

THE UNTOUCHABLE CLASSES
OF MAHARASHTRA

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The problem of Untouchability is beset with great difficulties and in order to approach to a right solution, it is highly essential to have first-hand information of the economic and social life of the Untouchable classes. It is also necessary for us to know the grievances and the remedies that these classes themselves have to suggest for them, the scope of their natural aspiration to rise to a higher level in the society and the difficulties that they have to meet therein. I have tried in the following pages to find exactly these things in some of the Marathi speaking Districts of the Bombay Presidency, and I feel sure, that from the results that I have got, it is possible to get a fair idea of the position of these classes as regards, both economic and social life, and it also will be easy for us to understand the exact solution for their age-long maladies.

In order to ascertain their social and economic conditions and also their view-point in matters relating to both, I have visited quite a large number of villages in the District that are under my survey, and acquired first-hand information, after moving, talking, and freely associating with them. This, of course, I could not do in all the cases in the families that I have studied and I had to depend in some cases, on the kindness of some local leaders, who furnished me quite promptly, the necessary information. Thus I collected correct information about nearly 600 families from the following Districts.

<i>Districts.</i>	<i>Number of schedules.</i>
1 Kolaba	100
2 Thana	64
3 Nasik	95
4 Satara	90
5 Ahmadnagar	55
6 Khandesh (East)	138
*7 Poona	28
*8 Belgaum	6
*9 Ratnagiri	6
*10 Sholapur	7
Total	589

† Summary of the Thesis, "Untouchability in Maharashtra," submitted for the degree of M.A. in 1935.

* Schedules from these Districts are not utilised in the following study as they are very few.

✓ The main castes among the Untouchables of the area under survey, are Mahars, Chamars, Mangs, Dhors and Bhangis,* and the following is the analysis of the 542 families that I have studied.

POPULATION

The following tables show the number of families of the different castes of the Untouchables, in the six Districts and the number of members in the families.

TABLE NO. 1.
(Showing the number of families)

Districts	Mahar	Chamar	Mang	Dhor	Bhangi	Total
1 Kolaba ...	67	25	4	...	4	100
2 Thana ...	49	13	...	...	2	64
3 Nasik ...	59	26	2	...	8	95
4 Satara ...	48	8	13	21	...	90
5 Ahmadnagar	37	6	6	6	...	55
6 Khandesh (East)	122	8	6	...	2	138
Total ...	382	86	31	27	16	542

TABLE NO. 2.
(Showing the number of Members in the families.)

Districts	Mahar		Chamar		Mang		Dhor		Bhangi		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1 Kolaba ...	224	199	100	97	13	11	...	...	11	9	348	316
2 Thana ...	167	142	47	47	...	...	...	...	5	4	219	193
3 Nasik ...	209	241	69	80	4	7	...	...	22	19	304	347
4 Satara ...	140	124	31	31	74	56	65	60	...	...	310	271
5 Ahmadnagar	174	179	21	16	20	21	29	21	...	...	244	237
6 Khandesh (East)	560	594	43	42	30	41	...	...	8	8	641	685
Total ...	1474	1479	311	313	141	136	94	81	46	40	2066	2049

M. = Male ; F. = Female.

* Bhangis are not really Natives of Maharashtra.

From the tables Nos. 1 and 2 we get the following table which shows the average size of a household of each caste in the six Districts. Of these households some may be purely natural families, i.e., parents living only with their unmarried children or with or without children only with the addition of some other relative like unmarried brother or sister, widowed sister, father's sister, brother's child, sister's child, paternal uncle's child, wife's mother, wife's brother or sister, etc. "Such families are essentially natural families, the relatives being such dependants, as do not affect the basic household group of husband and wife."¹ There also may be joint families with more married couples than one, forming a household. But I have made no such differentiation.

TABLE NO. 3.
(Showing the size of families.)

Districts	Mahar	Chamar	Mang	Dhor	Bhangi
1 Kolaba	6.3	7.9	6.0	...	5.0
2 Thana	6.1	7.2	...	...	4.5
3 Nasik	7.6	5.7	5.6	...	5.1
4 Satara	5.5	7.7	10.0	5.9	...
5 Ahmadnagar	9.5	6.1	6.8	8.3	...
6 Khandesh (East)	9.5	10.7	11.8	...	8.0
Total	7.7	7.3	9.0	7.0	5.4

We see that the average size of a family revealed by this inquiry is larger than the average Indian family which is taken to consist of only 5 to 6 persons per family. For instance the average size of a family in Pimpla-Saudagar as also in Jategaon Budruk is found to be 5.² In "Some Village Studies" in the Kolaba District "the average family is found out to be 5.66 persons ;"³ and the survey of the Konkan village also shows that the average size of the family is 4.6.⁴

1. "Some Village Studies," By S. R. Deshpande and Dr. G. S. Ghurye. *Indian Journal of Economics*, Vol. VII, 1926-27, p. 472.

2. "Land & Labour in a Deccan Village," by Dr. H. H. Mann. Study No. 1, p. 124, and Study No. 2, p. 107.

3. "Some Village Studies," By S. R. Deshpande and Dr. G. S. Ghurye. *Indian Journal of Economics*, Vol. VII, 1926-27, p. 472.

4. "Economic and Social Survey of a Konkan Village," By Mr. V. G. Ranade, p. 60.

It can be seen that the Mahars and the Mangs have greater percentage of the family members than the other three castes.

In the case of the Bhangis the percentage of the family members is moderate. The Bhangis are not permanent settlers of these places. They have migrated to this province either from U. P. or from Gujarat. So it might be probable that they must not have here all the members of their families, with them. At times they go in for more than one wife, but they do it only with the intention of adding one more earning member to their families.

TABLE No. 4.

(Showing the number of females per 100 males.)

Districts	Mahar	Chamar	Mang	Dhor	Bhangi
1 Kolaba	88	97	84	...	82
2 Thana	85	100	...	..	80
3 Nasik	115	116	175	...	86
4 Satara	88	100	75	92	...
5 Ahmadnagar ...	103	76	105	73	...
6 Khandesh (East) ...	106	98	137	...	100

Thus on the whole, there is an obvious deficiency of females except in Nasik and Khandesh (East) Districts and among the Mahars and the Mangs of Ahmadnagar District. It must be noted that the general proportion as found by the above figures agrees with the average Indian proportion as it can be seen from the Census Reports.

We shall now consider the distribution of population of the different castes in the six Districts according to age.

TABLE No. 5.

(A) (Mahars.)

Age	Below 1	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61 & above	Total
Male ..	60	188	214	158	197	268	153	128	68	40	1474
Female	46	195	242	194	242	217	148	103	51	41	1479
Total ..	106	383	456	352	439	485	301	231	119	81	2953

(B) (Chamars.)

Age.	Below 1	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61 & above.	Total
Male ...	7	36	52	30	50	51	40	19	11	15	311
Female ...	13	44	42	47	38	43	36	23	15	12	313
Total ...	20	80	94	77	88	94	76	42	26	27	624

(C) (Mangs.)

Age.	Below 1	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61 & above.	Total
Male ...	4	11	20	18	19	29	17	10	7	6	141
Female ...	1	15	21	16	23	32	7	12	2	7	136
Total ...	5	26	41	34	42	61	24	22	9	13*	277

(D) (Dhors.)

Age.	Below 1	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61 & above.	Total
Male ...	5	11	9	8	15	24	11	4	3	4	94
Female ...	3	9	12	7	17	14	10	4	1	4	81
Total ...	8	20	21	15	32	38	21	8	4	8	175

(E) (Bhangis)

Age.	Below 1	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61 & above.	Total
Male ...	5	5	9	6	4	7	6	2	1	1	46
Female ...	0	9	4	6	4	9	5	1	2	0	40
Total ...	5	14	13	12	8	16	11	3	3	1	86

It will be seen from the seventh and eighth columns of the Table No. 5A that there is a sharp drop in the number of living persons among the Mahars from 485 to 301.

MARRIAGE

The tables Nos. 6 and 7 show the three categories, *viz.*, Married, Unmarried and Widowed and their percentages to the population of the different castes of the Untouchables.

TABLE No. 6.
(Male.)

Category	Mahar	%	Chamar	%	Mang	%	Dhor	%	Bhangi	%	Total	%
Unmarried	681	46	128	41	64	45	42	45	24	52	939	45
Married	744	51	176	57	72	51	46	49	22	48	1060	51
Widowed	49	3	7	2	5	4	6	6	0	0	67	4

TABLE No. 7.
(Female.)

Category	Mahar	%	Chamar	%	Mang	%	Dhor	%	Bhangi	%	Total	%
Unmarried	440	30	84	27	37	27	22	27	15	37	598	29
Married	905	61	230	64	88	65	49	60	25	63	1267	62
Widowed	134	9	29	9	11	8	10	13	0	0	184	9

From tables Nos. 6-9 we can draw the following conclusions :—

(1) There is universality of marriage, among these people as it will be seen from the Tables Nos. 6 and 7, that there are very few males who are unmarried after the age of 20, and there are also very few females who are left unmarried after the age of 15. There is only one case of a Chamar girl in the Kolaba District, who is left unmarried even after the age of 20, as she has been mad from her childhood.

(2) It can be seen from the Tables Nos. 8 and 9 that, of the males aged 16 and above, 84 per cent. are married, 6 per cent. are widowers and the remaining 10 per cent. are unmarried. Of the females aged 16 and above, 83 per cent. are married, 16 per cent. are widows, and hardly 3 per cent. are unmarried. Of the males up to the age of 16, 6 per cent. are married and of the females 36 per cent. are married.

(3) There is a practice of early marriage on a large scale as it can be seen from the Tables Nos. 8 and 9. Out of the males up to the age of 15, 6 per cent. are married and up to the age of 20, 27 per cent. are married. Of the females, after the age of 15, there

TABLE No. 8.
(Male.)

AGE	MAHAR				CHAMAR				MANG				DHOR				BHANGI				TOTAL			
	M	U	W	Total	M	U	W	Total	M	U	W	Total	M	U	W	Total	M	U	W	Total	M	U	W	Total
1-15 ...	31	588	1	620	10	115	...	125	2	51	...	53	1	32	...	33	4	21	...	25	48	807	1	856
16 & above	713	93	48	854	166	13	7	186	70	13	5	88	45	10	6	61	18	3	...	21	1012	132	66	1210
Total ...	744	681	49	1474	176	128	7	311	72	64	5	141	46	42	6	94	22	24	...	46	1060	939	67	2066

TABLE No. 9.
(Female.)

