

DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR MEMORIAL
LECTURES

by

Dr. V K R V Rao

I should like to begin by thanking the University of Delhi and its Extension Lecture Department who have done me the honour by inviting me to deliver the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Memorial Lectures this year. I had the privilege of knowing Dr Ambedkar personally both when I was a student and young lecturer in Bombay and subsequently in Delhi. Dr. Ambedkar, though a very controversial person as far as his relations with Gandhiji were concerned, was in himself a very amiable and kindly person and I still remember the many discussions I had with him on both economic and social matters. His life can be described as a saga for oppressed humanity. All his life he fought for trying to remove the centuries old sufferings and handicaps under which his countrymen, who belonged to his particular section of Indian society, had been suffering. The culmination of his fight was perhaps the adoption of the Article abolishing untouchability by the Constituent Assembly. Dr Ambedkar knew fully well that this was perhaps a paper victory but it was better than nothing. But he continued to fight till his end.

The task that he set himself on still remains to be implemented. How and when untouchability will really cease to exist in India, I do not know. Anyway, I am glad that University Grants Commission has instituted these lectures in his memory and I hope those of us who have been honoured to deliver these lectures will do something to hasten the process which Dr. Ambedkar had started.

SOCIAL PLANNING - THE THEME

Social Planning, Social Development, Social Policy, these were all words that hardly found mention in the economist's dictionary in the 19th century. Economic development was the main theme, Adam Smith's invisible hands gave credibility to the thesis of private interests automatically functioning in the public interest, private enterprise was the key instrument to economic growth, and economic liberalism was the ruling philosophy of the professional economist. The 19th century and the early part of the 20th century as also more recently the two decades following the second world war, saw an unprecedented rate of economic growth in the industrialised world, which further enhanced the primacy of economic development in both popular and official thinking. There were of course some voices that were raised against its adverse social consequences. And there were some other voices that dwelt on the adverse effects of some social factors in preventing or retarding the pace of economic development. But there were also some wiser men who, while conceding the validity behind these views, also felt that social measures could minimise or offset the adverse consequences of economic development, reduce or eliminate social obstacles to economic development, and in fact, make social factors an aid to economic development by appropriate social policies. Social movements of protest also helped to focus policy attention on the need for preventive and positive social action, placing social development and social policy prominently on the developmental map.

This interest in the social aspect of development as against its economic aspect also got philosophic and emotional support from the writings of John Ruskin and others who draw attention to the non-economic aspects of human well being, which after all is the goal of development including economic development. Subsequently the life and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi gave pointed emphasis to the deterioration that takes place in the quality of life through unbridled economic development and the application of modern technology to methods of production. On

another plane, the life and teachings of Mao Tse Tung also emphasised the importance of simple living, the need for controlling wants, and the relevance of the quality of life with its large non-economic component in developmental strategy. Thus aesthetics, morality, limitation of wants, and simple living all came into the debate on developmental goals and strategy, and went a long way in emphasising the non-economic or broadly speaking, the social aspect of development.

The primacy of the economic aspect in the developmental process has also suffered erosion from the economic standpoint itself in recent years. Thus, the damage caused to the environment, and the ecological consequences of the kind of industrialisation and development that has taken place in the western world and Japan has drawn pointed attention to the harmful economic consequences of concentrating developmental efforts on only economic growth. More recently, the oil crisis has shocked the industrialised world into realising the unstable foundations on which its affluence has been built, the extent to which non-renewable resources have been used with its inevitable D day when these resources will near exhaustion, and the steep rise meanwhile in the prices charged for these resources due to a shift in the balance of power in the Middle East vis-a-vis the ex-colonial powers and the formation of cartels by producers of these non-renewable resources. The Club of Rome has driven into public consciousness the spectre of the limits of economic growth and given material justification for departing from the pursuit of purely material ends and stressed the need for giving a larger place to the non-economic in developmental strategy.

Also the belief that the benefits of economic growth will get diffused and percolate into the weaker sections of society has been found illusory, with inequality in income and wealth continuing and poverty persisting in spite of massive economic development. It was becoming increasingly clear that even from the point of view of economic development, its stability, continuing growth, and equitable distribution of its dividends, social policy, social planning and social development had to be brought into the development picture.

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This development has been greatly assisted by the new international institutions starting with the U.N.O. which was established after the conclusion of the Second World War, and the machinery and the bureaucracy they brought into being for the furtherance of their objectives. Thus, the charter of the United Nations Organisation (UNO) signed on 26th June 1945 included among its objectives:¹ the promotion of a "higher standard of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development". A Bureau of Social Affairs was set up in its Department of Economic and Social Affairs to look after social welfare, community development and residual social programmes. And the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) set up among its functional commissions a Social Commission charged with the responsibility for this aspect of U.N. activities. In the ECOSOC resolution of 1946 determining its terms of reference, there was a reference to "the field of social policy" but the term was not elaborated or explained the general impression given being "that the social factors were regarded as residual in the overall process of development and that social policy would be designed to provide remedies or palliative measures rather than positive and dynamic action in the social field".² However, it was only in 1961 that the U.N. Assembly took a comprehensive and policy-oriented approach to development, proclaiming the sixties as the Development Decade and outlining a programme for international economic cooperation for its implementation. The main emphasis of the programme was on the economic growth of the less developed countries, through it did refer to social progress as the ultimate objective and social reform as a necessary condition of economic improvement. In his report on the programme, the Secretary-General of UNO gave the warning: "Continuous neglect of social aspects of development might result either in stagnation in economic progress or violent reversal of the existing social order".³ The same year, ECOSOC passed a resolution asking for further action in the social field by UNO and stressing the Social Commission's role in the field of broad social policy development, social research and programmes designed to promote social progress. In 1965, it asked the Secretary-General of U.N.O. to submit a report based on the replies to a questionnaire he should address to Member-

Governments for determining their needs in the social field, and the priority to be given to these needs. 56 Governments replied; and their replies contained two major criticisms of the U.N. and the Social Commission in regard to activities in the social field. These were (1) U.N. had made no attack on major problems such as social reform and role of the State in planning for social development and social aspects of industrialisation (2) More urgent attention should be paid to urgent social problems in specified fields such as social welfare and social defence and less to economic questions and theoretical aspects of planning. At its 41st session of ECOSOC adopted a resolution on the reappraisal of the role of the Social Commission and thought it should include:⁴

- 1) more specific emphasis on positive social programmes;
- 2) more recognition of the thesis that economic and social development should go together in the promotion of better standards of life;
- 3) the need for balanced and integrated social and economic development;
- 4) significance of adequate "structural social and economic changes for the achievement of social progress".

