



ANNIHILATION OF CASTE AND Dr. B.R.AMBEDKAR -A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The point which is really interesting to note is that in spite of the existence of certain obstacles, Brahminical customs and way of life did manage to spread not only among all Hindus but also among some outlying tribes. This is to some extent due to the fact that Hindu society is a stratified one, in which there are innumerable small groups each of which tries 'to pass for a higher group. And the best way of staking a claim to a higher position is to adopt the customs and way of life of a higher caste. As this process was common' to all the castes except the highest, it meant that the Brahminical customs and way of life spread among all Hindus. It is possible that the very ban on the lower castes' adoption of the Brahminical way of life had an exactly opposite effect. Though, over a long period of time, Brahminical rites and customs spread among the lower castes, in the short run the locally dominant caste was imitated by the rest. And the locally dominant caste was frequently not Brahmin. It could be said that in the case of the numerous castes occupying the lowest levels, Brahminical custom reached them in a chain reaction. That is, each group took from the one higher to it, and in turn gave to the group below. Sometimes, however, as in the case of the Smiths of South India, a caste tried to jump over all its structural neighbours, and claimed equality with the Brahmins. The hostility which the Smiths have attracted is perhaps due to their collective social megalomania.

KEY WORDS: Varna, Shudra, 'Brahminism, Manusmriti, untouchability

INTRODUCTION

The word "caste." — This is of Spanish and Portuguese origin, Castameans lineage or race. It is derived from the Latin word Castus, which means pure. The Spaniards were the first to use it, but its Indian application is from the Portuguese, who had so applied it in the middle of the fifteenth century (FardleFaciotts, II) The current spelling of the word is after the French word "Caste," which appears in 1740 in the "academies,(FaUn&Ulloa's Voyages V South America. (1772) I- I, IV, 20) and is hardly found before 1800. Before that time it was spelt as "cast." In the sense of race or breed of man it was used as early as 1555 A. D.(common Brahmins have eighty-two casts or tribes, Lord Banian,) 1630 A. D. The Spanish word "Caste" was applied to the mixed breed between Europeans, Indians (American) and Negroes. But "caste" was not used in its Indian sense till the seventeenth century' The Indian use is the leading one now, and it has influenced all other uses. As the Indian idea of caste was but vaguely understood, this word was loosely applied to the hereditary classes 1234 of Europe resembling the castes of this, who keep themselves socially distinct. Darwin (Darwin's Origin of Species,) has applied this word to different classes' of social insects. The Portuguese used this word to denote the Indian institution, as they thought: such a system was intended to keep purity of blood. We thus see that derivation of the word does not help us to understand what caste is.

OBJECTIVES

- To identify different definitions of caste-ism
- To identify nature of non-Brahmin movement
- To identify non-Ambedkar movement against caste
- To identify Ambedkar as a Dalit leader

Sir H. Risley defines a caste as follows: "A caste may be defined as a collection of families or groups of families bearing a common name which usually denotes or is associated with specific occupation, claiming common descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine, professing to follow the same professional callings and are regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogeneous community."

There are some statements farther on which may be regarded as a part of his definition of a caste, and which may be summarized as follows: A caste is almost invariably endogenous in the sense that a member of a large circle denoted by a common name may not marry outside the circle; but within the circle there are smaller circles, each of which is also endogamous



M.N. Srinivas says: My own definition of a caste. — A caste is a social group having two characteristics: (i) membership is confined to those who are born of members and includes all persons so born; (2) the members are forbidden by an inexorable social law to marry outside the group. Each one of such groups has a special name by which it is called. Several of such small aggregates are grouped together under a common name, while these larger groups are but subdivisions of groups still larger which have independent names.

However, the operative category that determines the contemporary social code is caste. More than 3,000 castes exist which are also called jatis (and share the basic characteristics of Varna), but they follow a more complex system of hierarchy and rules of conduct towards each other. In fact, Varna's provide a measure of status to which castes try to align themselves. If there was a one-to-one correspondence between the two, the castes would be reduced to a mere subset of Varna's. However, this scale becomes fluid and ambiguous for castes as a whole as they present claims and counter-claims to their Varna affiliation (Kothari 1997: 62). Srinivas (2003) refers to a 'frequent disagreement' about the position of a caste in the rank order: between the rank that the caste claims for itself and the rank accepted by others.