AGE	MAHAR				CHAMAR				MANG				DHOR				BHANGI				TOTAL			
	M	U	W	Total	M	U	W	Total	M	U	W	Total	M	U	W	Total	M	U	W	Total	M	U	W	Total
1-15 ...	238	439	...	677	63	83	...	146	17	36	...	53	9	22	...	31	4	15	...	19	331	595	...	926
16 & above	667	1	134	802	137	1	29	167	71	1	11	83	40	...	10	50	21	...	...	21	936	3	184	1123
Total ...	905	440	134	1479	200	84	29	313	88	37	11	136	49	22	10	81	25	15	...	40	1267	598	184	2049

NOTE :—M = Married ; U = Unmarried ; W = Widowed.

are only 3 girls who are left unmarried out of 2,049 females and one of them as stated above, is a mad girl. Thus we may conclude that early marriage among them is almost the rule.

(4) There is a large proportion of widows as it can be seen from the Table No. 9. Up to the age of 15 there are no widows but after that age, there are 184 widows out of 1,123 females, which means the percentage of the widows to the total number of females above 15 is 16. At the same time it is seen from the Table No. 8 that out of 1,210 males there are 66 males that is 6 per cent. who are widowers.

DEATH

TABLE NO. 10.

(Male.)

(Showing Deaths according to ages.)

Caste	Below 1	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61 & above.	Total.
Mahar ...	73	70	9	12	7	15	3	11	24	14	238
Chamar ...	30	15	1	3	2	4	3	4	5	11	78
Mang ...	2	5	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	6	15
Dhor ...	10	7	0	1	0	1	0	3	3	3	28
Bhangi ...	4	7	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	12
Total ...	119	104	11	17	9	21	6	18	32	34	371

TABLE NO. 11.

(Female.)

(Showing Deaths according to ages.)

Caste.	Below 1	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-30	40-31	41-50	51-60	61 & above.	Total.
Mahar ...	44	49	17	10	13	18	9	22	13	8	203
Chamar ...	9	10	7	3	5	6	4	6	2	3	55
Mang ...	4	8	3	0	1	4	1	0	2	3	26
Dhor ...	3	3	3	0	0	3	1	1	0	1	15
Bhangi ...	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Total ...	61	71	30	13	20	31	15	29	17	15	302

According to the data that I have at my disposal, the number of deaths that might have occurred, during the last ten years, are tabulated above. Yet it cannot be said with certainty that all deaths that might have occurred during the last ten years, have been recorded here. The above tables are the simple records of the number of deaths that have occurred, at the different ages, during the last ten years, and from these tables we can roughly draw the following conclusions :

(1) The total number of deaths among these classes is 673 while the total number of deaths below the age of one year is 180. Thus the percentage of infant deaths per 100 of total deaths is 26.7. The highest percentage of infant deaths in the Bombay Presidency, during the last five years, recorded is 24.48. From these figures we can conclude that the infant mortality among these classes is very high.*

(2) The percentage of deaths below six years, among the males is 60, and among the females is 44, which means on an average child mortality is very high among these people within the first five years of life.

(3) The number of deaths between the ages of 16 to 20 and 21 to 30 is proportionately higher among the females than among the males. This may probably be due to the risks attendant on pregnancy.

(4) After the age of 50 the number of deaths among males are proportionately higher than the number of deaths among women.

LITERACY

TABLE No. 12.

(Showing literacy among different castes of the Untouchables.)

Caste.	Males.			Females.			Total.		
	No. of Liter.	No. of Illit.	Total.	No. of Liter.	No. of Illit.	Total.	No. of Liter.	No. of Illit.	Total.
Mahar ...	314	1160	1474	37	1442	1479	351	2602	2953
Chamar ...	94	217	311	5	308	313	99	525	624
Mang ...	33	108	141	0	136	136	33	244	277
Dhor ...	21	73	94	2	79	81	23	152	175
Bhangi ...	7	39	46	0	40	40	7	79	86
Total ...	469	1597	2066	44	2005	2049	513	3602	4115

* Seventieth Annual Report of the Director of Public Health for the Government of Bombay, 1933, p. 10.

TABLE NO. 13.

(Showing literacy of the Untouchables in the six Districts.)

Districts.	Males.			Females.			Total.		
	No. of Liter.	No. of Illit.	Total.	No. of Liter.	No. of Illit.	Total.	No. of Liter.	No. of Illit.	Total.
1. Kolaba ...	126	222	348	9	307	316	135	529	664
2. Thana ...	41	178	219	4	189	193	45	367	412
3. Nasik ...	87	217	304	15	332	347	102	549	651
4. Satara ...	92	218	310	8	263	271	100	481	581
5. Ahmadnagar.	63	181	244	4	233	237	67	414	481
6. Khandesh (East)	60	581	641	4	681	685	64	1262	1326
Total ...	469	1597	2066	44	2005	2049	513	3602	4115

TABLE NO. 14.

(Showing standard of literacy.)

Districts	Mahar			Chamar			Mang			Dhor			Bhangi			Total		
	V. F. & Trained	Matric	Higher Edu.	V. F. & Trained	Matric	Higher Edu.	V. F. & Trained	Matric	Higher Edu.	V. F. & Trained	Matric	Higher Edu.	V. F. & Trained	Matric	Higher Edu.	V. F. & Trained	Matric	Higher Edu.
Kolaba ...	4	1	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6	1	...
Thana ...	5	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6	...	...
Nasik ...	5	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5	1	...
Satara ...	7	1	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	8	1	3
Ahmadnagar...	3	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	3	1	1
Khandesh (East)	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Total ...	25	3	1	3	1	...	1	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	29	4	4	

TABLE NO. 15.

(Showing English Literacy.)

Districts	Mahar	Chamar	Mang	Dhor	Bhangi	Total
1 Kolaba ...	21	2	...	...	...	23
2 Thana ...	1	...	...	...	...	1
3 Nasik ...	13	1	...	...	...	14
4 Satara ...	8	7	3	7	...	25
5 Ahmadnagar ...	8	2	1	2	...	13
6 Khandesh (East)	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total ...	51	12	4	9	...	76

From the above tables we get the following conclusions :—

(1) The percentage of literacy among the Chamars is higher than any of the other castes of the Untouchables. This might be due to the fact that the Chamars are economically better off than any of the other castes of the Untouchables.

(2) Although the percentage of literacy among Mahars is less than the Chamars, yet the number of persons who have passed the Vernacular final examination, who have taken Secondary and Higher education, is proportionately greater than any of the other castes of the Untouchables, as it can be seen from the Table No. 14.

(3) The Mangs have less percentage of literacy than the other castes of Untouchables except Bhangis. They have the poorest lot, as they are economically very backward.

(4) Out of the total number of women 2,049, there are only 44 women who are literate, i.e., who are just able to read and write. The rest of them, i.e., nearly 98 per cent. are totally illiterate.

(5) The percentage of literacy in English is higher in Satara District than in any of the other Districts.

(6) The percentage in English literacy in the Kolaba District is recorded here, higher, on account of the Military Pensioners residing in the District.

(7) Nasik has a fair percentage of literacy in English probably due to the following reasons :—

- (a) There is general awakening of these people on a larger scale than any other District.
- (b) There is provision for English education for the Railway Servant at Manmad and there is a fair representation of the Untouchables (especially of the Mahars) in the Railway Service. Naturally these people find convenient to send their children to the High School.
- (c) The average economic conditions of these people, in this District are far better than that of any other District under survey, and that may be the reason why there is a high percentage of literacy.
- (d) There are hostels meant for these people at two places and the Railway line running through the District as well as a quick Motor Service between the Taluka Towns help the parents to keep their children, in the hostels, at distant places.

(8) Ahmadnagar has a fair percentage of literacy in English. It may probably be due to the Missionary activities of helping these people in matters of education and others, as Ahmadnagar is the stronghold of Missionary activities in Maharashtra.

(9) Khandesh (East) is the most backward District as far as literacy is concerned due to its economic backwardness.

(10) The table No. 14 shows that the Mahars have larger percentage of English knowing persons. This shows that the Mahars have become more keen, in having higher education than any other community of the Untouchables.

(11) There is only one girl in the Kolaba District, who can be said to be literate in English by courtesy as she has taken education in English up to the Third Standard.

On the whole it must be noted that the percentage of literacy is much higher than what is actually recorded in the Census Report of 1931. Most of the villages from which I have collected the statistics have primary schools in the villages or in the near vicinity. On the other hand there are a large number of villages in Maharashtra without any school, even within an area of three miles from the village proper.

OCCUPATION

TABLE No. 16.

(Showing the number of persons following different occupations.)

	Mahar.			Chamar.			Mang.			Dhor.			Bhangi.			Total.		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
1 Agri- culture.	177	128	305	20	21	41	1	2	3	2	4	6	200	155	355	
2 Pub. Admn.	15	...	15	2	...	2	17	...	17	
3 Vatan	75	...	75	75	...	75	
4 Casual Labour.	356	311	667	9	33	42	7	9	16	7	9	16	379	362	741	
5 Swee- pers.	9	2	11	9	2	11	
6 Tea- chers.	26	...	26	3	...	3	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	30	...	30
7 Sca- vengers.	20	13	33	20	13	33	
8 Shop- keepers.	2	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	2
9 Car- penters.	8	...	8	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	9	...	9
10 Priests	2	...	2	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	3
11 Rope- makers.	...	...	...	...	...	...	52	38	90	...	...	...	...	52	38	90
12 Sho- makers.	...	...	...	110	...	110	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	110	...	110
13 Busi- ness.	8	...	8	...	...	...	3	...	3	3	...	3	...	14	...	14
14 Domes- tic Service.	18	...	18	4	...	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	22	...	22
15 Tan- ning.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	34	7	41	...	34	7	41
16 Cart- men.	5	...	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5	...	5
17 Miscel.	9	1	10	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	9	1	10
Total ...	710	442	1152	149	54	203	65	49	114	46	20	66	20	13	33	990	578	1568

N.B.—M = Male ; F = Female ; T = Total.