The Social Commission was not redesignated and called the Commission for Social Development.

A Committee of experts appointed by ECOSOC met at Stockholm in 1969 to consider the relation between social policy and planning were even more emphatic in endorsing the importance of the social factor in development strategy. ⁵I quote: "It should be stressed that economic phenomena are in fact, social phenomena: they are social in nature, are socially conditioned and have social consequences; and any development planning, if limited to economic interrelationship and negative social conditions and social implications, is bound to be misleading.....It is most necessary to view the development process as a complex whole, comprising not only economic elements but also other social as well as political and administrative elements. Any design for a development strategy, national or international has

to cover all the above mentioned fields if it is to be meaningful, internally consistent and capable of effective implementation".

U.N. had also appointed a more permanent Committee of experts headed by Prof Jan Tinbergen to make their experience in development planning available to them in the formulation and execution of development plans. This Committee met several times to discuss proposals and guidelines for the Second Development Decade and made its final proposals at its Sixth Session held in New York in January 1970. Their report, popularly known as the Tinbergen Report gave further strength to the advocates of the social emphasis thesis by stating that "development implies not simply an increase in productive capacity but major transformation in their social and economic structures". It pointed out that the dualism that marks the developing economies had often the effect of making technical and economic advances sharpen the contrast between their modern and backward sectors and widen social and economic disparities. After conceding that high rates of growth of income and output are necessary to eliminate mass poverty, it went on to say:⁶ "The process of development has itself to be used in terms of fundamental structural changes and as much with reference to concepts ^{and} methods appropriate to social transformation, as to those customary to economic analysis and policy making. Indeed, for this reason, the distinction often made between economic and social objectives is often not a very meaningful one to draw". The Tinbergen Report lists among its priorities income distribution, employment, health, housing and institutional change that will eliminate privileges, injustices, ^{and inefficiencies,} and lead to the modernisation of the societies of the developing countries.

The big landmark in international thinking on social development was the resolution on "Declaration on Social Progress and Development" passed by the U.N. General Assembly in December 1969.⁷ The preamble to the Resolution emphasised, inter-alia "the interdependence of economic and social development

in the wider process of growth and change, as well as the importance of a strategy of integrated development which takes full account at all stages of its social aspects". The following are the more important of the Articles that dealt with Principles underlying the Resolution:

- Article I. "All peoples and all human beings without distinction as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, family or social status or political or other convictions shall have the right to live in dignity and freedom and to enjoy the fruits of social progress, and should, on their part, contribute to it".
- Article V(b) The dissemination of national and international information for the purpose of making individuals aware of changes occurring in society as a whole.
- Article V(c) The active participation of all elements of society individually or through associations, in defining and in achieving the common goals of development with full respect for the fundamental freedoms embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Article V(d) The assurance to disadvantaged or marginal of the population of equal opportunities for social and economic advancement in order to achieve an effectively integrated society.
- Article IV. Social progress and development require the participation of all members of society in productive and socially useful labour, and the establishment of forms of ownership of land and the means of production which preclude any kind of exploitation of man, ensure equal rights of property to all, and create conditions leading to genuine equality among the people.
- Article VII: The rapid expansion of national income and wealth and their equitable distribution among all members of society are fundamental to all social progress

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and they should therefore be in forefront of the pre-occupation of every State and Government.

Part II of the Resolution, called "Objectives" indicated the aim of social progress and development as "the continuous raising of the material and spiritual standards of all members of society and listed the following items as needing attainment for the purpose:

1. Right to work, with just conditions of work and remuneration.
2. Elimination of hunger and malnutrition and guarantee of the right to proper nutrition.
3. Elimination of poverty and assurance of a steady improvement in the levels of living, and of a just and equitable distribution of income.
4. Good health.
5. Eradication of illiteracy and establishment of free and compulsory elementary education.
6. Adequate housing and community services, especially to low income groups and large families.
7. Social security schemes and services including the rights of mother and child, the aged, the disabled and the physically and mentally disadvantaged, and social defence.
8. Education of youth in, and promotion among them, of the ideals of justice and peace, mutual respect and understanding among peoples, and the provision of full participation of youth in the process of national development.
9. Guarantee that all individuals without discrimination of any kind, are made aware of their rights and obligations and receive the necessary aid in the exercise and safeguarding of their rights.
10. Planning for social progress and development as an integrated part of overall development planning.
11. Establishing national systems for framing social policies and programmes.
12. Measures to ensure effective participation, as appropriate of all the elements of society in the preparation and execution of national plans and programmes of economic and social development.
13. Mobilisation of public opinion, at both national and international levels, in support of the principles and objectives of social progress and development.
14. Dissemination of social information to make people aware of changing circumstances in society.

Part III, entitled "Means and Methods" included inter-alia national legislation, social and institutional reform including land reforms, low cost housing, improved and expanded system of transportation and communication, health services and medical facilities, social security and social welfare services, rehabilitation of the handicapped, trade union rights, harmonious industrial relations, training programmes, education, strengthening of family, demographic policy, child care, laying down economic growth rates, international aid, trade and exchange of information concerning social progress and development, technical, scientific and cultural cooperation, transfer of technology, protection of the environment and disarmament.

There is a lot of repetition in this Resolution, but I have refrained from editing it partly because the items repeated show the direction of emphasis but even more because this Resolution can truly be described as the international Magna Charta of Social Development, Social Policy and Social Planning. I only hope that it will not require as many centuries as the English Magna Charta of Parliamentary Democracy took before it achieves implementation in all its meaning.

