

Chapter 5

Theories of Caste: Gandhiji and Ambedkar

5.1. Introduction

The term 'caste' is not an Indian word. This term is derived from the Portuguese word 'Casta'¹. The Portuguese used this word 'Casta' generally to mean 'cast', 'mould', 'race', 'kind', and 'quality' etc. They applied this word to designate the peculiar system of religious and social distinctions that prevailed in the Hindu society when they first arrived in India. But this word is founded particularly on race. The Indian word 'Jati' is corresponded with the word caste that equivalent to the Latin gens and Greek yevos, 'race or nation'. Even the Indian words Varna, Jati etc. gradually rendered by caste to represent not only varieties of race, colour etc. but every original, hereditary, religious etc. distinction that is impossible to imagine. Besides, the term caste also comes from the Latin word 'Custus'² that means pure. In fact, the Portuguese ordinarily used the term caste to identify the Indian social classification as they thought that the intention of the mechanism in the caste system was to preserve purity of blood. Therefore, there is no satisfactory definition possible to define caste system due to its multi-complexity and peculiarity. Emile Senart defined a caste as 'a close corporation, in theory at any rate rigorously hereditary: equipped with a certain traditional and independent organization, including a chief and a council, meeting on occasion in assemblies of more or less plenary authority and joining together at certain festivals: bound together by common occupations, which relate more particularly to marriage and to food and to questions of ceremonial pollution, and ruling its members by the exercise of jurisdiction, the extent of which varies, but which succeeds in making the authority of the community more felt by the sanction of certain penalties and, above all, by final irrevocable exclusion from the group'³. Sir H. Risley said, '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.'⁴ According to Sir E.A. Gait, 'the main characteristics of a caste are the belief in a

common origin held by all the members and the possession of the traditional occupation. It may be defined as an endogamous group or collection of such groups bearing a common name, having the same traditional occupation, claiming descent from the same source and commonly regarded as forming a single homogeneous community'⁵. Nesfield defined a caste "as a class of the community which disowns any connection with any other class and can neither intermarry nor eat nor drink with any but persons of their own community"⁶. Ketkar defined caste as 'a social group having two characteristics: (i) membership is confined to those who are born of members and includes all persons so born; (ii) the members are forbidden by an inexorable social law to marry outside the group'⁷. But different scholars have formulated a number of theories regarding the origin of the caste system in India. Some scholars like Risley explained the origin of the caste system based on racial differences whereas Nesfield and Ibbetson mentioned its origin on the line of occupational factors. However, Abbe Dubois referred to the role played by the Brahmins had its origin. Hutton referred to belief in Mana in its origin. However, it can be said very clearly that the caste system in India has been discussed in the context of Indological, socio-anthropological and sociological point of view. The Indologists have explained caste from the scriptural point of view. But some social anthropologists have explained it from the cultural point of view whereas some sociologists have discussed caste from the stratificational point of view. Naturally, the important theories regarding the origin of the caste system may be discussed as follows:

Different Theories of Caste:

Traditional Theory of Caste

There is a traditional theory of caste, which is based on the divine origin of the caste system. Many Western and Orthodox Indian scholars have pointed out that the caste system has been created by divine ordinance or at least with divine approval. They said that the Hindus seek intimacy with the Ultimate Reality and explained everything in terms of God and religion. According to this theory, the Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra castes have got their origin distinctively from the mouth, the arms, the thighs and the feet respectively of the Creator (Brahma). The idea of the Purusha Sukta (90.12) of the Tenth Book in the Rig Veda has its origin. This idea of the

creation of the four castes has been gained wide circulation in the Dharmasastras and the Puranas. Manu, an ancient lawmaker has established it without questioning in I.31 and cited it as an authoritative pronouncement on this subject. Besides, the status and role of different castes groups are generally determined in terms of karma and dharma doctrines. This theory viewed it as a normal and natural system. This theory has two explanations viz. mythical and metaphysical. The first version has noted that the four castes have been emerged from different parts of Brahma's body. Even the four-fold division of the caste system was created based on the principles of gunas (qualities) and karmas (functions). Krishna has highlighted the same content in the Gita. After extensive research regarding the origin of the caste system, John Muir had noted the same doctrines of karma and dharma in determining an individual caste. According to the scholars of the traditional caste doctrine, a man is born in a particular caste because of his actions performed in his previous incarnation. If he had performed better actions, he would have been born in a higher caste, that is, birth in a particular caste is not an accident. Srinivas said in this context that man was born in that caste because he deserves to be born there. He said that a man, who accepts the caste system and the norms of his particular caste, is living according to dharma, while a man who questions them is violating dharma. It is generally established that if a man observes the rules of dharma, he will be born in his next birth in a high and rich caste; otherwise, he will be born in a low and poor caste. Secondly, the metaphysical idea explained the hereditary and fixed functions, hierarchy, birth and other norms of the caste system. It has noted a separate function of each caste group that is determined by the swabhav (nature) and the guna (qualities) of the caste members. Apart from these, the hierarchical arrangement of four Varnas considered as four castes in the traditional theory of caste. But Prof. D. Raghaban reviewed the content of the Gita regarding the origin of the Chaturvarna and pointed out that 'The statement of the Gita does not warrant the assumption that according to one's Guna and Karma one may either oneself or through some friends declare oneself as a Brahmana or Kshatriya. The basis of Guna-Karma is to explain rational of the four-fold classification'. He also said regarding the utility of the four-fold Varna system that 'The organization according to Varna has served as a steel frame that has preserved the Hindu Community down the Centuries. Its marriage selection and vocational specialization have contributed to the refinement of the species and the conservation and perfection of its spill; they have eliminated confusion, perplexity and wastage.' In

fact, the followers of this theory search for truth through mysticism and not through science.

Manu's Theory of Caste

According to Manu, an ancient lawmaker, 'The Brahmana, the Kshatriya and the Vaishya are the three twice-born castes; the fourth is the one caste, Sudra; there is no fifth'⁸. He explained the origin of these four castes that were created from the mouth, the arms, the thighs and the feet respectively of the Prajapati (Creator) in the universe. 'The three twice-born castes, devoted to their duties, shall study; but of these the Brahmana alone shall expound it, not the other two; such is the established law'⁹. It has been clearly noted in the Manusmriti that Prajapati had deputed men of different castes in the prescribed works. The man of various castes would normally re-engage themselves after re-birth in the same occupations or professions. Naturally, caste and occupation of a person universally has fixed up. As a result of it, the innovative qualities of a person had been permanently destroyed or refused and caste and profession ultimately became hereditary in perpetuity. Therefore, the role, activities, dignity and status of different castes groups henceforth more or less are going to determine only by birth of a particular caste. Apart from these, Manu said that many castes or Jatis like Murdhavasikta (Brahman and Kshatriya), Mahishya (Kshatriya and Vaishya), Karana (Vaishya and Sudra), Nishada or Parasava (Brahman and Sudra) etc. were created by a series of crosses first between members of the four Varnas or castes and then between the descendants of these initial unions. Besides, different types of castes were made by degradation from the original Varnas or castes on account of non-observance of sacred rites. These are called Vratyas; e.g. Acharjya, Maitra etc. Therefore, it can be said that Manu had fixed up the four-fold division of castes and professions and transforming it into 'Caste Institution' on to be hereditary basis brushing aside the doctrine of 'Karma' (action) and inborn qualities as well as virtuous deeds. He divided the Hindu society mainly into four Castes, i.e., Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra and thereby laid the basis of inter-caste hatred and caste-based discrimination which in course of time divided the Indian Hindu society into multiple segments. He made the Caste System hereditary and issued a lease of permanent privilege in case of power, position and status in society, polity, economy, education, culture, religion etc. especially for the benefit of the 'Twice Born' and

particularly for the Brahmins by degrading the condition of the Sudras into the level of animals. The Sudras were denied even a little comfort. They had been compelled to become an unprivileged caste.

Brahmanical Theory of Caste

According to the some scholars of the Brahmanical theory of caste, the caste system originated and developed in India with the initiative of the Brahmins. Hutton, Abbe Dubois (A Description of the People of India, 1817, quoted by Hutton, 1961) and other scholars have highlighted this view. They said that the caste system has nothing but an ingenious device created by Brahmins for the benefits of Brahmins. The Brahmins created mechanism for imposing severe restrictions to preserve their purity on the issue of social restrictions, marriage, eating, drinking etc. with the non-Brahmins. The main motto of them was to satisfy their own desire and to perform pure sacerdotal functions in their own whims¹⁰. That is why; they established their high status, special privileges and prerogatives in the Brahmanas and other books. The Brahmins are the lords of the so-called Hindu social system. Everything might be a social norm whatever the Brahmins say and they are the owner of the entire property of the society. They could marry many times but could never be severely punished in any matter. They were free from capital punishment. They had to shave only their head for their serious offences whereas other persons are liable to be hanged for the same offences. The Brahmins are the lords of rituals and elaborate rites for bringing salvation of individuals and society. Even the king's prayers and offerings were unacceptable to gods without their performance of the elaborate rites and ministry. It was generally said that Brahmins added to the punya (spiritual merit) for the king as 1/16 of it accumulated by the Purohit (priest) through offerings and sacrifices that went to the credit of the ruler of the land. Ghurye strongly asserted that the Brahmins played a vital role for the creation of the caste system. They excluded the aborigines and the Sudras from religious and social communion with themselves. It is a well-established fact that the Indian Aryans were primarily divided into three different classes. But the Brahmanic literature contemplated it when the fourth class of the Sudras was made as it contradicted to the other three classes. That is why; the Vedic opposition between the Arya and the Dasa was replaced by the Brahmanic classification of the dvijati and the ekajati (the Sudra)¹¹. Naturally, the most respected

class in the society could not fail to be imitated by groups that claim respectively. Even the restrictions on marriage and regulations about the acceptance of food, which contemplated only four classes in society, came to be the characteristics of each and every well-marked group. Caste in India is a Brahmanic child of the indo-Aryan culture, cradled in the land of the Ganga and the Yamuni and thence transferred to other parts of the country. But Hutton ultimately gave two arguments to reject the Brahmanical theory of caste on the basis of the following points:

Firstly, caste did not originate later when the Brahmins got political power. But this theory indicates that caste have originated at a date when Brahmins must have got political power. Secondly, Caste could hardly have been imposed by an administrative measure. Both these arguments are illogical as Brahmins obtained high status and special prerogatives not when they got the political power in the end of the second century B.C. but when they wrote the Brahmanas somewhere in the fifth century B.C. Kshatriya, the ruler of the country, refused to accept the superiority of the Brahmins over them and the writings of the Brahmanas were started at that very moment. Naturally, Hutton is not correct in assuming that caste will have originated later. Brahmins did not impose their superiority over others not through administrative means but by arousing the religious sentiments of the people. Therefore, it can be said that the origin of caste cannot be explained only in terms of a single factor like the one the role played by the Brahmins, as Abbe Dubois has done. Racial, religious, economic and other factors must have been responsible in creating the institution of the caste system.

Racial Theory of Caste

Herbert Risley was an ardent exponent of the theory of caste. Eminent scholars like Westernmarck, Ghurye, Majumdar and others, have supported him in this context. The main content of this theory is that the clash of cultures and the contact of races crystallized castes in India.¹² It is a well-established fact in the history of the world that conquerors had subdued the opposition group very severely and took their women as concubines or wives but they refused to give their daughters in marriage to them. But complete amalgamation between the conqueror and conquered groups was possible if these two opposition groups belonged to the same race or same colour

otherwise not. If irregular unions held between men of the lower strata and women of the higher groups served the purposes of a caste. Therefore, the relation between the migrant Aryans and the aboriginal inhabitants in India might be considered in the context of the origin and development of the caste system. The ideas of ceremonial purity, racial superiority, patrilineal mentality and others of the Aryans were responsible for the growth and development of the caste system in India. They considered themselves as superior race than the original inhabitants in India. Aryans were patrilineal whereas pre-Aryans were matrilineal. It is generally said that the Aryans had colour prejudice whereas pre-Aryans had nothing. The migrant Aryans married with the daughters of the native inhabitants but they refused to give their daughters to them. The children of such marriages had to be assigned the lowest position in the society and were called the chandals. Therefore, the origin of the group of 'half-breeds' as well as the feeling of racial superiority ultimately became responsible for the origin of the caste system. Risley has mentioned the following six processes¹³ that are responsible for the formation of castes:

I. Change in traditional occupation

It is generally followed that if a person changed his parent profession and adopted a new one, his caste or sub-division of caste ultimately developed into a distinct caste.

II. Migration

It was very difficult to maintain contacts with the parental caste for the migrated people of a particular region due to the lack of communication in the early days. Naturally, their relation and communication with the parental caste got gradually cut off and eventually they developed themselves as a new caste.

III. Change in customs

The formation of these new castes as a result of discarding old customs and usages and by adopting the new practices has been a familiar incident of the caste system.

IV. Preservation of old tradition:

Certain castes believed in the bygone sovereignty of the traditions and tried to preserve old traces of an organization. They separated themselves from those who have been assuming new traditions, customs and adopted a new name. As a result, a new caste came into existence.

V. Enrolling oneself into the rank of Hinduism

Sometimes either an entire tribe or a section of a tribe becomes 'Hinduised' and taking a new caste name. It enters into the rank of Hinduism and distinguished itself from the other castes; for example, Maria Gonds of Madhya Pradesh and Rajbanshis of Bengal.

VI. Role of religious enthusiasts

A religious enthusiast sometimes preaches his own doctrines and his followers form a separate sect, which ultimately developed as a new caste; for example, Kabirpanthies.

That is why; Ghurye said that the Vedic Aryans were civilized. They were fair-skinned and had colour prejudice in comparison to the aboriginal inhabitants of India. Naturally, they tried to show off their exclusiveness. They adopted the policy of exclusive spirit in social behaviour and uphold the ideas of ceremonial purity. The migrant Aryans took the policy of hatred towards the natives and imposed various severe restrictions in social interaction with them. It is generally asserted that the indo-Aryans settled in the Gangetic plain in India after migrating from Central Asia near about 2500 B.C. The Indo-Aryans comprising the Romans, the Iranians, the Spanish, the Anglo-Saxons and others. They were called as Vedic Indians. They spoke of themselves as 'Arya' whereas the aboriginals are entitled as 'dark colour' people without nose. Even they were termed as 'Dasas'. The term dasa means enemy in the Iranian language. Westmarck mentioned in his book viz., History of Human Marriage, 1891, that India was the land of the dark-skinned people before the Aryans invaded, conquered and settled in India. They had no racial mentality, colour prejudice and antipathies as like the Aryans, which ultimately hastened the process of the creation of the caste system. Hutton said that racial factor was responsible along another factors for the origin of the caste system. He said that caste system should not be confined to India but other racial groups should find it in all those societies, which have faced the conquests. According to him, caste is not confined to India only but it appeared in a pronounced form in South Africa, Canada etc. In South America, Negroes and other mixed races were cut off from the legal unions with the white race. Riskey¹⁴ and Narmadeshwar Prasad¹⁵ mentioned the same phenomenon that was observed among the half-breeds of Canada and Mexico. They did not intermarry with the natives. Marriage was occasionally held only with pureblood Europeans.

