

THE UNTOUCHABLE CLASSES OF THE JANJIRA STATE

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I

THE GEOGRAPHICAL AND GENERAL SURVEY OF THE STATE.

The Janjira State¹ is in Konkan lying between 18° and 18°-31' north and 72°-53' and 73°-17' east. The State is bounded on the north by the Kundalika river or the Revdanda creek, in the Kolaba District, on the east by the Roha and Mangaon Talukas of the same District; on the south by the Bankot creek in Ratnagiri District and on the west the Arabian sea. About the middle of the coast line 40 miles long, the Rajpuri gulf divides Janjira into two main portions, northern and southern. The total area of the State is 324 sq. miles.

The surface of the State is covered with spurs and hill ranges, averaging about 1000 ft. in height, one peak being 1300 ft. above the sea level, and generally they are running parallel to the arms of the sea penetrating eastwards into the interior. The sides of the hills are thickly wooded except where cleared for cultivation. Inland from the coast rise ranges of wooded hills. Near the mouth of the creeks belts of palm groves 1-2 miles broad fringe the shore. Behind the palm groves lie salt marshes and mangrove bushes. Behind these again the rice-lands of the valleys.

None of the rivers is more than 5 to 6 miles in length. The larger water courses flow Westward. During the rains they are very torrents but dwindle to mere rills at other seasons. The chief creeks and bulk-waters are, beginning from the North, the Borli-Mandla, Nandgaon, Murud, Rajpuri, Panchatan, and Shri-wardhan. All the creek entrances are rocky and dangerous.

The rock is almost all trap with, on the higher hill slopes, laterite or ironstone in large boulders. The hills are well wooded, teak being plentiful in the north. Tigers, leopards, hogs and wild cats are found in some part.

Except the plots of rich alluvial rice land in the valleys and some sandy tracks near the coasts, the usual red strong soil of the Konkan prevails throughout the Janjira State. The total area under cultivation is 103753 acres under survey tenure, and 1248

1. The dependency of Jafraabad is excluded from this study.

bighas of kowli and unsurveyed lands in inam villages.¹ The total areable waste land available for cultivation during the year 1935-36 was 7531 acres and 39 guntas.

The climate is moist and relaxing but not unhealthy. The sea breezes cool the coast and the hill tops.

During the year 1935-36 the total rainfall in the State was 102.81. The following table gives the details:—

TABLE NO. 1.

State	April 35	May 35	June 35	July 35	Aug. 35	Sept. 35	Oct. 35	Nov. 35	Dec. 35	Jan. 36	Feb. 36	Mar. 36	Total.
Jan-jira	0.0	0.1	35.30	29.34	20.51	17.76	1.72	0.13	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	102.81

The average rainfall of the last five years in the State is 110.53.

The temperature of the State varies from 62° to 92°.

The population of the State according to the census report of the year 1931 is 98296. The following table gives the details:—

TABLE NO. 2.

Caste.	Male.	Female.	Total.
Hindus	34081	36476	70557
Muslims	7089	8915	16004
Depressed classes	4401	5000	9401
Hill tribes	723	799	1522
Jains	147	10	157
Christians	22	1	23
Others	293	339	632
Total.	46756	51540	98296

There are two towns and 228 villages and the following table shows the distribution of the population in these villages and towns.

1. The figures that are mentioned in this study and the statements that are made are all in relation up to the period ending the year 1935-36.

TABLE No. 3

Population	No. of villages	Total population
Under 500 ...	182	37826
500-1000 ...	28	18544
1000-2000 ...	15	19511
2000-5000 ...	3	7238
over 5000 ...	2	14257
Encampment Boat and Railway Population	—	920
	230	98296

Thus the urban population is 14257 and the rural population is 84039. The number of houses that are occupied by the urban population is 2114 and the rural population stay in 17696 houses.

Out of the total population 98296, the number of literate persons is 7923,¹ i. e. 8% of the population. The following table gives the details.

TABLE No. 4

Caste.	Male.			Female.			Total.		
	L	I	Tot.	L	I	Tot.	L	I	Tot
Hindus .	3563	31241	34804	445	36830	37275	4008	68071	72079
Muslims.	2203	4886	7089	1133	7782	8915	3336	12668	16004
D. C. ...	200	4201	4401	20	4980	5000	220	9181	9401
Jains ...	129	18	147	...	10	10	129	28	157
Christ ...	10	12	22	...	1	1	10	13	23
Others...	155	138	293	65	274	339	220	412	632
Total ...	6260	40496	46756	1663	49877	51540	7353	90373	98296

N. B.—L=Literate; I=Illiterate; Tot=Total

1. Census report, 1931.

Next to agriculture which supports nearly 70% of the population, sea-fishing and toddy-tapping are the main occupations. The small industries in several villages are carried out, where articles such as silver brass and copper pots, wicker-wares, earthen-wares, iron works, coarse sarees, shoes, etc. are made to meet the local wants.