Following the Tinbergen Report and the U.N. Assembly Resolution of 1969, there was a shift towards social concern in the International Development Strategy for the Second U.N. Development Decade. Thus, the U.N. Report on the World Social Situation in 1964, pointed out:

"The emphasis is increasingly focussed on question relating to the quality and distribution of growth. As the quality of life is established as a primary development objective, the range and complexity of policy measures are dramatically enlarged. Many social, cultural and political factors, such as human environment or citizen participation in decision-making, that earlier seemed to be at the margin of concern, have now become central. At the same time, the failure of most macro-growth policies to bring about any significant narrowing of disparities in income or levels of living has led to a more explicit emphasis on social or distributional equity. The growing

conviction that the fruits of development must be available to more than a select few demands specific policies for improving the conditions of life for rural and urban poor, ethnic minorities and marginal groups".

Anyway, the emphasis in development has now moved away at least conceptually from the primacy of the economic factor. In fact, the previous emphasis on economic goals had now given way to social goals and that on the quantum and rate of economic growth to its quality and distribution. Both ECOSOC and the General Assembly were now calling for an elaboration of a unified approach to development analysis and planning that would take account of the multiplicity of goals and their relative emphasis.

This was easier said than done. As the ESCAP Report⁹ on "Social Development in Asia - Retrospect and Prospect", while conceding that "economic growth is just one aspect of a total process of change in which political, social and ideological aspects are inextricably interrelated", also pointed out: "However, this intellectual awareness has yet to take more tangible form in the establishment of methodology of integrated development planning and implementation. By and large, social and economic planning are still regarded as separate disciplines; and the former, where it exists at all, is interpreted largely in terms of conventional sectoral approaches towards improving levels of living and not in terms of effecting fundamental institutional changes which are in many instances the prerequisites of development."

The difficulty in spelling out an integrated approach was further underlined in the U.N. Report on the World Social Situation in 1964 in the following terms:¹⁰

"The simplicity of the concept of an integrated approach to development is both its strength and its weakness. Although relatively easy to conceptualise, given its inherent complexity, it is difficult to implement.... The application of a unified approach is complicated by the necessity of making policy decisions in the absence of an objective knowledge of the functioning of many aspects of society. Knowledge of the complex

of social, economic and political factors, as well as psychological and perceptual factors, is often limited and at best partial. When policy is required, a high degree of expediency and uncertainty must be tolerated".

The report also pointed out:¹¹ "On the whole, the integration of planning to take account of the goals, structure and functioning of society is hampered, inter-alia, by the fact that many of the existing planning concepts, instruments and techniques have been elaborated to further the goals of economic planning per se and not those of broad social and economic development".

Answering the question of how to integrate the several streams of conceptualisation regarding the 'social' aspect and achieve a useful framework for developmental planning, Prof. A J Kahan points out:¹²

"Clearly the system addressed must not be the social realm and economic development alone; all the records of wastages or failures are records of ignoring or underestimating one of the dimensions. The system for planning then, is the society of the developing country (italics mine). The target is not economic growth alone or social programmes alone, but rather development. Development is usefully defined as "Growth plus change", or "Growth and change of social and economic elements in the society/economy". This is because "growth and change also require an inter-twining of both economic and social dimensions, economic growth is never an adequate formulation of the target, and a society's assessment of its overall political and resources realities and its preferences are very relevant to the specification of the development image which emerges. The question becomes, "What kind of society do we think we can become and do we wish to become, given our resources, our potentialities, our political situation and our motivations". The answer will of course vary from country to country according to its preferences and resources.

This view finds support in the Encyclopedia of Social Sciences¹³ which states in the relevant article that "a 'social' plan is designed to meet the needs of a society which means, in many cases, an entire nation. This usage, in which social planning is equivalent to social planning, is generally accepted by social scientists". The same article also points out "Focus on objectives, including both short term and long terms of social policy, confronts the issue of ideology -- the conception of the good society".

It would be a truism to say that there is no universally accepted concept of a good society; apart from individual preferences, tradition, and environment also have a role in defining its content. All that one can say is that a good society covers all aspects of life and includes not only the economic and the social but also the political, cultural, environmental and the spiritual (ethical or religious or philosophical) aspects of life. If want to take a global view of societal growth and change, we know that it is necessary to study all of these aspects. We know that they all have values in themselves but we also know that these values are also inter-linked and act and react upon each other. What we do not know is how to combine them, as we have no common measuring rod and cannot reduce them into homogeneous units that can make a meaningful total and also give them relative values and be an aid in determining priorities. That is why mankind has so many religions and ideologies with a conflict element in them which has prevented the emergence of a world view on a good society. Obviously therefore it is not possible to draw up an integrated planning framework that will cover all aspects of societal growth and change or formulate an operably integrated and unified set of goals for overall societal planning. But, it would not be a waste of time or effort to undertake such an exercise. For even if we fail to find a complete answer, we can get many insights which can help us to go beyond economic planning and bring in other elements that have relevance but have hitherto failed to get adequate attention or find their proper place in the planning exercise which have now become

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a near universal part of the functioning of national governments and international bodies in the modern world. It is therefore worthwhile to take up social planning and see what place it has and what role it can play in the developmental process.

According to the conclusions reached at a seminar organised by the Economic Commission for Europe on long term social planning and policy making and held in France in May 1972,¹⁴ "the concept of social planning has still two different meanings; either it is a complement to economic planning and may be defined with reference to the fields or sectors that it covers; or it is all-embracing because it expresses and tries to master the broad objectives and main choices of society. According to this second meaning, social planning encompasses and directs economic planning since the creation, allocation and effective use of resources come to serve as means --especially the important ones, it is true but not the only ones -- of achieving more fundamental aims such as the maintenance of social cohesion or the achievement of a chosen pattern of social organisation.

Whether social planning encompasses economic planning or vice versa, they are both interlinked and act and react upon each other. There is a place for social planning in the developmental process even when its major accent is on economic development. Accordingly we now proceed to discuss the concept of Social Planning in more (or is it less) than in philosophical or ideological terms and in the context of how it can be reduced to operable terms and translated into social policies and programmes for development.