However, there is a lot of controversy among the scholars of different fields whether the origin of the caste system is a unique Indian phenomenon or not. Scholars like Dumont, Pocock, Hocart, Hutton, Senart, Srinivas and others pointed out that caste is a unique Indian phenomenon only. But some scholars like Risley, Crook etc said that caste is a universal phenomenon. Some scholars analyzed caste from ethnographic and sociological point of view etc. Leach said that caste is confined to India as a structural phenomenon.¹⁶ Ghurye has made an extensive study on the elements of caste system outside India. He reviewed the social structure of Egypt, West Asia, China, Japan, Rome and tribal Europe to satisfy his quest for the elements of caste outside India. Many primitive people and almost all the major civilizations of ancient times usually recognized the distinction by birth. Privileges and restrictions were very common among the primitive peoples during the medieval times all over Europe. Mate selection was based on birth, which was comparatively infrequent among them. Even occupations became hereditary in the tribal England, Rome and Asian civilizations. The lower classes were not given permission to change their hereditary trades and occupations but the middle and upper classes could change their professions. A man could not enjoy freedom to leave his father's professions if he unconsciously joined in his family's trade. It was impossible for him to move out it and ultimately they were compelled to adopt the hereditary occupations of their ancestors from generation to generation. Even occupations were graded into high and low. Not only that but also society was categorically divided into two (Brazil, Saudi Arabia), three (Mexico, Rome), four (Egypt: soldiers, priests, craftsmen and serfs; Iran: priests, warriors, artisans and herdsmen), five (Japan) well-marked groups, inter-marriage between which was often prohibited. In almost all cultures, the clergy were entitled as members of the nobility. They identified themselves to be more superior to the other classes. They had themselves formed into a sacerdotal organization. Therefore, it can be said that the well-marked status-groups separated themselves from one another by the absence of freedom of inter-marriage, rights and disabilities that may be considered a common features of the social dimension of the Indo-European cultures.¹⁷ In fact, Ghurye tried to establish the fact that the characteristics of caste are found in other societies and cultures in the world beyond Indian society. According to him, caste is not a unique Indian phenomenon at all. But Srinivas, Hocart, Bougle and other scholars have straightway rejected the theory of Ghurye and considered caste as a unique phenomenon in India due to its religious significance.

Srinivas has pointed out that the idea of pollution has been governing the relations between different castes. The concept of pollution is fundamental to the caste system along with the ideology of karma and dharma that has contributed to make caste the unique institution in India. Bougle said that caste system has penetrated into the so-called Hindu society in a level unknown elsewhere. Senart pointed out that 'Caste is peculiar to India since it is determined by ethnological, economic, geographical and psychological conditions, which are essentially native'¹⁸. Harold Gould has pointed out that caste in its fullest sense is an exclusively Indian phenomenon. Besides, some scholars have said that caste is a typical Hindu institution. Although the main religious groups in India beyond the Hindus are Muslims, Sikhs, Jains etc. and if the caste system is found among Jains and Sikhs, it is because they are basically Hindus. Even the endogamous and closed rank groups of Shias and Sunnis among Muslims and Protestants and Catholics among Christians have nothing to do with religion as castes amongst the Hindus are linked. The theological ideas such as pollution, rebirth, pap (sin), punya (merit), karma, dharma etc. are the unique concept of caste in Hindu society. Davis and Gardner carried out an extensive study on caste and wrote a book viz. *Socio-Anthropological Study of Caste and Class*, 1968 where he tried to prove that the concept of purity and pollution in a country like America did not exist except the concept of uncleanness. But the concept of purity and pollution exists in the Hindu society. Therefore, it can be said that caste derives from some essential principle and we should search for that principle not in our minds but in the minds of those people who practice caste system in the Hindu society.

Occupational Theory of Caste

Nesfield was the founder of the Occupational theory of caste. Denzil Ibbetson strongly supported this theory and pointed out that the origin of caste has nothing to do with racial affinity or religion but it is mainly due to functions or occupations. Nesfield pointed out that the technical skill of the occupation was passed on hereditary from one generation to another generation due to practicing the same occupation of their forefathers over a long period of time. That is why; the occupational guilds came into existence and ultimately came to be known as castes. The feeling of the superiority and inferiority of occupations gave birth to the creation of hierarchy in the caste system. It depends completely upon the rank, position and

culture of any caste as high and low in the Hindu society¹⁹. According to him, Brahmins were specialized in the occupation of sacrifices, hymns and rituals that were most important in the socio-religious life of the Hindus and they ultimately became the most respected people in the Hindu society. They were the first born of castes, the model upon which all the other castes were gradually formed.²⁰ However, priesthood became hereditary when the Brahmins organized themselves as an exclusive privileged class. Even the other communities organized themselves into different castes and adopted precaution for the sake of defence and privileges for their caste interest. Nesfield said that the origin of castes depends upon two things; viz. occupation and organization of the tribe. Denzil Ibbetson pointed out in his book, viz. 'Punjab Castes', 1916 in supporting Nesfield's views regarding the origin of castes. He explained three factors that were responsible for the origin and growth of castes, such as tribe, guilds and religion. According to him, tribes developed as occupational guilds and ultimately came to function on religious lines that hastened the process of formation into castes in the way of social revolution. However, many scholars criticized Nesfield's and Ibbetson's theories of castes. Senart raised a question in his book, viz. 'Caste in India', 1930 pointing out the scenario of Russia where total population of many villages is engaged in same occupation like shoe making, pottery etc. and these villages are not assemblies of groups that have merged themselves into a community and these communities pursued a single industry. He said that it is not occupation that results in grouping but it accelerated the process of formation in community of occupation. That is why; he raised a question why should it not be the same in India? Apart from this, D.N. Majumdar criticized the theoretical explanation of hierarchy of castes in the context of the superiority and inferiority of the occupations. He said that status of castes did not depend upon the superiority and inferiority of the occupations but by the degree of purity of blood and extent of isolation maintained by the groups²¹. Hutton said that the occupational theory of castes propounded by Nesfield practically did not explain the social status of various agricultural castes, as the status of same agricultural castes in North India and South India is quite different. Even the status of agricultural castes in North India has higher than the status of agricultural castes in South India. Not only that but also some scholars have criticized the theory of occupational castes of Nesfield as because it is certainly not accountable in the case of Vaishyas and Sudras. Besides, it is well known to all that every human society comes to be stratified into various groups.

These people and their kith and kin having similar occupational roles interact with one another very smoothly. These people together come to form what Harold Gould has called 'sub-cultural groups'²² each with different standard of living, moral outlook, socialization pattern type and level of education etc. but these sub-cultural groups called castes in India. Indian society with non-industrial civilization had ascription-oriented stratification in which the role and the role-occupant remain merged. Therefore it is held that occupations are inherited at birth, are believed to be transmitted in the blood line and are, therefore, seen as a part of the person himself. This is true with reprehensible and sacerdotal occupations. In fact, this process of internalization of occupations really checked and controlled social mobility that led to the development of static features of our social system. Therefore, it can be noted in spite of its limitations that it cannot be denied that the occupational theory of castes is an important factor in the origin of caste.

Ketkar's Theory of Caste

According to Ketkar, the psychological prejudicial tendencies of human beings from the early tribal atmosphere accelerate the process of the origin of castes. It is nothing but a developed tribes or converted classes. The Indian tribes of different regions did not fuse themselves as the European tribes had done due to the introduction of the customs of endogamy in their society. They involved in struggle with each other due to their conflicting attitude relating to their boundary disputes or girl kidnapping mentality of the opposite group. Therefore, the people of a particular tribal group always try to avoid to make relation with other tribal group beyond their circle relating to marriage, social relations etc. They confined themselves for the interaction in all respect to the members of their own tribes. Ketkar said about the origin of various features of castes as because each features has a history of origin behind it but not the caste system as a whole. According to him, the phrase 'origin of caste' has no meaning, though endogamy has its origin, hereditary occupation and commensality restrictions have their origin, ascendancy of the priests and their exclusiveness have their origin, association of purity and impurity to various objects also has its origin. Thus, each of these various phenomena can have an origin but the origin of caste system can not be conceived of as long as these words (that is, castes) remain a collective expression.²³ He gave psychological explanation of each characteristic that

was the most important element of endogamy in the caste system and endogamy was practiced due to three reasons: firstly, due to the feelings of sympathy and affection for the members of one's own group, secondly, to maintain blood purity and thirdly, because it makes social adjustment with the partner easier. Westermarck noted very clearly that both sympathy and affection strengthened each other. Even the same culture, mode of life etc. strengthened both of these components. But Ketkar also pointed out that the feeling of superiority and inferiority comes from the cause or the result of endogamy. Superior caste did not marry inferior caste. Indians did not marry the natives of Africa when they first migrated there as they considered themselves superior to the natives of Africa. Even the Chinese did not make marital relations with the people of America after their migration in there due to their prejudicial attitude towards the white people. However, it is very much interesting to note that both the Indians and Chinese had no such feelings of superiority or inferiority before their migration in there. In fact, endogamy gave birth to the feelings of psychological hierarchy or superiority-inferiority. Ketkar said that an individual could degrade himself in his own caste by deviating from the caste norms or by taking to a degrading occupation. Therefore, it is natural for every group to think of creating some institution to exercise control over its members. Naturally, the origin of caste panchayats is also a natural phenomenon. Ketkar defined caste as 'a social group having two characteristics; viz., membership is confined to those who are born of members and includes all persons so born and 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'²⁴ However, Ketka's theory of caste was perhaves a corollary of Rice's totemistic theory. Rice said that castes originated from the belief in totems and taboos whereas Ketkar said that castes originated from tribes. Some scholars pointed out that castes originated from primitive belief in magic. Therefore, it can be said based on the content of Ketkar's theory of caste that Indian caste system was evolved not by the Aryans but by the native Dravidians on aborigines. Besides, scholars like Slator and Pargitor pointed out that caste is essentially Dravidian and it was adopted by the semi-civilised Aryans. But there is a lot of evidences in history that the caste system did not exist in the pre-Vedic period. It was evolved only in the later-Vedic period. Even we cannot ignore

the role of religious and socio-political factors that were responsible for the origin of the caste system. Apart from these, Brahmin's concept of ceremonial purity or impurity, racial superiority or inferiority was definitely the important factors in the origin of castes.

Senart's Theory of Caste

Emile Senart pointed out that caste is the normal development of ancient Aryan institutions that assumed a peculiar form because of the peculiar conditions in India. The process of the formation of caste system in the shape of Varna division to the Indo-Iranian period of history as the fourfold division of society is found both in the Avestan Persia and in Rig Vedic India. There were four classes in ancient Persia, such as Atharvas (priests), Rathaesthas (warriors), Vastriya Fshuyants (cultivators) and Huitis (artisans). But the only difference between India and Persia in the social arena lay with regard to the fourth class i.e. artisan class in Persia and the servile or Sudra class in India. Senart tried to find out the beginning of the caste system beyond the Indo-Iranian period. He said that the Indians, Greek and Romans are all Aryans and their civilizations are the oldest one. He finds out certain similarities of these countries. There are three important groups, viz., family, gotra and caste (Jati) in India; gens, curia and tribe in Rome; family, phratria and phyle in Greece. In fact; gotra is an exogamous group in India; gens in Rome and phratria in Greece which confined their marriages to their own groups²⁵. Even the Brahmins of India and the Patricians of Rome enjoyed the hypergamous rights of marriage. Woman after marriage can transfer her gotra to that of her husband's gotra in India; the same custom prevails in Rome also in confarratio. Even the hukka-pani band custom (ex-communication) of India can be compared with the 'interdict aquaet igni' custom in Rome²⁶ Senart also pointed out that just as Caste Panchayats exist in India and its head is an all-powerful man, in Rome and Greece, in addition, there are similar councils with similar powers. He said based on the foregoing discussions that caste is the normal development of ancient Aryan institutions. But this theory failed to explain the origin of the caste system. Senart highlighted the fact that caste system did not exist in the Vedic age. He clearly noted in the preface of his book (1930, xiv) that there is no allusion to caste in the Vedic hymns; it did not exist, therefore, in the period when these were composed. He noted that the beginning of the caste system is

shown in the literature of the Brahmanas²⁷. According to Dahlman, the origin of caste cannot be explained only in terms of religious elements. Such a complex institution must be the result of multiple forces and it has been confused with gotra²⁸. Therefore, the foregoing discussions regarding the origin of castes may be concluded mentioning the multi-dimensional approach such as racial differentiation, occupational distinctiveness, the monopolistic priesthood of Brahmins, socio-religious ideas of ceremonial purity, pollution etc. that were responsible for the creation of the caste institution in the Hindu society. The concept of ceremonial purity and pollution first applied to the Sudras in connection with sacrificial rituals and it was extended in the course of time to other groups as because theoretical impurity of certain occupations were responsible for the origin of the caste system in India. Besides, the lack of rigid control of the state over its subjects along with the unwillingness of the rulers to implement a uniform policy of law and order and creating uniform socio-political environment ultimately hastened the process of the formation of the origin of the caste system. Instead of bringing the divergent socio-religious and cultural elements less than one unified umbrella, the authority of different regions of the country fostered the varying norms and customs of different groups as valid. That is why, it can be noted that their tendency was to manage themselves somehow by recognizing the multi-dimensional varieties of different groups or communities to run their state. All these factors fostered the formation of castes based on petty distinctions.

Theory of Gandhian Caste Philosophy

Gandhi's thoughts and beliefs in Varnashrama Dharma, Caste system and Untouchability were completely based on the age-old atrocious traditions of the so-called Brahmanical Hindu religion. His attitudes towards the issues of Varnashrama Dharma and Caste system did not encourage the toiling masses in India. Gandhiji expressed his views and opinions on these issues in different writings and speeches. He pointed out that Varnashrama Dharma was an integral part of Hinduism. He identified himself as a 'Sanatanic Hindu' in all through his life and gave an explanation why he was called himself as a Sanatanic Hindu. He profoundly believed in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas and the Hindu scriptures. He advocated the theory of incarnation (avatars) and re-birth. Gandhiji said that he believed in the Varnashrama Dharma in the Vedic sense, not in its present, popular and crude sense.