More than 50 million Indians are from tribal communities that are separated from the Hindu caste society. These are tribal; whose origins predate the Aryans and even the Dravidians of the south. The lifestyles and languages of many people are different from those of any known community in India. Singh (1994) identifies 461 tribal communities in India and finds that they are all derived from four ethnic stocks: Negrito (Great Andamanese, Onges and Jarawas), Proto-Australoid (Munda, Oraon and Gond), Mongoloid (The tribes of the tribes (North-East), and the Caucasoid (Todas, Rabri and Gurjars). However, he emphasizes that concern with racial typologies has given way to the study of genetic and morphological traits of Aboriginal populations, but existing data are too scant to allow any generalizations and, generally, various Population groups that are part of the region's repertoire, uniformity of symptoms. Most of the tribal, being local communities, see their identity at the local level, maximum at the state level. Only 10 per cent see themselves as a national community. The tribes have a rich oral tradition, the documentation of which has helped researchers to understand many aspects of their lives. Tribes have generally been outside the Varna system. Singh (1994) reports that only 12 per cent recognize their place in it, and another 32 per cent are aware of the Varna system, about 8 per cent of those who identify their place in this claim to be Kshatriyas, 7.5 per cent Shudras and 0.9 per cent Brahmins. However, Ghurye (1963) points to a close similarity between Adivasis and Hinduism. In terms of a tribal community's self-perception in the regional hierarchy, 27 per cent see themselves as high status, 47 per cent see themselves as middle, and about 25 per cent see themselves as low.

However, this belief is not shared by others in the region. Another 11 per cent see tribal as high, 39 per cent as medium and 49 per cent as low (Singh 1994). This confirms the marginalization picture of most tribal communities, which emerges from the data. Tribal groups share some similarities with castes in that almost all tribal are endogamous and tribal communities have a notion of hierarchy based on ecology, ancestry, ranking, status, etc. Tribal social organization recognizes the principles of division into clans and clans governing sex and marriage. Despite some similarities, there are some specific areas where tribal can be clearly separated from Hinduism: the dominant form of tribal family being single (91 per cent), allowing divorce (93.2%) and widow remarriage (96 per cent) is Percentage) and divorced (90 per cent) are allowed. Overall, even though tribal report their main religion as Hinduism or Christianity, and some report more than one religion, there is enough diversity and distinctiveness within tribal communities that they are not considered part of the Varna system can go.

The Beginnings of Caste and the Hindu Social System Jotirao Phule (1827–90), a nineteenth-century social reformer from Maharashtra, was India's first systematic theorist of caste and one of its most radical opponents. Religion and caste are central to Phule's thought. He was opposed not only to the Varna system, but to almost everything within the Hindu belief system, as he believed that the Hindu texts (Shruti, Vedas and Smritis) rationalized and perpetuated Brahmanical dominance. His writings are sharp in their attack on Brahmanism. He believed that 'Brahminism was historical, built over time and since it was an ideology of oppression and domination, it had to be opposed and eventually disbanded. There was nothing sacred or divine about it' (Deshpande 2002:6). He did not make any distinction between Varna and caste. He argued that since Brahmins derived their authority not from their caste but from their Varna, it was important for others to realize that they could fight this dominance only if they claimed their Shudra-Atishudra status. Thus, Phule's central point was that the Brahminical system is bipolar and caste or Varna is concerned with power and dominance and that level is to be attacked. Of course, he was aware of the existence of several smaller castes within the wider Varna: 'The Brahmins divided the Shudras into different castes, punished or rewarded them according to their loyalty and established their control over them and are now enjoying at the cost of the Shudras' (ibid.: 45).

