody to reach his goal.

By 1927 Dr. Ambedkar decided to launch active movements against untouchability. He began with public movements and marches to open up and share public drinking water resources, also he began a struggle for the right to enter Hindu temples. He started Satyagraha on March 20, 1927 at the Chowdar Tank at Colaba, near Bombay, to give the untouchables the right to draw water from the public tank where he burnt copies of the 'Manusmriti' publicly.

3.1.12 Bahishkrit Bharat, a fortnightly Marathi Paper

Now, Dr. Ambedkar had to face the attack of criticism. So he felt the need for a mouth piece as never before. Dr. Ambedkar started a fortnightly Marathi paper Bahiskrit Bharat (outcaste India), he himself as the editor on April 3, 1927 to highlight excluded masses in society on political scenario. The new paper was meant to meet the need for articulating the grievances and interests of the depressed classes, especially in view of the impending constitutional reforms. The primary goal was to win representation for these classes proportionately to their numerical strength. Other social reform goals included the access to temples and water resources for the untouchables, and also opening up of public places in general for them, such as schools. Dr. Ambedkar also started journals like Samata
in 1928 and Janata in 1930 and Prabuddha Bharat to rationalize the whole country after the Great Buddha.

3.1.13 Samata Samaj Sangh (League for Equality)

The touchables and the untouchables used to level criticism against the movements launched by Dr. Ambedkar. He was facing this criticism and as well as expediting his work. The masses were now conscious about their equality in social life. At some places such activities were being undertaking. Then Dr. Ambedkar established Samata Samaj Sangha in September 1927.

3.1.14 Simon Commission

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was appointed to the Bombay Presidency Committee to work with the all-European Simon Commission in 1925. This commission had sparked great protests across India, and while its report was ignored by most Indians, Ambedkar himself wrote a separate set of recommendations for future constitutional reformers.

Indian Statutory Commission, popularly known as Simon Commission, arrived at Bombay on 3.2.1928 and Dr. Ambedkar did not oppose the Simon Commission because the problems and difficulties of untouchables differ from those of touchables and no adequate efforts were made to solve their problems by so called leaders in India. Dr. Ambedkar submitted to it a Statement on the 29th May, 1928, under the caption, “State concerning the Safeguards for the Protection of the interests of the Depressed Classes as a Minority in the Bombay Presidency, and the changes in the composition of and the guarantees from the Bombay Legislative Council necessary to ensure the same under provincial autonomy”. He demanded protection through adequate representation for the depressed classes. Further, he demanded that the education of the depressed classes shall be recognized as the first charge
on the revenues of the Province. He further said that surely the first essential of any scheme of reform is that adequate safeguard should be provided for the good government of the inarticulate masses of the population.

On 23rd October, 1928, Dr. Ambedkar gave evidence before the Simon Commission at Pune. In the course of the evidence, Dr. Ambedkar agreed that the terms “Depressed Classes” and “Untouchables”, were synonymous, the term “Untouchable” meaning “those whose touch will pollute a high caste Hindu”.

3.1.15 Nagpur-Kamtee Conference

All India Depressed Classes Conference was held at Nagpur on 8th and 9th August 1930. Dr. Ambedkar delivered presidential address. In his address, he told that the best guarantee for the protection of your own interests, consists in having the power of control in your own hands so that you may yourselves be in a position not only to punish when the mischief to your interests is done, but to keep a watch over your interests, from day to day, prevent possible mischief from arising. This will never be secured by leaving the power in the hands of the third party be it the Governor, Viceroy or the League of Nations. For of what use will that power be to us, if those who will hold it in trust for us refuse to exercise it when we call for their intervention.

3.1.16 The Round Table Conferences

The Round Table Conferences held by the British Government in London during 1930-1932 has immense importance in the history not only for the nation but also for the Depressed Classes and other weaker sections of the people. Dr. Ambedkar and Rao Bahadur Srinivasan represented the Depressed Classes at the Round Table Conferences. Dr.
Ambedkar voiced in the First Round Table Conference held from 12th November 1930 to 19th January 1931 that a generous policy be adopted in the matter of the employment of the Depressed Classes in the Public Services and the recruitment of the Police and Military from which they are now excluded should be thrown open to them. Dr. Ambedkar further spoke on the scheme of political safeguards for the protection of depressed classes in the future Constitution of India. He further argued that the backward sections did not enjoy equality with other sections, even under the British Government; the British had just followed the ways of the other Hindus.

This was a time when Gandhiji was very popular in India. Millions of people followed his foot-steps with devotion. Ambedkar openly opposed Gandhiji’s views on how justice should be secured for the ‘untouchables’.

Soon a second conference was held from 7th September 1931 to 19th January 1931, which Mr. Gandhi attended representing the Congress Party. Babasaheb met Gandhi in Bombay before they went to London. Gandhi told him that he had read what Babasaheb said at the first conference. Gandhi told Babasaheb he knew him to be a real Indian patriot.

At the Second Conference, Babasaheb asked for a separate electorate for the Depressed Classes. -Hinduism”, he said, has given us only insults, misery, and humiliation.” A separate electorate would mean that the ‘untouchables’ would vote for their own candidates and be allotted their votes separate from the Hindu majority.

Babasaheb was made a hero by thousands of his followers on his return from Bombay - even though he always said that people should not idolise him. The British government partly concurred with his arguments in the arbitration (the Communal Award) which it
announced on August 14, 1932. Gandhi, who feared that the measure would threaten Hindu
unity, immediately went on a fast in Yeravda jail at Poona.

It was feared by Dr. Ambedkar that in the system of joint electorates with reserved
seats the candidates of the Depressed classes would be at the mercy of the majority of
electorates, and in order to win their votes they would have to pander to their prejudices, or
there would be every possibility of the seats being occupied by the stooges of the majority
community. The whole idea of the separate electorates is leaving the question of electing the
Candidate to the depressed classes.

3.1.17 Poona Pact

Even after more than 75 years, the Poona Pact remains the biggest obstacle for the
emergence of an autonomous and strong Dalit political leadership. Dalits continue to face
formidable challenges and the situation has actually deteriorated in absolute terms, despite
some advances among certain sections of the untouchables.

The Poona Pact refers to an agreement between the lower caste Untouchables (then
called Depressed Classes, now referred to as Dalits) of India led by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and
the upper caste Hindus of India that took place on 24 September 1932 at Yerawada Jail in
Pune (now in Maharashtra), India.