He advocated the protection of the cow in its much larger sense than the popular. He did not disbelieve in idol worship. Naturally, he advocated Varnashrama Dharma and Caste system. He believed in the hereditary birth circle of man. He advocated hereditary Varna system and pointed out that Varna of a man was determined by his birth. Not only that but also the occupation of a particular Varna was decided by the principle of hereditary professions of his ancestors. He coined the term Harijan to define untouchables. Even Gandhiji was completely unwilling politically to attack Caste Institution. His attitudes towards the issues of Caste and untouchability were very much discouraging and self-contradictory. He said that inter-dinning and inter-marriage were matters of individual choice. In spite of his unwillingness, Gandhiji was forced to allow untouchables to enter Hindu Temples²⁹. Gandhiji discouraged the inclusion of Mr. Agnibhoj who was an untouchable in the Ministry of Dr. Khare. But Dr. Khare clearly noted the attitudes of Gandhiji on these issues and pointed out that 'Mr. Gandhi told him that it was wrong on his part to have raised such aspirations and ambitions in the untouchables and it was such an act of bad judgment that he would never forgive him'³⁰. Not only that but also Gandhiji noted the untouchable's problem as the moral stigma that would to be removed by the acts of atonements whereas Ambedkar gave importance to implement the rule of law and constitutional safeguards in protecting the interest of the lowborn peoples. But the Congress wanted to coerce the British Government to transfer its power or to use Gandhi's phrase i.e., hand over the keys to the Congress without being obliged to agree to the safeguards demanded by the untouchables. He identified the untouchable problems as political problem that were a separate element in the national life of India. He profoundly realized the anti-social attitudes of the Hindus towards the issues of the untouchables. It created socio-mental discrimination as a principle of touch-me-not-ism. Once Gandhiji said that he was busy in planning a campaign to win Swaraj and that he had no time to spare for the cause of the untouchables³¹. But Gandhiji changed his attitudes later on towards the issues of the untouchables and propagated untouchability as an evil in the Indian social life. Realizing the ill-fated conditions of the untouchables Gandhiji decided to sacrifice most of his life span to emancipate the untouchables. But Gandhiji did not come forward to implement the historic Bardoli Programme to reform and remove the curse of the untouchable community. But it was irony of fate that Gandhiji never used the weapon of Satyagraha against the so-called Hindus to get them to throw open wells, ponds and temples to the untouchables. He

took initiative to establish Harijan Sevak Sangh and launched Temple Entry Movement in 1933. However, it was very much astonishing to note the fact that Gandhiji excluded the untouchables from the management of the Harijan Sevak Sangh³². He said that any attempt to give political safeguards to the untouchables was unnecessary and harmful³³. But the results of 1937 Election conclusively disproved Gandhiji as well as the Congress claim to represent the untouchables. In course of time, he demanded the abolition of untouchability but favoured Caste system in perpetuity. Naturally, Gandhiji came forward to establish schools, hostels for the untouchable children. He urged to the Hindus to open their ponds, tube wells, roads, temples etc. for the benefits of the Harijans. In these ways, Gandhiji tried to establish 'social justice' for the Harijans. However; Gandhiji stressed on political reform rather than social reform. But Ambedkar was identified as a symbol of social justice. He was a great champion of the Dalit movement in India. His human approach towards the issue of caste and untouchability stirred the very foundations of the Hindu caste system and untouchability. His ceaseless struggles for the establishment of the Dalit human rights in India were an epoch making event in the history of India. The ideas and thoughts of Ambedkar towards the issue of caste and untouchability were completely based on the principle of scientific reasons, liberty, equality, fraternity and after all nationality. He vehemently opposed to the inhuman mechanism of the caste institution and untouchability. Ambedkar expressed his views on the issues of caste and untouchability in a different angle that were reflected in his different following writings and speeches, such as, Caste in India, Annihilation of Caste, Who were the Sudras? Mr. Gandhi and the emancipation of the untouchables etc. According to him, Varnashrama Dharma was itself the source of the productive mechanism of the Caste system and untouchability that was unscientific and irrational that had no far-reaching consequences. He strongly demanded to reform the Hindu society. He knew it very well that it was completely impossible without the eradication of the Hindu caste system as it artificially fostered and created hindrance to social solidarity. That is why; Ambedkar advocated the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity in consonance with the ideology of democracy to set up a new social order. According to Ambedkar, superimposition of endogamy over exogamy was the root cause for the formation of Caste groups. The sub-division of a society was a natural phenomenon and these groups became castes through ex-communication. Caste was not based on the division of labour. It was basically a division of labourers. He proposed to

annihilate caste system. He said that inter-caste marriage would only play a vital role to reduce and solve the caste problems. He emphasized on scientific knowledge, test of reasoning, logistic argument for the betterment of the human conditions. He encouraged the common people to discard the age-old irrational, illogical, inhuman verdict of the so-called Shastras and its prescribed socio-religious customs that were working as the root of creating and maintaining castes and untouchability in the Hindu society. He gave a very important suggestion to 'make every man and women free from the thrall of the Shastras, cleanse their minds of the pernicious notions founded on the Shastras and he or she will inter-dine and intermarry^{34.}' Ambedkar expressed his grievances regarding the issues of caste and untouchability and noted a fact that society must be based on reason, not on age-old atrocious traditions of the caste system as nation building process would not be completed within the caste dominated society. Not only that but also untouchability emerged from the caste rules and regulations that created an unequal society in India where human beings lived in fear and with a sense of impending danger in its heart. He said that neither God nor soul can save the society. He liked to utilize religion only to establish peace and tranquility in the society not to bring down the conditions of the common people into the inhuman position of animal or beasts that was done by the so-called Brahmins. He said that society should play a vital role as a protector of religion not as a victimized object of it. But it can not be denied that the idea of pollution was an important feature of the Caste system as it had a religious flavour and in course of time untouchability became a mental disease in the Hindu social mind. Even all channels of life were rigidly enclosed in caste. Apart from these, the verdict of the caste rules relating to inter-marriage, inter-dining and endogamy restricted the class into an enclosed caste. In fact, the custom of Sati, enforced widowhood, imposing celibacy on the widower and wedding him to a girl not yet marriageable etc. were the outcome for the preservation of endogamy against exogamy in the Caste system. He believed in social democracy. He fought for the sake of humanity. He stressed on social reform rather than political reform. He said that socialists would have to fight against the monster of Caste institution either before or after the revolution.

5.2 The Ideas and Views of Gandhiji towards the Issue of Caste

The ideas and views of Gandhiji were fully elaborated in 1921-22 in a Gujarathi Journal called Nava-Jivan. Gandhiji expressed his views on the-then main social problems in India as like the Caste system, Untouchability and others in this Journal. He said that he profoundly believed in the Caste system, Varnashrama Dharma and the theory of incarnation. According to him, Hindu Society had been able to stand due to the foundation of the Caste system; otherwise, the base of the Indian society would not be made on granite basis. Apart from this, he said that the seeds of Swaraj were to be found in the Caste system. He said that different Castes were like different sections of military division. Each division was working for the good of the whole. A community, which could create the Caste system, must be said to possess unique power of organization. Gandhiji said that Caste had its own mechanism for spreading primary education. It could take the responsibility for the education of the children of its own caste. Apart from these, he pointed out that Caste had a political basis that could work as an electorate for a representative body. He also said that Caste could play a vital role in judicial matters by electing persons to act as judges to decide disputes among members of the same Caste. It could create a defence force to fulfill the necessity of security. Even each Caste could raise a brigade for the same. Gandhiji said that inter-dining and inter-marriage were not required for promoting national unity. Friendship of dining together did not always create solidarity. He said that the act of taking food must be done in seclusion. In fact, he did not advocate inter-dining and inter-marriage. He cited the examples of the Orthodox Vaishnava women who did not eat with the members of the family and even did not drink water from a common water pot. Therefore, he raised a question that had they no love for their family members. Apart from these, Gandhiji pointed out that Caste system could not be identified as bad due to the prohibition of inter-dining and inter-marriage between different Castes. He also noted the fact that Caste was another name for control. It could fix up the limits on enjoyment. It did not give permission to a person to cross caste limits for his enjoyment. That is why; the essence of the prohibition of inter-dining and inter-marriage between different castes was very important in this connection. Gandhiji said that the Hindu should not must give up the principle of hereditary profession that was the soul of the Caste system. According to him,

hereditary principle was an eternal principle. So it should not be changed, otherwise, it might create disorder. He was completely opposite to the direction of the Guna-Karma theory. This notion can be proved by his following comments:

“I have no use for a Brahmin if I cannot call him a Brahmin for my life. It will be a chaos if everyday a Brahmin is to be changed into a Sudra and a Sudra is to be changed into a Brahmin”.³⁵

Therefore, it can be said that Gandhiji did not like to change the caste position of a person in the society by following the norms of the virtuous deeds and pious actions by which a person could change his previous caste position. Instead of giving importance to the essence of the theory of ‘Chaturvarna’, Gandhiji preached that caste system was a natural order of the Hindu society. It had been given a religious coating in India. Other countries did not realize the importance of the Caste system and were deprived for getting advantage from the Caste system. But India had been enjoying numerous advantages since the beginning from the Caste system. Gandhiji vehemently opposed to all those who were eager to destroy the Caste system. Therefore, it can be said that Gandhiji was a great upholder and preacher of the Caste system. He played a vital role as a great defender of the Caste system in 1922. He expressed a critical view on the issue of the Caste system on 3 February 1925. Gandhiji said that he supported the Caste system as it meant restraint. But at present it did not mean restrain, it meant limitations. To him, restraint was glorious and paved the way to achieve freedom. But limitations meant chain that binded within the circle. There was nothing commendable in castes, as they existed today. They were contrary to the tenets of the Shastras. There was infinitive number of castes. There was a bar against inter-marriage in the Caste system. It was not a condition of elevation. This was a state of fall. That is why; Gandhiji gave a way out to solve this problem. He pointed out that ‘the best remedy is that small castes should fuse themselves into one big caste. There should be four such big castes so that we may reproduce the old system of four Varnas’³⁶. Apart from these, Gandhiji was a great upholder of the Varna system. The old Varna system divided the ancient Indian society into four Varnas; viz. Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra. The main occupation of the Brahmins was teaching, learning, and worshipping. But the profession of the Kshatriyas was warfare. In fact, the trading was the occupation of the Vaishyas

whereas the main duty of the Sudras was to serve the other classes. Gandhiji wrote a book in Gujarathi on 'Varna Vayavastha' and explained his Varna system in the following manner:

Firstly, Gandhiji pointed out that he believed that the divisions into Varna were based on birth.

Secondly, there was nothing in the Varna system that would create obstacles for the Sudras to acquiring learning or studying military art of offence or defence. On the other side, a Kshatriya could serve. There was no bar for him in the Varna system. But it was mentioned in his Varna system that a Sudra would not make learning a way of earning a living. Even a Kshatriya would not adopt service as a way of earning a living. In the same way, a Brahmin could learn the art of war or trade and business. But a Brahmin could not make them a way of earning his living. Even a Vaishya could acquire learning or cultivating the art of war, but he could not must make them a way of earning his living.

Thirdly, the Varna system of Gandhiji was connected with the way of earning a living. A person who belonged to a particular Varna could acquire the knowledge of science or arts to become specialized in any subject that belonged to the other Varnas. There was no bar in his Varna system for any person to acquire knowledge on any subjects of the four Varnas. But a person must follow the profession of the Varna to which he belonged so far as the way of earning his living was concerned. It was nothing but a dictated prescription for a person in the Varna system of Gandhiji to follow the hereditary professions of his ancestors.

Fourthly, Gandhiji pointed out that the object of his Varna system was to prevent competition, class struggle and class war. He said that this Varna system fixed up the duties and professions of a person.

Fifthly, Gandhiji noted the fact that Varna meant the determination of a man's profession before he was born.

Sixthly, he clearly pointed out that a man had no liberty to choose his profession in this Varna system. His profession was determined for him by hereditary³⁷.

That is why; Ambedkar criticized the Gandhian Varna model or Caste model. Gandhian Varna model or Caste model was not based on the principle of democracy. It was completely against the principles of democracy. His arguments on these issues were completely based on irrational and impractical point of view. The first three arguments of Gandhiji were completely unscientific and irrational. According to Rousseau, 'Man is born free but everywhere he is in chain.' The Hindus bound the fourfold divisions of the society to bring under the rigid rules of chains to gauge the voice of the common people. They survived not due the existence of caste but by the conquest of the foreign invaders who did not find it necessary to kill them wholesale. The Hindus were defeated several times by the foreigners due to the lack of solidarity, mobility and unity among themselves. The chaotic condition of the Hindus was accelerated due entirely to the existence of the Caste system. They survived not by fighting but by abject surrender. They failed to organize themselves unitedly to launch a rebellion against the foreign yoke. They were bound to come under the foreign rule as slave. Naturally, they were compelled to accustom with the foreign slavery. It was happened due the existence of the Caste system. Ambedkar vehemently opposed to the way of spreading primary education and judicial judgments relating to different disputes on the line of the Gandhian social philosophy. He said that Caste was not the sole instrument to solve these problems. It was nothing but a worst method of dealing these burning issues. The notion of raising caste based military units was really utopian and fantastic. This was impossible and unthinkable due to the existence of the hereditary occupational theory. Even Gandhiji knew it very well that not a single caste based military unit in his Province of Gujarat had ever formed. It was not possible in the dynamic world. A general mobilization of the people for defence was impossible, as it required a general liquidation of the occupational theory underlying the caste system. The fifth and sixth argument of Gandhiji was totally wrong as per the content of the Vedic literature. Every member of an ideal family was filled up with love and affection although there was no system of inter-marriage among members of a family. But it did not prove that inter-dining and inter-marrying were not required to establish fraternity. Both these factors were absolutely essential in the Hindu society. But Caste system did not advocate these

notions. Naturally, inter-caste dinner and inter-caste marriage were necessary, as there were no other means of communication for binding the different castes together while in the case of a family there existed other forces to bind them together. But Gandhiji failed to realize its absolute value. So he noted inter-dining as bad, although it was capable of producing good results for the Hindu society. He was a great defender of the Caste system. Ambedkar noted him as 'a deep-dyed Hindu' and said, 'Save us from Mr. Gandhi'. Gandhian social philosophy in terms of caste was not worth much for building up moral strength. A man could not satisfy his desire for a woman who was not of his caste. It was severely followed by the caste rules. Not only that but also caste system forbade a man to take food cooked in the house of a man who was not of his caste. Actually, liberties of man and woman were wrecked in Hinduism to gauge the voice of the common people by the mechanistic way of the Caste system. But it did not forbid a man who married hundred women and kept hundred prostitutes within the ambit of his caste. Even it did not prohibit him from indulging in his appetite with his caste men to any degree. Therefore, Ambedkar criticized Gandhi's hereditary occupational theory of Caste. It did not left to the choice of an individual. The class labels were quite unnecessary and could well be eradicated altogether without causing difficulty. A person's class was known only to the service he offered to the society. But Gandhiji made the hereditary occupational theory of Caste compulsory as well as official doctrine. It was quite harmful for the society. A Brahmin sold shoes. Nobody was disturbed because he was not called Chamar. A Chamar became an officer of the State. Nobody was disturbed because he was not called a Brahmin. The whole argument was based on a misunderstanding. Another argument of Gandhiji was that Caste system was a natural system. But it was historically false. Ambedkar said that Manu Smriti showed the Caste system was a legal system maintained at the point of a bayonet. It survived due to the prevention of the peoples from the possession of arms; denying to the peoples the right to education and depriving the peoples of the right to property. Therefore, it was nothing but an imposition by the ruling classes upon the servile classes. Gandhism was opposed to democracy, as there was no difference between the basic notion of his Varna system and the Caste system. The idea of Varna was the parent of the idea of Caste. Both these ideas were evil ideas. It matters very little whether a person believed in Varna or in Caste. But the Buddhist did not believed in the Varna system and mercilessly attacked the idea of Varna whereas the Orthodox or Sanatan Vedic Hindus had no