Phule's critique of caste includes both socio-religious and economic aspects. He saw caste 'as a category in the productive process and as a facilitator of the dominance of Brahmins in the ideological sphere'



(Deshpande 2009: 53). Deshpande(2009) holds that for Phule, caste was a category that belonged to the base and superstructure of Indian society. If one accepts this reading of Phule, then in addition to providing a contrast to the standard Marxist understanding that considers affiliations other than class to be part of the superstructure their main purpose in fabricating lies was to deceive the minds of the ignorant and to impose on them the chains of perpetual bondage and slavery, which were created by their selfishness and cunning. The seriousness of the laws affecting the Shudras and the intense hatred with which they were regarded by the Brahmins cannot be explained by any other conjecture, but originally there was a fatal quarrel between the two, which led to the advent of ... was born from the latter in this land. ('Slavery', 1873, translated and reproduced in Deshpande 2002:30)

Another powerful early criticism of the caste system came from Periyar E.V. RamasamyNayakar (born 1879), whose main focus was on the social, rather than economic, aspects of caste inequalities. His view of the caste system, rather like that of Phule, was a dichotomy: he believed that Brahmin-no-Brahmin was the central opposition that shaped society. He was a staunch rationalist and anti-religious. He actively campaigned for temple entry for Shudras; for example, against the separation between Brahmins and non-Brahmin students in the food system at Cheranmadevi Gurukulam and for communal representation for non-Brahmins in legislatures, a proposal that the Congress never accepted (Pandian 2007), during his years in Congress.

He left the Congress and declared his philosophy as 'No God, No Religion, No Gandhi, No Congress and No Brahmin' and started the self-respect movement in 1926 with the primary objective of advancing rationalist criticism of caste. (Hereinafter SRM) was established, Religion and mainstream nationalism. SRM's primary audience included non-Brahmins, and SRM deliberately promoted rationalism (or opposition to God and religion) as a means that non-Brahmins could employ to gain control of their lives. In direct contrast to Gandhi, the SRM regarded the Varnashrama Dharma advocated in the Manusmriti as the backbone of casteism and as a system legitimizing the downfall of non-Brahmins. Periyar and SRM criticized 'essential Hinduism' (for example, a unified Hinduism represented by such diverse texts as the Manusmriti, the Ramayana and the Bhagavad Gita) and showed that caste, and therefore Brahmins, were central to this essential Hinduism. It should be noted that there is a deliberate departure from the flexible approach of Hinduism; Periyar himself did not question the flexibility of Hinduism, but instead read it as a Brahmanical strategy of 'co-opposition of caste and thus affirming Brahmanical supremacy' (ibid. 203). Periyar portrayed Brahman as a symbol of a series of identities (Brahmin, Hindu, Aryan, pro-Sanskrit, believer in Ramayana) and allowing each of these (rather specific) identities to represent the others as transitive gave. This variability allowed them to mobilize a large number of 'inferior class identities' against Brahmins (on the basis of gender, occupation, language and region) (Pandian 2007: 205). Thus, Periyar's project, in which he succeeded to a large extent, was to create a conglomeration of diverse interests based on his common opposition to the Brahmins.

MOVING TOWARDS THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: B.R. AMBEDKAR

Criticism of the caste system is further elaborated in the writings of Ambedkar, who is clearly regarded as the ideological leader of the current Dalit movement. Ambedkar was a prolific writer and not just one but several volumes could easily be consumed to do justice to the full range and variety of his writings. Also, analysis of his writings by various experts has yielded very rich insights into the workings of the caste system and the colonial economy. Although we cannot reproduce here the richness of Ambedkar's ideas or his analytical writings, it is pertinent for us to take a glimpse of his economic criticisms of the caste system.

In his essays 'Castes in India' and 'Annihilation of Caste' (see Rodrigues 2002), Ambedkar summarizes the theories on the origin of the caste system and outlines his own views. Like Phule, his criticism of the caste system is devastating, especially as it shapes the lives of millions of untouchables in a life of slavery, exploitation and abuse. In fact, he goes further and condemns the caste system for its effects on Hindu society as a whole: 'The effect of caste on the morality of Hindus is simply reprehensible. Caste has killed public sentiment. Caste has destroyed the spirit of public charity. Caste has made public opinion impossible the people of a Hindu is his caste. His responsibility is only towards his caste. Their loyalty is limited to their caste only. Virtue has become obsessed with caste' (ibid. 275). Refuting the specific defence of the caste system as a division of labour, he argues that it is not a division of labour, so much as it is a 'division of workers' (ibid.: 263, emphasis original). He points out that division of labour is not accompanied by division of labour in any civilized society, where workers are classified one above the other. He further argued that this division of labour is neither spontaneous nor based on natural ability. The caste system 'attempts to assign tasks to individuals in advance, which are not selected on the basis of the trained core abilities, but on the basis of the social status of the parents. Viewed from another point of view, this stratification of occupations which is a result of the caste system is positively harmful' (ibid. 263). He argues that the essence of industry is change, but the caste system does not give individuals the freedom to choose what jobs they will do to be able to adjust themselves to