To draft a new Constitution involving self rule for the native Indians, the British
invited various leaders for Round Table Conferences in 1930-32. Mahatma Gandhi did not
attend the first and last but attended the second Conferences. The concept of separate
electorates for the Untouchables was raised by Dr. Ambedkar. Similar provisions were
already available for other minorities, including Muslims, christians, anglo-indians and Sikhs.
The British government agreed with Ambedkar's contention, and British Prime Minister J.
Ramsay MacDonald's Communal Award to the "depressed classes" was to be incorporated into the constitution for governance of British India. Gandhi strongly opposed it on the grounds that it would disintegrate Hindu society. He began an indefinite hunger strike at Yerawada Jail from September 20, 1932 to protest this Award.

As Gandhi's health worsened, Dr. Ambedkar was under tremendous pressure to save the life of Mahatma Gandhi. Ambedkar feared that should Gandhi die due the fast there would be a severe reprisal against the depressed classes by the upper caste Hindus of India. A compromise, the Poona Pact, was made between the leaders of caste Hindus and Dr. Ambedkar was reached on September 24, 1932.

Dr. Ambedakar got the concession for separate electorate from the British. When Mr. Gandhi— a very strong supporter of the caste system and Untouchability— heard about the British acceptance of separate electorate, he went into a tizzy fit. The Hindu mahasabah threatened mass massacres of the Dalits. The enslaved Untouchables were harassed to no end all across the land. Mr. Gandhi went into a fast unto death to blackmail Dr. Ambedkar. Finally Dr. Ambedkar gave in to the pressure, and surrendered the rights of the Dalits. He said that this was the biggest blunder of his life. The Dalits still remain oppressed because of the lack of separate electorate for them.

The Scheduled Castes want the restoration of separate electorates given to them by the Communal Award by Her Majesty’s Government and the abrogation of the Poona Pact, which was forced by Mr. Gandhi through His fast unto death.
3.1.18 Principal of Government Law College

Babasaheb had by this time collected a library of over 50,000 books, and had a house named Rajgriha built at Dadar in north Bombay to hold it. In 1935 his beloved wife Ramabai died. The same year he was made Principal of the Government Law College, Bombay.

3.1.19 Yeola Conference

Yeola Conference was again a turning point in Dr. Ambedkar’s life as well as in the movement of the Depressed Classes, which was held on 13th October 1935 at Yeola and which is a Conference of Dalits. It was during that Conference that he moved a resolution to this effect: ‘We have made sternuous efforts to bring about a rapprochement between the so-called untouchables and the caste Hindus, during the Mahad Chavdar Tank satyagraha, and the Nashik Kalaram temple satyagraha. But the caste-Hindus have evinced no sign of change of heart. And so, this conference of the “Untouchables” do hereby resolved that efforts to persuade the caste-Hindus having proved futile, the ‘Untouchables’ should no longer waste their energies on such efforts. Let us put a stop to Satyagrahas; get away from the Hindus; and achieve an honourable position of equality with all people of India. Because we call ourselves Hindus, we are treated thus. If we were the members of another faith, nobody would treat us as untouchables. I had the misfortune of being born with the stigma of ‘untouchability’; that is not my fault; but I will not die as a Hindu; this is in my power. This was the first time that Babasaheb stressed the importance of conversion from Hinduism for his people - for they were only known as ‘untouchables’ within the fold of Hinduism.

3.1.20 Origin of ‘Annihilation of Caste’ Book

In December 1935, Dr. Ambedkar was invited by the Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal (Society for the Breaking up of Caste), of Lahore to preside over its conference. The presidential
address that Babasaheb wrote for it, has come down to us in the shape of the famous, thought-provoking classic, namely, “Annihilation of Caste”. In the Annihilation, he sought to destroy the very sanctity of the Shastras that gave religious sanction to the creation of castes and untouchability. He wanted to bring about a radical, ‘notional’ change in the Hindu mind. These views were much too extreme to the Arya Samajist Jat-Pat Todak Mandal’s ideology. Dr. Ambedkar, however, was not prepared to alter his speech to suit the views of the organization. So Jat-Pat-Todak preferred to have the conference cancelled altogether.

Babasaheb, however, published the Annihilation, in 1936. He distinguishes between a religion of rules and a religion of principles; and advocates the annihilation of the religion of rules.

3.1.21 Labour Minister

During the Second World War, Babasaheb was appointed Labour Minister by the Viceroy. Yet he never lost contact with his roots. He said that he had been born of the poor and had lived the life of the poor. He would remain absolutely unchanged in his attitudes towards his friends and to the rest of the world.

3.1.22 Architect of the Constitution

After the war Babasaheb was elected to the Constituent Assembly to decide the way that India - a country of millions of people - should be ruled. How should elections take place? What are the rights of the people? How are laws to be made? Such important matters had to be decided and laws had to be made. The Constitution answers all such questions and lays down rules.
When India became independent in August 1947, Babasaheb Ambedkar became First Law Minister of Independent India. The Constituent Assembly made him chairman of the committee appointed to draft the constitution for the world’s largest democracy.

All his study of law, economics, and politics made him the best qualified person for this task. A study of the Constitutions of many countries, a deep knowledge of law, a knowledge of the history of India and of Indian Society - all these were essential. In fact, he carried the whole burden alone. He alone could complete this huge task.

After completing the Draft Constitution, Babasaheb fell ill. At a nursing home in Bombay he met Dr. Sharda Kabir and married her in April 1948. On November 4, 1948 he presented the Draft Constitution to the Constituent Assembly, and on November 26, 1949 it was adopted in the name of the people of India. On that date he said: -I appeal to all Indians to be a nation by discarding castes, which have brought separation in social life and created jealousy and hatred.”

3.1.23 Buddhist Conversion

In 1950, he went to a Buddhist conference in Sri Lanka. On his return he spoke in Bombay at the Buddhist Temple that “in order to end their hardships, people should embrace Buddhism. I am going to devote the rest of my life to the revival and spread of Buddhism in India.”

Babasaheb resigned from the Government in 1951. He felt that as an honest man he had no choice but to do so, because the reforms so badly needed had not been allowed to come into being.
For the next five years Babasaheb carried on a relentless fight against social evils and superstitions. On October 14, 1956 at Nagpur he embraced Buddhism. He led a huge gathering in a ceremony converting over half a million people to Buddhism. He knew that Buddhism was a true part of Indian history and that to revive it was to continue India’s best tradition. ‘Untouchability’ is a product only of Hinduism.