rational defence to offer. They pointed out that Varna was founded on the authority of the Vedas. They demanded very strongly that the Vedas were infallible. So Varna was infallible. But this argument was not sure enough to save the Varna system against the rationalism of the Buddhist. This Varna idea was survived due to the philosophical foundation given to the Varna system by the Bhagvat Gita. It highlighted the fact that the Varna system was founded on the innate qualities of man. The Bhagvat Gita made use of the Sankhya philosophy to defend the Varna idea. It emphasized on innate qualities. Therefore, it can be noted that the Varna system of the Bhagvat Gita had at least two merits. Firstly, it did not say that Varna was based on birth. It said that man's Varna was fixed according to his innate qualities. Secondly, it made a special point that the profession of a person would be according to his innate qualities, not his ancestor's innate qualities. But Gandhiji gave a new interpretation regarding the Varna system. According to him, Varna was determined by birth and the occupation of a Varna was fixed up by the principle of heredity. Naturally, Varna was merely another name for Caste. Therefore, it can be said that Gandhiji was basically an orthodox man who made birth as the principle criteria of the Varna system brushing aside the doctrine of karma or virtuous deeds. Apart from these, the Hindu sacred law penalized the Sudras from acquiring wealth. It was nothing but a law of enforced poverty. This example was unknown in the world. But the role of Gandhiji towards this problem of the Sudras was very much interesting. He blessed them for their moral courage to give up property. He said that the Sudras served the higher castes as a matter of religious duty. They would never own any property. Even they had not the ambition to own anything. So they were deserving of thousand obeisances. That is why; the very Gods would shower down flowers on them. Gandhiji's attitude towards the scavenger was very much surprising and horrible. According to the sacred law of the Hindus, a scavenger's progeny shall live by scavenging. They were forced to do it. Gandhiji praised scavenging as the noblest service to the society with a motto to perpetuate it³⁸. He said that he might share their sorrows, sufferings and affronts imposed upon them and might try to liberate themselves from those miserable conditions. He loved scavenging. So he liked to reborn as a scavenger. Ambedkar criticized the role and attitude of Gandhiji in this context because he never encouraged the scavenger to give up their traditional, inhuman and exploiting works. Besides, Gandhiji did not advise the people at this juncture to work as scavenger for their own benefits as well as cleanliness. He praised

scavenging instead of encouraging the people do their work with a motto of fixing up this work for the untouchables. He preached that scavenging was good for the Untouchables and for none else and to make them accept these onerous impositions as voluntary purposes of life. Therefore, it can be said that Gandhiji did not fight for their rights so that they would get chance to choose their professions, as they liked. Even they did not adopt the career of lawyer, doctor or engineer. But he encouraged them to follow their hereditary professions. Not only that but also he was not against Varna system. His Varna system was nothing but a new name for the Caste system that retained all the worst features of it. Gandhiji had killed two birds with one stone by calling the Untouchables as Harijans. To him, assimilation of the Untouchables by the Sudras was not possible. He counteracted assimilation by introducing a new name Harijan and made it impossible. They had no right to choose their profession under Gandhism. In fact, Gandhiji played a vital role to fulfill the law of caste. He remarked that caste was an anachronism³⁹. But he did not say that caste was an evil as well as anathema. Gandhiji changed his attitude later on towards the issues of caste, untouchability and others due to political compulsions and other numerous reasons. He delivered a speech in Sri Lanka in 1927 regarding the message of Goutam Buddha through Mohendra to this country and pointed out that it had also to accept the humiliation of having sent him the curse of caste distinctions⁴⁰. He noted before 1930s that caste that was the endogamous sociological category, of which there were hundreds, if not thousands, was “a handicap on progress”⁴¹ and “a social evil”⁴² and by the 1940s that it was “an anachronism”⁴³ which “must go”⁴⁴. He distinguished the Caste system from ‘Chaturvarna’, the scriptural fourfold Varna order of hereditary occupational divisions. But the critique overlooked this important matter. Gandhiji said that caste system was not observed in his own circle. He cited the example of his ashram in this context. He said that Varnavyavastha was not observed as well as executed from the beginning in the ashram due to the distinct position of the ashram from that of the society outside. Gandhiji declared in 1927 that he would not shed a tear if Varnavyavastha would go to the dogs in the removal of untouchability⁴⁵. His first salvo attack on Varnavyavastha in April 1933 was very important. His declaration based on some authoritative texts that Varna could not be perpetuated or determined only by birth. He said, “These and numerous other verses from the Shastras unmistakably show that mere birth counts for nothing.”⁴⁶ This was first time Gandhiji attacked Varna. It did not repudiate birth as a criterion for Varna.

Therefore, it can be said that Gandhiji changed his views on this issue. Gandhiji said in October 1933 before starting a tour that Jains must give stress on the fact that their religion knew no Varnashramadharma. Even they convinced the people by telling that the present day Varnashramadharma and untouchability had no place in Jainism. But Gandhiji could not accept this view. In 1935, Gandhiji described the restrictions on inter-marriage and inter-dining imposed in relation to the Varna system as “cruel.”⁴⁷ His position against the fourfold Varna system became more emphatic in 1945. He discarded some previous conceptions regarding the Varna system. The most important of them was the abolition of the hereditary occupations of the Varna system. Once he said, “Castes must go if we want to root out untouchability.”⁴⁸ Although he thought that untouchability could be fought separately from caste and the fourfold Varna system. Now he veered round to Ambedkar’s line on this question. He was self-contradictory on these issues from time to time. In the later phase of his political activities, Gandhiji was very much influenced by the concept of one Varna. He asked the caste Hindus to become Ati-Sudras not merely in name but in thought, word and deed⁴⁹. Gandhiji advised the caste Hindus without any hesitation that ‘today they have all to become Ati-Sudras, if the canker of caste feeling is to be eradicated from Hinduism and Hinduism was not to perish from the face of the earth’⁵⁰. Not only that but also he pointed out that the distinctions between Harijans and caste Hindus would automatically disappear if the caste Hindus would become bhangis of their own will and various divisions and distinctions between them would go. In July 1946, Gandhiji encouraged marriages between dalits and others. He left the conceptual category of Varna implied in the Gita, both of its sociological implication and of its original connotation of fixed classes of humanity determined by birth and distinguished by four categories of occupations. He played a vital role in February 1947 to take measures for removing the foundation of the edifice of Varna distinctions and pointed out that ‘Caste must go if Hinduism is to survive’. He also noted the fact that monopoly of occupations would go when all became casteless. He wrote a letter in May 1947 where he mentioned that Goutam Buddha knew no caste and stood for perfect toleration. He pointed out that Caste ought to go root and branch when the stage had come where he found Caste was a serious hindrance for further progress and gave a proposal not only for inter-dining but also for inter-marriages as the means⁵¹.

5.3. The Ideas and Views of Ambedkar towards the Issue of Caste

Ambedkar was a symbol of revolt against all oppressive features of the Hindu society. He played a vital role to establish the concept of human rights as an emancipator that brought international recognition for him as a liberator of humanity from socio-economic injustice. He emerged as a constructive social reformer and legal philosopher in India. His social philosophy relating to caste may be discussed from his different writings and speeches. The most important among these research-oriented papers were 'Caste in India: Their mechanism, genesis and development', 'Annihilation of Caste' etc. His attitudes towards the issue of caste were clearly expressed in these writings. He took part in an International Anthropological Seminar of Dr. A. A. Goldenweizer at the Columbia University, New York, U.S.A. on 9 May 1916. He presented a paper in that Seminar on the topic of 'Caste in India: Their mechanism, genesis and development' to highlight the pernicious notion of caste and its evolution through ages. He vividly noted the mysteries of caste in a different manner and pointed out that it was theoretically and practically a critical institution in life and death. He said that if Caste exists in India, Hindus would hardly intermarry or have any social intercourse with outsiders. If Hindus migrate to other regions on earth, Indian caste would become a world problem⁵². Ambedkar made a commendable opinion on the issue of caste by criticizing the views and thoughts of well-known scholars like Senart, Nesfield, Risley and Ketkar who defined caste mentioned above in their own way. Ambedkar said that all these definitions on caste had missed the central point in the mechanism of the Caste system. None of these definitions was based on concrete, complete, or correct foundations by itself. They had done a grave mistake to define caste as an isolated unit by itself, not as a group within and with defined relations to the system of caste as a whole. All these definitions were collectively complementary to one another, each one emphasizing what had been obscured in the other. That is why; Ambedkar identified only those features common to all Castes in each of the above-mentioned definitions. He criticized the notion of Senart regarding pollution as a feature of Caste. According to him, the idea of pollution was a feature of Caste only in far as Caste had a religious flavour. It was generally originated in priestly ceremonialism to maintain purity. Priest and purity had old associates. Naturally, the relation of Caste with the idea of

pollution may be completely denied without destroying the work of Caste. Nesfield said that the growth of Caste was increased due to the non-observance of inter-dinning and inter-marring beyond the members of its class. He highlighted a new idea on the issue of Caste but had mistaken the effect for the cause. It was a self-enclosed unit and restricted social intercourse within its members. Risley made no new comments on the issue of Caste. Ketkar, a native scholar who defined Caste and paid due attention only those characteristics that were absolutely needed for the existence of a Caste system by excluding the all-secondary features of it. He emphasized on two important features of Caste, i. e. prohibition of inter-marriage and membership by autogeneity. However, it was nothing but the two aspects of the one and same thing. It was not at all two different things that noted by Ketkar. Actually, the prohibition of inter-marriage restricted the limited membership to those peoples who were born of within the group. Ambedkar clearly highlighted this fact and identified these two things as the obverse and reverse sides of the same medal. But Ambedkar asserted that endogamy was the only essence of caste that might be denied by some scholars on the basis of anthropological grounds. They may be cited the examples of the negroes, the whites and different tribal groups that were identified by the name of American Indians in the United States in viewing of the support of this view. But the case of India was quite different. The population of India was artificially divided into numerous fixed and definite units or Varnas or groups, each dividing group was abstained from fusing into another through the norms of endogamy. Therefore, endogamy was the only peculiar feature to Caste. That is why; Ambedkar tried to explain the gravity of endogamy to prove the genesis and the mechanism of Caste. He identified endogamy as the key to the mystery of the institution of Caste. He said that 'the superposition of endogamy on exogamy means the creation of caste so far as India is concern'.⁵³ He clearly narrated the norms of exogamy and explained how exogamy was losing its efficacy with the advance of history. Only marriage was not held among the nearest blood kins. Matrimonial alliance was completely based on the principles of exogamy. Therefore, it can be said that Sapindas (blood kins) could not marry and a marriage even between the Sagotras (same class) was identified as a sacrilege. But the concept of endogamy was basically an imported custom to the people of India. Actually, exogamous was prevailed among the different Gotras in India. Even the totemic organization was connected with this social custom and it (exogamous) ultimately became a creed. In spite of the endogamy in the Caste system

within the group, nobody could deny its entity. But it was very important to note the fact that more rigorous penalties were implemented against them who was violating the norms of exogamy rather than endogamy. In fact, exogamy meant fusion and there could be no Caste if exogamy was existed as a rule of marriage. Therefore, it can be said that the creation of Caste meant the superposition of endogamy on exogamy as far as India was concerned. However, the introduction of the endogamy was creating big problems in the exogamous population of India. Naturally, we can find out the genesis, growth and development of the Caste problems in keeping and executing the preservation of endogamy against exogamy. In fact, the superposition of endogamy on exogamy had hastened the process of the creation of the Caste system. It can be noted that exogamous was the rule of all matrimonial relations before the introduction of endogamy. It was a normal trend to all groups for making a close contact with one another to assimilate, amalgamate and consolidate into a homogeneous society. That is why; it was inevitable to make a dividing line between endogamy and exogamy for creating the Institution of Caste. Naturally, the person of India was compelled to follow the norms of Caste in respect of marriage. Therefore, it was not an easy task to solve the problems of Caste, which emerged from the prohibition of inter-caste marriage. Even artificial restrictions were severely imposed on marriages of two opposite sexes within the same groups. The motto of which was to form a Caste. That is why; it was inevitable to keep a numerical equality between the marriageable units of the two opposite sexes within the same groups to make itself into a Caste. This was the only way through which an equality of such group could be kept intact in respect of endogamy; otherwise, a very large disparity was sure to break it. Therefore, the problem of Caste then ultimately centered itself into one of abolishing disparity between the two opposite sexes of marriageable units within the groups. Much parity between these two units could be realized only when a couple died at a time. It may be happened in rare case. If husband was died before wife, woman must became surplus in the society. That is why; an arrangement was made of disposing this surplus woman either through inter-marriage or she violates the norms of endogamy of the group. In the same manner, if husband survived after the death of his wife, either he might be surplus whom the group had to dispose of through the arrangement of re-marriage within the group or he had an chance to marry outside the Caste that might bring down the norms of endogamy. Naturally, both the surplus man and surplus woman created a threat to the Institution of Caste if

they were not taken care of for finding suitable partners inside their prescribed norms, otherwise they would transgress the boundary, marry outside their norms and gave birth to the offspring beyond the Caste circle. Ambedkar proposed a scheme to dispose of surplus woman in two different members to preserve the endogamy of the Caste. He criticized the norms that were applied to preserve the endogamy of the Caste by the so-called Hindu Sastras to solve the problems of the surplus women in the society. All sorts of arrangements were made by the Hindu Sastras to burn a woman on the funeral pyre of her deceased husband. This custom did not take responsibility to a deceased woman on the part of the society. Therefore, it can be said that it was nothing but a cruel, inhuman and impracticable method to solve the problem of sex disparity. Naturally, it was not fruitful in all the cases. In fact, the surplus woman (= widow) if not disposed of remained in the group, the existence of whom might be created a double danger. She had a chance to marry outside the Caste by violating the norms of endogamy or she had an option to marry within the same group of Caste. Naturally, a widow could take part in competition for re-marriage that must be reserved for the potential brides in the Caste. The existence of widow might create a menace in any case and same thing must be done to her if she would not be barred with her deceased husband. The second remedy was to enforce widowhood to a deceased woman. Ambedkar pointed out that the best solution was to burn a widow than to enforce widowhood of a deceased woman as it eliminated all the three evils; viz. , it did not create the problem of re-marriage either inside or outside the Caste. It was more practicable to enforce compulsory widowhood than to burn a deceased woman. But it was very difficult to keep in tact the morals of the group. Woman could live without doubt in widowhood but it deprived her natural right of being a legitimate wife in future that increased immoral conduct. In this way, the position and condition of a woman was brought down into the extreme ill-fated condition that did not compel her to work as a source of allurements. But the problem of surplus widower was more important and difficult than that of surplus woman in a group to make itself into a Caste. It was well known to all that man had upper hand in comparison to woman as he enjoyed a dominant position in every group. They enjoyed traditional superiority to woman. Naturally, women were forced to be victimized in all kinds of iniquitous injunctions, religious, social and economic. Therefore, the problem of surplus woman and surplus man were quite different into a Caste Institution. But the custom of burning a widower or a man with his deceased

wife was very difficult in two perspectives; firstly, it could not be done simply as he was a man. Secondly; if done caste would lose its supporters who were the asset to their groups. Ambedkar said that there remained then only two solutions that could be easily disposed of him. The role of man was very important to the group but endogamy was still more important than man was. Even the solution must be assured both these ends. Under these circumstances, he might be forced or convinced by social norms to remain as a widower for the rest of his life. This solution was not altogether much difficult as it was the general tendency of some persons to enjoy self-imposed celibacy or renounce the world and its joys. Therefore, this solution completely based on human nature that could hardly be expected to be realized. If the surplus man remained in the group as an active participator in the group activities, he must be a danger to the morals of the group. However, it failed both theoretically and practically to impose celibacy on the surplus man in the group. It was better to keep the surplus man as a Grahastha to protect the interest of the Caste. The problem was to provide a wife only by recruiting a bride from the ranks of those not yet marriageable in order to tie him down to the group. It was practically very difficult to trace out marriageable women within the groups due to their shortcomings. Naturally, it can be said that the best possible solution of this problem was to arrange a marriage between a widower and a woman of a very lower age. The numerical disparity between the two sexes were maintained under the following four principles, firstly; burning the widow with her deceased husband; secondly, compulsory widowhood – a milder form of burning; thirdly, imposing celibacy on the widower and fourthly; wedding him to a girl not yet marriageable. However, the policy of burning the widow and imposing celibacy on the widower were doubtful to preserve endogamy. All the above-mentioned policies practically operated to protect Caste Institution. Some scholars pointed out that Caste and endogamy was one and the same thing. Ambedkar analyzed the general mechanism of a caste in this way in a system of castes. Naturally, we have to scrutinize the solution how the Hindus arrived at to meet the problems of the surplus man and surplus woman. Although it was complex, yet the Hindus presented the following three singular uxorial customs:

Firstly; Sati or the burning of the widow on the funeral pyre of her deceased husband.