The Janjira State is a first class State, under the direct political relationship with the Government of India, through the Deccan State Agency. The total income calculated on the average of last five years amounts to Rs. 11,30,984. It pays no tribute to the British Government nor to any State. It receives from the Junagad State an annual "Khandani" payment on Una Mahal of 360 Mosambigiri Ryals, equivalent to Rs. 500.

II

THE UNTOUCHABLES OF THE STATE

SOCIAL CONDITIONS :

(i) *Population*:—We have seen that the total number of population of the untouchables of the Janjira State is 9401. The following table will show their different castes and their numerical strength.

TABLE NO. 5

Caste.	Male.	Female.	Total.
Mahar ...	3401	3963	7364
Chamar ...	894	934	1828
Koli-Dhor ...	93	91	184
Bhangi ...	10	7	17
Mang ...	3	5	8
Total ...	4401	5000	9401

Thus it can be seen that there are only two prominent untouchable castes in the State i. e. The Mahars and the Chamars and I have carried my research by studying 210 families of these

two communities. The following table gives the number of males and females of these families.

TABLE NO. 6.

Caste.	No. of families.	Persons		
		Male.	Female.	Total.
Mahar	139	401	361	762
Chamar	71	248	253	501
	210	649	614	1263

Thus it can be seen that the average size of a Mahar family is 5.5 and that of a Chamar family it is 7.0. It is no doubt a little larger than the average Indian family. For instance the average size of a house-hold of the Mahars of the Sasvad village is 4.8¹; that of a Konkan village it is 4.6². From the village studies in the Kolaba District it is 5.66.³ and that of the Aravi village in the Poona District, it is 5.1⁴; and that of the Badlapur village in the Thana District it is 5.1.⁵

From my previous study of the Untouchables of Maharashtra, it can be seen that the average size of a Mahar family is 7.7 and the average size of a Chamar family, is 7.3.⁶

It can be also seen from the above table that there is some deficiency of women in general among these classes. This fact is borne out from the table No. (5) which actually gives the census figures of these communities of the State.

We shall now consider the distribution of population of these families according to age.

1. The Mahars in a Deccan Village by Dr. H. H. Mann (Social Service League Quarterly 1916).
2. Economic and Social Survey of a Konkan Village by V. G. Ranade, Page 60.
3. Some Village Studies by S. R. Deshpande and Dr. G. S. Ghurye I.J.E., Vol. VII, Page 472 ;
4. "Gramodhar" by N. G. Apte, Page 96.
5. "Amche Gaon" by N. G. Chapekar, Page 2.
6. "The Untouchable Classes of Maharashtra" Page 3.

TABLE NO. 7.
(Mahars)

Age.	below 1	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61 & above	Total
Male	14	34	43	35	61	95	40	44	29	6	401
Female	8	53	40	33	57	58	41	49	15	7	361
	22	87	83	68	118	153	81	93	44	13	762

TABLE NO. 8.
(Chamars)

Age.	below 1	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61 & above	Total
Male	10	27	42	20	29	48	30	17	14	11	248
Female	13	35	32	33	38	40	24	23	9	6	253
	23	62	74	53	67	88	54	40	23	17	501

From the above two tables it can be said that the average longevity of the Mahars and the Chamars is somewhere between 30 and 40 as there is a sharp drop in the eighth column from 153 to 81 from the Mahar community and from 88 to 54 from the Chamar community. The percentage of death among women is greater at the age of 15 probably due to the deaths in pregnancy. From the first two columns it may be roughly said that the child mortality is little high.

(ii) *Literacy*:—We have seen from the table No. (4) the literacy of these classes according to the census report of 1931 is } 2.3. From my study of these 210 families it can be seen from the following table that it comes to 4.2.

TABLE NO. 9.

Caste.	Male.			Female.			Total.		
	L.	I.	T.	L.	I.	T.	L.	I.	T.
Mahar	31	370	401	2	359	361	33	729	762
Chamar	17	231	248	3	250	253	20	481	501
Total	48	601	649	5	609	614	53	1210	1263

Note:—L=Literate; I=Illiterate; T=Total.

But if we compare this literacy with the other castes of the State we can realise that literacy among these classes is hardly out of infancy. Moreover if we take into consideration the standard of literacy and English literacy we can find that there is none in the State from these classes who has passed any qualifying examination and there are hardly two persons who can be said literate in English by courtesy.

There are various difficulties in the spread of literacy among these classes such as their economic backwardness, the segregation of their children as it is done in a majority of the village schools and want of special care of their children as these people are incapable of understanding the importance of education.

The following table gives the number of the untouchable school-going children in relation with the total number of school-going children during the last forty years.

TABLE NO. 10.