If we take into consideration the four broad divisions of occupations, *viz.*, Agriculture, Casual Labour, Hereditary occupations and the rest, we get the following table.

TABLE NO. 17.
(In percentage.)

Nature of Occupation	Mahar	Chamar	Mang	Dhor	Bhangi	Total
Agriculture ...	26.5	20.0	26	9.0	...	22.6
Casual Labour ...	58.0	21.0	14.0	26.0	...	47.4
Hereditary Occupation ...	6.5	54.0	79.0	62.0	100.0	23.0
Other Occupations ...	9.0	5.0	4.4	3.0	...	7.0

From the above tables we come to the following conclusions :—

(1) A majority of these people except the Mahars, are depending upon their hereditary occupations. The Mahars have no permanent occupation yielding permanent income. Some of them have the Vatans but the payment they get for their services is so low that they have to depend upon other sources of income or upon the earnings of the other members of their families. This can be seen from the questions put and the answers received from the Government, in the Bombay Legislative Council debates that a Mahar in the Thana and Ahmadnagar Districts gets Rs. 1½ per month from the Government for his services; in the East Khandesh District he gets Rs. 1½; in the Nasik District he gets 13 as. 4 p. per month and in the Satara District he gets 2 as. 1 p. per month.¹ The other sources of income of these Mahars who are holding the Vatans, are the Inam lands and the Baluta or the collection of grain from the villagers. The lands given Inam to these people are divided and sub-divided now, to such an extent that they get practically no income or so little, that it is insignificant. As far as the Baluta is concerned nothing can be said with certainty about its collection. It all depends upon the economic conditions and goodwill of the villagers. In my investigations I have found, that in quite a large number of villages, for some reason or the other, the relations of the Mahars are not in perfect harmony with the villagers and naturally they have to forego the income they would have received from the Baluta. Besides the villagers themselves are reduced to such poverty that they are never in a position to part with any portion of their income which is itself insufficient for their needs.

The Mahars carry on also the skinning work of dead animals but it yields very little income and therefore it cannot be taken as a substantial addition to their total income.

1. "Bombay Legislative Council Debates" Official Report, Vol. XXIII, page 710.

(2) As the Mahars have no regular hereditary occupation, naturally they have to depend upon other types of occupations and that is the reason why we find 58 per cent. of them wholly depending upon Casual Labour. But Casual Labour is not found at all times of the year and on all occasions. It is casual in type of occupation and also it is casual in duration of time. Moreover, demand for such labour also depends upon the general economic condition of the population. So it cannot be said with certainty that these people who are depending upon Casual Labour, can get it, at all times. On the contrary, leaving aside a few days during the harvest time, a majority of these people find it very difficult to get employment even for ten days on an average, out of a month, and for the rest of the time they have nothing to do but to sit idle. That is the reason why we find economic backwardness among them to a greater extent, than among the Chamars and the Bhangis who have some hereditary occupation of their own.

(3) As far as agriculture is concerned 26.5 per cent. of the Mahars and 20 per cent. of the Chamars are depending upon it. But only very few of them have lands of their own, and the majority of them are cultivating the rented lands, with the result that they find it very difficult to depend upon agriculture solely, for their maintenance.

(4) The Mangs are not so much depending upon agriculture, probably because they have a hereditary occupation of their own. They are economically so low that they have no capital to invest nor have they sufficient credit to raise any loan for initial expenses. Besides, more or less they are taken to be wandering tribes and naturally they have no status in any particular village.

(5) Although the number of persons, following other occupations such as Teaching, Carpentry, Shop-keeping, Business, Public Administration, etc., is to some little extent higher among Mahars than the other castes, still on the whole they are very few, not even one per cent. of the total number of persons following the different occupations. The reasons for this are obvious. Firstly, they are educationally very backward ; so naturally they are very few in number, in the teaching profession and in public administration. Secondly, as far as shop-keeping and carpentry are concerned their untouchability comes in their way and it is not possible for them to carry on these occupations on a large scale, as there will be no public demand. The few persons, only ten in number, who are following these occupations, depend upon their own people, and in few cases upon the Mohammedans.

(6) As far as business is concerned, it has become possible

for a few Mahars only in Nasik District and for a few Mangs and Dhors in the Satara District to do this. In the Nasik District the Railway line passing through the District, has helped them to take petty contracts of supplying sand, stones, bricks, etc., and also of constructing small buildings for the Railway purposes. Thus it has helped a few of them to improve to some extent, their economic conditions and thus some of them are able to take big contracts for constructing buildings, etc., for others than the Railway Company. In Satara and Ahmadnagar Districts the Dhors carry the business of getting raw skins from the Mahars and after tanning them they supply them to the leather-merchants in the cities. This has helped them to improve their economic condition.

(7) I have found that in some parts of the Thana District, where the Railway line is running through, it has become possible for a few Mahars to carry on the occupation of cartmen.

(8) A very few of them, especially the Mahars, carry on the occupation of priesthood. They conduct the marriages of their own community and guide them in other religious affairs.

(9) Eighteen persons among the Mahars and four persons among the Chamars are employed as domestic servants. Of the Mahars, most of them are employed with Mohammedans who have advanced debt to them for their marriage purposes and in return they have to serve a fixed number of years as domestic servants. During their service they get very insignificant remuneration from their employers.

(10) A few of the Mahars are economically so backward that they cannot follow any occupation and are forced to resort to begging.

TABLE NO. 18.
(Showing Earners, Subsidiary Earners and Dependants.)

CASTE	Principal Earners			Subsidiary Earners			Dependants			Total		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Mahar ...	374	6	380	337	435	772	763	1038	1801	1474	1479	2953
Chamar ...	86	...	86	63	54	117	162	259	421	311	313	624
Mang ...	31	...	31	34	49	83	76	87	163	141	136	277
Dhor ...	27	...	27	19	20	39	48	61	109	94	81	175
Bhangi ...	16	...	16	4	13	17	26	27	53	46	40	86
Total ...	534	6	540	457	571	1028	1075	1472	2547	2066	2049	4115

NOTE.—M = Male ; F = Female ; T = Total.

TABLE NO. 19.
(In percentage.)

CASTE	EARNERS		DEPENDANTS	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Mahar	48	29	52	71
Chamar	48	17	52	83
Mang	46	36	54	64
Dhor	49	25	51	75
Bhangi	44	33	56	67

From these tables we arrive at the following broad conclusions :—

(1) The percentage of male earners is, roughly speaking, uniform being 48 per cent. in all the castes except in the Bhangis.

(2) Among the female earners the Mangs have greater percentage than any other castes of the Untouchables. Rope-twining is a convenient occupation which can be managed by women, during their leisure hours.

(3) Thirty-three per cent. of the Bhangi women are employed and they all carry on no other work except scavenging.

(4) Some of the Mahar women carry on, the Agricultural work or get some casual labour as well as agricultural labour.

If we leave aside the number of children below the age of 15 and old men and women above the age of 50, we get the following percentages of earners among the males and females of the Untouchable classes.

TABLE NO. 20.
(In percentage.)

Percentage.	Mahar.	Chamar.	Mang.	Dhor.	Bhangi.
Male	84	93	88	85	100
Female	62	39	66	45	67

From the above table it is seen, that among males, the Bhangis and the Chamars have more employment than the other castes. These people have their hereditary occupation which allows better scope for work than the other hereditary occupations.

EARNINGS

TABLE NO. 21.

(Showing the number of households having different monthly income.)

Caste.	Monthly Income in Rs.									Total.
	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-40	41-50	51 & above.	
Mahar ...	105	137	56	32	15	11	16	3	4	379*
Chamar ...	8	16	19	14	11	2	7	4	3	84*
Mang ...	9	11	6	3	...	...	1	1	...	31
Dhor ...	6	9	3	1	4	...	...	2	2	27
Bhangi ...	...	...	2	2	1	7	2	1	1	16
Total ...	128	173	86	52	31	20	26	11	10	537*

From the above table we get the following conclusions :—

(1) On the whole, taking a general view of the Untouchables, we find that 24 per cent. of their families have monthly income of less than Rs. 5 and nearly 32 per cent. of them have a monthly income of more than Rs. 5 but less than Rs. 10. This shows that the majority of them is in utterly depressed conditions, as far as their economic conditions are concerned.

(2) The Mahars and the Mangs are extremely poor as it can be seen that nearly 64 per cent. of the Mahars and 65 per cent. of the Mangs have monthly income of not more than Rs. 10.

(3) The Chamars and the Bhangis are economically a bit better off than the Mahars and the Mangs, probably because they have their own hereditary occupations.

* In Kolaba District 3 families from the Mahar community and 2 families from the Chamar community are omitted on account of want of information.

TABLE NO. 22.

(Showing average income in Rupees per family and per capita.)

Caste.	No. of Families.	Total income per month.	Income per month.	Income per month per capita.
Mahar	379*	4358/12	11.5	1.5
Chamar	84*	1635/4	19.5	2.6
Mang	31	342/8	11.1	1.2
Dhor	27	1459	21.5**	2.9**
Bhangi	16	451	28.2	5.2
Total	537*	8246/8	13.5	2.0

The above table gives us the following indications :—

(1) The average annual income of a Mahar family comes to Rs. 138, that of a Chamar family comes to Rs. 234, that of a Mang family comes to nearly Rs. 133, and that of a Bhangi family comes to Rs. 338/8. In the case of a Dhor family some explanation is necessary. There are 27 Dhor families and the total monthly income as given in the above table is Rs. 1,459. But there is one family having the exceptional income of Rs. 1,000 per month. So leaving aside that family the average annual income of a Dhor family comes to nearly Rs. 212.

If we compare these figures with the incomes of agriculturists made known through the few studies in this area, we find how some of the Untouchable castes on the whole, are extremely economically backward. For instance the annual income per family of Pimpla Soudagar is Rs. 218¹; and that of Jategaon Budruk a village in the Poona District is Rs. 169/13². In some villages of the Kolaba District, the annual income per family is Rs. 218/6/11³, lastly in the "social and

* In Kolaba District 3 families from the Mahar community and 2 families from the Chamar community are omitted on account of want of information.