changing opportunities. And there are some things that are always hated and considered despicable. The caste system assigns them to certain castes and thus degrades those castes as well. 'As an economic organization, caste is a pernicious institution, as it involves the subjugation of man's natural forces and inclinations to the imperatives of social rules' (ibid. 267). Therefore, 'caste codes do not result in economic efficiency' (ibid.) this point about efficiency is particularly important, as it makes a link with the discussion of discrimination and efficiency.

IDENTITY, DISCRIMINATION AND ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES

While the bulk of economic theory is built on the assumption that the social identities of agents do not matter in the market, there are powerful exceptions that show how the social identities of economic agents can be central to the determination of their economic outcomes. The two main neo-classical theories that demonstrate this 'statistical discrimination,' (Arrow 1971; Phelps 1972; Akerlof 1984) and 'discrimination for taste' (Baker 1957), however, approach discrimination from opposite ends.

Statistical discrimination ascribes discrimination to the presence of incomplete information in labour markets: in a deviation from the theoretical world of general equilibrium theory which assumes accurate information to be immediately available, in the real world the information is neither accurate nor expensive. Thus, employers cannot easily assess the productivity of potential employees and therefore cannot determine what wages to pay them without incurring costs to measure productivity, which, despite employers' best efforts, is a There may be estimates and may not be very accurate. One way out of this problem is the use of pointers or proxies that are derived from and based on social tradition. Thus, for example, employers may believe that, in general, women are less likely to be productive than men, and use this belief as the basis for their salary decisions when a man or woman The candidate has to face the possibility of giving employment. In other words, employers use the employee's group identity (which they can see) as a proxy for competence (which they cannot see). In its simplest form, the theory states that employers assume that all members belonging to a given social group have equal abilities and use dominant stereotypes about the distribution of abilities among groups (for example, beliefs such as 'Whites are better workers than blacks'), or that 'men are more efficient than women') to offer higher wages to groups with positive stereotypes (the group perceived to be more productive). In this way, job and wage offers of workers are shaped by their group affiliation and employers save the cost and effort of devising various tests and techniques to measure individual productivity. Thus, an important neo-classical postulate, which is considered to guide efficient resource allocation throughout the world of general equilibrium theory, should be paid according to their marginal productivity in equilibrium, but the economy still achieves equilibrium is.

Here discrimination is seen by employers as a rational decision and is due to economic incentives (i.e., incentives to obtain productivity information to decide on wage offers) Gandhi's discourse on untouchability was developed in the wake of the Congress Party's 1920 "Resolution on Non-Cooperation." This resolution was intended to cement Hindu-Muslim unity so that all Indians would join forces in resisting the British. The resolution also included a statement on the need to ensure social justice for Untouchables. As Bayley explains, the solution put forward by Gandhi and other Congress Party leaders was less a political solution than a religious one. Instead of legislating reform, they called for Hindu leaders to reform Hinduism and rid it of the "reproach of untouchability" (Bayley 1999, 247, quoting Zelliott 1988, 185). In addition, Gandhi's followers worked to elevate the status of Untouchables by promoting among them a Hinduism-based sensibility about purity and religiosity.

They established ashrams, intentional communities where Untouchables were taught Gandhian Hindu virtues such as temperance, vegetarianism, and religious devotion. Such acts were intended to rid them of the stigma of impurity by raising them to a proper Hindu (Gandhian) ethic. As part of his effort to rethink caste exclusions, Gandhi promoted an idealized concept of Varna, that is, the division of the population into different classes, each with its own duty to perform (Bayley 1999, 251; Dirks 2001, 268). As we saw above, Varna is usually understood as a Hindu ranking of humans into four classes: Brahmans (priests), Ksatriyas (kings and nobles), Vaisyas (commercial castes), and Sudras (servants and workers), with Untouchables in the reckoning of many generally falling outside the ranking altogether, hence outcastes. For Gandhi, however, the idea of Varna did not denote rank but rather a cooperative social venture within which each class—including Untouchables—provided a service to the whole, and for the benefit of all, much like the idealized concept of mutuality. He argued that caste ranking was an aberration, a degraded form of the Varna system of mutual cooperation for the good of the whole (268). "Caste has nothing to do with religion," he stated (quoted on 267).