Year.	No. of untouchable Students.	No. of other Students.	Total No. of Students.
1896-97	187	3830	4017
1897-98	173	3780	3953
1898-99	159	3252	3411
1899-1900	142	3112	3254
1900-01	81	3055	3136
1901-02	65	2895	2960
1902-03	70	2728	2798
1903-04	49	2813	2862
1904-05	45	2913	2958
1905-06	61	3022	3083
1906-07	53	3114	3167
1923-24	33	3422	3455
1924-25	76	3509	3585
1926-27	94	3786	3880
1927-28	135	4004	4139
1928-29	144	3951	4095
1929-30	151	3967	4118
1930-31	158	4003	4161
1931-32	165	3998	4163
1932-33	170	4320	4490
1933-34	217	4370	4587
1934-35	169	4562	4731
1935-36	174	4809	4983

From the above table we can see that proportionately a large number of children of these Classes were attending the schools by the end of the last century as special attention was paid by the Government in matters of their education. No doubt it can be seen from the table that in recent years the number of Untouchable boys is steadily increasing, but special efforts are absolutely necessary for the rapid spread of education among them.

III

THEIR ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

(i) *Occupations*.—The following table shows the number of persons of these classes following different occupations.

TABLE No. 11

Nature of Occupations.	Mahar.			Chamar.			Total.		
	M.	F.	T.	M.	F.	T.	M.	F.	T.
1. Agriculture	61	43	104	25	22	47	86	65	151
2. Vatan	17	...	17	...	...	...	17	...	17
3. Casual Labour	121	87	208	22	16	38	143	103	246
4. Shoe-making	...	...	...	94	...	94	94	...	94
5. Domestic Service	84	...	84	15	...	15	99	...	99
Total	283	130	413	156	38	194	439	168	607

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

From the above table it can be seen that the Mahars have not permanent occupations, yielding permanent income. Some of them pursue their Vatan but they do not get any payment from the Government. No doubt they have got the right of Baluta *i. e.* the collection of grain from the villagers and Government tries to see that these people get their share. But in spite of that, nothing can be said with certainty about the collection. It all depends upon the economic conditions and the good-will of the villagers. Some years back a villager of Borli Mandla had stopped paying the Baluta to the Vatan Mahar for some years and consequently the Mahar had complained against the villager to the higher authorities and thus he recovered all his dues. But such cases rarely happen. Generally the Mahar Vatanars are very much backward both economically and socially and he has entirely to depend upon the good intention of the villagers. If the relations of the Mahars are not in harmony with the villagers, they find very difficult

to recover the Baluta. Besides some of the villagers are themselves reduced to such poverty that they are unwilling to part with any portion of their income which is itself insufficient for their needs. There is another practice which is entirely detrimental to their interests. These people are very poor and in times of difficulties they approach the villagers and request them to pay a few annas in lieu of the Baluta that they may get in future.

As the Mahars have no hereditary occupations, naturally, they have to depend upon other types of occupations and that is why we find 50.4% of them are depending upon casual labour. But casual labour is not found at all times of the year and on all occasions. Besides except a few villages which are near the towns, the rest of them are scattered at great distance and these people do not get any scope for casual labour, except at the time of the harvest. Thus they have to sit unemployed for a major part of the year. That is why we find the economic backwardness among these classes to a greater extent.

It can be seen from the table, that 25% of the Mahar Community and 24.3% of the Chamar Community are following the agricultural profession, but a very large majority of them do not possess their own lands and they are cultivating the rented lands, with the result they find very difficult, to depend solely upon agriculture. Besides they do not get sufficient rented land for cultivation and naturally a large number of them are depending upon agricultural labour.

It can be seen from the table that 20.3% of the Mahar Community and 8% of the Chamar Community are employed as domestic servants especially at the Muhammadan Sowcars, who have advanced money to them for marriages and in return they have to serve a fixed number of years. Generally for a sum of Rs. 100 they have to put in service from 5 to 7 years. During their service they get paddy sufficient for their maintenance, clothes and a pair of sandals.

From the table we can find that 48% of the Chamars are depending upon their hereditary occupation of shoe-making. But owing to the scarcity of leather, they have to depend upon its importation from Bombay. Thus it does not become a profitable concern and so often they have to sit idle for days together. This is largely due to the fact that the dead cattle are simply thrown away in many villages without taking out the skin.

Thus there are 607 persons who are the principal and subsidiary earners out of the total number of 1263 persons. The

following table shows the relative proportion of the earners, the subsidiary earners and the dependents.

TABLE No. 12.

Caste.	Principal Earners.			Subsidiary Earners.			Dependents.			Total.		
	M.	F.	T.	M.	F.	T.	M.	F.	T.	M.	F.	T.
Mahars.	139	-	139	144	130	274	118	231	349	401	361	762
Chamars.	71	-	71	85	38	123	92	215	307	248	253	501
Total.	210	...	210	229	168	397	210	446	656	649	614	1263

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

From the above table it can be seen that the percentage of the male earners of the Mahar Community is 66% and from the Chamar Community 62.9%. The percentage of the Mahar female earners is 36% and that of the Chamar Community it is 15%. The females carry on the agricultural work or get some casual labour as well as agricultural labour; but as there is much scarcity of casual labour, as these people are practically landless and as they have no facilities to cultivate more rented lands, a large number of their women-folk has to sit idle.