We may begin with what Prof. Kahan (to whose more philosophic and ideological definition of social planning we had made a reference to earlier) has to say on social planning on a more practical plane.¹⁵ I quote: "One may define the universe of social planning in simple, pragmatic, operational terms as all that is not preempted by or assigned to economic and physical policy makers, and not clearly in the domain of internal and external protection and defence". This negative way of defining the area of social planning recalls to an Indian mind the Upanishadic way

of defining God as Neti, Neti (not this, not this). However, we may now pass on to the relative (and positive) way in which Kahan would define social planning. "Or one may urge a definition that sees social welfare, and therefore, social planning, as encompassing a society's efforts to implement a guaranteed minimum of resources for individual and group development and living and to realise its goals and aspirations for its members -- all this through mechanisms that assign consumption rights by non-market criteria". His two definitions are not really alternatives. In fact they can be taken together, the second functioning as a limit to the scope set by the first.

Martin Rein, who has contributed the article on "Social Welfare and Planning" in the Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, identifies four different views of the function of social planning, three of which would link it directly with economic planning; while the fourth will give it a somewhat independent role in the developmental process.¹⁶

One is to treat it as a burden the weight of which we can afford without overburdening the economy. An illustration of this can be found in Prof William McCord's¹⁷ "The Springtime of Freedom -- The evolution of Developing Societies", which I quote without comment. "The already advanced nations did not suffer from some of the social and political hindrances to economic growth which handicap aspiring areas in the modern era, e.g., in India, egalitarian dogmas force the Government to adopt welfare and labour legislation which, while humanitarian in purpose, could hardly be adequately financed even in Scandinavia". A more scathing exposition of the same point of view is found in Prof. Chester Lihurt in his "Social Aspects of Economic Development".¹⁸ I quote: "In many of the developing countries, governments which are unable to meet the expenses which are usually considered as a bare minimum of state activity, such as highways, postal services, national defence, maintenance of law and order, public health etc., are exposed to pressure from their citizens to assume burdens of welfare support frequently

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even greater than those adopted by the most advanced countries... A welfare programme, which might be a minor part of the budget of an industrialised state may absorb a major proportion of the resources of a developing economy to the detriment of the most rapid possible growth".

The second way to link social with economic planning is to treat the former as a handmaiden to the latter. This is based on the thesis that economic and physical planning is best promoted by investment in the social sector in fields like education, health, nutrition, housing and community development. In fact this has led to a whole spate of literature on the human factor in economic development and a new formulation of capital theory in terms of human capital. Social welfare and social institutions are also brought within the scope of this view of the social aspect of development as an aid to economic development.

A third way to do this is to treat social development as complimentary to economic growth. In a sense, this is really a combination of the first and second ways indicated earlier for linking social development to economic development. But it postulates that social development can only proceed along with economic growth and at a pace set by the latter or otherwise it will only result in a redistribution of poverty.

These three approaches however give social planning a subordinate place and treat social goals as supplementary items to economic development, which both conditions and uses them, rather than as factors having an autonomy of their own. A fourth view to which Rein refers however gives social planning an independent existence; and this is to treat it as a "means of social control" for reducing social deviance and thereby ensuring political and economic stability. This would bring within its scope policies and programmes directed towards abolition of poverty, reduction in social and economic disparities, working for national minimum of desired consumption

goods and services, incurring expenditure on programmes of social welfare and other possible ways of bringing in the concepts of equity and equality into the developmental process.

After all this discussion, Rein in effect turns to a pragmatic rather than philosophic view of social planning and treats it as a programme-mix of factors like health, education, housing and income maintenance or as social services planning. And this involves the question of the inter-relation between the different categories of social services as well as priorities among them; there is also the question of inter-relationship and priority among the sub-sectors in each social service sector. Dealing with these questions is a part of social planning. But there is no theory of rational choice (such as can be subsumed in economic planning) that is available for determining allocations of public or even private expenditure on the different social services. Rein points out that there can be no social planning without ideology and politics and that allocative decisions are based on value judgements. These are influenced by tradition, organised pressure, the strength of the social service delivery system (both the supply system of social service agencies and demand systems of their recipients), and the constraint of resources in finance and professional skills.¹⁹ He also points out that the problem of social planning involves answering the following three questions:

- 1) How to create a viable structure that can overcome the jurisdictional problems which arise in forging a coalition of established but autonomous service institutions.
- 2) How to promote radical democracy which respects the preference of the social services consumers.
- 3) How to create rational problem-solving based upon research and planning.

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The question also has to be faced that conflict situations may arise when one tries to combine the elements involved in these three questions.

S.I. Cohen, whose doctoral thesis for the Rotterdam University was the subject of social planning, points out that the term social planning itself is being used in at least six different senses; and each sense starts from different assumptions of what constitute development aims. He lists them as under:²⁰

- 1) Raising of national levels of living as represented not only by monetary indicators (national income per capita) but also by non-monetary indicators (nutrition, housing, health, education, security and so on).
- 2) Reduction of inequalities in the distribution of national levels of living.
- 3) Elimination of poverty.
- 4) Increasing of participation, mobility and integration in society.
- 5) Facilitating social change among traditional populations.
- 6) Social planning as the planning of 'social service sectors'.

These six different senses in which the use of the term social planning are listed are not so really different from each other in so far as they are not independent variables, and influence and are influenced by each other. However, two of these raise difficulties in both conceptual and operational terms as we shall see when we come to discuss social planning in the Indian context. Cohen draws pointed attention to the difficulties associated with social integration and social change, which are mentioned in his items 4 and 5. On the subject of social integration, he points out²¹ "An index of the degree of integration in society is not within reach, besides relevant data on the problem as a whole are scanty, so that students in this area do not pretend to do more than ask the right questions. There are divisions in society which

hinder effective participation and societal integration such as those which separate elite and laymen, rich and poor, white and black, right and left, old and young etc. The divisions can cross each other, but it is not clear in what pattern. Among all influential factors, education is found to play an important but uncertain role; education is the principal route to a high status occupation, but it is not obvious whether, on balance, it promotes societal integration. The high degree of sensitivity involved also tends to restrict the number of students". As regards social change, Cohen appears more concerned with its effect on economic development rather than on culture and values (the handmaid view of social planning referred to earlier in this context). Thus, he says, ²² "Much developmental planning is obstructed at the implementation phase by attitudes of farmers, industrial workers, consumers and administrators, the most well-known examples refer to certain caste systems reducing occupational change, certain religious beliefs obstructing certain activities etc. Research studies indicate marked differences in receptivity to economic and technological change among different societies, and have tended to stress the diversity of local conditions among less developed countries and sometimes within the same country, which makes it difficult to generalise in this area of social planning than in earlier ones".