He saw as his task the reformation of Hinduism "back" to what he argued was its ideal, pure form absent the inauthentic "degradation" of social inequality. One manifestation of this religious work was Gandhi's participation in a temple entry movement. Untouchables were usually excluded from Hindu temples, but during



this period of time there were several efforts by various political organizations to conduct marches into Hindu temples by Untouchables. These efforts were not particularly successful, and in fact the exclusion of Untouchables from temples continues in many places to this day. So, too, do continued efforts by today's government to use Hindu temples as sites for signifying caste unity and Untouchable inclusion. Gandhi's rhetoric was aimed at changing the image of Untouchables from polluted outcastes to "Harijans" or "children of god." As Bayley writes (1999), Gandhi created an image of an idealized Untouchable, a child of god, the dutiful and humble sweeper who cleansed the nation as he or she swept clean the dirt of others.

Gandhi attempted to uphold the Harijan as the ideal of sacrifice and devotion to the nation. To make his point, Gandhi and his followers also did the work usually reserved for Untouchables. They cleaned their own toilets and swept the streets of their ashrams, their special Gandhian communities. But many Untouchable leaders balked at what they saw as a condescending image of the humble Untouchable and the idea that Hinduism would offer a solution to the degradation and mistreatment of Untouchables. The most prominent advocate of a different, political solution was B. R. Ambedkar.

Ambedkar was born in 1891. Himself an Untouchable, a Mahar sweeper from the state of Maharashtra; he was born into a military family that had served in the British army. His father was relatively educated and was able to convince the local government school to allow his children to attend. Ambedkar proved to be an able student and, despite prejudice against him, was eventually able to gain entry to the University of Bombay. Through successive scholarships, he eventually received a PhD in political science from Columbia University in New York (in 1927) and advanced degrees in economics and law at the London School of Economics (in the early 1920s), later qualifying as a lawyer in London. He returned to India in the early 1920s, established a law practice, and became a leading social reformer advocating the end of untouchability. In the late 1920s, he organized active protest rallies and marches advocating equal educational access for Untouchables, the abolition of prescribed duties for Mahars (sweepers, the cleaners of latrines and streets), temple entry, and access to public wells. Untouchables were—and continue to be in many places—denied access not only to schools and temples but even to water from the wells used by higher castes. To protest such exclusions, Ambedkar led a nonviolent demonstration at a water reservoir. To assert the rights of Untouchables to draw water from it, he took a drink, which resulted in violence between caste Hindus and Untouchables. Later the reservoir had to be publicly purified by Brahman priests before caste Hindus would use it again (Kadam 1991, 83).

Ambedkar disagreed vehemently with Gandhi's proposal for a religious solution to caste exclusions and pursued direct legal and political action instead. Unlike Gandhi, who idealized an authentic Hinduism devoid of caste ranking, Ambedkar argued that caste had its origins in religion and Brahmanical Hinduism in particular. Religion, therefore, could not be the course for real change. Ambedkar called for the legal abolition of caste, which he saw as "the principle impediment to social justice, equality, and reform" (Dirks 2001, 265). His anti-Brahmanism made it difficult for him to gain wide support, especially when in 1927 he burned sacred Brahmanical texts on caste duties in a public display of protest (Zelliot 1996, 163)

AMBEDKAR AND THE 'DESTRUCTION OF CASTE'

During the 1930s, several legislatures in India debated and, in some cases, enacted minor anti-untouchability measures, most notably the Madras Presidency's 1938 Civil Disabilities Act and Bombay's 1939 Harijan Temple Worship Act. Far from being greeted with admiration by the 'modern' men sitting as members of these bodies, such initiatives have generated some notably fierce opposition, especially in areas where 'Hindu' political interests have been met with extremist non-violence was put in danger by the Brahmin or the downtrodden class. Activist Zoya Chatterjee noted that every Hindu member of the Central Legislative Assembly in Bengal raised their voice against an untouchability abolition bill, which came before it in 1933;