** Leaving aside the exceptional family of having the income of Rs. 1,000 per month.

1. "Land and Labour in a Deccan Village," Study No. 1, by Dr. Mann, page 129.

2. "Land and Labour in Deccan Village," Study No. 2, By Dr. Mann, page 116.

3. "Indian Journal of Economics," Vol. VII, 1926-27, page 427. "Some Village Studies," By Mr. Deshpande and Dr. Ghurye.

economic survey of a Konkan village" the annual income per family is found to be Rs. 281.¹

Judging from the above figures we can say that the Mahars and the Mangs are far below the average standard of income of an average villager that is found out from the above studies. The Dhors and the Chamars are just on the line of the average standard of income and it is only the Bhangis that have an income one and half times that of an average villager.

(2) Leaving aside the Bhangis the annual income per capita of the other castes is extremely low and it is not sufficient to satisfy the necessary requirements.

CATTLE

What Dr. Mann says regarding the position of the agricultural stock of the Deccan is practically true in the case of all the six Districts under survey. He says, "It can never be insisted on too much, that most of the Deccan is not really a cattle country. The grazing almost everywhere is poor and though it is a country in which sheep and goats can find a living, cattle have either to be fed for a considerable part of the year or they are half starved, and at intervals of few years there comes a famine and a large number die and disappear."² "In a few places where waste land abound, or where the facilities of fodder and water are particularly good, large number of cattle are kept, and sheep and goat are pastured during the part of the year. But with all this, the animals are relatively few and are chiefly kept for actual use."³

This is the case regarding the general agricultural classes but out of the untouchables that are under my survey 22.6 per cent. depend upon agriculture and the rest either on agricultural labour or on their hereditary occupations. Naturally they are never in a pressing necessity nor can they afford to keep cattle. For instance the Bhangis are in no way concerned with agriculture and have none of the agricultural stock. Besides a large number of the Untouchables do not own the land they cultivate. It has been rented to them and naturally it will not be economically a good bargain to keep the cattle throughout, when practically for all the seasons of the year except

1. "Social and Economic Survey of a Konkan Village," By Mr. V. G. Ranade, page 93.

2. "Land and Labour in a Deccan Village," By Dr. Mann, Study No. 1, page 97.

3. "Land and Labour in a Deccan Village," By Dr. Mann, Study No. 1, page 116.

one, they have no work. In such cases they hire the neighbour's bullocks at the time of sowing and anyhow finish their work of ploughing.

The actual number of the animals belonging to these classes may be seen from the following table.

TABLE NO. 23.
(Showing number of cattle.)

CASTE	Milking Animals		Working Animals		Ovine Cattle		Total Cattle	
	Cows	She-Buf.	Bull.	He-Buf.	Sheep	Other Animals	Bovine	Ovine
Mahar ...	207	32	290	30	126	6	559	132
Chamar	76	14	64	20	19	2	174	21
Mang ...	13	5	16	...	44	3	34	47
Dhor ...	14	10	29	...	5	3	53	8
Bhangi ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total ...	310	61	399	50	184	14	820	208

The Bovine cattle are not evenly distributed among these people but are found mostly with those people who are depending on agriculture for their maintenance. They are 26.5 per cent. among the Mahars, 20.0 among the Chamars, 2.6 per cent. among the Mangs and 9.0 per cent. among the Dhors.

Milking Animals :—The milking animals are comparatively fewer with these people than the other agricultural Hindu classes as it will be seen from the study of the two villages in the Deccan by Dr. Mann, and the study of one village in the Konkan by Mr. V. G. Ranade. Here their position is peculiar and their untouchability is responsible for it. No caste Hindu would think of buying milk from these people owing to caste prejudices. Nay, even the caste differentiation goes to such an extent, that the Mahar is unwilling to take milk from the Mang and the Chamar never takes it from the Bhangi. So "There are minute rules as to what sort of food or drink can be accepted by a person and from what caste."¹ In short the whole caste system is based upon the restrictions on feeding and drinking. Consequently none can take even water from these people, much less milk and food. The result is obvious. There is no demand for the milk that they get from the cows and she-buffaloes and it is thus

1. "Castes and Race in India," By G. S. Ghurye, p. 7.

wasted. For, rarely they are in the habit of preparing curds and butter-milk, etc., out of it. So generally what they do is that they take out the necessary milk that is required for tea and for the children and the rest they allow the calves to suck. It is true that "the production of milk for urban consumers presents problems of great complexity."¹ So what is true of the agriculturists is also true of the Untouchables. The only difference is that the other agriculturists use milk for its other products which somehow or other is not in vogue among the Untouchables. "All of them are principally concerned with the cow as the mother of their bullocks and attach only secondary importance to its milking capacity."²

All the cattle that they possess are not necessarily bought by them. There is a practice prevalent in almost all these Districts that a small female calf is given to anybody to be brought up and after it is fully grown into a cow is to be returned to the owner after taking its first issue. Thus it becomes convenient for them to have bullocks for the agricultural purposes which is their main point in view, in passing through all these transactions.

Lastly as far as the ovine cattle are concerned they are not kept on a large scale and as such they cannot be said to be of any substantial economic help to them. They are kept more for the sake of hobby than for utility.

MARRIAGE EXPENDITURE

Although there might be various causes of indebtedness of the Untouchables, such as recurrence of bad seasons in some Districts as Ahmadnagar and East Khandesh, the small margin of profit even in good years, want of suitable work, especially for Mahars and Mangs and women of all these classes, during all the seasons of the year, the joint family system among them which "tends to create drones and helps to swell the number of dependants whom the working members of the family have to support," universal poverty among them, and the usurious and oppressive methods pursued by the Sowcars, yet the principal cause that I have found which leads them to perpetual indebtedness is proportionately the heavy expenditure that they incur on marriage purposes which they try to perform with their utmost pomp in order to keep up their prestige and which more or less has become the unwritten law of these communities. For instance, the following is the actual expenditure of a Mahar boy's marriage in the Panvel Taluka, Kolaba District, whose family income is not more than Rs. 7|8 a month, and who has to support a family of six members.

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1. Royal Commission Report on Agriculture in India, p. 23.
 2. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

An account of marriage expenditure of a Mahar boy in the Panvel Taluka, Kolaba District, in 1930.

Rs. a. p.

25—0—0	For ornaments for the bride (Rs. 10 for a necklace and Rs. 15 for a Vela).
1—8—0	Ornaments for the toes and fingers of the bride.
2—0—0	"Mangal-Sutra" a sort of necklace to be worn by the bride on the marriage day.
4—0—0	Special Saree for the bride's mother.
4—0—0	Green Saree for the bride.
3—0—0	White Saree for the bride.
8—0—0	Special Saree for the bride.
2—0—0	Special Bodice made of rich cloth for the bride.
10—0—0	Saree and Dhoties for the bride's sisters and brothers.
2—0—0	Spent on liquor on the first day when the offer of marriage was made.
2—0—0	Spent on liquor for those who had gone to the market to purchase Sarees, Dhoties and other cloth.
5—0—0	Spent while returning back with the bride to the bridegroom's house for liquor.
11—4—0	Given to the Community for the marriage celebrations.
25—0—0	Cost of 3 goats given to the community for the marriage
15—0—0	Cost of dinner given to those who had assembled on the marriage day.
20—0—0	Total expenses during the four marriage days for dinner etc.
10—0—0	Expense of the dinner given to relatives.
1—4—0	Given to a Brahmin when he was consulted.
3—0—0	Fees of the Mahar Joshi who conducted the marriage ceremony.
25—0—0	Dowry given to the bride's father on the day of betrothal.
7—0—0	Wages of the Music instrumentalists engaged during the marriage days.
0—8—0	Expenses for dismantling the marriage Mandap.

186—8—0 Total.

From the above statement we can see how these people spend on marriage purposes lavishly, without the least consideration of their economic position. The result is obvious. They have to incur debt even at usurious rates of interest and there is no wonder that a major portion of them "are born in debt, live in debt and die in debt." As for instance the above family of which the account of marriage expenses is given is under a debt of Rs. 250 out of which Rs. 150 are borrowed on the condition that 18 maunds of paddy are to be given per year to the creditor as interest on the sum. This means that according to the prevailing prices of paddy the rate of interest per annum will be 18 per cent. But this is according to the present day prices of the paddy, but at the time when the debt was incurred the price of the paddy was double that of the present day and the rate of

interest that was fixed was 36 per cent. The remaining Rs. 100 were borrowed at the time of the marriage, that is 4 years back, on the condition that he was to give annually for 4 years 20 maunds of paddy. Taking into consideration the prices of paddy that were, at that time Rs. 2¼ to Rs. 2⅞ per maund, he had to pay back Rs. 180 within four years for the sum he had borrowed. He has failed to return back the sum or to pay it in kind and the creditor has filed a suit against him. Now it is left to us to imagine what will be the fate of the debtor.

This system of spending excessively for the marriage purposes is not prevalent among the Mahars only, but is universally common in all the castes of the Untouchables as it will be seen from the following table :—

TABLE NO. 24.

(Showing the marriage expenses of the different castes of the Untouchables.)