(ii) *Earnings*.—The earnings of these classes are generally far below than the other agricultural classes. The following table gives their number of households with their monthly income.

TABLE No. 13.

Caste	Monthly income in rupees									Total.
	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-40	41 to 50	51 & above	
Mahar	54	42	27	9	4	3	-	-	-	139
Chamar	22	20	13	10	3	2	1	-	-	71
Total.	76	62	40	19	7	5	1	-	-	210

From the above table it can be seen that both the untouchable Communities are economically very backward, nearly 36.1 of

them have their average monthly income less than five rupees and 29.5 of them have a monthly income more than five rupees but less than ten rupees. Thus it can be seen that a majority of these classes are in utter economic depressed conditions. Of the two Communities the Chamars are slightly well-off as they have their own hereditary occupation.

Now if we take into consideration the average income per family and per capita we can realise the economic backwardness of these classes. The following table gives the average income per family and per capita.

TABLE NO. 14.

Caste.	No. of families.	Total income per month.	Income per month per family.	Income per month, per capita.
Mahar	139	1245	8.9	1.8
Chamar	71	825	11.6	1.7
Total	210	2070	9.8	1.6

Thus the average annual income of a Mahar family is Rs. 106-12-0 and that of a Chamar family it is Rs. 139-4-0.

If these incomes are compared with the incomes of the agriculturists, made known through the few studies in the Bombay Deccan we find that these people are comparatively speaking economically much worse off. For instance in some villages of the Kolaba District the annual income per family is Rs. 218-6-11.¹ that in the "Social and Economic Survey of a Konkan Village" it is found to be Rs. 281-6-11²; that of a Mahar family in the Badlapur village it is Rs. 137-8-0 and of a Chamar family in the same village it is Rs. 234.³

From my study of the untouchables of Maharashtra it can be seen that the annual income of a Mahar family is 138/- and that of a Chamar family it is Rs. 234/-.⁴

1. "Some Village Studies" by S. R. Deshpande and Dr. G. S. Ghurye "Indian Journal of Economics" Vol. VII. 1926-27, page 472.
2. "Economic and Social Survey of a Konkan Village" by V. G. Ranade, page 60.
3. "Amche Gaon"-Badlapur by N. G. Chapekar, Table facing page 164.
4. "The Untouchable Classes of Maharashtra." Page 19.

Judging from the above figures, it can be said that both the Communities are below to some extent the average standard of income of an average villager that is found out from the above studies.

It can be also seen that the annual income per capita of these Communities is very low and it is certainly not sufficient to satisfy the necessary requirements of human life.

(iii) *Indebtedness*:—Collection of figures showing indebtedness of these classes 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 are 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 over-estimate it and others to under-estimate it. But I have collected the figures with utmost precaution verifying them from all possible sources. The following table gives the frequency and the extent of their debts.

TABLE No. 15.

Amount of debt.	Mahars. (No. of cases).	Chamars. (No of cases).	Total. (No. of cases).
Nil	51	20	71
Rs. 1-50	34	10	44
.. 51-100	27	16	43
.. 101-200	16	12	28
.. 201-300	6	9	15
.. 301-400	3	2	5
.. 401-500	1	...	1
.. over 500	1	2	3
	139	71	210

Thus it can be found out that 35% of the Mahar Families are free from debt and that of the Chamar Families it is 26%.

Paradoxical as it may appear that one-third of these families are free from debt. That does not mean that these families are in better economic conditions. But leaving aside a few of these families, they are all free from debt only because they are so poor and their credit is so low that no Sowcar would dare to lend them any money. Thus it can be very easily noticed the truth of the dictum "Debt follows Credit". On the contrary these people have to pay higher rate of interest to the Sowcars when they have no credit with them.

Now we will take into consideration the average amount of debt per family.

TABLE No. 16.

Caste.	Amount of debt.	No. of families.		Average debt incurred.	
		Indebted	Without debt	Per indebted family.	Per Family
Mahar	10021	88	51	114.8	72.1
Chamar	7655	51	20	150.1	107.8
Total	17676	139	71	127.0	84.2

Thus we can find from the above table the Chamars are more indebted than the Mahars and this is invariably due to the fact that they are slightly well-off than the Mahars. If it is compared to my study of the untouchables of Maharashtra it can be found out that the average debt for per indebted Mahar family is 148.4 and for the Chamar family it is 163.2; while average debt incurred per family of the Mahars it is 91.9 and of the Chamars it is 104.4¹.

IV

THEIR GRIEVANCES AND THE REMEDIES AS
SUGGESTED BY THEM.