Some openly declared that they considered untouchables to be innately unworthy who could never come to the level of clean-caste Hindus (Chatterjee. 1994:45). Despite these bold 'Manuvadi' views, there were still deep divisions among politicians who saw untouchability as a 'stain' on Indian faith and culture. The major counterpoint to the Gandhian view of caste came from BR Ambedkar. 1891–1956), India's first Western-educated and professionally qualified 'untouchable' Ambedkar came from a family of rural Mahars of the Ratnagiri region. Like the other commercially running Mahars of this part of the Konkan, many of Ambedkar's ties had achieved modest prosperity through service in the Bombay Army; the family also had a tradition of following the Kabirpanthi Bhakti movement (Kir. 1981:8-9)

This Bhakti sect (sect), which cultivated an ardent devotion to the person and teachings of the humble weaver-saint Kabir, left its mark not only on Ambedkar and his relatives but also on a significant portion of the region's Mahar population. In fact, by the end of the nineteenth century, Ambedkar's home region was one of those regions in which a combination of new economic opportunities and inspirational religious teachings endowed some untouchables or near-untouchables with an unusual sense of unity, and the ability to achieve did



new skills and resources. The Swami Narayan movement of Gujarat in the early nineteenth century promoted a similar 'self-help' ethos among the former 'hunting' herders of the Koli dynasty. By the mid-century, Christian missionaries in the Madras Presidency and Punjab were claiming credit for inspiring people such as the Tamil Shanars and 'backward' groups in the Punjab with a similar sense of self-aggrandizement.

Ambedkar completed his Ph.D. in 1917, at Columbia University under leading sociologists Alexander Goldenwiser and E. R. A. Seligman. Ambedkar returned to India where he entered the Bombay Bar, lectured at the Government Law College and served as the Bombay Provincial Legislator. By the late 1920s his speeches and publications on the mistakes of the 'backward' classes had made him one of the foremost public activists in the subcontinent. Ambedkar was a strong proponent of forcible 'temple entry' as well as the adoption of sacred threads and other symbols of 'clean-caste' birth, which were forbidden to the so-called untouchables by the precepts of the formal Varna theory. In works such as *The Annihilation of Caste* (1936) he took a fundamentally non-Gandhian view of 'up-liftment' for those humiliated by the poison of Brahmanism (Jelliot.1988:192-3). What the Congress and Gandhi had done to the untouchables (1945) was a scathing condemnation of the Mahatma and his allies as enemies of the 'sad' (Moon.1982). Ambedkar was vehemently critical of high-minded morality and pious ideals:

The effects of caste on the morality of Hindus are very reprehensible. Caste has killed public sentiment. Caste has destroyed the spirit of public charity. Caste has made public opinion impossible, the people of a Hindu is his caste. His responsibility is only towards his caste. Their loyalty is limited to their caste only. Virtue has become casteist and morality has become caste-ised. There is no sympathy for the worthy. There is no value for the meritorious (Ambedkar-1936:63) Ambedkar created a sensation in 1927 when he dramatized his campaign against 'Brahminism' and 'caste oppression' by publicly burning a copy of the Manusmriti, that is, Manu's so-called institutions. As we saw above, this work was widely represented by Western and Indian commentators as the defining code or schema of Brahmanical Hinduism (Keer-1981). Compared to custom or personal desire to shape human behaviour at the same time, this gesture of erasing the codified word was an attack on the values of pious Hindus for whom the sacred texts were the incarnation of divinity. Ambedkar's opponents were therefore quick to paint him as a potential destroyer of Hinduism, a view he contributed by describing his goal of freeing Hindus from their 'slavery of the scriptures', and declared what is called Dharma by Hindus is nothing but a multitude of orders and prohibitions. It does not involve allegiance to ideals, only obedience to commands. I have no hesitation in saying that such religion should be destroyed (Ambedkar-1936:87-88)