3.1.24 Last Political Speech

On 13.10.1956, there was a meeting of the workers of the Scheduled Castes Federation, Nagpur. It was in this meeting that Dr. Ambedkar gave his last political speech and said, “Perhaps you have more love for politics than for religion. It is true that the Scheduled Castes Federation has created a sense of self-respect among the depressed classes. But it is equally true that it has created something like a wall between them and other classes of the society. So much so that a situation has now come when others are not giving their votes to those who belong to the depressed classes. This is not good. It is more appropriate to organize a party in unison with those who realize their shortcomings. Our people should get accustomed to work in unison with others”.

According to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, “The most vital need of the day is to create among the mass of the people a sense of common nationality – the feeling not that they are Indians first and Hindus, Mohammedans or Sindhis and Kanarese afterwards, but that they are Indians first and Indians last”.

3.1.25 Last Breath

Since 1948, Ambedkar had been suffering from diabetes. He was bed-ridden from June to October in 1954 owing to clinical depression and failing eyesight. He had been increasingly embittered by political issues, which took a toll on his health. His health
worsened as he furiously worked through 1955. Just three days after completing his final manuscript *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, it is said that Ambedkar died in his sleep on December 6, 1956 at his home in Delhi.

Since the Caste Hindus denied the cremation at Dadar crematorium, a Buddhist-style cremation was organised for him at Chowpatty beach on December 7, attended by hundreds of thousands of supporters, activists and admirers. A conversion program was supposed to be organised on 16 December, 1956. So, those who had attended cremation function also got converted to Buddhism at same place.

Thus ended the life of one of India’s greatest sons. His was the task of awakening India’s millions of excluded and oppressed to their human rights. He experienced their suffering and the cruelty shown to them. He overcame the obstacles to stand on an equal footing with the greatest men of his time. He played a vital role in forming modern India through its Constitution.

Ambedkar was survived by his second wife Savita Ambedkar and converted to Buddhism with him. His wife’s name before marriage was Sharda Kabir. Savita Ambedkar died as a Buddhist in 2002. Ambedkar's grandson, Prakash Yaswant Ambedkar leads the Bharipa Bahujan Mahasangha and has served in both houses of the Indian Parliament.

A number of unfinished typescripts and handwritten drafts were found among Ambedkar’s notes and papers and gradually made available. Among these were *Waiting for a Visa*, which probably dates from 1935–36 and is an autobiographical work, and the *Untouchables, or the Children of India’s Ghetto*, which refers to the census of 1951.

A memorial for Ambedkar was established in his Delhi house at 26 Alipur Road. His birthdate is celebrated as a public holiday known as Ambedkar Jayanti or Bhim Jayanti. He
was posthumously awarded India's highest civilian honour, the Bharat Ratna in 1990. Many public institutions are named in his honour, such as the Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University in Hyderabad, Dr B.R. Ambedkar University in Srikakulam Andhra Pradesh, B. R. Ambedkar Bihar University, Muzaffarpur Dr.B.R.Ambedkar National Institute of Technology, Jalandhar the other being Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar International Airport in Nagpur, which was otherwise known as Sonegaon Airport. A large official portrait of Ambedkar is on display in the Indian Parliament building. On the anniversary of his birth (14 April) and death (6 December) and on Dhamma Chakra Pravartan Din, 14th Oct at Nagpur, at least half a million people gather to pay homage to him at his memorial in Mumbai. Thousands of bookshops are set up, and books are sold. His message to his followers was "Educate!!!, Agitate!!!, Organize!!!". His work and mission continue today - we must not rest until we see a truly democratic India of equal citizens living in peace together.

Part II
VISION AND MISSION

3.2.1 Separate Electorates

Dr. Ambedkar demanded separate electorates to the depressed classes in Round Table Conferences and the British has accepted separate electorates in the Second Round Table Conference held in 1932 in the name of Communal award. Under the communal award the untouchables were to have a differential franchise, not only to have to differential franchise, they were to have certain number of seats reserved for them in the provincial and central legislatures. The seats reserved for them were to be filled by separate electorates formed exclusively of voters belonging to the untouchables. In addition to having a vote in separate electorates, the untouchables were to have a second or additional vote in general election for seats opened to Hindus other than the untouchable community.
A joint electorate is one where the entire voting population of a country or region is part of a single electorate, and the entire electorate votes for the candidates who contest elections. Joint electorates may produce the enslavement of the minor community by the major community. Joint electorates mean giving the untouchables office without power. What the untouchables want is office with power. This, they can get office with power only through separate electorates and that is why the Scheduled Castes have been insisting upon it.

In the case of separate electorates, the voting population of a country or region is divided into different electorates, based on certain factors like religion, caste, occupation etc. Here, members of each electorate votes only to elect representatives for their own. Separate electorates are usually demanded by minorities who feel it will difficult for them to get fair representation in government, in a joint electorate.

Mr. Gandhi favoured joint electorates and achieved the same from Dr. B.R. Ambedkar through Poona pact by the acts of coercion and threat. The ill motive of Mr. Gandhi was to force the Dalits, under the leadership of Ambedkar, to accept their position of being subordinated to the politically dominant sections of Hindu society. Mr. Gandhi, who had been objecting to separate representation of the untouchables raised a protest against the proposal of the British Government and threatened to fast unto death if these concessions were not withdrawn. Mr. Gandhi’s objection was mainly to separate electorates and as the British government refused to withdraw their proposals unless there was an agreement between the untouchables and the Hindus. Thereupon, Mr. Gandhi started his fast. Eventually an agreement was arrived at between the Hindus and the Untouchables in September 1932. That agreement was known as Poona Pact.

Ambedkar anticipated that "things will be much worse under the system of joint electorates and reserved seats which will hereafter become operative under the terms of the
Poona Pact. This is no more speculation. The last election (1946) has conclusively proved that the Scheduled Castes can be completely disfranchised in a joint electorate." The joint electorate is from the point of the Hindus to use a familiar phrase a "rotten borough" in which the Hindus get the right to nominate an untouchable to set nominally as a representative of the untouchable but really as a tool of the Hindu”.

Baba Saheb Ambedkar could clearly anticipate the outcome of the Poona Pact. Being a constitutional expert and a democrat, he could well imagine the fact of the disfranchised people in a democracy based on adult franchise. He could also anticipate the fate of the people whose representatives were not real representatives, but mere tools in the hand of their age-old enemies. It was the helplessness of his people at that time that forced him to sign the Poona-Pact under the coercive effects of Gandhiji's fast. At that time, he must have thought of the times when the depressed classes would be less helpless to take up the challenge and fight for their due.