So far we have discussed the economic and social conditions of these classes. Various methods are suggested by people of all shades of opinion to better their economic and social conditions 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 had and the following is the gist of their answers.

1. "The Untouchable Classes of Maharashtra." Page 29.

SOCIAL :

(1) *Removal of untouchability by law*:—Thirty Mahar families and eighteen Chamar families have suggested that the Government should pass a law removing the untouchability and they should find an access to all the public and private institutions. Untouchability has proved a severe handicap in their attempts of bettering their economic conditions and it will be a great boon to them if their untouchability is removed by law.

(2) *Education*:—The next step that a majority of them have suggested is that their salvation lies in the spread of education among them. No doubt there are Government Schools in several villages but they are not in a position to send their children to the Schools owing to their utter economic backwardness. Some of them have suggested that Government should give slates and books to their children. Besides most of the untouchable families are residing in villages and except at Taluka places, there is no provision of the higher Primary Education. Naturally they get no facility of receiving education upto the Vernacular Final Examination. That is why there is not a single individual from their communities in the State who has passed at least the Vernacular Final Examination. The Government, they think should, give to their children sufficient Scholarships to enable to complete their Vernacular Final Examination course, after they have finished the 4th Std. in the village schools. For instance a Mahar boy, who had creditably passed his the 5th Std. in the Borli Mandla School, had a desire to prosecute his studies further but he could not join the Taluka School owing to his economic conditions and now he is forced to become a labourer.

Ten Mahar families and seven Chamar families have suggested that Compulsory Primary Education should be introduced for them so that after a time their literacy will be increased and it would help to better their social conditions.

Thirty-two Mahar families and twenty Chamar families have suggested that their children should be allowed to mix freely with the other boys of the school. In some schools these boys have to sit separately and naturally so much care is not taken by the teachers with regard to their studies. For instance a Mahar boy at Mazgaon Village had to leave his studies owing to his failure for three times in the same standard. This is attributed by the untouchables to the negligence on the part of the teacher of the school where the untouchable boys have to sit in the veranda.

(3) *Access to wells and other public institutions*:—Thirty-eight Mahar families and seventeen Chamar families have com-

plained that they have to suffer greatly on account of scarcity of water for their daily use. No doubt that they have public wells and tanks in some of their villages but they have no access to them owing to their untouchability. For instance in the village Usroli the dispute is going on, with regard to the use of the lake water. There is a big lake with ample provision of water but the Mahars and the Chamars are not allowed to take water by all the villagers including the Muhammadans; as they believe that the water will be polluted. For getting water they have to request somebody to pour water in their pots and in return they have to give some firewood or to pay in cash.

One Chamar family has complained that the Untouchables are not allowed to use the public water-taps at Murud. For instance there are three water-taps near the Palace, one is for the Muslims, the other is for the Hindus and the third for the Mahars. But the Chamars cannot take water from any of these three taps.

Ten Mahar families and nine Chamar families have complained that they do not get access freely in the Government offices and in the dispensaries. They have to stand at a distance and it involves a great loss of time and a lot of inconvenience. It is true that in serious cases the doctors touch and see personally the conditions of the patients but ordinarily they have to wait outside and have to spend a lot of time.

Seven Chamar families have complained that they have to undergo various difficulties while they are in journey in the ferry-boats or in the Machwas. Sometimes the Tandels do not allow to enter in the Machwas on the plea that the food of other Caste Hindus may be polluted. Recently a case of this type had happened at Rajpuri where the untouchables were not allowed to enter into the Machwa.¹

Eight Mahar families and six Chamar families have said that they are very often cheated by the shop-keepers who give them the worse type of articles and as they are not in a position to make a choice of the articles by selecting with their own hands they have no other alternative but to accept the articles which the Shop-keepers offer.

(4) *Miscellaneous* :—The Chamar families of Shrivardhan have made a complaint that there is no accommodation of space for their houses and they have to live in congested and insanitary places. The space that is allotted them is very narrow and so it remains unhygienic and that is why they say that epidemics like Cholera are broken first in their areas.

1. The *Naukai* dated 11-5-1937.

The untouchables of the village Varal have complained that the burning-place of the caste Hindus is quite close to their place of residence and thereby they have to suffer a lot of nuisance owing to the burning of the dead bodies at a distance of a few paces from their houses. As a matter of fact, they say that the Caste Hindus have a burning place also at another place but they are obstinate in burning the dead bodies near their houses.

ECONOMIC :

(i) *Uncultivated Land*—Seven Mahar families and six Chamar families have expressed their opinion that they would gain economic independence much earlier if they get waste lands from the Government which are lying uncultivated free or on a very nominal rental fee. The problem is of great importance to them especially to the Mahars who are depending upon agriculture. But they are practically landless and are simply working as agricultural labourers.