Therefore, for both Gandhi and Ambedkar – who, along with Nehru must rank as the most important twentieth-century politicians of the subcontinent – caste in general and untouchability in particular were real and problematic facts of Indian life. Of course, as important contributors to the 'modern' Indian's understanding of caste, Ambedkar and Gandhi came to very different conclusions about what the state could or should do about the plight of 'Dalits'. But did not leave his contemporaries in any doubt that this plight for him was real, and should be regarded as a matter of deep condemnation for the faith of the Hindus. At the same time, both explicitly accepted the view that it was the business of modern nationalist leaders to use the term caste to define and address social issues. Both held that a leader in the political sphere should address people named 'communities' as symbols of shared lineage and moral identity. Neither rejected caste as an ethnographic invention or a self-proclaimed 'colonial' fantasy. Here he was with both Nehru and his fellow 'secular' nationalists, who saw no need to treat caste as a political problem or prescribe special measures to rectify the 'disability' of caste. Ambedkar, had always seen the necessity of both economic and social measures for the liberation of the Dalit's. But the acceptance of a mechanical Marxist framework led him to see these as separate entities and not interwoven in the way that Phule had. On the economic front, he mostly began to follow a Nehruvian-left line. While he had written two major books in the early 1920s on fiscal and monetary policy which by and large reflected a neoclassical perspective though with a severe critique of British rule, in the 1930s and 1940s he switched to a socialistic framework that took for granted the necessity of state-guided industrial development but did not confront the problem of high-caste domination over the state machinery. This was expressed in his book *States and Minorities*, written as a submission to the constitutional convention on behalf of the Scheduled Caste Federation. Economics, though, was not by this time his major concern. He was putting most of his intellectual energy into the question of the historical roots of the caste system and India's cultural identity.

Ambedkar began with a rejection not only of Marxist 'class theory' but also of the kind of caste theory represented by the non-Aryan identity claims of other Dalit radicals of his time. This was seen in two books published during his lifetime, who were the *Shudras*, and *The Untouchables*. However, it was his unpublished manuscripts, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Ancient India* and *The Untouchables: Children of India's Ghetto* which shows the breadth of his attempt to articulate a historical theory. *Revolution and Counter-Revolution* represents his major theoretical analysis, and begins with a firm rejection of the Aryan theory of



caste: "The Aryans were not a race. The Aryans were a collection of people. The cement that held these together was their interest in the maintenance of a type of culture called Aryan culture" As he had made clear earlier.

CONCLUSION

The caste system, therefore, in its principle of exclusion, isolation and disintegration is reminiscent of the savage man; in the sanctity and privileged position which it accords to the priesthood it bears analogy to conditions in ancient Egypt, Persia and mediaeval Europe; in its occupational character and the proud exclusiveness of the ruling class it contains the spirit of mediaeval guild system and feudalism; but in none of its aspects can it fit in with the modern conceptions of nation, state, democracy and individual liberty.

This critical evaluation of the various characteristics of Caste leave no doubt that prohibition, or rather the absence or intermarriage-endogamy, to be concise is the only one that can be called the essence of Caste when rightly understood. But deny this on abstract some May anthropological grounds for there exist endogamous groups without giving rise to problem of Caste. In a general way this may be true, as endgames societies, culturally different, making their abode in localities more or less removed, and having little to do with each other are a physical reality. The Negroes and the whites and the various tribal groups that go by name of American Indians in the United States may be cited as more or less appropriate illustrations in support of this view. But we must not confuse matters, for in India the situation is different. As pointed out before, the peoples of India form a homogeneous whole.

The various races of India occupying definite territories have more or less fused into one another and do possess cultural unity, which is only criterion of a homogeneous population given this homogeneity as a basis Caste becomes a problem altogether new in the character and wholly absent in the situation constituted by the mere propinquity of endogamous, social or tribal groups. Caste in India means an artificial chopping off the population into fixed and definite units, each one prevented from fusing into another through the custom of endogamy. Thus the conclusion is in evitable that Endogamy is the only characteristics that are peculiar to caste, and if we succeed in showing how endogamy is maintained, we shall practically have proved the genesis and also the mechanism of Caste. The first and foremost thing that must be recognized is that Hindu Society is a myth. The name Hindu is itself a foreign name. It was given by the Mahomedans to the native's for the purpose of distinguishing themselves. It does not occur in any Sanskrit work prior to the Mahomedan invasion. They did not feel the necessity of a common name because they had no conception of their having constituted a community. Hindu Society as Sucrose not exists. It is only a collection of castes. Each Caste is conscious of its existence. Its survival is e be-all and end--all of its existence. Castes do not even form a federation. A caste has no feeling that it is affiliated to other castes except when there is a Hindu-Moslem riot On all other occasions each cast endeavours to segregate itself and to distinguish its from other castes each caste not only dines among itself and marries among itself but each caste prescribes its own distinctive dress. What other explanation can there be of the innumerable styles of dress worn by the men and women of India which so amuse the tourists? Indeed the ideal Hindu must be like a rat living in his own hole refusing to have any contact with others.