Secondly; Enforced widowhood by which a widow was not permitted to re-marry.

Thirdly; Girl marriage.

Apart from these, it was generally observed to become Sannyasa among the widows. It was completely happened due to the psychic disposition. There was no scientific explanation given by the scholars even today regarding the origin of these customs. A number of philosophies were established to tell us why these customs were honoured but nothing to tell us the causes of their origin and existence. Ambedkar said that he did not know why compulsory widowhood was honoured. Even he did not find out any one who sang in praise of it though they adhered to it. He said that they were needed to create the structure of caste and the motto of its philosophies was to popularize them. That is why; he said that Sati, enforce widowhood and girl marriage were customs that were urgently needed to solve the problem of the surplus man and surplus woman in a caste and to protect its endogamy. However, endogamy could not be preserved without these customs and caste without endogamy was a fake. There raised a question about the genesis of caste after explaining the mechanism of the creation and preservation of Caste in India. Endogamy was the only characteristic of Caste and he said Origin of Caste meant The Origin of the Mechanism for Endogamy. A Caste was an Enclosed Class. That is why; we have to know what was the class that first made itself into a caste. Actually, caste and class were the next-door neighbours to each other and it was only a span that separated the two. All these customs were rigidly obtainable only in one caste, i. e., the Brahmins. They occupied the highest place in the social hierarchy of the Hindu society. Naturally, the strict observance of these customs and the social superiority arrogated by the priestly class in all ancient civilizations were sufficient to prove that they were the originators of this 'unnatural institution' founded and maintained through these unnatural means. Ambedkar explained how did the institution of caste spread among the rest of the non-Brahmin population of the country. He said that the two questions of spread and of origin of caste were not separated and different. Some scholars generally believed that the caste system was imposed upon the docile population of India by a lawgiver as a divine dispensation, or it had grown normally by some laws of social growth to the Indian people. According to the Western scholars, various castes were formed in India due to the occupation, survivals of tribal organizations, and the rise of new belief, crossbreeding and migration. Ambedkar said that all these factors were complementary to each other. Matthew Arnold identified them as 'the grand name without the grand thing in it.' Sir Denzil Ibbetson, Mr. Nesfield and H. Risley propagated some theories on Caste. According to Nesfield, 'function and function

only . . . was the foundation upon which the whole system of Castes in India was built up. Castes in India were functional or occupational that was a very poor discovery. He explained the process of transformation of an occupational group that turned into an occupational caste. Ambedkar noted that the Hindu society like the other societies was made of classes. These classes in India are identified as the priestly class (Brahmins), the military class (Kshatriya), the merchant class (Vaishya) and the artisan and menial class (Sudras). A qualified person could change his class in the class structure of the society. But the Brahmins socially detached themselves in the course of time from the rest of the Hindu population through the closed-door policy in the course of time that accelerated the process of the formation of caste by itself. The other classes being subject to the law of social division of labour underwent differentiation, some into large, others into very minute groups. The Vaishya and Sudra classes were the original inchoate plasma that made the genesis of the numerous castes of today. The sub-division of a society was quite natural in the open door policy of the class system. But they ultimately lost its open door character and became self-enclosed units and known as castes. It was generally said that they were bound to close their doors to become endogamous or they closed themselves by their own accord. Ambedkar specify the matter and pointed out that some closed the door and others found it closed against them. One was psychological interpretation whereas other was mechanistic. Both these explanation were complementary and necessary to explain the phenomena of caste-formation in its entity. Ambedkar gave psychological interpretation for the creation of these sub-divisions or classes and noted the name of the Brahmins who created the system of self-enclosed endogamy that ultimately became a fashion in the Hindu society. All the non-Brahmin classes ultimately transformed themselves into endogamous castes. They whole-heartedly imitated the self-enclosed and endogamous Brahmins. In fact, the infection of imitation upon the non-Brahmins played a vital role for the formation of Castes. According to Gabriel Tarde, there are three laws of imitation⁵⁴ as follows:

Firstly, imitation flows from the higher to the lower. If the nobility got opportunity, they tried to imitate always and everywhere its leaders and its kings, likewise the people intimated the nobility. Secondly, the intensity or extent of imitation varies inversely in proportion to distance. This law of the imitation of the nearest, of the least distant, explains the gradual and consecutive feature of the spread of an example

that has been set by the higher social ranks. Ambedkar asserted that caste was formed by imitation. There were two types of conditions for the imitation. First, the particular source of imitation must be prestigious in the group of the society. Secondly, there must be 'numerous and daily relations' among members of a group. There was little reason to doubt that these two conditions of imitation were present in India. However, it was irony of fate that the ignorant people imitated the inhuman, unnatural, unscientific social norms and verdict of the caste system without justifying and considering its real necessity, impartiality and goodness of humanity in the society that created by the so-called Brahmins. Actually, it was not possible for frail humanity. Thirdly, there was another important way to make out the mentality and attitude of non-Brahmin classes for their imitation towards those customs that hastened the process of the formation of the structure of caste in its nascent days until in the course of history; it became embedded in the Hindu mind. Only the status of a caste in the Hindu society varies directly with the extent of the observance of the customs of Sati, enforced widowhood and girl marriage. Naturally, the imitation theory of Gabriel Tarde has to be applicable relating to 'distance' model in the context of the caste formation in India. They have imitated with strict observance the above noted three customs those who are the nearest castes to the Brahmins. But the less nearest castes to the Brahmins have imitated the enforced widowhood and girl marriage; others, a little further off, have only girl marriage and those furthest off have imitated only the belief in the caste principle. Naturally, it can be said that the whole process of caste-formation in India is a process of imitation of the higher by the lower. The non-Brahmins imitated those social customs from one original caste, i. e., the Brahmins whose socio-religious status and position were very high and unquestionable in the-then society. They closed the door due to their weakness. As a result, others those who were closed out, were closed. This was nothing but the mechanistic process of the formation of caste. Some reputed scholars have identified caste as a unit, not as one within a system of caste. Ambedkar strongly asserted that caste in the singular number is impossible or an unreality. It exists only in the plural number. The Brahmins made themselves into a caste by creating non-Brahmin caste as closed out. If an X group willingly becomes endogamous, Y group has to be so by the constant pressures of inevitable circumstances. That is why; it can be noted that castes are enclosed units. It is then conspiracy with clear conscience that compels the excommunicated to make them into a Caste. The penalty of violating caste norms is

excommunication that gives birth to the formation of a new caste. Some unfortunate groups find themselves as enclosed whereas others are closed them out. In this process caste were creating in the so-called Hindu society. According to Dr.Ketkar, 'All the princes whether they belonged to the so-called Aryan race, or the so-called Dravidian race, were Aryas. Whether a tribe or a family was racially Aryan or Dravidian was a question, which never troubled the people of India, until foreign scholars came in and began to draw the line. The colour of the skin had long ceased to be a matter of importance'⁵⁵. Ambedkar scientifically explained the pros and cons of the future of the Hindu caste system and strongly uphold the view that it is almost impossible to be sustained caste as it rests on belief. He traced out the following four main points on the issues of Caste:

- a. There is a deep cultural unity in spite of the composite diversity of the Hindu population.*
- b. Caste is a parceling into bits of a larger cultural unit.*
- c. There was one caste to begin with.*
- d. Classes have become Castes through imitation and excommunication.*

Apart from these, Ambedkar was cordially invited to preside the Annual Conference of the Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal of Lahore in 1936. He was very much encouraged to know the honest purpose of the emerging intelligentsia those who were the vital members of that Conference. Most of the members of this Organization Committee were either social reformers or big political figures under the banner of the Indian National Congress. Their main motto was to reform the society. That is why; Ambedkar got opportunity for the first time to deliver a presidential speech in the Conference that was completely arranged mainly by the so-called high caste Hindus. He was repeatedly requested to prepare a fruitful speech on this occasion. Being interested as a Dalit leader, Ambedkar prepared a thought provoking research-oriented paper on 'Annihilation of Caste'. He did hard work and cherished a dream to reform the Hindu society. He came forward to help them in connection with social reform. But the content of his presidential speech was completely unbearable to the leaders of the Conference of the Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal. So he could not get chance to deliver a lecture on the issue of the 'Annihilation of Caste' due to the sudden cancellation of this Conference. He was very shocked by this incident and ultimately he made necessary arrangement to publish his presidential speech in different languages. As a result, it was published in the title of 'Annihilation of Caste' by his

own initiative in different languages as like, English, Gujarati, Tamil, Marathi, Punjabi, Malayalam, and Hindi that stirred the very mind set up of the upper caste Hindus. He raised different questions relating to caste and expressed his views and thoughts to solve the question of caste. He noted the ill-fated age-old socio-religious conditions of the ill-fated low caste peoples in India. He stressed on the annihilation of caste in India due to uplift their basic conditions, civic demands and urged for the protection of their human rights in all sphere of their individual as well as national life. He explained the role of the social reformers and criticized their caste interest that kept in tact the norms of the caste institution. They came forward to reform the Hindu society only in the context of Sati or the burning of the widow on the funeral pyre of her deceased husband, enforced widowhood by which a widow was not permitted to re-marry and Girl marriage. Naturally, they did not deal at all until that date with the question of the 'Annihilation of Caste'. He knew it very well that the Brahmins were authorized by the Shastras to act as a Guru for the three Varnas. Even the learned Antyaja had no rights to act as a Guru. That is why; he was very much surprised to know the daring decisions of the Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal for selecting him as a President of that Conference by violating the Shastric injunction in selecting the President. He had no intention to ascend the platform of the Hindus on the issues of castes and social reforms. He expressed his views on those issues from his own platform. However, he agreed to attend that Conference for the sake of humanity, social reforms and benefit of the toiling masses in India. Most of the social reformers in India were belonged either to the upper caste political-minded groups or to religiously orthodox-minded groups. Naturally, the question of social reform was remained unsolved in the Hindu society. Ambedkar urged for the abolition of caste and explained critically and scientifically the nature of religion and politics on the issue of social reforms specially relating to caste. He put the following questions to the members of the Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal:

- i. *How to bring about the reform of the Hindu social order?*
- ii. *How to abolish Caste?*
- iii. *Is your prescription the right prescription for the disease?*
- iv. *Why a large majority of Hindus does not inter-dine and do not inter-marry?*
- v. *Why is it that your cause is not popular?*

Ambedkar criticized the role and attitude of the Political Reform Party of the Indian National Congress. It was completely engaged to remove political weakness whereas Social Reform Party was very much busy to remove social evils that were imposed by age-old religious traditions, which wrecked the civil rights and privileges of the low caste peoples in India. They urged for social reforms before political reforms whereas the Political Reform Party encouraged for political reforms as on urgent basis before the social reforms. Congress and its leaders supported the works of the Political Reform Party. Naturally, the Social Reform Party became weak and began to work under the banner of the Social Conference. Therefore, it was irony of fate that most of the educated Hindus came forward for political reforms without considering the basic needs and demands of the ill-fated low caste peoples. He criticized the views of W.C.Banerjee on the issues of social reforms who delivered his speech on those issues as a President in the eight Annual Conference of the Indian National Congress in 1892. He raised a question about the views expressed by Mr. Banerjee in that Conference. Mr. Banerjee said that he had no patience with those who said that they should not be fit for political reform until they reform their social system. He did not find out any connection between the two. He said that their widows remained unmarried; their girls were given marriage earlier than in other countries; their wives and daughters could not accompany them at their friend's house; they did not send their daughters to Oxford and Cambridge etc. It seemed to him that these would not be the causes of their backwardness for political reforms. Ambedkar told those who believed in the importance of social reform to ask, 'Was the argument of Mr. Banerjee on the issues of social reforms final? Did it prove that the victory went those who were in the right? Did it prove conclusively that social reform had no bearing on political reform? Ambedkar noted other facts to make out the gravity and importance of the social reforms. He realized the essence of social reforms. That is why; he indirectly challenged the arguments of Mr. Banerjee on the issues of social reforms by putting an example of burning social issues relating to the case of the untouchables in Maratha. Ambedkar mentioned the ill-fated social conditions in different regions of the untouchables. He especially cited the example of the untouchables in Maratha who were forcefully bound to follow the following social norms during the reign of the Peshwas in Maratha:

“The untouchables were not allowed to use the public streets when the Hindus traveled in the street. Their shadow was treated as impure or pollute. So they were strictly prohibited to travel in the roads due to keep in tact the purity of the Hindus. They had to wear black thread either on his wrist or in his neck as a sign or a mark. It was severely maintained by them due to protect the Hindus from getting themselves polluted by their touch through mistake. They had to keep a sweep in their waist (komor) to clean the roads used by them in Poona, the capital of the Peshwa. It was done due to safe from impurity in the journey of the Hindus in the same route. They had to carry an earthen pot in Poona by hanging in their neck wherever they went for holding their spit. It was strictly followed, as their spit on earth should pollute the Hindus who might unknowingly happen to walk on it⁵⁶. Besides, Ambedkar cited the example of the Balais, an untouchable community in Central India who were tyrannized and oppressed by the Hindus. The high caste Hindus introduced severe rules for the Balais. All the high caste Hindus (Kalotas, Rajputs, Brahmins, Patels and Patwaris) of different villages of Kanaria, Bicholi-Hafsi, Bicholi-Mardana and almost 15 other villages in the Indore district asked the Balais of their respective villages to give confirmation for their following 8th prescribed norms if they liked to live among them :

1. *Balais must not wear gold-lace-bordered Pugrees.*
2. *They must not wear dhotis with coloured or fancy borders.*
3. *They must convey intimation of the death of any Hindu to relatives of the deceased – no matter how far away these relatives may be living.*
4. *In all Hindu marriages, Balais must play music before the processions and during the marriage.*
5. *Balai women must not wear gold or silver ornaments; they must not wear fancy gowns or jackets.*
6. *Balai women must attend all cases of confinement of Hindu women.*
7. *Balais must render services without demanding remuneration and must accept whatever a Hindu is pleased to give.*
8. *If the Balais do not agree to abide by these terms they must clear out of the villages.*⁵⁷

But the Balais refused to follow their prescribed rules. As a result, the high caste Hindus became cruel and angry with them. So the Balais were prohibited to take water from the village wells and let go their cattle to graze. It was declared that they would not go to their land through the land owned by a Hindu. Even the Hindus used

the Balais land for cattle grazing. So the Balais submitted petitions to the Darbar against these inhuman measures of the high caste Hindus. But they could not get help against these continuous oppressions in time. Naturally, the Balais were compelled to abandon their ancestral homeland with their wives and children and migrated to adjoining States, namely, to villages in Dhar, Dewas, Bagli, Gwalior etc.