3.2.2 Tussle between Dr. Ambedkar and Mr. Gandhi

Among those who contributed to the social advancement of the Harijans, Gandhi and Ambedkar are the most important. The former came from a caste of Vaishya status, while the latter was born into an Untouchable caste; the former approached the problem from the standpoint of an upper caste Hindu who wanted to rot out Untouchability from the fabric of society, the latter identified himself with the struggle against the exploitation which the untouchables had suffered under the upper caste Hindus across the centuries. Gandhi, as a believing Hindu, felt that Hinduism needed to be reformed of the excrescence of Untouchability. Ambedkar, on the contrary, was convinced that the problem was a part of Hinduism and was enshrined in its sacred scriptures.
Mr. Gandhi was fasting 'till death forcing Dr. Ambedkar to abandon his demand for separate electorates for the Dalits. Mr. Gandhi a firm believer in the Caste system is hated by Dalits all over the world. This is the main reason 450 million Dalits and Untouchables hate Mohandas Gandhi

By now Ambedkar had become one of the most prominent untouchable political figures of the time. He had grown increasingly critical of mainstream Indian political parties for their perceived lack of emphasis for the elimination of the caste system. Ambedkar criticized the Indian National Congress and its leader Mohandas Gandhi, whom he accused of reducing the untouchable community to a figure of pathos. Ambedkar was also dissatisfied with the failures of British rule, and advocated a political identity for untouchables separate from both the Congress and the British. At a Depressed Classes Conference on August 8, 1930 Ambedkar outlined his political vision, insisting that the safety of the Depressed Classes hinged on their being independent of the Government and the Congress both:

We must shape our course ourselves and by ourselves. Political power cannot be a panacea for the ills of the Depressed Classes. Their salvation lies in their social elevation. They must cleanse their evil habits. They must improve their bad ways of living. They must be educated. There is a great necessity to disturb their pathetic contentment and to instill into them that divine discontent which is the spring of all elevation.

Ambedkar's political work had made him very unpopular with orthodox Hindus, as well as with many Congress politicians who had earlier condemned untouchability. This was largely because these "liberal" politicians usually stopped short of advocating full equality for untouchables.
In 1932, M. C. Rajah concluded a pact with two right-wingers in the Indian National Congress, Dr. B. S. Moonje and Jadhav. According to this pact, Moonje offered reserved seats to scheduled castes in return for Rajah's support. This demand prompted Ambedkar to make an official demand for Separate Electorate System on an all-India basis. Ambedkar's prominence and popular support amongst the untouchable community had increased, and he was invited to attend the Second Round Table Conference in London in 1931. Gandhi fiercely opposed separate electorate for untouchables, Gandhi believed in Chaturvarna system, but accepted separate electorate for all other minority groups like Muslims, sikhs...etc. Gandhi feared that separate electorates for untouchables would divide Hindu society for future generations.

When the British agreed with Ambedkar and announced the awarding of separate electorates, Gandhi began a fast-unto-death while imprisoned in the Yerwada Central Jail of Poona in 1932 against the separate electorate for untouchables only. Gandhi asked for the political unity of Hindus. Gandhi's fast provoked great public support across India, and orthodox Hindu leaders, Congress politicians and activists such as Madan Mohan Malaviya and Palwankar Baloo organized joint meetings with Ambedkar and his supporters at Yeravada. Fearing a communal reprisal and killings of untouchables in the event of Gandhi's death, Ambedkar agreed under massive coercion from the supporters of Gandhi. This agreement, which saw Gandhi end his fast, while dropping the demand for separate electorates that was promised through the British Communal Award prior to Ambedkar's meeting with Gandhi. Ambedkar was to later criticise this fast of Gandhi as a gimmick to deny political rights to the untouchables and increase the coercion he had faced to give up the demand for separate electorates.
Gandhiji felt that separate electorates would only separate the Harijans from the Hindus. The very thought that the Hindu would be divided pained him much. He started a fast against separate electorates. He said he would fast unto death is necessary. There was anxiety in the country because of Gandhiji’s fast. Many Congress leaders went to Ambedkar to save Gandhiji.

"Muslims, Christians and Sikhs have obtained the right of separate electorates. Gandhiji did not fast to oppose them. Why should Gandhiji fast to oppose Harijans getting separate electorates?" questioned Ambedkar. "If you are unwilling to give the ‘untouchables’ separate electorates, what other solution is there? It is essential to save Gandhiji. But just to save him I am not prepared to give up the interests of the backward classes," he declared. He said, reserve a larger number of seats for the untouchables’ than the British have given; then I will give up the claim for separate electorates."

At last there was an agreement between the leaders who had gone for a compromise and Ambedkar. It was decided that ten per cent of the seats in the legislatures should be reserved for the Harijans. Ambedkar gave up the claim for separate electorates. Gandhiji ended his fast.

This famous treaty is called the Poona Treaty was another important step in the struggle of the backward people.

At the second round Table Conference had in London, in 1931, Gandhi and Ambedkar continued to have serious differences. While the latter wanted reserved seats and separate electorates for the Untouchables, the former wouldn’t hear of it. Stating that Dr. Ambedkar did not speak for the whole of the Untouchables in India, Gandhi went on to say: “I want to say with all the emphasis I can command that if I was the only person to resist this thing I will resist it with my life.” Gandhi was true to his word. under the Communal Award of 1932
the Untouchable castes were to choose a few representatives of their own by separate electorates and also vote in the general electorate. Gandhi imposed this move by going on the famous ‘Epic- Fast’. Ambedkar, with great reluctance, went to Poona to negotiate with Gandhi, whose condition was worsening. Eventually a compromise was arrived at where Ambedkar dropped his demand for separate electorates and Gandhi conceded the provision of reserved seats. Gandhi’s reason for opposing separate electorates was his fear that it would disrupt the Hindu community. He said. separate electorates will create division among Hindus so much that it will lead to blood shed. Untouchable hooligans will make common cause with Muslim hooligans and kill caste-Hindus.? At another level Gandhi felt that the time was ripe for caste Hindus to make reparation to the untouchables. Conceding separate electorates would take away this possibility of change of heart.

3.2.3 Educational Thoughts of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

Ambedkar stated that the higher the educational and economic status of a minority, the lesser is the need for that minority of being politically protected. On the other hand, the lower the educational and economic status of a minority, the greater will be the need for its political protection.

Political career

In 1935, Ambedkar was appointed principal of the Government Law College, Mumbai, a position he held for two years. Settling in Mumbai, Ambedkar oversaw the construction of a house, and stocked his personal library with more than 50,000 books. His wife Ramabai died after a long illness in the same year Pandharpur, but Ambedkar had refuse. It had been her long-standing wish to go on a pilgrimage to d to let her go, telling her that he would create a new Pandharpur for her instead of Hinduism's Pandharpur which treated them as untouchables. Speaking at the Yeola Conversion Conference on October 13
near Nasik, Ambedkar announced his intention to convert to a different religion and exhorted his followers to leave Hinduism. He would repeat his message at numerous public meetings across India.