It is the definition given in item 6 which seems to find most acceptance among the meanings given to social planning. Thus, in 1966, the Economic Commission for Latin America defined social planning as planning of 'social service sectors', including housing, health, education and sometimes also the splinter activities of community development. Similarly, Michael Hill's book on "Understanding Social Policy" (1980), answering the question "What is social policy?", says that one way to answer it would be to provide a list of the areas of public policy included under that heading. And Chapters V to XI of his book deal with various fields of social policy

such as social security, the personal social services, the health services, education, employment services, housing, and social policy and security. He also adds that "several recent discussions on social policy have suggested that welfare policies are promulgated not from social concern to meet need but as response to social unrest". Similarly, in the volume of essays on "People, Planning and Development -- Some Reflections on Social Planning", edited by Raymond Apthorpe (1976) the topics dealt with under social planning include administrative decision-making, rural systems, the family, housing, nutrition, primary education, small scale enterprise, community participation and the human factor in social planning. The U.N. report on the Social Situation also covers the same broad field when suggesting indicators for social development. Most other studies on Social Planning also tend to treat the social services sector as its main field, though the items listed differ, some including special groups like women, children, and the aged, popular participation and community development; but all of them include health including family planning, education, and rehabilitation of physically and mentally handicapped under the head of Social Services to be dealt with under Social Planning. Matters like employment, reduction in inequalities of income and wealth, abolition of poverty, sometimes environmental protection are included under social policy and therefore come under Social Planning. Social control is another heading which also comes under social planning and includes measures taken against social deviance such as alcoholism, drug addiction, prostitution, crime and suicide. But in terms of both public and private expenditure, it is the social services like health, housing, education and rehabilitation which account for the bulk of the allocations for social purposes and constitute the major arena under Social Planning. Societal cohesiveness, social change, restructuring of social institutions and protection of human dignity do not normally figure under social planning, though they all figure under national and internationally declared aims of social policy. We have no

way of converting social values into economic terms or give them a dollar content. Social life is more complex than the simple model of maximising a single goal defined as utility and measured by preference functions and indifference curves. In the social sphere, the pursuit is of multiple goals some of which are in partial conflict with one another and are also difficult to identify and select. Thus, we cannot develop a single best plan and have to be content with multiple plans which will vary according to which items we accept as constraints for the achievement of selected objectives. We have to go in for different kinds and degrees of trade-off, but there is no way bringing them under a common scale of measurement. As was pointed by the U.N. Secretary-General in a report to the Social Commission: "Social Planning does not have the unity and coherence of economic planning. Social allocation is ultimately a matter of judgement, operating among incommensurable values".

We need not however wholly abandon the ideal of social planning as an instrument for social change for the achievement of a nationally accepted social system or society. This depends of course on the existence of such a nationally accepted ideal society. In this context, social planning is somewhat more practical for the countries of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union which have a definite societal objective, namely, the creation of a socialist society which incorporates both social and economic objectives and unifies both Governmental and non-governmental institutions into a common endeavour for the achievement of this objective. ²³ Thus, for example, the Economic Research Institute of the U.S.S.R. State Planning Commission has developed a differentiated income-consumption balance for the population, based on a combination of selected family budget characteristics and national economic balance data on the income and consumption of the population. This has enabled differential balances to be established for a number of financial and plan years. The basic elements of the differentiated balance prepared at the Institute are models of income distribution and of income and consumption patterns, differentiated according to social status groups

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and sections of the population at different income levels and a model of family size and composition. And the consumption model of the differentiated balance can be expressed as the sum of the consumption functions which reflect analytically the dependence of the level of consumption on each group of consumption goods (in physical terms) and services on the overall level of consumption. Indicators describing individual aspects of the promotion of public well-being are incorporated in nearly all sections of the national economic plan. And the processes involved in raising the standard of living are extensively reflected in those sections of the plan which deal with the promotion of education, culture, health and trade; the labour plan incorporates wage and salary indicators, the agricultural development plan collective-farmer income indicators and so on. It is a pity that so little attention has been given in the developing world to the social aspects of Soviet planning and so much attention has been paid to its heavy industry strategy.

The Hungarian Economic Planning Institute²⁴ undertakes exercises in long term planning not so much on the basis of the structure and movement of production as that of the policy and aims of employment and by the level-of-living policy. The Institute links with long-term planning the development of the level of living, of the way of life and living conditions, and of their economic and social interrelationships. And the long-term plan is treated as an integral plan for the development of society and of the economy. The fundamental objectives of their social policy, based on the socialist nature of their society and strengthening socialist trends, are reflected, directly and indirectly, in the strategic goals of the level of living policy. This involves taking into account in long term planning the strengthening of social security and of the open character of society, the further development of the system of consumption preferences and the satisfaction of the population's need for a higher level of living. Social security means full employment, free provision of health services to the entire population, special allowances for the

aged and disabled, and social protection. Strengthening the open character of society involves a reduction of the unfavourable differentiating influence of family and social conditions on young people starting to work, giving adults a greater opportunity to raise the level of their knowledge and demonstrate their abilities, and social equality of women which means a further development of the net-work of children's institutions (creches, nursery schools, late-hour kinder-gartens, etc.) and a further increase in allowances in cash and in kind for women who stay at home, thereby broadening the choice between working and housekeeping for women who stay at home. As income is the largest determinant of well being and as a socialist society is geared to a progressive achievement of egalitarianism and need-based income, and as, at the same time, the efficiency of material production has to be secured through differentiation of income according to the work done, the long term plan is expected to incorporate means for:

- 1) ensuring that society as a whole and each social group of any size enjoy the benefits of economic development.
- 2) ensuring that the lowest incomes can meet the minimum social needs corresponding to a particular level of development and at the same time, the highest incomes should not exceed acceptable, socially justifiable levels.