Apart from these, Ambedkar cited another example of the Kavitha in Gujarata. The upper caste Hindus in Kavitha ordered the untouchables not to send their children to the common village school that maintained by the Government. They assaulted even the untouchable women who used the metal pots at Zanu village of Ahmedabad district in Gujarat. An untouchable of Chakwara in Jaipur State arranged to give a dinner to his fellow untouchables of the village as an act of religious piety. But the Hindus came there with lathis and assaulted the host and the guests to serve ghee (butter) in occasion. After putting these examples, Ambedkar reminded the dogma of Mill to the Congressmen that 'one country is not fit to rule another country must admit that one class is not fit to rule another class'. That is why, Ambedkar raised a question whether the Hindus were fit for political powers or not. The Hindus did not like to allow the untouchables, a large class of the society to use public schools, public wells and public streets. They did not permit them to take any food as they like. Even the untouchable women could not use precious ornaments. Naturally, how did the Hindus expect to rule the countrymen who liked to wreck the civil rights and privileges of the low caste people in India? No caste is fit to rule another caste. Both are equally complementary. Therefore, they have to rule the countrymen with mutual understanding and honourable conditions. The Social Reform Party fought for the abolition of the caste system along with other social evils whereas the Political Reform Party mainly dealt with the problems of the widow re-marriage, Sati system, child marriage etc. Most of the enlightened Hindus were the active supporters of the Political Reform Party who did not feel the necessity for agitating for the abolition of the Caste system. They had not any courage to move against it. But Social Reform Party felt the necessity of the reorganization and the reconstruction of the Hindu Society. Naturally, the enlightened people of India did not put the break-up of the Caste System as an agenda in their social reforms policy. That is why, Social Reform Party lost its importance. But Ambedkar clearly noted the fact that political reform can not precede social reform in the sense of reconstruction of society. Ferdinand

Lassalle, a friend and co-worker of Karl Marx pointed out that the makers of political constitutions must take account of social forces. He said before the Prussian audience in 1862, "The constitutional questions are in the first instance not questions of right but questions of might. The actual constitution of a country has its existence only in the actual condition of force which exists in the country: hence political constitutions have value and permanence only when they accurately express those conditions of forces which exist in practice within a society."⁵⁸ Apart from these, Ambedkar cited the example of the 'Communal Award' in British India. According to him, the significance of it lies in the fact that political constitution must take note of social organization. The politicians who denied the gravity of the social problem in India were bound to reckon with the social problem in devising the constitution. In fact, the 'Communal Award' was so to say the nemesis following upon the indifference and neglect of social reform. He also noted the instance of Ireland. Mr. Redmond tried to make negotiation between the representatives of Ulster and Southern Ireland due to bring Ulster in a Home Rule Constitution common to the whole of Ireland and said to the representatives of Ulster, "Ask any political safeguards you like and you shall have them". They replied, "Damn your safeguards, we don't want to be ruled by you on any terms."⁵⁹ That is why; the emerging intelligentsia of India who blamed the minorities in India ought to consider what would have happened to the political aspirations of the majority if the minorities had taken the attitude, which Ulster took. The Ulster took this attitude because there was a social problem between Ulster and Southern Ireland the problem between Catholics and Protestants, essentially a problem of Caste. There was a social problem of Caste between Catholics and Protestants that prevented the solution of the political problem. Ambedkar also cited the example of Rome to realize the gravity of social reform. He said that there was a strong similarity about the content of the 'Communal Award' and the essence of the Republican Constitution of Rome. The kingly power was divided between the Consuls and the Pontifex Maximus after the abolition of kingship in Rome. The secular authority of the king was given to the Consuls, while the religious authority of the king was given to the latter. Under this Republican Constitution, there was a provision to provide two Consuls, one Consul from Patrician and other from Plebian. This Constitution had also provided that, of the Priests under the Pontifex Maximus, half were to be Plebeians and the other half Patricians. Therefore, it can be said that the Constitution of Republican Rome had to take account of the social

division between the Patricians and the Plebeians, who formed two distinct castes. Naturally, the political reformers could not ignore the problem arising out of the prevailing social order during the making of a constitution. The reflections of the social and political problems were inevitable in the political constitution. Even political revolutions had always been preceded by social and religious revolutions. The religious Reformation of Martin Luther was the precursor of the political emancipation of the European people. Puritanism was a religious movement that led to the establishment of political liberty in England and won the war of American Independence. The religious and social revolution of Goutam Buddha led to the political revolution during of Chandragupta Maurya. The political revolution of the Sikhs was preceded by the religious and social revolution led by Guru Nanak. The political revolution led by Shivaji was preceded by the religious and social reform brought about by the saints of Maharashtra. Not only that but also Ambedkar critically examine the vitality and importance of different sources as like polity, economy, society and religion in order to understand the key strength of the source of power. Some scholars pointed out from the Marxist point of view that labour is the master of wealth in the universe. They are the key architect of the source of economic power and economy is the only unquestionable source of mastery in power in the universe. Some scholars pointed out from the Socialist point of view that Socialist Economy must bring equality, liberty and fraternity to establish more tranquility in the world. The Socialists are trying to apply the economic interpretation of history to the facts of India. According to them, the activities and aspirations of man are tied up by economic facts only and property is only source of power. They uphold theory of economic reform that is the precedence of any kind of reform. However, some renowned personalities marked politics as the master key of all source of power in the world. Many experts identified religion as the source of power. According to some reputed scholars as like Ambedkar etc., religion and society itself work together as the key partner of all source of power in the society in India. They cited the example of India in this context. The forces of polity and economy did not precede the social essence of the Indian masses in respect of their individual as well as national life. That is why; the essence of the socio-religious sources are the key factors of power that should be consider in connection with the strength of polity and economy which could not bring radical change in Indian society. The social status of an individual by itself often becomes a source of power and authority by which the Mahatmas

established their unquestionable authoritative influence over the common people. The social credibility of the Sadhus and Fakirs attract the millionaires in India to obey them. They become the inevitable source of inspiration to the common people and its social influence act as an undisputed source of power and authority. Millions of paupers in India go to Benares and Mecca by selling their only precious wealth to satisfy their aspiration. It is clear in Indian history that religion is the source of power. Even the priests hold the sway and influence over the common people than the magistrate. Beside, Ambedkar cited the case of the Plebians of Rome as an example of the power of religion over man. He pointed out very clearly that you cannot have political reform; you can not have economic reform, unless you kill the monster of the concept of the Caste and its institutions. The defenders of the Caste System pointed out that another name of the Caste System is the division of labour. The caste system is not merely division of labour. It is also a division of labourers. Ambedkar said that it is not only a division of labourers but also it is quite different from the theory of the division of labour. It is a hierarchy in which the divisions of labourers are unequally graded one from the other. It is not spontaneous division of labourers. It is completely depended upon the social status and position of an individual's ancestors. An individual has no liberty to change its professions, as he likes. Caste rules compel everybody to remain in the circle of the division of labour as it prescribed. Therefore, it can be noted that caste is a harmful institution as an economic organization as it restrict man's natural choice.

Besides, the ethnologists expressed their views that men of pure race exist nowhere. There has been a mixture of all races in all parts of the world. D.R.Bhandarkar noted the same view. He said that 'there is hardly a Class or Caste in India which has not a foreign strain in it... Even the Brahmins are not free from foreign elements'. Therefore, it can be pointed out that the idea of maintaining purity of race and purity of blood by the notion of Caste propagated by the so-called Orthodox Hindus or Brahmins is completely based on false philosophical analysis. Ambedkar supported both these views. The existence of Caste and Caste consciousness has served to keep the memory of past feuds between castes green and has prevented solidarity. To Ambedkar, liberty, equality and fraternity should be the basic elements of an ideal society. He vehemently opposed and criticized to the notion of Chaturvarna that leveled the man of the society into so-called for divisions which was completely

irrational, inhumane and illogical. It is nothing but a snare to preserve the notion of birth-based Caste system. He highlighted the military service, suffering and education as physical weapon, political weapon and moral weapon respectively. These three weapons had never been with held by the strong from the weak in Europe. All these weapons were denied to the common people in India's by Chaturvarna theory that deadened, paralyzed and crippled the people from helpful activity. Ambedkar also noted the fact that nation cannot be build up within the parametric existence of the Caste system. The presence of the Caste system made it impossible to make integrated Indian Nation. The evils and harmful influence of the Caste system accelerated pace of disintegrated India. Therefore, India as a Nation can be made after the eradication of the Caste system in the true sense of the term, otherwise not. He gave some proposals to abolish it from the practical point of view. The first step of his scheme was to introduce the implementation of inter-caste marriage for the eradication of the Caste system. This was his basic remedial concept behind it. The good intention of inter-dinning and inter-caste marriage might be accelerated the process of the abolition of the Caste system. He said that Caste is nothing but a mental condition of a man. It was the out come of abnormal psychological mentality and behaviour of the so-called orthodox Brahmins and Hindus. The core of the Caste system was the fundamental elements of the Hindu religion. So the Hindus believed Caste system and religion. But Ambedkar did not blame the peoples who believed in the Caste system. He did not identify them as enemies. But he said that the Shastras were the source of common enemy which taught them to follow this religion of Caste. The second proposal for remedial measures of Ambedkar was to destroy the belief in the sanctity of the Shastras. He criticized the role of the reformers who moved for the abolition of untouchability. They did not estimate the inculcated influence created into the minds of the common people by the Shastras. Naturally, the people would not change their conduct until they would come forward to cease to believe in the Sanctity of the Shastras as because their conduct was formed on the basis of the Shastras. So every man and woman should come forward to make inter-dine and inter-marry if they would want to be freed from the thralldom of the Shastras, cleanse their minds of the pernicious notions that based on the Shastras without asking them to do so. He asked the reformers to discard and deny the authority of the Shastras on the line of Goutam Buddha, Guru Nanak and others that created the notion about the sacredness of Caste into their minds. Therefore, the reformers should come forward to

show that courage. Some religious believes gave birth to the notion of sacredness in Caste. It had the sanctity of the Shastras. Its instruction can not be disobeyed without committing sin. It has a divine basis. That is why; the people of India should destroy the sacredness and divinity with which Caste has been invested. They should destroy the authority of the Shastras and the Vedas. Ambedkar proposed the way of destroying Caste in these ways. He said that the Brahmins would not come forward to destroy the Caste system as because it perpetuated their authority since the inception. It is well known to all that a revolutionary is not the kind of man who becomes a Pope. On the other hand a man who becomes a Pope has no wish to be a revolutionary. So the Brahmins had no wish to become a revolutionary to change the society. A Pope has no wish to become a revolutionary; a man who is born a Brahmin has much less desire to become a revolutionary. To Ambedkar, "In every country the intellectual class is the most influential class, if not the governing class. The intellectual class is the class, which can foresee, it is the class, which can advise and give lead. . . . The intellectual class in India is simply another name for the Brahmin caste Which has regarded itself the custodian of the interest of that caste, rather than of the interests of the country?"⁶⁰ Ambedkar opposed to the myth of the Brahmin Gods on earth. He discussed very critically how and why the Hindus were intentionally taught about the Brahmins as Bhudevas (Gods on earth.). He said that a people should not believe the Brahmins as most of them were either selfish or autocrat for their Caste interest. The Brahmins were the chief architect of the Caste system and they institutionalized it for the benefit of their Caste interest. They established their unchallenging authority in the Contest of the Shastras and gave Shastric explanation to uphold it in perpetuity. Not only that but also they were identified themselves as the only medium of instruction of unknown or unwritten subjects on religion or society. All these factors were responsible to contradict the role of the Brahmins as an emancipator from the thralldom of the Caste system. Even Manu gave an explanation to support this view. Manu said, "If it be asked how it should be with respect to points of the Dharma which have not been specially mentioned, the answer is that which Brahmins who are Shishthas propound shall doubtless have legal force."⁶¹ Ambedkar confidently pointed out that the Brahmins who always tried to keep the rest of the community in its grips by hook and cook to establish their unquestionable authority and supremacy in the so-called Hindu society; polity, economy, religion etc. that were opposed to the reform of Caste. Naturally, the

social reform movement if they would like to start they did not come forward to agendise the eradication the Caste system. Apart from these, Ambedkar gave a logical explanation about the causes that made the destruction of the Caste system impossible. He said that the destruction of the Caste system would not possible by the Marxian economic explanation or interpretation as well as the concept of the Proletariat dictatorship in India due to the existence of the Caste system. He identified different causes behind it. As Caste divided men into various distinctive communities that were in equally graded to each other in the context of the social status and position. Each Caste was arranged in a graded order one above the other to feel pride and its consolidation to remain in the prescribed social position in the Caste circle. As per the superior or inferior status and position of a person in the Caste arena social, religious rights and privileges and Sanskaras were assigned by the verdict of the Caste institution. A person who belonged to superior grade of a Caste could enjoy greater the number of these rights and privileges than the lower or lesser-graded peoples. Therefore, it can be noted that this scaling of creating unequal gradation of Castes among the different communities that made it impossible to organize a common front against the Caste system. Naturally, the Brahmins did not allow the rights to interdine or inter-marry with another Caste that would create a death trap of them. According to them, all are slaves of the Caste system who are not equal in status. Karl Marx excited the proletariat to bring about an economic revolution by telling them that they had nothing to lose except their chains. But the artful way in which the social and religious rights were given among the different Castes whereby some have more or some have less, made the slogan of the Karl Marx quite useless to excite the Hindus against the Caste system. A graded system of sovereignties, high and low was created by the Caste Institution that were jealous of their status and which know that if a general dissolution came, some of them stand to lose more of their prestige and power than others do. It is impossible to mobilize the Hindus for the eradication of the Caste Institution. Ambedkar said that the Hindus never tried to discard caste as being contrary to reason. They were basically the followers of the verdict of the Caste Institution that was created and propagated by the ancient lawmakers of different socio-religious law books or Shastras. Manu said that a Hindu must follow Veda, Smriti or Sadachar. He can not follow anything else. According to the Shastras, a Hindu is not free to use his reasoning faculty, he was strictly forbidden to use his reasoning in the examining of the question of Varna and Caste but they

have directed to take care to see that no occasion is left to examine in a rational way the foundations of his beliefs in Caste and Varna. The Hindus break Caste for their gain at one step but proceeded to observe it at the next without raising any question as per the directions of the Shastras to maintain Caste as far as possible and to undergo Prayaschitta when they could not. Naturally, the theory of compromise for a perpetual lease of life was maintained by the way of Prayaschhita. So the Shastras gave a verdict to follow a spirit of compromise if necessary to maintain Caste rules. According to the theory of Prayschhitta, the Shastras had given Caste a perpetual lease of life and had smothered reflective thought that would have otherwise led to the destruction of the notion of Caste. Ramanuja, Kabir and other great saints had tried to abolish Caste and Untouchability. Therefore, the Hindus tried to show act as reformer following their line of thinking. But Manu gave directions to the Hindus to follow the norms of Sadachar that gave higher place than Shastras. Whether it is Dharma or Adharma in accordance with Shastras, contrary to Shastras, must be followed. It was very interesting to note the fact that Smritis directed the Hindus in unmistakable terms not to follow even Gods in their good deeds, if they are contrary to Shruti, Smriti and Sadachar. That is why; Ambedkar said that the main motto behind it was to deprive the true Reformers of using these two powerful weapons, viz. Reason and Morality. So it can not be denied that Reason and Morality are the two most powerful weapons in the armoury of a Reformer. They took all sorts of steps to deprive their powers for using these two weapons. Naturally, people could not break up the Caste system as they are not free to consider whether it connected with morality or reasons. The Brahmins built up a well decorated mechanized as well as impregnable wall around the Caste that is well nigh impossible to break down. That is why; Ambedkar gave directions to apply the dynamite to the Vedas and the Shastras that deny any part to reason to Vedas and Shastras that deny any part of morality. Therefore, you must destroy the Religion of the Smritis and the Shrutis. Nothing else will avail. Ambedkar considered this view in this way. Ambedkar asserted to abolish Hindu religion due to many reasons. Firstly; Ambedkar said that the Hindu religion banned responsibility which was the essence of a truly religious act. He said that religion should not be a matter of rules. It must be a matter of principles only. The principle may be wrong but the act is conscious and responsible. The rule may be right but the act is mechanical. Secondly, the Hindu Religion is nothing but a set of rules. According to the Varna of the Vedas and the Smritis, the Hindu Religion is