(ii) *Debt with low interest*—Twenty-six Mahar families and nineteen Chamar families have suggested that they are under heavy debt with a high rate of interest. They have paid more than twice the amount, as interest and still they are in debt. Thus they will have to remain in debt practically for all their lifetime if their debts are not wiped off and if they do not get the facilities getting debt with low interest.

(iii) *Forced Labour and the Begar System*—The System of forced labour is wide-spread and deep-rooted in the State, especially in the Khoti Villages, heavy with age and even sanctified by traditions. No doubt the general policy of the state is in favour of removing such oppressing customs as it can be seen that the system of "Weth" (curvee) and Nangar Weth were abolished in the year 1883-4 to mark the auspicious occasion of the accession of the late Nawab Saheb.¹ But the system of the forced labour continues anyhow, till to-day. Twenty-one Mahar families have suggested that they had to do forced labour for the Government officials for very little or for 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. This practice affects not only the Mahars but the other lower communities also. The duties of the Vatandar Mahars are not defined with the result that some times petty officials ask them to render personal services and do such work which has in no way any connection with their official work. They think that such system should be stopped and they should be paid the due remuneration for their extra services.

1. The Janjira Administration Report 1883-84. Page 5.

(iv) *Vatan System*:—Some of the Vatandar Mahars have expressed that they get no remuneration from the Government for their services and they have simply to depend upon the Baluta that they may get from the villagers. So they think that it will be a great boon to them if the Government pays them for their services as it is done in British Districts.

V

CONCLUSION :

We have discussed so far the economic and social conditions of the Untouchables of the Janjira State. Here in this chapter we shall try to coordinate the important topics with regard to their general uplift comparing to my previous study of the Untouchable Classes of Maharashtra of the six Marathi-speaking Districts of the Bombay Presidency.¹

Education :

It must be remembered that educational opportunity is the key to the advance of all the Communities and the Untouchables cannot be an exception to this rule. Naturally the social and economic uplift of these unfortunate classes entirely depend upon the spread of education among them which will alone help to drive their untouchability to a great extent.

The Educational policy of the State is very liberal to everyone irrespective of caste and race. The Primary Educational Department is started in the year 1870² by an establishment of a Marathi Primary school at Murud ; and if we take into consideration the progress that is made during the last sixty years it can be safely said that educational opportunities are open to all the subjects of the State. The late Nawab Sahab was immensely keen in the spread of Education among his subjects and more especially among the Depressed Classes. For instance if we refer to the table No. (10) we can realise that immense progress was made in the matters of Education of these classes in his early part of his reign as the number of school going children was enormously large, even greater than what it is today. He made the Primary Education free to all the classes and in appreciation of this benevolent act a memorial was presented to His Highness in the year 1906 by all the subjects of his State including the untouchables for making the Primary Education free for all the classes.³ In

1. i. a. Kolaba, Thana, Nasik, Ahmednagar, Satara and East Khandesh.
2. *Bombay Gazette* Vol. XI Page 459.
3. *Janjira Administration Report* 1905-6

the address presented to the Governor of Bombay on 17th December 1905 the Nawab Saheb made it clear that it was his desire to see that educational facilities should be open to all his subjects and for that "63 Primary Schools have been opened and a High School is established which imparts Education upto Matric and School Final."¹

But the problem of educational advance among the untouchable classes presents various difficulties, and the most important of them is their poverty. Their earnings are too low as we have seen to provide for the education of their children. The boys are helpful to them in getting small earnings at times and often to do agricultural and domestic work, and as such, some of them are unwilling to send their children to the schools.

Another difficulty in the spread of education among these classes is the general indifference evinced by these classes towards education. Ignorance, of course, is largely responsible for their indifference. They are practically unconscious of the value of education, and hence they have no attraction for it. There is no doubt, some awakening among a few of them, but a majority of them who dwell in the villages, which are scattered far away from the towns have not touched even the fringe of the problem.

But as compared with the Untouchable Classes of the six Districts that I have studied, it can be seen that the Untouchables of the Janjira State are lagging far behind. For instance, there is none from the Untouchable Classes in the Janjira State who has passed any qualifying examination. While in my previous study of the untouchables in the six Districts I have found 29 students who have passed the V.F. examination, 4 have passed the Matriculation Examination and four were taking Higher Education². There are also 76 persons that I have found who are literate in English³, while there are only two persons in the State, that I have found in my survey who can be called literate in English by courtesy. In the questionnaire I had put similar questions about their ideas of progress in matters of their education to the Untouchables of the six Districts, and some have suggested about industrial education, free accommodation in the Government Hostels and facilities for Higher Education, while the untouchables of the Janjira State have not got the slightest idea of such various issues of the problem of their education. Naturally, special

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1. Janjira Administration Report 1905-6, p. 3.
 2. "The Untouchable Classes of Maharashtra" by the Author, page 10.
 3. *Ibid*, page 11.

efforts are necessary to make them to realise the importance of education which is "the evident panacea for all the social disorder."¹

So the great handicap under which these people are labouring is want of consciousness regarding the utility of education. It must be remembered that they have not cultivated a desire for education and special attention is required for making them understand the importance of education in their daily life. There are many difficulties in sending their children to the schools. In some village schools, they are not allowed to mix freely with the children of the other caste Hindus. In some places the teachers are not found much careful about their studies and clean habits, and I have found some cases where these untouchable boys have to spend two or three years to complete the course of one standard, with the result that in spite of spending two or three years in the schools, they get no knowledge of the three Rs. and they are as bad as the other illiterate boys. So, mere provision of the schools in the villages will be never of much use to the uplift 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 the higher authorities, where these boys are deliberately neglected by the teachers.