In 1936, Ambedkar founded the Independent Labour Party, which won 15 seats in the 1937 elections to the Central Legislative Assembly. He published his book *The Annihilation of Caste* in the same year, based on the thesis he had written in New York. Attaining immense popular success, Ambedkar's work strongly criticized Hindu orthodox religious leaders and the caste system in general. Ambedkar served on the Defence Advisory Committee and the Viceroy's Executive Council as minister for labour. With *What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to the Untouchables*, Ambedkar intensified his attacks on Gandhi and the Congress, hypocrisy. In his work *Who Were the Shudras?*, Ambedkar attempted to explain the formation of the Shudras i.e. the lowest caste in hierarchy of Hindu caste system. He also emphasised how Shudras are separate from Untouchables. Ambedkar oversaw the transformation of his political party into the All India Scheduled Castes Federation, although it performed poorly in the elections held in 1946 for the Constituent Assembly of India. In writing a sequel to *Who Were the Shudras?* in 1948, Ambedkar lambasted Hinduism in the *The Untouchables: A Thesis on the Origins of Untouchability*:

The Hindu Civilisation is a diabolical contrivance to suppress and enslave humanity. Its proper name would be infamy. What else can be said of a civilisation which has produced a mass of people... who are treated as an entity beyond human intercourse and whose mere touch is enough to cause pollution? In a "communal malaise", both groups [Hindus and Muslims] ignore the urgent claims of social justice.
Part III
ROLE PLAYED BY DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR AS THE ARCHITECT OF INDIAN CONSTITUTION

India became free from foreign rule on the 15th of August 1947. Ambedkar became the first Minister of Law in independent India. With one voice all India welcomed his appointment. He took oath as a minister. The country, no doubt, got freedom. It was to be decided how a country with crores of people should be ruled. How should elections take place? What are the rights of the people? How are laws to be made? How should the government works? How should courts of law function? - Such important matters had to be decided, and laws had to be made. The Constitution answers all such questions and lays down rules.

It was a very difficult task to prepare the Constitution. A study of the Constitutions of many countries, a deep knowledge of law, knowledge of the history of India and of the Indian society, the patience and wisdom to weigh different opinion-all these were essential. On 29th August 1947, a committee was constituted to frame the Constitution of India. Ambedkar was chosen as its Chairman. Shri T. T. Krishnamachari, a member of the committee, himself has said:

"Though a committee of seven members was formed, one of them resigned. Another was nominated in his place. Another member died. No one took his place. One of the members was very busy with government work. Owing to ill health two other members were far away from Delhi. As a result, Dr. Ambedkar alone had to carry the herculean burden of preparing the draft of the Constitution. The work he has done is admirable".

As the Minister for Law, Dr. Ambedkar placed the draft Constitution before the Constituent Assembly on 4th November 1948. He gave satisfactory answers to many
questions about the Constitution. The part of the Constitution wiping out ‘untouchability’ was approved on 29th November 1948. Ambedkar’s struggle bore fruit in his own life time. A new chapter began in social life. We should remember the words of Ambedkar in answer to the debate on the Indian Constitution:

"India has lost her freedom only owing to treason of her own people. Raja Dahir of Sindh was defeated by Mahammad Bin Khasim. The only reason for this defeat was that the generals of the Sindh army took bribes from Kahsim’s men and did not fight for the king. It was Raja Jaichand of India who invited Mohammad Ghori to fight against Prithviraj. When Shivaji was fighting for the freedom of the Hindus, other Maratha leaders and Rajputs were fighting for the Mughals. When the Sikhs were fighting against the British, their leader did nothing. Such things should not happen again; therefore, everyone must resolve to fight to the last drop of his blood, to defend the freedom of India"

The Constituent Assembly accepted the draft India Constitution on 26th November 1949. Dr. Sharda kabir; she was working in the nursing home where he was treated for sometime. In 1951, Dr. Ambedkar resigned his office as minister.

Upon India's independence on August 15, 1947, the new Congress-led government invited Ambedkar to serve as the nation's first law minister, which he accepted. On August 29, Ambedkar was appointed Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee, charged by the Assembly to write free India's new Constitution. Ambedkar won great praise from his colleagues and contemporary observers for his drafting work. In this task Ambedkar's study of sangha practice among early Buddhists and his extensive reading in Buddhist scriptures were to come to his aid. Sangha practice incorporated voting by ballot, rules of debate and precedence and the use of agendas, committees and proposals to conduct business. Sangha practice itself was modelled on the oligarchic system of governance followed by tribal
republics of ancient India such as the Shakyas and the Lichchavis. Thus, although Ambedkar used Western models to give his Constitution shape, its spirit was Indian and, indeed, tribal.

Granville Austin has described the Indian Constitution drafted by Dr Ambedkar as 'first and foremost a social document.' 'The majority of India's constitutional provisions are either directly arrived at furthering the aim of social revolution or attempt to foster this revolution by establishing conditions necessary for its achievement.'

The text prepared by Ambedkar provided constitutional guarantees and protections for a wide range of civil liberties for individual citizens, including freedom of religion, the abolition of untouchability and the outlawing of all forms of discrimination Ambedkar argued for extensive economic and social rights for women, and also won the Assembly's support for introducing a system of reservations of jobs in the civil services, schools and colleges for members of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, a system akin to affirmative action. India's lawmakers hoped to eradicate the socio-economic inequalities and lack of opportunities for India's depressed classes through this measure, which had been originally envisioned as temporary on a need basis. The Constitution was adopted on November 26, 1949 by the Constituent Assembly.

Ambedkar resigned from the cabinet in 1951 following the stalling in parliament of his draft of the Hindu Code Bill, which sought to expound gender equality in the laws of inheritance, marriage and the economy. Although supported by Prime Minister Nehru, the cabinet and many other Congress leaders, it received criticism from a large number of members of parliament. Ambedkar independently contested an election in 1952 to the lower house of parliament, the Lok Sabha, but was defeated. He was appointed to the upper house, of parliament, the Rajya Sabha in March 1952 and would remain a member until his death.
3.3.1 Ambedkar’s great efforts for the cause of Scheduled Castes

According to Dr. Ambedkar, caste is a religion and religion is anything but an institution. Inequality is the soul of Hindu society which is based on Hindu religion. Religion is an influence or force suffused through the life of each individual moulding his character, determining his actions and reactions, his likes and dislikes. These likes and dislikes, actions and reactions are not institutions, which can be lopped off. They are forces and influences, which can be dealt with by controlling or counteracting them.