nothing but a mass sacrificial, social, political and sanitary rules and regulations all mixed up. It is nothing but a multitude of commands and prohibitions. Thirdly; the concept of Religion, in the sense of spiritual principles, truly universal, applicable to all races, to all countries, to all times,. But it is not to be found in the Hindu Religion. Fourthly; the term Dhjarma is used in the Vedas in most cases as religious ordinances or rites. Jaimini defined dharma in the Purva-Mimansa as ‘a desirable goal or result that is indicated by injunctive (Vedic) passages.’ But the Hindus identified Religion as law or at best legalized class-ethics. These codes of ordinances are identified as Religion. Ambedkar said that this code of ordinances mis-represented to the people of India as Religion that deprived the moral life of freedom, spontaneity. Therefore, it can be said that Hindu Religion is nothing but a mixture of rules. But the worst evil of this code of ordinances is that the laws it contains must be same yesterday, today and for ever. These ordinances are iniquitous introduced by the so-called intellectual classes or the Brahmin Prophets or law-makers for the lower classes or castes of the Hindu society. But they are freed from all these ordinances. The main objectionable part of this code of ordinances is that it had been invested with the character of finality and fixity. Ambedkar urged for the destruction of such a religion. He also said that the douden duty of the common people to tear the mask to remove the mis-directed as well as mis-instructed ordinances that as created/ caused by wrong identification this law as Religion. That is why; it is the duty of all to clear the wrong conception of Religion from their mind set up and to enable the common people to discover the real meaning of Religion. He said that the Hindu Religion is not Religion but it is really the law introduced by some ancient sages. So you will be in a position to amendment or abolish the so-called laws or ordinances of the Hindus if you will able to find out the real meaning of Religion in the true sense of the terms. The people who believe it as Religion, they will not come forward to change these laws. It is the general said that Religion is not associated with the idea of change. All know it very well that the idea of law is associated with the concept of change. When they get opportunity to know it that what is called Religion is rally law, old and archaic, then they will be prepare them for change, for people know and accept that law can be changed. Not only that but also Ambedkar strongly condemned a Religion of Rules. But he advocated the essence of a true religion. A true Religion is completely based on principles. The main motto of a true Religion is to establish the concept of humanity, equality and so on among its followers. According to Burke, “True

Religion is the foundation of society, the basis on which all true Civil Governments rests and both their sanction.” Ambedkar agreed with this view of Burke. So he gave a proposal to reform the Rules of the Brahmanical Hindu Religion. That is why; Ambedkar cited the following cardinal items to reform this Hindu society⁶².

Firstly, there should be only one unanimously accepted and recognized standard religious book of the so-called Brahmanical Hindu Religion. He demanded to abandon all other religious books that were identified as sacred and authoritative by law, such as Vedas, Shastras and Puranas. Ambedkar not only demanded the abolition of these authoritative books but also the propagation of any doctrine, religious or social contained in these books should be legally penalized.

Secondly, Ambedkar strongly demanded the abolition of the Priesthood from among the Hindus. He also pointed out that Priesthood must be banned as hereditary if it would be impossible. He demanded that every person of a Hindu Religion must be given the rights to act as a priest and only law should do it. Apart from these, he gave another proposal that no Hindu should be called a priest unless he had passed an examination prescribed by the State and a Sanad should be issued from the State permitting him to practice.

Thirdly, he said that a priest must have to State Sanad with him to perform ceremony as a priest; otherwise, law to act as a priest should penalize him.

Fourthly, a priest must have to play the role of a servant of the State. He must have to bring under the subject of disciplinary action of the State in connection with his morals, beliefs and worships. He must be a subject with other citizens to the ordinary law of the State, Country.

Fifthly, Ambedkar proposed that the number of priest must be limited as per the requirements of the State by law as like the case of the I.C.S. He also said that law regulates every occupation like Lawyer, Doctor, and Engineer etc. Even everybody those who belonging to these professions must have to show their proficiency before they are permitted to practice their occupations. They must have to obey the law of the land civil as well as criminal. Even they must have to obey the special code of

morals prescribed by their respective professions. However, the priest has not required showing their proficiency. Their profession is not a subject to any code. They are not prohibiting entering a Hindu Temple to worship the Hindu God in spite of their numerous physical diseases as like syphilis or gonorrhoea etc. It is enough to be born in a priestly class. The priestly class always get chance to enjoy numerous rights and privileges without performing their duties. That is why; Ambedkar gave a proposal to bring these priestly classes under rigid control by some strict legislation that will prevent them from doing mischief and from mis-guiding people. Naturally, this policy will democratize to depute a priest by throwing it open to everyone. It will certainly help to annihilate Caste system and Brahmanism. He said that Brahmanism is the poison that has spoiled Hinduism. He proposed that you would succeed in saving Hinduism if you will kill Brahmanism. Therefore, you should must come to re-modeling your Religion based on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity in connection with democracy either from foreign sources or from Upanishads. It means a complete change in the fundamental notions of life like values of life, outlook or attitude towards men and things. That is why; Ambedkar asked to discard the authority of the Shastras and destroy the religions of the Shastras.

Sixthly, Ambedkar pointed out that the Hindus must examine their religion and their morality in terms of their survival value. They must consider whether they conserve the whole of their social heritage or select what is helpful and transmit to future generations only that much and no more. The principle that makes little of the present act of living and growing naturally looks upon the present as empty and upon the future as remote. Such a principle is inimical to progress and is an obstacle to a strong and a steady current of life.

Seventhly, Ambedkar advised the caste Hindus to accept and recognize the changing situation as change is the law of life for individuals as well as for society. Everything is changeable. There is nothing sanatan (pre-existing), fixed or eternal. Therefore, the caste Hindus should come forward to change their way of life for the betterment of the society and the nation.

Therefore, it can be noted that Ambedkar who had no tool of power, no flatterer of greatness, made these views. He had to fight ceaseless struggle for liberty of the poor

and the oppressed. Not only that but also Ambedkar pointed out that Swaraj for Hindus may turn out to be only a step towards slavery if the Hindu society do not come forward to become a casteless society to defend itself. Naturally, the foregoing discussions regarding the origin of castes made it clear that multi-dimensional approaches such as racial differentiation, occupational distinctiveness, the monopolistic priesthood of Brahmins, socio-religious ideas of ceremonial purity, pollution etc. were responsible for the creation of the caste institution in the Hindu society. Not only that but also the unwillingness of the rulers to implement a uniform policy in the state in connection with law and order over its subjects in different matters relating to socio-religious, political, economic etc. paved the way of creating the environment of Caste formation. Lack of rigid control over the subjects in different parts of the state bound the authority to manage them somehow by recognizing the multi-dimensional varieties of different groups or communities to run their state. Naturally, it can be said that scholars of different schools made their argument to establish the theory of Caste in their own way. Some scholars stressed on racial differentiation, occupational distinctiveness, role of the Brahmins, socio-religious ideas of ceremonial purity, pollution and others. But they failed to reach a definite theoretical explanation regarding the origin of Caste in the true sense of the terms. Every theoretical explanation of different scholars regarding the origin of Caste was complementary to each other. Even Gandhi's theoretical explanation on caste was self-explanatory. His interpretation regarding the origin of caste was based on the line of the traditional theory of caste, Brahmanical theory of caste etc. His views and opinions on the issues of caste and untouchability were published in different writings and speeches. He believed in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas and the Hindu scriptures. He advocated the theory of incarnation (avatars) and re-birth. He was an Orthodox Vaishnava. He acted to the line of the traditional beliefs, religious dogmas and others relating to the issues of caste and untouchability. Not only that but also he coined the term Harijan to define untouchables. Even he was completely unwilling politically to attack Caste Institution. He said that inter-dinning and inter-marriage were matters of individual choice. He started Harijan movement under some political compulsions and considerations. He did not like to encourage untouchables to obtain honourable position in the society. Even Gandhiji did not allow temple Satyagraha movement of the untouchables. Realizing the hard reality of the situation Gandhiji ultimately changed his attitudes towards the burning issues of

the untouchables and came forward to save their life and position in the Hindu society. In course of time, he demanded the abolition of untouchability but favoured Caste system in perpetuity. That is why; he came forward to establish schools, hostels for the untouchable children. Even Gandhiji urged to the Hindus to open their ponds, tube wells, roads, temples etc. for the benefits of the Harijans. In these ways, Gandhiji tried to establish 'social justice' for the Harijans. But he gave emphasized on political reform rather than social reform. But Ambedkar deeply realized the anti-social altitudes of the Hindus towards the issues of the Caste system and untouchables that created socio-mental discrimination as a principle of touch-me-not-ism. His theoretical explanation regarding the origin of the Caste System and untouchability made it clear that Brahmins and the Hindu Shastras are responsible for the formation of the Caste System and untouchability. He identified logically the issues of caste and untouchability. Even his human approach towards the issue of caste and untouchability stirred the very foundations of the Hindu caste system and untouchability. His ceaseless struggles for the establishment of the Dalit human rights in India were an epoch making event in the history of India. His ideas and thoughts relating to these issues were completely based on the principle of scientific reasons, liberty, equality, fraternity and after all nationality. His challenging attacked towards the inhuman mechanism of the Caste Institution and untouchability was published in his different writings and speeches. He said that Varnashrama Dharma was itself the source of the productive mechanism of the Caste system and untouchability that was unscientific and irrational that had no far-reaching consequences. Gandhiji knew it very well that it was completely impossible without the eradication of the Caste System as it artificially fostered and created hindrance to social solidarity and mobility. He said that superimposition of endogamy over exogamy was the root cause for the formation of Caste groups. The sub-division of a society was a natural phenomenon and these groups became castes through ex-communication. Caste was not based on the division of labour. It was basically a division of labourers. That is why; he gave a proposal to eradicate the Caste System. Not only that but also Ambedkar advocated inter-caste marriage that would play only a vital role to reduce and solve the caste problems. He asked the common people to discard the age-old irrational, illogical, inhuman verdict of the so-called Shastras and its prescribed socio-religious customs that were working as the root of creating and maintaining castes and untouchability in the Hindu society. Ambedkar said that society should play a

vital role as a protector of religion not as a victimized object of it. But the idea of pollution was an important feature of the Caste system as it had a religious flavour. He said that untouchability became a mental disease in the Hindu social mind in course of time. Apart from these, the verdict of the caste rules relating to inter-marriage, inter-dining and endogamy restricted the class into an enclosed caste. Not only that but also the custom of Sati, enforced widowhood, imposing celibacy on the widower and wedding him to a girl not yet marriageable etc. were the out come for the preservation of endogamy against exogamy in the Caste system. He believed in social democracy. He fought for the sake of humanity. He stressed on social reform rather than political reform. He said that socialists would have to fight against the monster of Caste institution either before or after the revolution for the greater interest of country and its citizens.

5.4. Debate on the Question of Caste, Varna and the Hindu Shastras between Gandhi and Ambedkar

There arose a great controversy on the questions of inhuman norms and principles of the Caste Institution, Varna System and the Hindu Shastras between Gandhiji and Ambedkar relating to the day-to-day socio-economic and religious activities of different castes or varnas in the Hindu society. Gandhi was the leader of the privileged castes or varnas of the so called Brahmanical Hindu society. But Ambedkar was the symbol of justice against all sorts of exploitation, humiliation and tyranny of the Hindu society. Gandhiji profoundly believed in the age-old traditional doctrines and customs of the Caste Institution, Varna System and the Hindu Shastras and advocated all sorts of norms and principles of these institutions to preach the gospel of the Hindu religion. In fact, he was very much convinced by the traditions of the Hindu society. He was the ardent follower of the norms and principles of these doctrines. He came forward to protect the socio-religious and economic interest of the privileged classes of the Hindu society. Even he explained the inner-truthfulness of these doctrines to establish the traditional institutions in perpetuity in the Hindu society. Realizing the hard reality of the down trodden sections of the society Gandhiji came forward to uplift the socio-economic conditions of the Harijans under political compulsions in India. But Ambedkar said that these caste based doctrines were basically against the principles of liberty, equality, fraternity, development and

progress. That is why; Ambedkar expressed his grievances against these exploitative inhuman gospels through his famous writings, viz., 'Annihilation of Caste' with a motto to eradicate the caste conception from the so called Brahmanical Hindu society. The main target of Ambedkar was to establish the concept of human rights and privileges in the Hindu society, irrespective of caste, class, creed, sex and religion. He was a blind supporter of the inhumane Caste Institution. His works and activities in all spheres of life were severely influenced by the so called Brahmanical Hindu traditions, customs and believe. That is why; Ambedkar launched ceaseless struggles against all sorts of exploitations and inhumane norms and principles of the Hindu society. He became the leader of the toiling masses in India. He highlighted the inhuman rules and regulations of the Hindu Religion, Hindu Shastras and the Caste Institutions through the microscopic observations of the Rig Vedic literatures and the Smriti Shastras. He fought against all sorts of inhuman rules and regulations of the so called Brahmanical Hindu religion. That is why, Ambedkar was declared as a hater of the Hindu religion.⁶³ In spite of his ceaseless opposition to the religion of the Hindus and its Shastras, Scriptures in the context of the anti-caste and anti-varna affiliation, Ambedkar was cordially invited to preside over the annual conference of the Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal of Lahore in May, 1936. He prepared himself accordingly. But the Reception Committee appeared to have deprived the public suddenly of an opportunity of listening to the original thoughts and views of Ambedkar who had carved out for himself a unique position in the society. Ambedkar had already declared to deliver a last speech of his life as a Hindu on this auspicious occasion before leaving the Hinduism. He never puzzled by the decision of the cancellation of this conference. Rather on realizing the hard reality Ambedkar replied their rejection by publishing his most wanted speech in the form of an article at his own expense. But Ambedkar's indictment was published in the Harijan under the title of 'A Vindication of Caste by Mahatma Gandhi.' The main vocal questions raised by Ambedkar in his undelivered speech are given below:

- 1) *"What are the scriptures?"*
- 2) *Are all the printed texts to be regarded as an integral part of them or is any part of them to be rejected as unauthorized interpolations?"*
- 3) *What is the answer of such accepted and expurgated scriptures on the question of untouchability, caste, equality of status, inter-dining and inter-marriages?"*⁶⁴

Gandhiji pointed out that he would answer to these questions raised by Ambedkar in the next issue of the Harijan. As a result of it, he explained the content of the Hindu