Amount of Expenditure In Rupees	MAHAR		CHAMAR		MANG		DHOR		BHANGI	
	No. of Families	Total Amt.	No. of Families	Total Amt.	No. of Families	Total Amt.	No. of Families	Total Amt.	No. of Families	Total Amt.
Below 50	27	1110	1	50	5	175	1	25	...	...
51-100	56	5017	5	475	9	835	2	200	...	...
101-150	54	7425	5	695	1	130	...	...	2	275
151-200	45	8817	11	2200	2	400	5	1000	1	200
201-250	22	5450	8	2000	1	225	...	...	...	...
251-300	18	5350	10	3000	4	1175	...	...	...	...
301-350	4	1375	9	3150	...	...	2	700	1	350
351-400	4	1600	9	3600	1	400	2	800	...	...
401-450	...	...	4	1800	...	...	5	2250	2	900
451-500	2	1000	4	2000	...	...	2	1000	...	...
501-600	1	600	2	1150	...	...	1	600	...	...
601-700	...	...	1	700	...	...	...	...	...	...
701-800	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	1550
801-1000	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	1750
1001 and above.	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	6000	...	...
Total ...	233	37744	69	20820	23	3340	21	12575	10	5025

It can be seen that of these classes, the Bhangis have to spend much more than any other castes. The dowry that they have to pay to the bride's father varies from Rs. 100 to Rs. 500 ; and other items of expenditure that they have to suffer which is uncommon to other castes is the travelling expenses. The Bhangis are scattered far and wide in the important cities of Maharashtra, where the scavenging system is introduced. It will not be always possible to find the local bride and so they have to hunt from places to places or in Bombay which is supposed to be a central place of these people ; and in case of settlement of marriage the bridegroom's family is to go to the bride's place. This naturally involves heavy expenditure of travelling which at times goes to Rs. 100 to Rs. 200. I have found out a case in the Nasik District where out of the total marriage expenditure of Rs. 900 nearly Rs. 650 were spent on dowry and the travelling expenses and the rest on the other items of marriage. He had incurred a debt of Rs. 900 for the expenses and there will be no reason for us to believe that he will not remain perpetually in debt.

From the above table we can see that of all the castes of the Untouchables the Mangs spend the least on the marriage ceremonies as they are financially very backward. Yet they are not immune from the marriage debts and from the unhealthy consequences thereof. To them, also, a Sowcar for marriage debt is an " indispensable necessity" and as they have the least security to offer, they are totally crushed under the heavy and usurious rates of interest of the Pathan Sowcars. We will now see in comparison with the above table the marriage debts that these classes incur. But before that it must be remembered that such extravagant expenditure for marriage purpose is not confined only to the Untouchable classes. The other classes of Hindus, especially the agriculturists and the labourers are also in the habit of spending very much above their capacity and unfortunately they have also to suffer the same sad consequences of their indebtedness.

It is seen from the table No. 25 that out of 233 Mahar families 199 families, that is 85 per cent. had to incur debt for the marriage expenses ; of the 69 Chamar families, 55 families that is 80 per cent. are indebted for marriage purposes ; so also 78 per cent. of the Mang families, 62 per cent. of the Dhor families and 90 per cent. of the Bhangi families had to approach the Sowcars for debt, with which they have celebrated their sons' and daughters' marriages. Most of the Mahars have no sound economic standing. For the little land they had, has slowly passed into the Sowcars' hands. They have now been reduced to the position of hired labourers. To them the problem of indebtedness is a very difficult nut to crack. They have

TABLE NO. 25.

(Marriage Debt.)

Amount in Rupees	MAHAR		CHAMAR		MANG		DHOR		BHANGI	
	No. of Families	Total Amt.	No. of Families	Total Amt.	No. of Families	Total Amt.	No. of Families	Total Amt.	No. of Families	Total Amt.
50 & Below	25	1040	1	50	5	155	...	...	...	...
51-100	55	4960	6	575	6	535	3	300	...	...
101-150	45	6150	7	970	1	130	1	150	2	275
151-200	39	7667	19	3775	...	...	4	800	1	260
201-250	17	4225	8	2000	1	225	...	...	...	...
251-300	13	3850	6	1800	4	1175	2	600	...	...
301-350	3	1050	3	1050	...	...	...	...	1	350
351-400	...	...	1	400	1	400	1	400	...	...
401-450	...	...	1	450	...	...	2	900	2	900
451-500	2	1000	2	1000	...	...	...	...	...	...
501-600	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
601-700	...	...	1	700	...	...	...	...	...	...
701-800	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	800
801-1000	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	1750
1000 and above	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
TOTAL	199	29942	55	12770	18	2620	13	3150	9	4275

no other course open but to work as agricultural labourers on the Sowcar's farms or as domestic servants in the Muslim Sowcar houses. The debt that they borrow for the marriage purposes is recovered by means of service for a certain number of years as domestic servants. For instance one Mahar boy of the village Badlapur, District Thana, who got married last year at the age of 15, is under a debt of Rs. 100 taken from a local Muslim Sowcar. He has to serve for a period of seven years as a domestic servant in that Muslim Sowcar's house and after that period he will be set free. During the service he is to get food and fixed number of clothes and a pair of sandals. This practice is to some extent, in vogue, practically in all the Districts in which I have carried my research work but more particularly it is very much in common usage in the Kolaba and Thana Districts.

TABLE NO. 26.

(Showing marriage expenses, marriage debt and debt for other than marriage purposes.)

Caste.	Families incurring debt for marriage purposes.				Families incurring debt for other than marriage purposes.							
	No. of Families.	Marriage expenses.	Marriage Debt.	Present Debt.	Families incurring no debt for marriage expenses.				Families having no marriages and yet in debt.			
					No. of Families.	Marriage expenses.	Marriage Debt.	Present Debt.	No. of Families.	Marriage expenses.	Marriage Debt.	Present Debt.
Mahar...	199	32,557	29,942	21,744/8	34	5,187	...	4,780	79	...	...	8,497
Chamar	55	17,095	12,770	7,540	14	3,725	...	450	13	...	...	988
Mang ...	18	2,655	2,620	1,745	5	685	...	...	3	...	...	150
Dhor ...	13	3,750	3,150	2,275	8	8,825	...	400	1	...	...	100
Bhangi	9	4,275	4,275	2,776	1	750	...	...	4	...	...	570
Total ...	294	60,332	52,757	36,090/8	62	19,172	...	5,630	160	...	...	10,305

The above table indicates the following significant indications.

(1) Out of 356 families only 62 families could bear the marriage expenses without incurring any debts for the marriage. The rest had to seek sowcars in order to have their sons and daughters got married.

(2) Out of the total marriage expenditure of Rs. 79,504, Rs. 52,757 were borrowed from the sowcars. This clearly shows that out of the total marriage expenditure nearly 69 per cent. of it was covered by debt.

The above state of affairs is not conspicuously true, only for the Untouchable classes. It can be generally applied to all the agricultural classes of the Bombay Presidency who, like the Untouchables, lack education, lack social stability, lack security for the debts they borrow, lack the permanent sources of income on which they can fall upon like some castes of the Untouchables. The result is obvious. They are equally degraded in their economic position and are equally susceptible to social traditions even at the cost of their economic stability.

INDEBTEDNESS

Collection of figures showing indebtedness of the Untouchables was a difficult task. I have found many cases where the borrowers themselves did not know the exact amount of their debt and in such cases they were naturally at the mercy of the money-lenders. In some cases I have found that they were not ready to expose their real position regarding their indebtedness, probably due to their sense of

prestige among their fellow-castemen. Some tried to overestimate it and others to underestimate it. But I have collected the figures with utmost precaution, verifying them from all possible sources and I can say, with confidence that on the whole, the figures that I have collected from the six Districts, are not far from the truth.

TABLE NO. 27.
(Showing the frequency and extent of debt.)

Amount of Debt	Mahar (No. of Cases)	Chamar (No. of Cases)	Mang (No. of Cases)	Dhor (No. of Cases)	Bhangi (No. of Cases)	Total (No. of Cases)
NIL	145	31	15	17	4	212
Rs. 1-100	141	24	11	2	6	184
" 101-200	53	15	1	4	1	74
" 201-300	23	11	3	1	1	39
" 301-400	8	3	1	1	1	14
" 401-500	4	2	...	1	1	8
" 501-1000	6	...	...	1	2	9
" Over 1000	1	...	...	...	...	1
Total ...	381*	86	31	27	16	541*

It will be seen from the above table, that out of 381 Mahar families, 145 families, that is 38 per cent, are free from debt ; out of 86 Chamar families 31 families, that is 36 per cent. of them are free from debt ; out of 31 Mang families 15 that is 48 per cent. of them are free from debt and out of 27 Dhor families that is 61 per cent. of them are free from debt and out of 16 Bhangi families 4 families that is 25 per cent. of them are free from debt.

Paradoxical as it may appear, nearly 40 per cent. of these people are free from debt. That does not mean that these families are in better economic condition. But leaving aside hardly 5 per cent. of them who are in good economic condition, the rest are free from debt only because they are so poor and their credit is so low that no Sow-car would dare to lend them any money. For instance nearly 48 per cent. of the Mangs are free from debt only because, they have none or very little credit so that they find it very difficult to get any sum from the money-lenders and if at all they get, they get on very high terms of interest. On the other hand, the Bhangis who have got a permanent source of income by way of their monthly salaries, have good credit in the market, and they get even large amounts of debt on their personal security. That is why it is found that 75 per cent. of them are involved in debt.

* I could get no information regarding indebtedness of one Mahar family in the Kolaba District.

TABLE NO. 28.
(Average amount of debt per family.)
(in Rs.)

Caste.	Amount of Debt.*	No. of Families.		Average debt incurred.	
		Indebted.	Without Debt.	Per Indebted Family.	Per Family.
Mahar ...	35,021/8	236	145	148.4	91.9
Chamar ...	8,978	55	31	163.2	104.4
Mang ...	1,895	16	15	118.	61.1
Dhor ...	2,775	10	17	277.5	75.0
Bhangi ...	3,346	12	4	278.8	209.2
	52,015/8	329	212	158.1	96.1

From the above table we see that the Bhangis are more indebted than the other castes of the Untouchables and next to them are the Chamars. Both of them are economically slightly well off and they have better credit in the market.

From table No. 29 overleaf we see that the rate of interest charged, varies from 6 per cent. to 100 per cent; but on an average it is 37½ per cent. This high rate of interest is probably due to the absence of their credit in the market. The Mangs are paying on an average higher percentage of interest only because they have no security to offer for the debt they borrow, and the money-lenders naturally charge heavy rates of interest simply because they find it very difficult to recover their money. Taking the general of the situation it cannot be denied that these people are very much oppressed under the burden of their debt and this is one of the many obstacles in their way to better their economic condition.

THE SOCIAL GRIEVANCES

EDUCATION

The history of Village Education in India can be traced back perhaps to the beginning of the village communities, but the problem of education of the Untouchables came to the forefront only in the year 1854, when the British Government declared itself in favour of mass education. Before that period "there was never a question of admit-

* Figures relate to present debt.

TABLE No. 29.

(Rate of interest.)