As per Dr. Ambedkar, there is no racial difference between the Hindus and the untouchables. Just as untouchability has no racial basis so also has it no occupational basis. There are two roots from which untouchability has sprung: (1). Contempt and hatred of broken men as of Buddhist by the Brahmins; (2). Continuation of beef eating by broken men after it had been given up by others. Further, he added that the origin of untouchability lies buried in a dead past, which nobody knows.

Further, Ambedkar investigated and found that those of who are called untouchables lived outside the Village from the very beginning even before they became untouchables and that they continued to live outside the village because of the supervention of untouchability at a later stage.

Ambedkar observed that the Hindu has a code of life, which is a part of his religion. This code of life gives him many privileges and heaps upon the untouchable many indignities, which are incompatible with the sanctity of human life. The untouchables all over India are fighting against the indignities and injustices, which the Hindus in the name of their religion have heaped upon them. A perpetual war is going on every day in every village between the Hindus and the Untouchables. It does not see the light of the day. In a quarrel between the Untouchables and the Hindus, the Untouchables will never get protection from
the police or justice from the Magistrate. The police and the Magistracy are Hindus and they love their class more than their duty. But the Chief weapon in their armoury of the Hindus is economic power which they possess over the poor untouchables living in the village. The social system helps the Hindus to have a monopoly of everything.

Ambedkar in his writings condemned the role of press, which is acting in favour of Hindus and against interests of untouchables. The Hindus have been opposing the rightful political demands of the untouchables. The press is theirs and they make a systematic attempt to ignore untouchables. When they fail to ignore them they buy their leaders and where they find a leader not open to purchase, they systematically abuse him, misrepresent him, blackmail him and do everything possible that lies in their power to suppress him and silence him. Any such leader who is determined to fight for the cause of the untouchables, he and his followers are condemned as anti-national. Every Hindu is a social torry and political and Mr. Gandhi is no exception to his rule. Mr. Gandhi stood for the cursed caste. He was a fanatic Hindu upholding the Hindu religion.

Commenting on the village Panchayats, Dr. Ambedkar raised some questions in the Parliament that a population which is illiterate, a population which is steeped in ignorance and a population which is swallowed up in superstition can produce five good men who can be entrusted to discharge the duties of judges? At least these five good men should have proper notions of right of duty, of equity and good conscience. A population which is hide bound by caste, a population which is infected by ancient prejudices, a population which flouts equality of status and dominated by notions of grading in life, a population which thinks that some are high and some are low can it be expected to have the right notions even discharge bare justice?

So, there is every responsibility of government to take positive steps to be aware from
the above false practices of the people for the betterment of the people in such areas. When the Christian Missionaries entered into India, wherever they stepped in, they have built forts wherein the church, the school and a hospital as service centers for the public in general. Since there was no rail route, or air route, the only way left for them was the sea route. On the coastal belt of Eastern side right from North to the South wherever they settled in, those towns or cities names were termed as ‘Pattanams or Patnams’, viz, Kalingapatnam, Visakhapatnam, Bheemunipatnam, Machilipatnam, Chennapatnam etc.

In those days, who had got knowledge in Sanskrit, those were be treated as Pandits or an erudite person. Sanskrit education was only permitted to the Brahmins. The other caste Hindus were not allowed to go for learning of religious books like Vedas, the Ramayana, the Mahabharat, the Upanishads etc. Particularly the untouchables / the scheduled castes were not allowed even to read, recite or learning the Hindu scriptures. Because of this reason and of poverty the scheduled caste people were nearer to the western education by learning English education. The Missionaries with service motto, they established the churches and schools in the dwellings of the scheduled caste people. The Britishers were kind enough and generously to provide employment in schools, railways and postal services even with very lower education.

This type of educational, employment and economic upliftment of opportunities which were facilitated or provided to the scheduled castes by the Britishers was never before in the Indian history. More so, the untouchables were made learned to be cultured, like dignifiedly and respectfully in the society. Indian society lacked fraternity or brotherhood and love. Caste Hindu hates or dislikes his neighbour. Caste clipped the people from any helpful activity. In India individual caste awareness is seen, but not societal awareness. Dr. Ambedkar's view of culture is to clean the unclean, to raise the fallen, to elevate the untouchables to the status of social equality was the real meaning of culture.
3.3.2 Socio- Economic Development

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar once said, “My philosophy has got roots in religion, but not in political science”. India suffers with the chronic disease of inequality which is based on caste system. He was under the opinion that caste is the root cause for all the ills and social disabilities in India. It is undoubtedly originated from the seeds of religion and that religion is Hinduism. So, it can be inferred that inequality is the soul of Hinduism. Caste restricted people from inter dining and inter caste marriages. As long as caste exists, so long you can not achieve unity among the people. Ambedkar says, “to leave inequality between caste and caste, class and class, between sex and sex which is the soul of Hinduism untouched and to go on making legislations and policies relating to economic problems is to make a farce of our constitution. It is like to build a beautiful palace on a dung heap. Dr.Ambedkar wanted to establish an egalitarian society in which the neglected people in the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, minorities and other weaker sections should have an equal opportunity in socio- economic and political spheres and all walks of life. Many leaders and social reformers have come and gone, but nobody had touched the stigma of untouchability in India.

He said, “make every man and woman from the thralldom of the Sastras, cleanse their minds, percecutious notions founded on the Sastras and he or she will interdine and intermarry with out telling him or her to do so. That’s why he propagated and encouraged the interdining and inter caste marriages a revolutionary social cleavage he brought about in India. It is an affront to Dr. Ambedkar, the Chairman of the Constitution drafting committee which started with a pious hope of casteless and classless society in the light of constitutional safeguards.

Untouchability cannot exist with any caste and Hinduism and the latter faith on the conversion to the other religious, universal and compulsory education upto the end of
secondary schools, industrialization and urbanization, delinking and banning of all castes and religious from the public life, bringing all castes, educational institutions under the Government control could be tried as measures.

In his own words, “I had dedicated myself to the upliftment of the scheduled castes and I have followed the adage which says that “it is better to be narrow- minded if you wish to be as enthusiastic about a cause which you wish to accomplish”. The ramifications of backwardness of certain sections (weaker sections) of the society on the basis of population, caste, culture, religion and occupation are a few to mention.

While framing the constitutions as chairman and as he clearly understood and knew the nature of Indian social system, Ambedkar provided constitutional guarantees for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Ambedkar visualized the means to achieve the goals through reservations in educations, employment and political field also.