Dharmashastras. He said, "The Vedas, Upanishads, Smritis and Puranas including Ramayana and Mahabharata are the Hindu Scriptures. Nor is this a finite list. Every age or even generation has added to the list. Who is the best interpreter? Not learned men surely. Learning there must be. But religion does not live by it. It lives in the experiences of its saints and seers, in their lives and sayings. When all the most learned commentators of the scriptures are utterly forgotten, the accumulated experiences of the sages and saints will abide and be an inspiration for ages to come."⁶⁵ He also pointed out that everything printed or even found handwritten was not Hindu scripture. He cited the example of the Smritis in this context. He even said that Smritis could not be accepted as the word of God although it contained much on different things. Naturally, the examples from Smritis in different aspects quoted by Ambedkar had no valid authentication. According to him, everything should be capable of being spiritually experienced to accept as the word of God. He highlighted the fact that caste had nothing to do with religion. It was simply a custom of the Hindus. Even he knew nothing about its origin. But he knew it very well that caste was harmful both to spiritual and national growth. So he did not feel necessity to satisfy his spiritual thirst. He said that Varna and Ashrama were two institutions which had nothing to do with Castes. The law of Varna taught them that they had each one and they had been following the callings of their ancestors for bread. It defined nor their rights but their duties. None but it had mentioned the occupations that were conducive to the welfare of humanity. It also noted the fact that there was no occupation of too low or too high. All were good, lawful and absolutely equal in status. The occupation of a Brahmin (spiritual teacher) and a scavenger were equal. Their due performances carried equal merit before God. But they were unequal before man. In fact, they had given rights to lead their livelihood independently and no more. He tried to draw the attention on the fact that there was no disparity between the earnings of different tradesmen including the Brahmins at Segaoon which was inhabited by 600 populations. He also pointed out about the real Brahmins who were living on alms and occasionally came forward to teach the common people freely. Not only that but also they played a vital role to impart spiritual knowledge among the people without any remuneration. This was a great job done by the real Brahmin. Naturally, it would be wrong or improper to judge the law of Varna considering the activities of a person who violated the norms of it belonging to a Varna. It prohibited the superiority status of a Varna over another Varna. Even there was nothing in the

law of Varna to warrant a belief in untouchability. Apart from these, Gandhiji opined that Ambedkar had made a profound mistake in his undelivered speech to depend upon the texts of doubtful authenticity by which he moved to judge the degraded Hindus who were unsuitable specimens. Ambedkar cited numerous evidences to prove the notion of the Caste Institution and the Varna System. In his most wanted undelivered speech, Ambedkar had over proved his case. Gandhiji highlighted the fact that a religion that was preached by Chaitanya, Jnyandeo, Tukaram, Sri Ramkrishna, Rammohan, Vivekananda and other eminent saints or scholars might not be utterly devoid of merit as was made out in Ambedkar's address. He said, "A religion has to be judged not by its worst specimens but by the best it might have produced. For that and that alone can be used as the standard to aspire to, if not to improve upon."⁶⁶

Besides, Gandhiji published an article on the topic of 'Varna versus Caste' in the Harijan at the request of Sri Sant Ramji of Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal of Lahore on 15th August 1936. Sri Saint Ramji pointed out that he had read the opinions and remarks of Gandhiji and Ambedkar on this issue. So he clearly highlighted the fact that they did not invite Ambedkar to preside over their conference as he belonged to the Dalit category. Even they did not distinguish between a touchable and an untouchable Hindu. But the name of Ambedkar was simply considered to preside over the meeting because his diagnosis of the fatal caste disease of the Hindu community was same as theirs. He scientifically highlighted and categorically identified the fact that Caste System was the root cause of the disruption and downfall of the Hindus and its religion. The name of the title of research topic selected by Ambedkar was Caste System. So he investigated this subject thoroughly to examine the hypothesis of his research work. But the main motto of this conference was to persuade the Hindus to annihilate the caste system. But Ambedkar insisted on saying that that was his last speech as a Hindu and was not only irrelevant but also pernicious to the interest of that conference. In spite of their request in several times to expunge that sentence but he refused to do that. As a result, they found no utility in making merely a show of their function. But it was the ever first best learned speech on that subject that would not be denied at all.

Apart from these, Sri Sant Ramji pointed out that Gandhiji made philosophical difference between Caste and Varna that was very much subtle to be realized by the people in general. Actually, Caste and Varna was one and the same thing in all aspects of practical purposes in the Hindu society. Even their function was one and the same, i. e., to restrict inter-caste marriages and inter-dining. Not only that but Sri Sant Ramji also criticized the theory of Varnavyavastha of Gandhiji as impractical in the dynamic age. He highlighted its futility and pointed out that there was no hope at all to revive it in the near future. The Hindus were made slaves through the institution of the Caste System which restricted their choice and liberty for its destruction. Sri Sant Ramji was very much worried about the imaginary explanation of Gandhiji on the issue of social reforms. That is why; he expressed his grievances against Gandhiji in the following manner:

“So when you advocate your ideal of imaginary Varnavyavastha they find justification for clinging to caste. Thus you are doing a great disservice to social reform by advocating your imaginary utility of division of Varnas, for it creates hindrance in our way. To try to remove untouchability without striking at the root of Varnavyavastha is simply to treat the outward symptoms of a disease or to draw a line on the surface of water...dvijas do not want to give social equality to the so-called touchable and untouchable Shudras, so they refuse to break caste, and give liberal donations for the removal of untouchability, simply to evade the issue. To seek the help of the Shastras for the removal of untouchability and caste is simply to wash mud with mud.”⁶⁷

After all Sri Sant Ramji came forward to support the views and thoughts of Ambedkar on that issue which was wholly untenable when the Mandal for which he claimed to speak, applauded the whole arguments of Ambedkar's undelivered address. There arose a pertinent question whether the Mandal believed in the Shastras or not. He also pointed out “How can a Muslim remain one if he rejects the Quran, or a Christian remains Christian if he rejects the Bible? If Caste and Varna are convertible terms and if Varna is an integral part of the Shastras which define Hinduism, I do not know how a person who rejects Caste i. e. Varna can call himself a Hindu.”⁶⁸

Realizing this hard reality, Gandhiji pointed out that he should cease to call himself a Hindu if the Shastras advocated the existing untouchability. He also noted very clearly that "... if the Shastras support caste as we know it today in all its hideousness, I may not call myself or remain a Hindu since I have no scruples about interdining or intermarriage.... I venture to suggest to Shri Sant Ram that it is the only rational and correct and morally defensible position and it has ample warrant in Hindu tradition."⁶⁹

Ambedkar came forward to reply the questions raised by Gandhiji on different aspects of Caste in the Harijan. Gandhiji accused him on this issue. But Ambedkar never attacked it and praised Gandhiji to publish his undelivered speech prepared for the Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal on Caste. He knew it very well that Gandhiji was completely dissented from his views on the issue of Caste. But the main object of Ambedkar in publishing the speech was to provoke the Hindus to think and take stock of their position on this inhumane issue. He never ran after publicity. He highlighted the fact that Gandhiji had entirely missed the issues raised by him. According to him, Gandhiji failed to identify his indictment on the question of Caste of the Hindus. The prime factors⁷⁰ which Ambedkar had tried to focus in his undelivered speech were as follows:

- i. *The Caste System had ruined the Hindus.*
- ii. *To reorganize the Hindu society on the basis of Chaturvarnya was quite impossible as because the Varnavyavastha was like a leaky pot. Caste was completely incapable of sustaining itself by its own virtue. It has an inherent tendency to degenerate into a Caste System unless legal action can be enforced against every one transgressing his Varna.*
- iii. *To reorganize the Hindu society on the basis of Chaturvarnya was quite harmful. It degenerated the people into the Caste System. It created obstructions for them to obtain knowledge disarmed them by denying the right to be armed.*
- iv. *The Hindu society must be reorganized on a religious basis recognizing the principles of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.*
- v. *Caste and Varna must be destroyed to achieve the object of religious sanctity.*

- vi. *The sanctity of Caste and Varna would be destroyed only by discarding the divine authority of the Shastras.*

Therefore, it can be said that the questions raised by Gandhiji were quite different and irrelevant in connection with the above noted questions raised by Ambedkar. In fact, Gandhiji failed to give attention on the main subjects that were reasonably explained on the issue of Caste. It was nothing but a great misunderstanding on the part of a great man like Gandhiji, the father of the Indian Nation.

In fact; the first question raised by Gandhiji was that the texts cited by Ambedkar in the speech were not authentic.

In reply to this question, Ambedkar confessed that he had no authority on those subjects. But he cited these texts taking from the writings of late Tilak who had a recognized authority on the Sanskrit language and on the Hindu Shastras.

The second question raised by Gandhiji was that the contents of the Shastras should be interpreted not by the learned but the saints as because they could understand them. Gandhiji said that Caste and Untouchability had no Shastric affiliation.

In response to this second question, Ambedkar raised another question about how the common people would make any distinction between the genuine texts and the interpolated texts as they were too illiterate to know the contents of the Shastras. Naturally, they would believe what they would have been told and they had been told that the Shastras did enjoin as a religious duty the observance of Caste and Untouchability. He also said that the saints failed to influence the common people to destroy the Caste System due chiefly to two reasons;

Firstly, the saints were staunch believers of the Caste Institution. Most of the saints lived and died as members of the Castes which they respectively belonged. Naturally, the saints never came forward to attack the Caste System for its destruction. He cited the names of saint Jnyandeo and saint Eknath in this context. Saint Jnyandeo moved heaven and earth to obtain the status of a Brahmin by the recognized Brahmin fraternity after refusing by the Brahmins of Paithan. Even saint Eknath who was

known as 'Dharmatma' to the untouchables did not come forward to start a campaign against Caste and Untouchability. Not only that but also the saints did not preach the gospel of equality and liberty. They preached that all men were equal in the eyes of God. They were mainly concerned between man and God.

Secondly; it was taught to the common people that saint might break the norms of Caste but the common people could not. As a result a saint would never become an instance to be followed. They were honoured as pious men. Naturally, the common people had nothing but remain staunch believers in the Caste and Untouchability. It must be reckoned with the fact that the common people held different views regarding the Shastras. Ambedkar said that it could not be dealt with except by denouncing the authority of the Shastras which continued to govern their conduct. This was a question which the Mahatma had not considered. He must have accepted that the pious life led by one good Samaritan might be very elevating to himself but in India, with the attitude the common man had to saints and to Mahatma-to honour but not to follow-one could not make much out of it.

The third statement made by Gandhiji is in connection with religion. He said that a religion must be judged by its best merits not by its worst specimens. He cited the names of many saints like Chaitanya, Tukaram, Ramkrishna Paramahansa and others who preached and upheld gospel of the Hindu religion. According to Gandhiji, Hindu religion could not be meritless as was understood by him.

In reply to this third question, Ambedkar said that he agreed with every word of the statement made by Gandhiji. But he wanted to know about the context of the fact that what did the Mahatma desire to prove? He also raised another question relating to this matter. Why the worst number so many and the best so few? He answered to this question in his own way. He identified the worst by reason of some original perversity of theirs which were morally uneducable and were incapable of making the remotest approach to the religious ideal. He said that the religious ideal was completely a wrong ideal. It had given a wrong moral twist to the lives of the common people. The best had become best in spite of the wrong ideal, in fact by giving to the wrong twist a turn in the right direction. Ambedkar basically emphasized on his second explanation which was only logical and reasonable to

accept the proposition unless the Mahatma had a third alternative to prove why the worst were so many and the best so few.

The fourth assertion stated by Gandhiji was that Hinduism would be tolerable if only the people were to follow the example of saints like Chaitanya and others. The broadest and simplest form of the Hindu society could be made happy without changing its any fundamental structure if all the high caste Hindus could be persuaded to follow a high standard of morality in their dealings with the low caste Hindus.

In reply to this assertion of Gandhiji, Ambedkar straight way pointed out that he was totally opposed to this kind of ideology in spite of his best regards to the saints and high esteemed caste Hindus who emerged to maintain a high social ideal in their life. He said that the criteria for the improvement of personal character would not make the maker of arrangements a good man. He cited the example of a man who would sell shells that would not burst and gas that would not poison. You can not accept personal character to make a man loaded with the consciousness of Caste, a good man, i. e. a man who would treat his fellows as his friends and equals. He must deal with his fellows either as a superior or inferior according as the case may be; differently from his own caste fellows. He also pointed out that there could be a better or worse Hindu. But there could not be a better Hindu. To a slave his master might be better or worse. But a master of his slave could not be a good master. A good man could not be a master and a master could not be a good man. The same context might be applied to the relationship between his high caste and low caste. Naturally, a high caste man could not be a good man in so far as he might have a low caste man to distinguish him as high caste man. Ambedkar already noted the fact that a society based on Varna or Caste was a society that was based on a wrong relationship. In connection with the above noted facts, Ambedkar had a curiosity to know how far Gandhiji himself practices what he preaches. He said that Gandhiji was a Bania by birth. His forefathers had left trading in favour of ministership that was calling of the Brahmins. He chose the profession of law before becoming a Mahatma. In course of time he changed the profession of that of a lawyer and became a politician. His role as a half saint and half politician created numerous problems in the Indian caste politics. He never adopted his ancestral trading being a Vaishya. Even his youngest

son had married a Brahmin's daughter who had chosen to serve a newspaper magnate. But Gandhiji never condemned his son for not following his ancestral occupation. Ambedkar also raised a question against Gandhi's proposition for ancestral occupation in the following manner;

'If every one must pursue his ancestral calling then it must follow that a man must continue to be pimp because his grandfather was a pimp and a woman must continue to be a prostitute because her grandmother was a prostitute. Is the Mahatma prepared to accept the logical conclusion of his doctrine?'⁷¹

5.5. Conclusion

The ideas and views of Gandhiji and Ambedkar towards the issue of Caste and Untouchability were completely opposite to each other. Gandhiji was a staunch follower of the Caste Institution whereas Ambedkar was completely anti-Caste. The social philosophy of Gandhiji was built up upon the norms of the Caste System, the Varnashram Dharma and the Hindu religion whereas Ambedkar made his social philosophy on the basis of the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity. He said, that a Varna of a person should be determined not by his birth but by his merits whereas Gandhiji emphasized on birth criterion in this context. The occupation of a person was decided by the principle of hereditary professions of his forefathers. Gandhiji emphasized on the tradition of heredity in this contest. Gandhiji favored the concept of caste whereas Ambedkar was completely anti-Caste and build up an anti-Caste thesis and strongly demanded the eradication of the Caste Institution. But Gandhiji was completely unwilling to attack politically the Caste System. Ambedkar raised voice to annihilate this Institution. So he made up his mind to launch a direct anti-Caste movement. He encouraged the ill-fated caste-stricken poor peoples of India to fight to finish the Caste Institution. He believed in the norms of the social democracy and political democracy in this respect. But Gandhiji did not come forward to start a Satyagraha movement against the attitudes of the Caste Hindus who closed the doors of the Hindu temples for the Untouchables. That is why, Ambedkar played a vital role to establish the rights of worship for the Depressed Classes in the Hindu temples. Therefore, it can be pointed out that Gandhiji was a bearer of the Caste traditions whereas Ambedkar was an ardent follower of equality, liberty and

fraternity in this respect and played a vital role in establishing the concept of 'Social Justice' by protecting 'Human Rights' of the Depressed Classes in India.

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