Socialist planning, thus incorporates social planning, sector-wise in terms of social services, social welfare, and social groups and globally in terms of consumer requirements, employment requirements and levels of living. Social cohesiveness and integration is taken as achieved socialist objective to be made fuller with further economic development and kept intact with further progress in social planning.

The non-socialist countries of Western Europe are also turning towards social planning, in spite of the larger structural difficulties they face in this field due to their system of private enterprise and parliamentary democracy.

25 Thus, at the seminar organised by the Economic Commission for Europe in May 1972, the problem of long term social planning and policy was considered in depth; and it was pointed out that any technical integration of planning methods and practices in the social field was linked up with the degree of social integration reached in the country in question. Social integration could be of three kinds, namely, vertical, horizontal and temporal; and could be achieved at three levels, namely, sectoral, goal-oriented and global. Of these, global integration was the most difficult as it expresses the will to master the whole development of society; and its success depends upon the political will of the society concerned supported by appropriate methods, adequate institutional means, participation by groups and individuals able to identify social problems and to contribute to the selection of policies and instruments for solving them, and, above all, an administrative system open and accessible to changes in the social context. Goal-oriented integration was primarily concerned with the distribution of the goods and services produced by the community in the context of the desired goals. And it is essentially linked with sectoral integration. The seminar outlined the scope of sectoral integration as covering:

- 1) basic needs,
- 2) social groups by age, sex, social and occupational status or activity,
- 3) activities of those engaged in producing basic goods,
- 4) social problems, e.g., poverty, crime rate, etc.
- 5) Official decision-making bodies.

At the seminar organised by the Economic Commission (referred to earlier), it was pointed out that the contents of the social field in which they operated varied according to the socio-economic history of each individual country. The authorities were taking up particular fields like health, education or housing or problems like the elderly sections of the population or environmental consequences of industrialisation either because of legal obligations or social pressures. In general, social policy in the Western European countries seem

to lie between sectoral plans dealing with individual social service sectors or integrated planning of public expenditure and action to reduce inequalities between groups or regions. Indicators or norms of all kinds for the planning or administration of social sectors and problems are used both in eastern and western European countries (more in the former than in the latter) and targets defined for each of them in terms of growth rates, the absolute level to be reached and the structure of consumption to be achieved. In general these indicators are expressed in value terms and translate into significant figures in the allocation of resources between, e.g., private and public consumption or between productive and unproductive (collective or social) investment. In formal terms, the standard indicator of social planning is the financial coverage reserved for social capital (health, education etc.), while at the disaggregated level, the growth rate of the real income of certain social categories, (e.g., farmers, wage-earners) is also treated as an important indicator. Some of the norms, especially those of a sectoral character, specify a desirable minimum used to secure state help when the actual condition falls below this minimum. Thus, for example, in France, any person with an income below a fixed level, who does not have the minimum physical habitability norm for housing can get a low-cost loan from the State. Sweden has a minimum income norm based on durable and non-durable goods respectively, all those whose income or pension is below this minimum level automatically receiving a financial allowance from the State equal to the sum necessary to reach this minimum level. In other case, the norm is a target that involves the application of a policy affecting almost the whole of the social sector concerned, e.g., reduction in infant mortality. Social statistics are also used not merely in preparing social surveys but also in preparing social indicators indicating the development reached, either in specific social service sectors or for particular social groups such as the elderly in West European countries. In some countries, balance sheets are also drawn up concerning the beneficiaries of public and private activities and an attempt is made to describe in schematic form the implementation of action by the authorities, at least in its more quantifiable aspects,

satellite accounts are also used as frames of reference suited to the analysis of specified areas of social fields and representing diagrammatically the mechanisms of production, cost, distribution and financing. The nomenclature and concepts of the Central National Accounts machinery, duly adopted, are taken as the basis for the framework of the system; but to be really useful for social planning, the costs will have to be related to a measure of production (often non-commercial) and the beneficiaries of these activities will have to be indicated.

Western European countries are also taking interest in long term social planning. They have started recognising the need for "an objective review of the future" in the social field and using these studies for obtaining a better understanding of the links between social needs and the factors that govern them. They are also intended to help them in defining effective policies and checking the increasing difficulties associated with growth such as urban concentration, migration, the environment, etc. These studies relate mainly to the following fields: education, health, housing, employment, social allowances, the elderly, rural migration and working conditions. The Scandinavian countries also deal with problems related to regional development, while the East European countries deal additionally with the structure of consumption (individual and public). A review of these studies concluded that these long term studies did reveal strategies variables (or fields) in the development process and the close inter-connection between economic and social phenomena. They also emphasised the effect of regional disparities on the extent to which needs are met. The review added that if the lessons emerging from these studies are to be turned to account, a trifle effort of integration might be required of medium term economic and social planning covering:

- 1) integration of long term choices and policies into the medium term and then into the short term.
- 2) medium-term integration of economic and social considerations at the level of macro-economic and inter-sectoral choices, and when activity in a particular field is being organised.
- 3) Integration of regional and local choices in national planning.

Mr Cohen,²⁶ in his doctoral thesis to the Rotterdam University and working under the inspiration of Prof Tinbergen, has attempted to formulate a model that would include along with production also manpower and social planning. His model involves the introduction of more aims than are normally included in production models. These additional aims are both monetary (income per capita) and non-monetary (employment, standards of nutrition, housing, health, education etc.). This involves the incorporation of additional means (public allocation to the social service sectors such as housing, health etc.,) and explicit planning of the additional sectors. Because of the nature of these additional aims and means, it also become necessary to incorporate relationships with a multi-disciplinary content, e.g., productivity effect of better health, formation of better health etc.

Secondly, -- and this is what is most relevant to our theme -- the population is divided into social groups (groups of people with common interests) and social policy is appraised in terms of these groups. This enables:

- 1) appraisal of socio-economic policy for the total population.
- 2) appraisal of social policy arising from the comparison of welfare of social groups.
- 3) appraisal of social policy for a specific group, that is, the poorest group.