It must be realised that no social progress can be achieved without education, as it is the most powerful leveller against all their disabilities. The influence which education has in raising the status is always remarkably unique and it alone "helps us in understanding all the important and intricate problems that beset our life today and in visualising to a certain extent at least, in its real perspective, what future has in store for us."² Education, therefore, can be taken as the only solution for improving the social status of the untouchables and which will help to change their environment and the circumstances in which they are now living.

Occupations:

It can be seen from the table No. (11) that a majority of the Mahar community are merely agricultural labourers and domestic

1. "Poor Pariah" by Olcott, page 16.
2. H. H. The Nawab Sahab's address at the opening of the Hindu Education Society's Boarding on 23-5-1935.

servants. This is entirely due to their utter economic backwardness and to their general ignorance. If it is compared to my study of the untouchables in Maharashtra, we can see that the economic condition of the untouchables of the State is on average below than their fellow-brothers in Maharashtra.¹ For instance if we look into the table No. 16 of my study "The Untouchable Classes of Maharashtra", we can find that there are twenty-nine teachers of these classes who are working in the Primary Schools. Besides there are eight Carpenters, eight Businessmen and five Cartsmen, while from the table No. (11) it can be seen that no persons are carrying such various occupations in the State. As a matter of fact, there are very little opportunities for these people in the State to pursue such honourable professions as they are neither educated nor they have an opportunity of studying skilled labour. There are no facilities for vocational training in the State. The late His Highness had declared, while presenting an address to the Governor of Bombay on 17th December 1905, his intention of starting industrial and technical classes in the State,² and accordingly a carpentry class was opened from 1st August, 1908. "With a view to give stimulus to this branch of Education, the class had been made not only free, but all students attending the class were paid scholarships according to their abilities, varying from one anna to four annas daily." A student was also sent for the weaving course at the Hewett Weaving School at Bara Baki, and under his management a Weaving Class was opened in the year 1912.³ But both these classes seemed to have been stopped after a time. It will be greatly beneficial to these classes if some vocational institutions are opened in the State, or the Primary Education in the rural areas is based upon the vocational and agricultural bias, and some of the untouchable deserving students are given facilities of pursuing the courses, so that after a time some of them may find an opportunity of carrying honourable professions.

As for the chamars, they have their own hereditary occupations of making shoes. But there are various handicaps in their profession. They are not getting sufficient leather as the dead animals are simply thrown away in many villages without taking out the skin. Naturally they have to depend upon the importation

1. Compare table No. 21 page 18 regarding their earnings of "The Untouchable Classes of Maharashtra" to the table No. (13) Page (12) of this study.
2. The Janjira Administration Report 1905-6.
3. The Janjira Administration Report 1912-13.

of leather from Bombay and thereby there is little margin for their profits. Besides, they are not acquainted with modern methods in preparing shoes and several other useful things out of leather. They are carrying on, their crude methods and thus it goes difficult for them to have any reasonable return from their occupation.

Indebtedness:

One of the main reasons that I have found for their perpetual indebtedness is proportionately the heavy expenditure that these people incur on marriage purposes. — As a general rule, they have got no surplus from the past and thus they are not in a position to meet such occasional calls of social obligations. Naturally these people have to go to sowcars for debts for such unproductive purposes. But they are landless and as such, they have no security to offer except pledging their labour to the sowcar for a number of years and if once they are entangled in dealings of such nature, they are bound to continue to be indebted to their sowcars for a greater part of their lives and even though they are freed after a period of ten to fifteen years. their sons by that time become of such age as to keep them in service and on pledging their labour these people get more sum either for their sons' and daughters' marriages, or for such other social purposes. Thus the vicious circle goes on, with no ending.

