

PREFACE

The objective of my thesis is to analyze and examine after Ambedkar the issue of untouchability, its past and present. It is well-known to all of us that Ambedkar was the victim of untouchability in his earlier stage. He had been humiliated from the first day of his school. Even his class teachers in school had directly or indirectly humiliated Ambedkar on many accounts. Since Ambedkar began a life as the conscious *Hindu* untouchables, he faced several difficulties. He felt it strongly when he came to know that his hair would defile the purity of the razor of the barber. The washer man refused to wash his clothes. The teacher had abused him in his first appearance in the school. He was not allowed to drink water with the glass which was commonly used. These are a few among many instances happened in Ambedkar life.

In the Introductory Chapter, I propose to analyze and examine the trio-concepts, such as, *Varna*, Caste and Untouchability. *Hindu* religion admits *Varna* system, which according to me, is the source of the origin of Untouchability. The *Varna* system is the genesis of Hinduism which is determined on the basis of *Guna* and *Karma* of the individual. There is a considerable debate regarding this classification. Some great thinkers, for example, Mahatma Gandhi – as a firm believer of Hinduism, admits and admires the four division of *Varna* system as found in Hinduism. However, Ambedkar disagreed with Hinduism. According to Ambedkar, the fourfold division of the *Varna* system is the root cause of originating untouchability. In this **Chapter**, I propose to analyze and examine such issues, i.e. concept of *Varna*, Caste and Untouchability.

There is no question of doubt that untouchability is not something which can be legalized. Rather untouchability is a social issue primarily is confined within the society. Untouchability is *Himsa* (violence). There is no question of doubt. Its origin lies in

Hinduism, according to Ambedkar. Ambedkar severely criticizes the *Hindu* religion, particularly *Manusmriti*, because Ambedkar felt that the literature of *Manusmriti* is responsible for generating untouchability. *Manusmriti* admits four-fold division of *Varna* system subsequently misinterpreted and used as a religious verdict by the dominant *Brahmin* community and thereby promulgated untouchability in the society. Therefore, it would be pertinent or necessary to know the historical background of Untouchability and the religious background of Untouchability. In this regard, it is necessary to examine the *Hindu* religion such as: the literature of *Veda*, the literature of *Mahabharata*, the literature of *Gita* and above all the literature of *Manusmriti* to know the rationale behind untouchability. All these issues will propose to discuss in the **First Chapter** and it is entitled as: “THE ORIGIN OF UNTOUCHABILITY IN THE *HINDU* RELIGIOUS SCRIPTURES”.

It is important to note here that in some sense or other untouchability has been justified by the *Hindu* religion. It is not at all clear whether *Manusmriti* admits four-fold division of *Varna* system. The *Manusmriti* admits only the four-fold division of *Varna* system and says nothing about untouchability. The relevant question then arises: why does Ambedkar criticizes *Manusmriti*? *Manu* admits that there is a section of people which will be remaining outside the four-fold division of *Varna* system. Such people would be regarded as untouchables. In this regard, *Manusmriti* mentions *Mahar* Community as untouchables. As Ambedkar belongs to *Mahar* community, he did not belong to the four-fold division of *Varna* system. Therefore, Ambedkar would be regarded as untouchables. As an untouchable caste, Ambedkar had faced several incidents from his live hood, which was totally unethical. So, it is necessary to examine Untouchability after Ambedkar. Thus we propose to discuss it in **Second Chapter** and it is entitled as: “AMBEDKAR: A VICTIM OF UNTOUCHABILITY”.

If we look back to the history of the literature of the controversial issue of untouchability, there we find that there are some other contemporary great thinkers with whom Ambedkar

had disagreed. In this regard, the controversy between Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi is particularly relevant. I think that both Ambedkar and Gandhi have involved in serious discussion regarding the issue of untouchability. Ambedkar uses the term untouchability and Gandhi uses the term *Horizon*. According to Gandhi, *Horizons* are not equal to untouchable. Gandhi has a little bit of reservation regarding the very use of the term ‘untouchable’. In this regard, Ambedkar was disagreed with Gandhi. Moreover Gandhi was a firm believer of Hinduism and Ambedkar was a firm disbeliever of Hinduism. Each of them has contributed a lot for the betterment of the downtrodden people. Therefore, the comparison between Ambedkar and Gandhi will definitely be enhanced the gravity of my thesis. This issue is proposed to discuss in **Chapter Three** and it is entitled as: “FACE TO FACE CONFLICT BETWEEN AMBEDKAR AND GANDHI: UNTOUCHABLE VS HORIZON”.

It is well known to all of us that, Caste system is the first and foremost social curse that would vitiate the very springs of national life. Rabindranath Tagore also aware about the purposes for which it served and the value of the principles on which it was framed. According to him, when the *Aryans* came to India, they had to encounter the previous inhabitants of the country. Basically the *Aryans* were dominated by the spiritual impulse. Although they were organized a social system based on the recognition of spiritual unity as well as racial differences, but they did not adopt the lazy device of either extirpating the native peoples or reducing them to slavery. When the different peoples could live together in mutual harmony and enjoying the freedom to maintain their differences, the caste system was instituted as a social unity. There we perceived thousand of essay, poem, drama of Tagore, about the issue of Caste system and Untouchability. So, in the **Fourth Chapter** we propose to analyze this issue after Tagore, which is entitled as: “POETIC APPROACH OF THE CONCEPT OF UNTOUCHABILITY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE.”

There we perceive thousand of opinions about the concept of Untouchability. From the *Vedic* period Casteism has practiced in our society in various ways. Every religious scripture discussed about this issue. But we think there are two different meanings, one is inner meaning and another is outer meaning. Whenever we say about casteism, we say about the outer meaning. But whenever we say about Untouchability, it is called inner meaning. So, in the **Fifth Chapter** we propose to analyze and examine the inner and outer meaning of Untouchability, which is entitled as: “UNTOUCHABILITY: INS AND OUTS”.

As the thesis is entitled as: “SOCIO-PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERSTANDING OF UNTOUCHABILITY: PAST AND PRESENT”, therefore in the **Concluding Chapter**, which is entitled as: “CONCLUDING REMARKS”, I propose to analyze and examine with critical outlook and also my own rationale about the Sociological and Philosophical implication of the concept of Untouchability developed in the Past as well as in the Present. The thesis would be ended with a selective BIBLIOGRAPHY followed by a brief INDEX.

.....