These three types of problems coincide with the major theme of social planning and would permit systematic treatment of welfare distribution among groups and of the absolute welfare of particular groups, be it the richest or poorest group. A second advantage that Cohen claims for this formulation of groups is the link it provides between the policy-maker's macro-welfare-function and the separate welfare functions of each social group. While traditionally, planning is concerned with the whole population, social planning takes as premises social groups with common interests and therefore serves as an intermediate stage on the road to the ultimate objective of satisfying

needs on an individual basis. A third advantage he mentions is that the group approach is closely associated with the conflict model and advocacy planning, which reflects some popular trends in politics and sociology that deny value-free professional objectivity in the planner's role and the possibility of planning impartially in the interests of 'society' as a whole. This approach wants each interested group or social force to acquire its own planners and accept as legitimate conflict between groups. Planning in this view becomes pluralistic and partisan or overtly political. The fourth advantage he claims is that "as a result of the formulation of aims and means in terms of social groups, social planning endeavours to eliminate a large amount of political interference from the planning tradition". He adds: "generally speaking, to ensure that politics are practised most on the side of the people of the developing nations and least on the side of the economist, the economist should approach the problem from a social planning point of view, and work with sufficiently flexible models, a greater number of aim variables, even more so for instrument variables, and above all, with group-wise distribution of the benefits and burdens related to the aim variables and controllable variables".

Unfortunately, when it comes to a concrete translation of these lofty aims into a workable model, Cohen has had to wrestle with non-availability of relevant data by desired social groups and the complications introduced by the sheer multiplicity of the variables needed and the absence of a rational way of relating them to one another in quantifiable terms. Thus his model deals only with social groups, namely, wage-earners, salary-earners, and the large group of employers, self-employed and family workers who certainly do not constitute a homogeneous social group. And the development aims are limited to nine variables defined in terms of social groups as under:

Wage earners: Disposable income per capita
 Employment rate
 Daily intake of calories per capita
 Number of rooms per capita
 Primary school enrolment rate.

Salary-earners:	: Disposable income per capita Employment rate.
Employers, self-employed and family workers	: Disposable income per capita
Whole Nation	: Survival rate.

The means variables required for these aim variables and concentrated on budgetary instruments only, though there are elements in the model which are controllable by Government. The means variables that he concludes in his model are:

Wage earners	: Tax levy Food subsidies Rent subsidies
Salary-earners	: Tax levy
Employees, self-employed and family workers	: Tax levy
Whole Nation	: General allocation Health allocation Primary Education allocation Secondary Education allocation Higher Education allocation Training on the job allocation Public investment.

Though the model which has emerged is not likely to help in the fulfilment of the objective behind its formulation, the thinking and the arguments that have preceded it certainly throw significant light on an important gap in the planning methods used in many countries, namely, the absence of disaggregates by social groups of aim variables, means variables and levels of achievement by these groups. And these concepts certainly deserve to be used in any exercise in social planning, even though it may not be of much practical help to put them into a single model.

To sum up Social Planning could be thought of under the following heads:

- 1) as a complement of and a corrective to economic development.
- 2) as an integrated planning of the different social service sectors.
- 3) as the planning of different sectors of activity, both economic and social for the fulfilment of specific social targets or the uplift of specific backward sections of society.
- 4) as overall societal planning for social change and social reconstruction.

Item 1 deals with social factors that either hinder or promote economic growth and would largely be concerned with legislation, regulation and policy; except for social services sectors like education, health etc., which both contribute to development and also constitute a part of the goals of development, and actually come under item 2. Item 2 would be concerned with the social services sectors but also with social welfare programmes such as those for women, children, the elderly and the handicapped. Item 3 would be concerned with overall planning of different sectors of activity such as abolition of poverty, full employment and reduction in inequalities in income and wealth and with integrated planning for specific social groups identified on the basis of accepted social or economic criteria or both. Item 4 would presuppose an overall view of the kind of society that is desired, e.g., a socialist society, or a good society, or a stable society or a non-violent society and thus involve an ideology for directing the overall development and the reconstruction of the society in question. It is items 2, 3 & 4 that properly fall under the head of Social Planning and could be summarised as social services sectors planning, social targets planning, and overall societal planning.

Of these, overall societal planning is the most ambitious and least possible category of social planning. Though it can

be formulated conceptually and even here there is no universally agreed goal -- it deals with factors that are non-quantifiable, not translatable in financial terms, difficult to be given operational meaning or instruments and not easily subject to government expenditure allocations or interventions or even policy operations. It is therefore that it finds its largest expression in high sounding and idealistic statements rather than in concrete and operable policies and programmes. Under the circumstances, overall societal change and reconstruction cannot be treated as an effective part of what is called social planning. And yet there is no doubt that it exists and influences the more concrete and identifiable policies and programmes of social planning. In fact, all the three items mentioned earlier are inter-connected. Social services planning influences and is influenced by social targets planning and vice-versa; and both have some influence on societal planning. It is therefore not inappropriate to list all the three items under the general head of Social Planning, even though they may differ in the degree of effectiveness in their planning and even in the feasibility of their being operated through the planning process.

In my next lecture, I shall proceed to discuss this subject in the Indian context.