RATE OF INTEREST Per Cent	MAHAR		CHAMAR		MANG		DHOR		BHANGI	
	No of cases	Amount of Debt.	No. of cas.	Amt. of Debt	No of cas.	Amt. of Debt	No of cas.	Amt. of Debt	No of cas.	Amt. of Debt
1-5	2	375	2	300	...	...	...	...	...	...
6-10	9	1316	3	750	...	...	...	...	...	...
11-15	27	3117	6	736	...	...	2	1000	...	...
16-20	17	2435	7	1170	2	150	...	...	...	...
21-25	50	11664	11	2000	2	120	5	1425	1	325
26-30	6	830	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
31-40	34	3609	5	725	4	440	1	150	6	1236
41-50	1	200	1	50	...	...	...	...	...	...
51-60	1	85	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
61-70	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
71-80	30	2370	5	495	3	180	...	...	1	500
81-100	1	175	1	25	...	...	...	...	...	...
101 and above	12	423/8	12	477	1	60	...	...	3	260
Rate not known	44	6682	11	2250	3	925	2	200	...	...
Without Interest	2	140	...	...	1	20	...	...	1	1000
Land Mortgaged	5	1600	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
TOTAL	241	35021/8	64	8978	16	1895	10	2775	12	3346.

ting them into the schools, as the education that was imparted, in the pre-British and early British days, was strictly confined to the higher classes. It was more or less a class education and naturally the Untouchables, who lay outside the regular caste system, had no chances of getting it as their mere touch would have been pollution."

It was only in the year 1856 that the question of admitting a depressed class boy into the Government School at Dharwar, was first raised. The Directors of the East India Company in their memorable despatch of 1854 had declared that "no boy be refused admission to the Government School or College on the ground of caste." But while

deciding this case of the Mahar boy, the Government of Bombay rejected his petition observing "the question discussed in the correspondence is of very practical difficulty. There can be no doubt that the Mahar petitioner has abstract justice in his side ; and the Government trust that the prejudices which at present prevent him from availing himself of existing means of education in Dharwar may be ere long removed. But Government are obliged to keep in mind that to interfere with the prejudices of ages in a summary manner, for the sake of one or few individuals, would probably do a great damage to the cause of education. The disadvantage, under which the petitioner labours is not one which has originated with the Government and it is one which Government cannot summarily remove by interfering in his favour as he begs them to do." ¹

Thus it will be seen that the right of the depressed classes to enter Government Schools was asserted in the despatch of 1858, but as a matter of fact "no effort was made for some years to enforce this theoretical right, and also very few separate schools were opened, so that in 1882 only 2,713 pupils of the depressed class population were in the primary school."²

The position of the Untouchables by 1882 was like this. "They had become alive to the advantages of education and in some places they were taking full advantages of the special schools established for them. The whole community was extremely poor but some of them were willing to pay the fees and thus they were trying to put forward their rights of getting admission to the schools."³

The difficulties of admitting their claims were both social and religious. Theoretically it was admitted beforehand by the Government in the letter dated 5th May, 1854, and again in their reply to the Government of India dated, 20th May, 1857, that "no boy be refused admission to a Government School or College merely on the ground of caste." Yet actually it became very difficult to get entrance into the private, indigenious, or to the Government Schools. Among the various reasons that were put forward by the caste Hindus the most potent was the fear of caste pollution. The Government nor the caste Hindus ever cared for their aspirations of rising high in the society. On the contrary total apathy was shown both by the Government and the caste Hindus to their anxiety for getting education as it will be seen from the statement of Mr. M. M. Kunte, some time acting Principal of the Elphinstone College, Bombay, that "the question of ad-

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1. Government Resolution 1856.
 2. Starte Committee Report, p. 13.
 3. Hunter Committee Report, p. 513.

mission of children of Mahars and Dheds into the Government Schools is never raised by themselves. It is not real and has no practical bearing. It is a groundless agitation caused by sentimental English officials and unpractical Native Reformers."¹ But the fact that there were 3,512 Untouchable boys in the primary schools of the Presidency clearly shows that there was growing anxiety among the Untouchables to get education.

Another objection against their entrance into the Public Schools, was their "uncleanly habits and the unpolished manners and conversation of the boys." This might be true in some particular cases but it was not the universal reason for their non-admittance, as it can be seen from the incident that happened at Dharwar when the regimental school boys who were refused admission, were "neither unclean nor unpolished." But the fact was that there was a total absence of sympathy of the Government for their cause and it without taking the practical view of the problem, kept quiet, remarking that "there exists a deep-seated prejudice to the admission of the Untouchable boys into Public Schools and though its force varies in different parts of India, its existence is partly due to religious feeling and partly to fear of physical and moral contagion."²

So by the end of the nineteenth century the measures that were adopted by the Government to facilitate education for the Untouchables were two-fold. The first was that of establishing separate schools for them and the other was the extension of special encouragement to Missionary bodies to undertake their education. But this system became expensive owing to the difficulties of inducing any large number of boys to attend.

But none of these measures had touched the difficulties that were met in spreading education. "There might be the necessity of the separate schools but this measure admitted the principle of exclusion." "It intensified the difficulty when a clever student from this class wanted to enter the Secondary School or perhaps the normal school."

During this period stray individual attempts were made to spread Primary education among these classes. One of this type was made by a Christian Missionary at Ahmadnagar in the year 1855, by starting a separate school for them. But the first attempt was made by Jotiba Phooley, at Poona in the year 1848 by starting a separate school for these classes as "he had perceived the necessity of educating the class of people to whom his appeal was directed."³ In his

1. Evidence given by Mr. M. M. Kunte, before Hunter Committee, 1882.

2. Hunter Committee Report, p. 515.

3. "Caste and Race in India," By Dr. G. S. Ghurye, p. 166.

statement to the Education Commission of 1882 he has stated that "Government collects a special cess for educational purposes and it is to be regretted that this fund is not spent for the purposes for which it is collected. Nearly 9|10ths of the villages in the Presidency or nearly ten lakhs of children are without any provision whatever, for Primary instruction. The Mahars, Mangs and other lower classes are practically excluded from all schools owing to caste prejudices as they are not allowed to sit by the children of the higher castes. The special schools that are opened for them are only in large towns, for instance, in the whole of Poona, and for a population exceeding over 5,000 people, there is only one school and in which the attendance is under 30 boys."¹ Such was the state of affairs regarding the education of the untouchable classes by the end of the last century.

To-day we find that "the local authorities are trying their best to remove the disabilities. Generally no objection is taken by the parents of caste Hindus to their children sitting in a class room along with those of the depressed classes, and especially in big towns, there is hardly any distinction noticeable. It is only in rural areas where people are too orthodox that we come across some disabilities imposed on the depressed classes."²

The following is the analysis of my investigations :—

TABLE No. 30.

Districts.	Villages having Provision for Primary Education.		Villages having no provision of primary education.	Total No. of Villages.
	Where the untouchable boys are allowed to mix freely with other boys.	Where the untouchable boys are segregated in the school.		
1 Kolaba ...	13	10	10	33
2 Thana ...	16	5	8	29
3 Nasik ...	39	3	14	56
4 Satara ...	31	8	3	42
5 Ahmadnagar	28	1	2	31
6 Khandesh (East)	7	12	7	26
Total ...	134	39	44	217

1. A statement presented to the Hunter Committee by Jotiba Phooley, Poona.

2. Report on Public Instruction in the Bombay Presidency, 1932-33, para. 108.

Thus we can see that out of the total number of 217 villages under survey, there are 44 villages where there is no provision for primary education. Out of the remaining 173 villages with primary schools, only in 39 schools the Untouchable children are not allowed to mix freely with the other children but in the remaining 134 villages they mix freely with the other boys and in no way are they treated with differentiation in the school premises.

WELLS

The question of wells is the most important and also the most difficult to solve. Nowhere have I found a common well used by the touchables and the untouchables, although from time to time, the Government might have issued orders, that all the public wells should be thrown open to all. There are many villages in Maharashtra where the Untouchables have no separate wells for their use and to them the problem of finding potable water becomes of intense difficulty, especially during summer when there is great scarcity of water. In such cases "they have to wait for the charitable among the caste Hindus to draw water and pour a little into their pots."¹ Thus they have to suffer intensely on account of scarcity of water. It "impairs both the health and their efficiency. Health suffers because the impure drinking water carries germs of guinea-worm which confine the patient to his home for several months."² Some of them, especially the agriculturists, have to suffer the economic loss by the waste of their time; for instance when they have to spend their time on their field is wasted on such a trivial operation as getting drinking water and lastly such "inadequate supply of water during the months (the hot months) when it is most required, cannot fail to affect health and vitality"³ of these classes.

We will now see the actual conditions of the six Districts that I have surveyed.

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1. Starte Committee Report, p. 53.
 2. "Some Village Studies," By Dr. G. S. Ghurye and Mr. S. G. Deshpande, p. 484. *Indian Journal of Economics*, Vol. VII, 1926-27.
 3. *Ibid.*, p. 484.

TABLE NO. 31.

DISTRICTS	Villages having no provision for water in all the seasons of the year.	Villages having no provision for water in the summer season.	Villages having provision for water in all the seasons of the year.	Total Number of villages.
1 Kolaba ...	...	24	9	33
2 Thana ...	1	14	14	29
3 Nasik ...	...	16	40	56
4 Satara ...	2	15	25	42
5 Ahmadnagar	...	11	20	31
6 Khandesh (E)	2	12	12	26
Total ...	5	92	120	217

Thus there are 217 villages in all that come under my survey and of these villages 5 villages are such that they have permanently no provision for water for the use of these classes. Out of the remaining 212 villages, where they have got provision for water, 120 villages are such that they get water in all the seasons of the year. But in the remaining 92 villages they find it very difficult to get it in the summer season. In 50 of these villages they have to beg water from the villagers, in 18 villages they bring water from long distances, in 20 villages they get water from rivers, etc., after digging, in 2 villages they buy it from the villagers, in one village in the Nasik District they employ a Maratha servant to pour it in the pots and in the remaining village in the Ahmadnagar District the local authorities provide a person to pour it in their pots.