This system cannot be exactly called the serfdom, for a serf means "a slave attached to the soil and sold with it." Here they are not necessarily attached to the soil or sold with it, but they make a contract to serve for a certain number of years in return of money taken in advance. They are at full liberty, to leave their masters by liquidating their debts. But somehow it so happens that they do not get freed from the debts practically for a major part of their lives. So "virtually there is no difference between the position of these people and the slaves of the American Plantations, prior to the Civil war, except that the Courts would not recognise the rights of the masters as absolute over persons and services. But in this country where—more probably than in others—the rich have a better chance in the Courts than the poor, this difference diminishes in importance¹." Thus it can be described the situation by saying that these people are free men *de jure* but serfs *de facto*. It is no doubt true that they have realised the evils of this system. But so long as these people are in want of money, especially for the marriages of their sons and daughters, and so long as they will have

1. Sedwick's Census Report 1921 - page 220.

no surplus of their own, and as they have no facilities to borrow on co-operative system either from the village co-operative Societies, which are not existing in the State, or from such any other source. or so long they do not refrain from spending more than their capacities on marriage expenses, and so long this system of pledging labour is not put to stop, or modified in the interest of these people by some legal enactment, this sort of "quasi-serfdom" will remain with all its demerits.

Wells :

The question of wells is the most important and also the most difficult to solve. Nowhere I have found in my both the studies a common well used by the touchables and the untouchables. Among the untouchables themselves, a common well is not used as it can be seen from the Mazgaon Village, where the Chamars have a well, in good condition, but they do not allow the Mahars to take water from it, nor the Mahars are willing to do so. They have a dowara which is in very much insanitary condition and it becomes dry in the summer. In such cases, the problem of finding potable water becomes of intense difficulty especially during the summer season, when in some villages there is a great scarcity of water. They have to wait for the charitable person to draw water and pour into their pots; or they have to pay or to give some fire-wood as it is done in the Usroli Village. Thus it can be seen that these people have to suffer intensely on account of scarcity of water. This is really a serious handicap in their way of living a cleaner life, and has really a bad effect upon their health and efficiency. It also involves sometimes economic loss as we have seen it requires great amount of time in getting water or they have to pay for it. It is essential that they must be made to appreciate a cleaner mode of life, and this will be done only when there is sufficient provision of water for daily use. Thus, if the Government and the Local Bodies look into this primary need of the untouchables of getting water, it will be highly helpful to drive away the vicious taint of untouchability.

Conclusion :

Thus, to sum up, it is highly essential in order to eradicate untouchability from the society, that the efforts should be made on all sides to concentrate upon the primary object of securing full civic rights for them, as the right of sending children to the public schools, without any discrimination being exercised against them or the right of drawing water from the public wells if they have no wells in good conditions. This will help these classes to appreciate a cleaner or more moral mode of life. It must be also

seen that these people get access freely to all the public institutions such as the Schools, Dharmashalas, Ferry-boats, Markets, Dispensaries, Government Offices, Public Water Taps, Hotels, and all such public and semi-public institutions which are maintained under the direct supervision of the Government, or over which the Government can exercise its authority. In the village schools there must be an attempt made by the Primary School Authorities that in addition to the knowledge of simply three Rs, there must be created opportunities of imparting discourses on the proper ideals of life, on cleanliness, and opportunities should be created and handled in such a way, that these classes come in immediate contact with ideas of better and cleaner ways of life, which will help to effect a change in their social environment. It will be also beneficial if the Primary Educational Authorities take special care of the untouchable boys regarding their studies, cleanliness, manners, their difficulties in attending the schools, the treatment they get at the hands of the teachers and other fellow-students, and all such allied topics, as it will be immensely helpful in driving the ugly ideas about untouchability from the minds of the younger generation, as well as from the older one.

Another way of helping to drive the notions about untouchability from the society, will be by employing some of the suitable candidates from these classes in Government menial services, such as the peons, the pattawalas in the Taluka Revenue Offices, Police, Forest Guards etc., whereby these people will be in direct contact with the public, while carrying the Government duties and thereby the caste-Hindus, after a time, will not attach any importance to the ideas of untouchability. There is also a necessity of nominating representatives from these classes to the Local Bodies as they will get an opportunity to ventilate their grievances that might exist in any corner of the State. But the sure way of improving the lot of these unfortunate classes will be by establishing temporarily a separate department to look into their affairs, like the Backward Class Office of the Bombay or the Madras Presidency.

There are no two opinions that untouchability is the worse type of social ostracism and it must be driven, from the society as soon as possible. No doubt the untouchables themselves are getting conscious of their taint and they are also mobilising their forces against it as it can be seen from several instances, happening in the State, such as the incident at Torade in Mhasla Taluka.¹ But it is the sacred duty of the Government,

1. The "Dhanurdhari" dated 27-11-1937.

and as well as of the Caste-Hindus, to get rid of untouchability from the society. For that, special efforts must be done. Along with the Government efforts in the direction suggested above, if a branch of the Harijan Sevak Sangha is started in the State, in order to create favourable atmosphere by educating the masses and doing useful propaganda, as it is doing in several other States, it can be easily prophesied that untouchability will be on its last legs and will die out within a very short period.¹

1. I am much thankful to the University of Bombay for sanctioning me a Research Grant for carrying this study. I am also greatly thankful to H. H. The Nawab Sahab of the Janjira State and to the Dewan Sahab of the State for allowing me to carry out the work and giving me facilities for it.