For social, economical backwardness of SC’s and weaker sections is an inadequate political representation. It is well known that the political power is the master key for all social and economic problems. Formal education, economic improvement and political representation were conceived to buttress one another and as a means to bring about the desired changes and improvements in the status of dalits.

It is true that a good number of programmes and policies have been evolved and implemented by the both the central and state governments. Out of which some progress has been achieved by the SC’s in the field of education and politics. Education should not be confined to only the advanced groups among SC’s, but the bulk of them are unavailed such privileges in rural areas.

The Indian constitution is the largest and biggest written constitution among the world
countries. The preamble of the constitution is the key to open the minds of the makers. The people of India have solemnly resolved to constitute India into a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic people and to secure to all its citizens.

Justice: social, economic and political liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship. Equality of status and opportunity and to promote among them all, fraternity assuring the dignity of individual and the unity and integrity of the nation. In any developed society politics played a very vital role, without political interference in the socio and economic activities, the society cannot develop in the fullest length of its face.

Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar realized the importance of politics in Indian society he gave utmost importance to the politics. In his own words, “we feel that nobody could remove our grievances as well as we can. But we can’t solve them unless the political power in our own hands”. With this view Dr. Ambedkar fought against the Britishers for the rights of the people in this country particularly the SC’s, ST’s and other Weaker Sections.

Indian society is basically an egalitarian society. The upper castes and the affluent sections of the people in the society are always trying to dominate and oppressing the weaker sections. The SC’s in particular in India, have been oppressed or exploited for centuries together.

The SC’s and ST’s were subjected to ill treatment and insulted by the caste Hindus, they were derived from all basic civil rights in the society. Ill human treatment was given to the untouchables and other weaker sections. Certain sections of the people are remained in equals among the equals. In the words of Abraham Lincoln, the former President of United States of America, says, “No nation can be half slaves and half free”. It is, in other wards that no nation can develop with the existence of inequality.
Dr. Ambedkar’s illumines and enlightened speech regarding the safeguards of SC’s, convinced the British Govt. as well as the participants in the conference and made them to provide the benefits, and other privileges along with the political rights i.e., special electorates by way of Communal Award in 1932.

3.3.3 Political Safeguards for Depressed Class/ SC’S:

3.3.3.1 Before Indian Constitution came into existence:

The depressed classes / SC’s will consent for the following terms and conditions to place themselves under a majority rule in a self-governing India.

3.3.3.1.1 Condition – I: Equal citizenship.

The SC’s cannot consent to subject themselves to majority rule. Before the majority rule is established, their emancipation from the system of untouchability must be accomplished fact. It must not be left to the will of the majority. The SC’s must be made free citizens entitled to all rights par with the other citizens of the state.

To secure the abolition of untouchability and to create the quality of citizenship, “all subjects of the state in India are equal before law and possess equal civic rights” a fundamental right be a part the constitution.

3.3.3.1.2 Condition – II :Free enjoyment of equal rights.

No use for the SC’s to simply to have a declaration of equal rights. The SC’s will have to face the whole fora of orthodox society, if they try to exercise the equal rights of citizenship in their everyday life, they should be protected by adequate pains and penalties from interference in such rights through Govt. of India Act 1919.

Offence of infringement of citizenship who ever denies to any person in full enjoyment of any accommodations, advantages, facilities privileges of inns, educational institutions, roads, paths, streets, tanks, wells and other water places, public conveyances on land, air or water, theatres or other places of public amusement, rest for these of the public
shall be punished with imprisonment for a terms which may extend to 5 years with fine also.

3.3.3.1.3 Condition No. III Protection against Discrimination.

The SC’s may get fears of discrimination either by legislation or by executive order in future. That’s why they proposed for statutory provisions be made in the constitutional law of India.

It shall not be competent for any legislature or executive in India to pass a law or issue an order, rule or regulation. So as to violate the rights of the subjects of the state.

3.3.3.1.4 Condition No. IV:

- Adequate representations in the legislatures. The SCs must be given sufficiently political power to influence legislature and executive action for the purpose of securing their welfare.
- Right to adequate representation in the legislatures of the country.
- Right to elect their own men as their representatives.
- By separate electorates for the first 10 years and thereafter by joint electorates and reserved seats.

3.3.3.1.5 Condition No: V:

- Adequate representation in the services for the depressed classes for enactment as part of the constitutional law.

3.3.3.1.6 Condition No: VI:

- Redress against Prejudicial action or neglect of interests. The depressed classes should have the means of redress given to them in the constitution.

3.3.3.1.7 Condition No: VII:

- Special Departmental Care
The depressed classes have proposed that the constitutional law should impose upon the Govt. of India a statutory obligation to maintain a department to deal with their problems and their welfare.

3.3.3.1.8 Condition No: VIII

- The depressed classes claim that there should be a proper representation in the cabinet for their moral rights.

3.3.4 Safeguards in the Indian Constitution for Scheduled Castes

India’s current affirmation action policy, otherwise known as the ‘reservation policy’, is operative in three main spheres, namely appointment and promotion in government services, admissions to public educational institutions, and seats in Central, State and local legislatures.

3.3.4.1 Government services

The most important aspect of the reservation policy is that relating to government services. Article 16 (4) of the constitution empowers the State to make “any provision for the reservation in appointments, or posts in favor of any backward class of citizens”, and “provision for reservation in matters of promotion to any class or classes of posts, in the services under the State in favor of the SCs and STs.”

In pursuing this provision, the Government made reservation for SCs and STs in proportion to their share of population. There are also reservations in the promotion of employed persons. The government services included are the Government civil service, public sector undertakings, statutory and semi-Government bodies, and voluntary agencies which are under the control of the government or receiving grant-in-aid. At the central level, some services are however excluded from the reservation policy; these include, most prominently, defense and the judiciary.
Reservation is accompanied by other provisions designed to increase the ability of SCs and STs to compete for government jobs. These include the relaxation of minimum age for entry into the service, relaxation in the minimum standard of suitability (subject to a required minimum qualification), the provision of pre-examination training, separate interviews for SCs and STs, and representation of people with SC or ST backgrounds on selection committees.

3.3.4.2 Education

The second most important aspect of reservation policy relates to education. Article 15 (4) of the constitution empowers the State to make special provision for the educational advancement of SCs and STs. In pursuing this provision, the State reserves places for SC and ST students in educational institutions, including all colleges run by the Central or State governments and all government-aided educational institutions. This is supported by a number of financial schemes, including scholarships, special hostels for SC and ST students, fee concessions, grants for books, and additional coaching.