There is an utter lack among the Hindus of what the sociologists call consciousness of kind". There is no Hindu consciousness of kind. In every Hindu the consciousness that exists is the consciousness of his caste. That is the reason why the Hindus cannot be said to form a society or a nation. There are however many Indians whose patriotism does not permit them to admit that Indians are not a nation, that they are only an amorphous mass of people. They have insisted that underlying the apparent diversity there is a fundamental unity which marks the life of the Hindus in as much as there is a similarity of habits and customs, beliefs and thoughts which obtain all over the continent of India. Similarity in habits and customs, beliefs and thoughts there is. But one cannot accept the conclusion that therefore, the Hindus constitute a society. To do so is to misunderstand the essentials which go to make up a society. 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. Secondly similarity in habits and customs, beliefs and thoughts is not enough to constitute men into society. Things may be passed physically from one to another like bricks. In the same way habits and customs; beliefs and thoughts of one group may be common activity it has prevented the Hindus from becoming a society with a unified life and a consciousness of its own being.

There is no doubt, in my opinion, that unless you change your social order you can achieve little by way of progress: You cannot mobilize the community either for defence or for offence. You cannot build anything on the foundations of caste. You cannot build up a nation, you cannot build up a morality, and anything that you will build on the foundations of caste will crack and will never be a whole.

The only question that remains to be considered is-How to bring about the reform of the Hindu social order? How to abolish Caste? This is a question of supreme importance. There is a view that in the reform of caste, the first step to take is to abolish sub-castes. This view is based upon the supposition that there is a greater



similarity in manners and status between sub-castes than there is between castes. I think, this is an erroneous supposition. Brahmins of Northern and Central India are socially of lower grade, as compared with the Brahmins of the Deccan and Southern India. The former are only cooks and water-carriers while the latter occupy a high social position. On the other hand, in Northern India, the Vaishyas and Kayasthas are intellectually and socially on a par with the Brahmins of the Deccan and Southern India. Almost all physical violence that is viewed as caste-violence today is against Dalit's. However, there is a "symbolic violence" that sustains and enables such physical violence and is the violence perpetrated through holders of symbolic capital (prestige, etc.) in such a manner as to naturalize - de-historicize the structure of violence while focusing exclusively on the physical act of violence. When viewed in this manner, caste violence, which is most dramatically seen inflicted upon Dalit bodies, can be viewed as nurtured at all levels by the system of graded inequalities and graded differences between caste groups. Moreover, its normal mode of existence is the quotidian or everyday life, especially when people do not think they are acting in castiest ways. Showing how this is possible is a task that this book takes up. The iron grip of the old order was pried open by a range of forces—civil wars, revolutions, legal and constitutional changes, the rise of democracy and universal franchise. But it was also reshaped by technological and economic forces, in particular the industrial revolution and capitalism.

Over the last century, Dalit's have sought to escape their predicament through multiple ways, such as religious conversion and linking themselves to anti-Brahmin social movements. They have sought to leverage the promise of universal franchise in the Indian Constitution, supporting political parties professing an egalitarian ethos and even creating their own political parties, first the Republican Party in Maharashtra and more recently, the (BahujanSamajwadi Party (BSP) in Uttar Pradesh, and they have sought mobility through the state itself, through affirmative action programmes in education and public employment. These combined efforts have surely made a difference and the relative position of Dalit's in Indian society is a far cry from what it was at the time of Independence. Nonetheless, while a long road has been travelled, the journey is far, far from complete. Social hierarchies are extremely resilient and weakening them requires overt opposition, multiple pressures and subtle ambushes. However, the old pathways of change, which centred on politics and public action, need to be augmented. If the state itself is decrepit and venal, the likelihood that it will be a resolute defender of the economically weak and socially marginalized in practice (as distinct from rhetoric) is somewhat low; Dalit's need additional arrows in their quiver to advance their interests.

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