GRIEVANCES AND THEIR REMEDIES

We have seen, so far, the social and economic disabilities under which the Untouchables are labouring. Various methods are suggested by people of all shades of opinion, to ameliorate their conditions, both economic and social, but in the following pages I have tried to analyse their own view-points, regarding their immediate sufferings and the way out of it. I had put a question in my questionnaire to elicit how their economic and social uplift can be done and the following is the analysis of their answers.

SOCIAL

(1) *Removal of Untouchability by Law* :—One hundred and sixty-nine families of all the different castes of the Untouchables from

the six Districts, under my survey, have suggested that removal of untouchability by law is the only solution that they can suggest to better their social and economic conditions. Out of these 169 families, 114 are Mahars, 34 are Chamars, 13 are Dhors, 7 are Mangs and one is a Bhangi.

(2) *Education* :—One hundred and fifty-two families out of which 132 families are from the Mahar community, 9 from the Chamar community, 10 from the Mang community and one from the Bhangi community have suggested that their salvation lies in the spread of education among them. It can be noticed from the above figures, that except Bhangis all other castes of the Untouchables have become alive to the spread of education. This fact can also be well noticed from the fact that out of 94 families who have suggested that the scholarships should be given to their sons and daughters to help them to take education, 65 are from the Mahar community, 8 from the Chamar community, 10 from the Mang community, 11 from the Dhor community and none from the Bhangi community. Some have suggested that compulsory primary education will help to spread education among them. Out of these 37 are from the Mahar community, 37 from the Chamar community, 11 from the Mang community and 12 from the Dhor community.

A very small number of these, have realised that mere knowledge of the three R's is not going to help much to solve their bread-problem and that some industrial education is quite essential for them, in order to have permanent stability in the society. Out of the 16 families who think in this way 10 families are from the Mahar community, 2 from the Chamar community, 2 from the Mang community and the remaining 2 from the Dhor community.

Only eight families out of which 6 are from the Mahar community, have suggested that hostels should be provided for their children. It is evident that the problem of hostels arises only in cities and towns where there are facilities for Secondary or Higher education. Such hostels may have many advantages in providing for "corporate life for the boys," but they have the grave drawback that "they do not mix the boys with those of the other castes."¹ However it is true that this problem of providing hostels, to the Untouchable boys, does not arise at all, in village education and it is needless to discuss here its merits and demerits.

There are 21 families from the Mahar community and one from the Chamar community who have suggested that they have been seri-

1. Starte Committee Report, p. 27.

ously handicapped on account of want of provision of primary education in their villages and that the immediate step that can be taken to better their condition is to provide schools for their villages. This is purely a local grievance but it can be seen that the Untouchables and more especially the Mahars have become alive to the need of getting facilities for education.

Five families from the Mahar community and one from the Dhor community have suggested that provision should be made for the higher education of their children. It can be well seen that the general population of the untouchable classes is absolutely incapable of understanding the importance or the advantages and disadvantages of higher education. It is only latterly that a small number of persons from the Mahar community have begun to realise the importance of higher education.

There are 19 Mahar families from East Khandesh District and one Mahar and one Chamar family from Kolaba District who suggest that the differentiating treatment of their children in the schools should be stopped and they should be treated on equal footing.

Lastly there are only 3 families of the Mahar community, one each from the Districts of Nasik, Thana and Ahmednagar, who have suggested that it will be of great advantage to them if they are provided with teachers coming from their own community. These people think that sufficient care is not taken of their children by the caste Hindu teachers but such grievances are very rare and as days pass on there will be no necessity for the Untouchables of having their own teachers.

(3) *Access of Wells and other Public Institutions* :—Twenty-four families from the Mahar community, one from the Chamar, and 5 from the Dhor community have opined that they have to suffer a great deal owing to the absence of provision for sufficient water for daily use. They have public wells in their villages but they have no access to them on account of their untouchability and according to them the immediate way for leading a better mode of life is to have free access to the wells and other provisions for water. Thereby they feel sure that they can lead a better and cleaner way of life and they will have free association with the caste Hindus which will be beneficial to them to change their dirty ways of living.

While there are other 25 families 18 from the Mahar community and 7 from the Mang community who are suffering on account of intense scarcity of water, feel that anyhow immediate steps should be taken for the provision of water for their daily use. They are not very much keen on having access to the common wells but they want only their difficulty in getting water to be solved.

There are 4 families from the Mahar community and 2 from the Chamar community who complain that they are occasionally cheated by the shop-keepers, who give them the worst type of articles and as they are not in a position to make a choice of the articles by selecting with their own hands that they have to buy on account of their untouchability, they have no other alternative but to accept the articles which the shop-keepers offer. Thus they are greatly handicapped and they feel that it would be of great advantage to them if access to the shops is facilitated.

There is only a solitary case from the Kolaba District where one family of the Mahar community complains that they are not allowed to travel by Motors or by Tongas on account of their untouchability. But this seems to be a very rare case. It is noteworthy that only thirteen families out of which 10 from the Mahar community, one from the Mang community and 2 from the Dhor community have expressed their desire to have an entry into the caste Hindu temples.

(4) *Carrion-Eating*. Five families, three Mahars, one Chamar and one Dhor have expressed that carrion-eating should be prohibited by law with a view to better the sanitary conditions of the untouchables and to have free association with the caste Hindus. It must be remembered that the Untouchables on the whole abhor publicly carrion-eating. They are denouncing it in public meetings and their leaders and those who are working for their salvation are preaching them to take a vow not to eat carrion.

Two Chamar families from Kolaba District have complained that they are greatly harassed by the Kumbhars, who work as their priests for the death ceremonies. Generally the Chamars engage the Brahmins as priests for their marriage ceremonies and the Kumbhars for the death ceremonies. Though this seems to be purely a local grievance, yet it gives us an idea of the complex nature of the problem of the Untouchables.

ECONOMIC

(1) *Government Service*. Seventy-four families, out of which 57 are Mahars, 10 Chamars, 2 Mangs and 5 Dhors have suggested that Government service to their qualified candidates is the best course for them to better their economic and social condition.

(2) *Uncultivated Land*. One hundred and thirty-four families out of which, 24 are Mahars, 3 Chamars and 7 Mangs have expressed their opinion that they would gain economic independence much earlier, if they acquire lands from the Government which are lying uncultivated, on a nominal rental fee. The problem is of vital importance

as most of them who are depending upon agriculture do not possess their own land and are simply agricultural labourers. Especially the Mahars are greatly affected by it, as a large number of them are depending upon agriculture or agricultural labour, having no other occupation of their own, like the Chamars or the Bhangis.

(3) *Debt with low interest.* Sixty-one families, out of which 41 are Mahars, 11 Chamars, 6 Mangs and 3 Dhors have suggested that they are suffering intolerably under the heavy burden of debt and there is no ray of hope for them unless they are offered money at low interest.

(4) *Co-operative Credit Society.* In the field of economic upliftment co-operative societies are essential as an ameliorative agency. Thirty-four families out of which 11 are Mahars, 6 are Chamars, 6 Mangs and 11 are Dhors, have suggested that the establishment of co-operative credit societies will help them much to improve their economic conditions. They can revive the industries that are in their hands such as shoe-making, leather-tanning and rope-twisting, etc.

(5) *Miscellaneous.* (a) Sixteen families out of which 10 are Mahars, 2 Chamars, 2 Mangs and 2 Dhors have suggested that the accommodation of space for their houses is too small and that they have to live in the most insanitary conditions. In the villages we find that "the castes are allotted district quarters of the village and called by the name of the caste; Brahmin-ali or wada, Prabhu-ali, Sonar-ali, etc,"¹ and "the depressed classes like the Mahars and the Mangs, etc., are forced to live on the outskirts of the village."² Often the space allotted to these people is dirty and too narrow with the result that they have no other alternative but to stay in such dirty places. In several villages in the East Khandesh District the Mahars have made a complaint that adjoining their houses, in the village, they have got the houses of the Dhors who carry the tanning work and thereby they are put to much nuisance on account of the dirty smell. In some other villages they have stated that they have not sufficient accommodation for disposing the dead animals and are left to decompose in the vicinity of their houses. The natural result is that these people are compulsorily forced to live in unhealthy and insanitary places and are given no opportunities to appreciate the cleaner ways of life.

1. "Land and Labour in a Deccan Village." Study No. 2, By Dr. H. H. Mann, p. 108.

2. "Caste and Race in India," By Dr. G. S. Ghurye, p. 11.

(b) *The Vatan System.* Eight Mahar families have suggested that they are convinced that the Vatan system is one of the chief causes why they are kept in backward condition. The whole system is oppressive to the Mahars. In the first place the duties of these Mahar Vatandars are not defined. "It is not known, in fact nobody as a matter of fact, can say to what particular department these vatandar Mahars belong. As a matter of fact every department claims their services."¹ They have to be ready at all times and in case the vatandar has to go on his personal work even for a day he can do it only when he gives a substitute for him. The remuneration that they receive in return is insufficient for their work. For instance, as I have mentioned elsewhere "in Thana District the amount paid by Government directly to the Mahar Officiator comes to Rs. 1|8 per month ; the amount paid in the Ahmadnagar District comes to Rs. 1|8 per month. . . ."² In fact nowhere in Maharashtra do they get more than Rs. 1|12 per month. The additional income that these people get is the Baluta. But as I have remarked it goes very difficult for these people to collect the Baluta in these hard days. The Inam lands that they possess are so sub-divided that they practically yield no income. So in no way is the Vatan system beneficial and it really, as Dr. Ambedkar told the other day at the Bhor Conference that it is the Mahar Vatan that comes in their way of upliftment of the Mahars and the sooner they get rid of it the easier is the way to their salvation.³

(c) *Forced Labour.* Four Mahar families have suggested that they have to do forced labour for the Government Officials as well as for the villagers, with no remuneration. The result is that at times they have to suffer economic loss as days after days are wasted in such sort of forced labour. The practice is essentially an outcome of the Vatan system and it only affects the Mahars and at times the Mangs. The duties of the vatandar Mahars are not defined with the result that sometimes petty officials ask them to render personal services and do such work which has in no way any connection with their official work. Generally they are required to work as message bearers of all Government officials, high as well as low, travelling in the Districts ; but at times they have to carry grass for their horses and other domestic animals, bring firewood for them, clean and sweep compounds and do all sorts of work that may be required.