3.3.4.3 Political representation

The third most important sphere of the reservation policy relates to representation in Central and State legislatures. Under Articles 330, 332 and 334 of the Constitution, seats are reserved for SCs and STs in the Central legislature and State legislatures. Similar reservations are provided in local level bodies at district, Taluk and village level. The reservation of seats is complemented by statutory provisions to enhance political participation by SCs and SC ST Non-SC/ST Poverty, STs; smaller election deposits are required from members of these groups for example.
The important Constitutional safeguards for SCs & STs are mentioned below:

3.3.4.3 (a) Directive Principles of State Policy

*Article 46* is a comprehensive article comprising both the developmental and regulatory aspects. It reads as follows: "The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections, of the people, and in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation".

3.3.4.3 (b) Social Safeguards

*Article 17.* "Untouchability" is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of "Untouchability" shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.

To give effect to this Article, Parliament made an enactment viz., *Untouchability (Offences) Act, 1955*. To make the provisions of this Act more stringent, the Act was amended in 1976 and was also renamed as the *Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955*. As provided under the Act, Government of India also notified the Rules, viz., the PCR Rules, 1977, to carry out the provisions of this Act. As cases of atrocities on SCs/STs were not covered under the provisions of PCR Act, 1955, Parliament passed another important Act in 1989 for taking measures to prevent the atrocities. This act known as the *Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989*, became effective from 30.1.1990. For carrying out the provisions of this Act the Govt. of India have notified the SCs and the STs (Prevention of Atrocities) Rules, 1995 on 31.3.1995.
**Article 23.** Prohibits traffic in human beings and begar and other similar forms of forced labour and provides that any contravention of this provision shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law. It does not specifically mention SCs & STs but since the majority of bonded labour belong to SCs/STs this Article has a special significance for SCs and STs. In pursuance of this article, Parliament has enacted the **Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976.** For effective implementation of this Act, the Ministry of Labour is running a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for identification, liberation and rehabilitation of bonded labour.

**Article 24** provides that no child below the age of 14 years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment. There are Central and State laws to prevent child labour. This article too is significant for SCs and STs as a substantial portion, if not the majority, of child labour engaged in hazardous employment belong to SCs and STs.

**Article 25(2)(b)** provides that Hindu religious institutions of a public character shall be thrown open to all classes and sections of Hindus. This provision is relevant as some sects of Hindus used to claim that only members of the concerned sects had a right to enter their temples. This was only a subterfuge to prevent entry of SC persons in such temples. For the purpose of this provision the term Hindu includes Sikh, Jaina and Budhist.

### 3.3.4.4 Educational and Cultural Safeguards

**Article 15(4)** empowers the State to make any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for SC and ST. This provision has enabled the State to reserve seats for SCs and STs in educational institutions including technical, engineering and medical colleges and in Scientific & Specialised
Courses. In this as well as in Article 16(4) the term 'backward classes' is used as a generic term and comprises various categories of backward classes, viz., Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, Denotified Communities (Vimukta Jatiyan) and Nomadic/Seminomadic communities.

**Article 330** provides for reservation of seats for SCs/STs in the Lok Sabha.

**Article 332** provides for reservation of seats for SCs/STs in the State Vidhan Sabhas (Legislative Assemblies).

**Article 334** originally laid down that the provision relating to the reservation of seats for SCs/STs in the Lok Sabha and the State Vidhan Sabhas (and the representation of the Anglo-Indian community in the Lok Sabha and the State Vidhan Sabhas by nomination) would cease to have effect on the expiration of a period of ten years from the commencement of the Constitution. This article has since been amended four times, extending the said period by ten years on each occasion. This provision was to expire in January 2000.

### 3.3.4.5 Service Safeguards

**Article 16(4)** empowers the State to make "any provision for the reservation in appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens which, in the opinion of the State, is not adequately represented in the services under the State".

**Article 16(4A).** Nothing in this Article shall prevent the State from making any provision for reservation in matters of promotion to any class or classes of posts in the services under the State in favour of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes which, in the opinion of the State, are not adequately represented in the services under the State".
**Article 335.** "The claims of the members of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes shall be taken into consideration, consistently with the maintenance of efficiency of administration, in the making of appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State".

**Article 320(4)** provides that nothing in clause (3) shall require a Public Service Commission to be consulted as respects the manner in which any provision under Article 16(4) & 16(4)A may be made or the manner in which effect may be given to the provisions of Article 335.

### 3.3.4.6 Statutes and Legislations

There are a number of laws, both Central and State, which provide for safeguards to SCs/STs. Some of these emanate from the various Constitutional provisions. An illustrative list of such laws is given below:

- Acts and regulations in force in different States to prevent alienation of land belonging to SCs/STs. In some States such provision exists in the Land Revenue Code.

### Sum up

Ambekdar oscillated between the promotion of the Untouchables in Hindu society or in the Indian nation as a whole. The strategy of a break that could take the form of a separate
electorate or of a separate Dalit party and/or of conversion outside Hinduism is to improve the status of scheduled castes. He searched for solutions, explored strategies and in doing so set the Dalits on the path of an arduous emancipation. When he advocated equality, he referred to equality in the economic, political and social spheres. It was Ambedkar who championed the cause of humanitarianism and tried to minimize the distance between two individuals. His contribution to uplift Scheduled Castes was realistic and lasting. He was largely responsible for creating reserved positions for untouchables in the civil service, legislatures and higher education. His major contribution was to have emphasized the importance of action from below that political organisation was indispensable to securing justice and basic human rights.

The ideas of Ambedkar were still very much relevant today and none can ignore his contributions to the socio-economic development of Indian society. Ambedkar worked for ensuring a classless, casteless and divisionless society and fostering unity amidst diversity. In order to attain the change among the Scheduled Castes, new norms are being evolved and new processes are being initiated for enabling to reach these norms. The Scheduled Castes as a group has not only to shed their inferiority but also to gear up themselves to adapt to the new order. They have to give up their old traditional occupations and life styles, come out of their shell and learn new skills and ways of life. This requires a great deal of change, both in their personal life, family ethos and group life. The problems of adjustment are thus entirely new and intricate.

In spite of the earnest efforts made by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and the consequent efforts of the Central and State Governments to uplift the Scheduled Castes, the status of the Scheduled Castes remained as it was. Yet, there are certain views of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar to be implemented for the emancipation of the Scheduled Castes in particular and the
amelioration of the weaker sections in general. Thus the dreams of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar are still far from being realized. Despite including several provisions in the Constitution to protect the rights of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, the dream of Dr. Ambedkar to convert India into an egalitarian society as was thought by Buddha, who believed in the three principles, namely, liberty, equality and brotherhood, is yet to be anticipated.
References


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