As a part of the vatan system, they have to render some services to

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1. Bombay Legislative Council Debates, Vol. XXIII, p. 709.
 2. Bombay Legislative Council Debates, Vol. XXIII, p. 710.
 3. "Dnyan Prakash," (Marathi), dated 9th January, 1935.

the villagers. For instance they have to remove dead animals from the villages and sweep and clean all refuse in the village. They have also to inform their relatives in other villages at the times of weddings and funerals, and in short they have to be at the beck and call of the village Patil and Kulkarni at any moment. In some places I have found that they are refusing to work for the villagers and consequently they have to suffer a great deal on account of the social boycott of the villagers. Recently a case happened in village Tudil, Taluka Mahad in the Kolaba District where the Mahars refused to remove the dead animals and consequently they are under social boycott of the Mohammadians who are the residents in predominant number of the village and who are also the Inamdars of the village. They have taken the lands given to the Mahars for cultivation and even have gone to the extent of stopping the water supply given to them. This is the usual result of their refusal to work for the villagers and unless they are very large in number in the villages or they are sufficiently self-reliant they dare not refuse to work as required by the villagers.

(d) *Advice to Untouchables.* Two Mahar families and one Chamar family have stressed that in order to bring about their social and economic upliftment, the caste Hindus should make a point to associate with the Untouchables oft and on, and should make them understand the importance of cleanliness and good habits.

CONCLUSION

We have discussed so far, the social and economic conditions of the Untouchables in Maharashtra and we have also seen how these circumstances stand in the way of their uplift. Thus we can very easily visualize that in order to assimilate the untouchable classes into the Hindu society we require, "first there is the immediate need of removing the disabilities that actually hamper the development of the individual by acting as hindrances in the way of better and a cleaner living. Second, to enable these classes to appreciate a cleaner and more moral mode of life. Third, to accustom the members of other sections to a freer social intercourse with these people and lastly to undermine and eradicate the exclusivist spirit of caste."¹

We have seen that the two important disabilities that actually hamper them are the lack of proper provision for water and facilities for education of their children. They generally find great difficulty in getting an ample supply of fresh water, because where separate wells for their use do not exist, and in some villages if at all they

1. Dr. G. S. Ghurye, "Aryan Path," Feb. 1933.

exist they are in very much insanitary conditions and they go dry in the summer season, there is always great trouble in getting water for their daily use, as they are not allowed to take water from the public village wells. This is really a serious handicap in their way of living a cleaner life and it also involves great amount of time in getting water for drinking purposes. It is essential that they must be made to appreciate a cleaner mode of life and this will be done only when there is ample provision of water for their daily use.

The second handicap under which they are labouring is the want of facilities for education. First it must be remembered that they have not cultivated to a great extent, a desire for education and special attention is required for making them understand the importance of education in the daily life. There are many difficulties in their way in sending their children to the schools. In some village schools they are not allowed to mix fully with the children of the other caste Hindus. In some places the teachers are found not much careful about the studies and clean habits of these children and I have found many cases in several villages where the untouchable boys have to spend two or three years in order to finish the first standard of the schools, with the result that most of these boys leave the schools before entering the second standard and in spite of their attendance in the schools for two or three years, they get no knowledge of the three R's and they are as bad as the other illiterate boys. So mere provision of schools in the villages will be never of full use to the upliftment of these classes unless they are made to realise the importance of education and they are helped in every way possible to remove the actual difficulties that come in their way in sending their children to the schools. Moreover, special attention is essentially required to see the progress of the Untouchable boys in the schools and such cases should be brought immediately to the notice of higher educational authorities where these boys are deliberately neglected by the teachers.

Thus we can see that concentration is essentially required on the primary object of securing full civic rights for the Untouchables, as the right of drawing water from the public wells if they have no wells in good conditions and of sending children to public schools, without any discrimination being exercised against them. This will lead to help these classes to appreciate a cleaner and more moral mode of life. Really there are many villages where the caste Hindu villagers have better provision of water in their villages, in all the seasons of the year, but unfortunately the Untouchables in those villages are put to severe handicaps in getting water for drinking and washing purposes and in such circumstances it is highly essential

that special efforts should be concentrated in all directions, under any cost, to see that these unfortunate classes also get sufficient provision of water. Otherwise all our efforts and good wishes to see that "they appreciate a cleaner and more moral mode of life" will be of no use as long as we have not removed these handicaps that are in their way. In village schools also there must be an attempt made by the school authorities that in addition to the knowledge of simply the three R's, there must be created opportunities of imparting discourses on the proper ideals of life, of cleanliness and morality and opportunities should be created and handled in such a way that these classes come in immediate contact with ideas of better and cleaner way of life which will help to effect a change in their social environment. This, of course, will be successful only when it is done purely in a Missionary Spirit.

The third thing that is essentially required for changing their outlook on life and making them realise to lead the right sort of moral and religious life is "to accustom the members of other sections to a freer social intercourse with these people." This will partly be done as I have stated above, in the villages where there are primary schools, if they are run in the Missionary ways that I have suggested. But this much attempt is not sufficient when we have to see that a change in the outlook of the Untouchables as well as of the villagers is required and besides there are many villages without the primary schools and so it will only be possible when opportunities are created in the villages where the Untouchables as well as the caste Hindus, assemble together for "Bhajans, Kirtans, and Pravachans together." This will not be possible, all of a sudden but special attempts should be directed in this way, with a small beginning such as assembling together on special religious days as Dasara, Sankrant, etc., on which days the Reformers as well as those who have taken the responsibility of eradicating Untouchability, should try to see that freer intercourse between these two sections of the society is gradually made, without any trouble. This really requires careful handling on the part of the Reformers and it will be possible only when it is done, with disinterested motives, with real anxiety for their salvation and with love and sympathy for these people for their hard lot.

But all these three things will be possible only when an attempt is made side by side "to undermine and eradicate the exclusivist spirit of caste." "For Untouchability is only a flagrant manifestation of the spirit of caste. The principle which runs through the whole caste system, breathes the spirit of exclusiveness, lays down barriers between group and group and culminates in the position of various social and religious disabilities on the lower sections. Viewed thus, Untouch-

ability registers the highest degree of spirit of caste. Removal of Untouchability therefore, immediately depends on the disappearance of the spirit of caste." ¹ This spirit of caste differentiation is not only among the caste Hindus but it is also equally formidable among the Untouchables as it can be seen from two recent incidents, one at Sholapur and the other at Sawantwadi. At Sholapur there is a long-standing dispute between the Mahars and Mangs of Vairag, a village in Barsi Taluka, regarding their right to draw water from a well, where the Mahars are asserting their sole right on the alleged caste inferiority of the Mangs and the Mangs in return asserting their own superiority over the Mahars.² The other incident which took place at Sawantwadi is that one social Reformer invited all the castes of the Untouchables on the Sankrant day and he wanted to distribute Tilgul to all of them, without observing any untouchability. This enraged some of the Mahars as they were not ready to touch the Chamars, with the result that the whole function ended without the achievement of the real object.³ Thus it will be clear that the whole Hindu society is based upon the exclusivist spirit of castes and what is essentially required is to wipe out such spirit by which the castes are differentiated and not allow any scope for functions which are likely to tend such exclusivist spirit. Nay, on the contrary, the Reformers should try their level best to substitute such functions by other functions so that caste patriotism and caste exclusiveness will be of no or of very insignificant importance and there will be an atmosphere, where the people have assembled for a common purpose, for common utility and for common salvation for all, irrespective of their castes.

These four things will be possible only when there is a central organisation to fight Untouchability with a net of smaller Committees all over the country. There must be Provincial Committees. Each Provincial Committee should appoint a small number of persons who are sympathetic and who sign a pledge that "they will work for the removal of Untouchability, at least in every Taluka town to carry on the programme outlined by the Central Organisation."⁴ These organisations will have to have an army of workers in the rural parts who will encourage the Untouchables to get their rights redressed by persuasion or by any other polite means possible. They should see that

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1. Dr. G. S. Ghurye, "Aryan Path," Feb. 1933.
 2. "Times of India," dated 16th Jan. 1935.
 3. "Subodha Patrika," dated 27th Jan., 1935.
 4. Dr. G. S. Ghurye, "The Aryan Path," Feb. 1933.

"cases of bad treatment of Untouchables or of refusal to admit their children to common schools, differential treatment in Government or in Municipal Dispensaries are some of the grievances which they should try amicably to settle by private and personal negotiation and persuasion. Failing such polite remedies, the Committee should communicate with the civil authorities of the place and also inform the Provincial Committee about the incidents. The Provincial Committee then may decide upon legal action or may confer with the higher civil authorities." ¹ Thus "Untouchability is a sin done by us and we must be interested in their cause for the sake of purifying ourselves of the taint of Untouchability and doing penance for the sin." ²

Finally, this is a question of national self-interest and it will not be possible for us "to realise our National aspirations" nor "our country can ever hope to make her place among the Nations of the world." "It is to be remembered that National decline has its origin in the oppression of others, and if we Indians desire to achieve National self-respect and dignity, we should open our arms to our unfortunate brothers and sisters of the depressed classes and help to build up in them the vital spirit of human dignity. So long as we have these large classes of the Untouchables in this country, we can make no real progress in our national affairs, for this requires a high moral standard ; and this is unthinkable where the weaker classes are unfairly treated."³

"This work is bound to be slow and can only be achieved by strenuous exertions for giving them education and finding for them honourable employment in life. And it seems to me that, in the present state of India, no work can be higher or holier than this. I think that if there is a question of social reform more than another that would stir the enthusiasm of our educated young men and inspire them with an unselfish purpose, it is this question of the degraded condition of our low caste. What the country needs most, at the present moment is a spirit of self-sacrifice on the part of our educated young men and they may take it from me that they cannot spend their lives in a better cause than raising the moral and intellectual level of these unhappy low castes and promoting their general well-being."⁴

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1. Dr. G. S. Ghurye, "The Aryan Path," Feb. 1933.
 2. Mahatma Gandhi, "Harijan," dated 20th April, 1934.
 3. Lajpat Rai, "The Arya Samaj," p. 232.
 4. G. K. Gokhale, His Speeches and Writings, pp. 901-902.

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