SOCIAL PLANNING - THE INDIAN CONTEXT

When we look at the official literature on Indian planning, it appears that we were far ahead of the rest of the world in recognising the importance of the social factor in the development process and showed an intellectual acceptance of the concept of balancing and integrating social with economic development when the industrialised western world was still obsessed with economic growth and the primacy of the economic in development. Thus the First Plan (published in December 1952) had for its first Chapter "The problem of Development" and for the first section in this Chapter "Planning: Economic and Social Aspects". And it contains some anachronistic (from the point of view of contemporary economic thinking on development) statements which I quote below:¹

"The problem of development in an under-developed economy is one of utilising more effectively the potential resources available to the community and it is this which involves economic planning. But the economic conditions of a country at any given time is a product of the broader social environment; and economic planning has to be viewed as an integral part of a wider process aiming not merely at the development of resources in a narrow technical sense, but at the development of human faculties and the building up of an institutional framework adequate to the needs and aspirations of the people.. . . .for development to proceed further, a readaptation of social institutions and social relationships becomes necessary. In planning for a better economic order, the close inter-relationship between the technical and the social aspects of development has to be continually kept in view. While there is need for concentrating effort on the more immediate problems, planning implies readiness on the part of the community to view the social process as one whole and to take action designed to shape this process along desired lines over a defined period.....Political independence provides the needed opportunity. It is therefore natural that improvement in economic and social conditions through the acceptance

of more progressive ideas and through suitable institutional changes is regarded as the practical test for judging the adequacy of the new political system..... Real democracy means much more than adult suffrage and parliamentary Government; it means a reordering of social relationships in terms of new values". The rest of the chapter, however, deals with the determinants of economic development, investment, income, employment and external resources. Social development is left hanging in the air, supported by an intellectual acceptance of its importance but without any positive programme or plan allocations for bringing about a re-ordering of social relationships in terms of new values".

It is not surprising that the very first of our Five Year Plan documents began its Report with a reference to the social aspect of development. ² Earlier, the Constituent Assembly had, on the 26th November 1949, adopted the Indian Constitution, constituting India into a Sovereign Democratic Republic for securing for all its citizens;

Justice: Social, economic and political;

Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

Equality of status and opportunity,

and to promote among all citizens;

Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation.

The Constitution came into force on the 26th January 1950 and the Planning Commission was set up in the following March of the same year with a pointed reference in its terms of reference to the Directive Principles of State Policy and in particular to Article 38 which read as under:³

"The State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all the institutions of the national life".

Speaking on the third and final reading of the Constitution Bill on the 25th November 1949, Dr Ambedkar, who chaired the Drafting Committee and is hailed as the architect of the Indian Constitution, gave these pregnant words of warning indicating the basic fundamentals which needed implementing if the Constitution was to be no more than a pious expression of noble aspirations. I quote:⁴

"I am of the opinion that in believing that we are a nation we are cherishing a great delusion. How can people divided into several thousands of castes be a nation? The sooner we realize that we are not as yet a nation in the social and psychological sense of the word, the better for us. For then only we shall realise the necessity of becoming a nation and seriously think of ways and means of realising the goal".

"On the social plane, we have in India a society based on the principle of graded inequality which means elevation for some and degradation for others. On the economic plane, we have some who have immense wealth as against many who live in abject poverty. On the 26th January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else, those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which this Assembly has so laboriously built up".

"We must make our political democracy a social democracy as well. Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy. Social democracy means a way of life which recognises liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life. These principles of liberty, equality and fraternity are not to be treated as separate items in a trinity. They form a union of trinity in the sense that to divorce one from the other is to defeat the very purpose of democracy. Liberty cannot be divorced from equality. Nor can liberty and equality be divorced from fraternity. We must begin by acknowledging the fact that there

is complete absence of two things in Indian society. One of these is equality; the second thing we are wanting is recognition of the principle of fraternity".

A distinguished predecessor in this series, Mr. Justice Krishna Iyer asserted in the First Ambedkar Lectures in 1976,⁵ "The keynote thought of the Constitution is social revolution; its juridical signature is social justice; its political motif is government for the people, by the people. Its conscience or inner voice speaks through Parts III and IV whose integral Yoga is the premise that Judges have sometimes missed but the latest constitutional amendments (He was referring to the 42nd Amendment) have stressed". Another distinguished predecessor in this series Prof Andre Beteille added the caution:⁶ "A Constitution may indicate the direction in which we are to move, but the social structure will decide how far we are able to move and at what pace and drew attention to the fact that "We are at every step confronted by the divergence between what exists as social reality and what ought to exist according to the laws we have created for ourselves".

There can be no doubt that among the non-communist countries ours was the one country which had a definite idea of what its 'good society' should be and was committed to its establishment by the very provisions of the Constitution which it gave itself in 1950. It was also one of few such countries that had accepted planning as a method for achieving its developmental goals. Social planning in the comprehensive sense (to which I referred in my first lecture) of overall societal planning for social change and social reconstruction should therefore have been the keynote in our strategy for national development.

Moreover, the primacy of overall societal planning was much greater in the case of our country than in those of the western industrialised countries which are now beginning to talk of societal planning or even of the communist countries which had achieved the basic norms for their societal change by the violent revolutions that had brought their governments into existence. This was because of the nature of stratification

in our society which had no parallel in the contemporary world outside our frontiers. I am referring to the caste system which dominates the Hindu Social structure and the system of untouchability which had kept millions outside the pale of even its four differentiated varnas. As was pointed out by Dr Ambedkar,⁷ "Hindu society as such does not exist. It is only a collection of castes. Castes do not even form a federation. There is an utter lack among the Hindus of what the sociologists call 'consciousness of kind'. There is no Hindu consciousness of kind. In every Hindu the consciousness that exists is the consciousness of his caste. That is why the Hindus cannot be said to form a society or a nation". He draws a vital distinction between groups sharing similar customs, beliefs and thoughts and sharing them in common. "The caste system prevents common activity and by preventing common activity it has prevented the Hindus from becoming a society with a unified life and a consciousness of its own being".⁸ The validity of this statement has been shown by the miserable record at the polls of the All India Hindu Mahasabha party and the comparatively poor showing of the Jan Sangh party which is described by its political opponents as a Hindu communal party. The diffusive effect of the caste system even on the converts to other religious beliefs is also a well recognised phenomenon of the Indian social structure as has been shown by Prof Parvathamma of Mysore University.

The uniqueness of caste as a system of social stratification is its rigidity, as entry into a caste is by birth and exit is by death. As pointed out by Ambedkar,⁹ "Caste is inconsistent with conversion. The law of caste confines its membership to persons born in that caste. Thus, it is caste which has prevented the Hindus from expanding and from absorbing other religious communities. So long as castes remain Hindu religion cannot be made a missionary religion and Shuddhi (a neo-Hindu attempt at conversion) will be both a folly and a futility". In his identification of caste with Hindu religion, Ambedkar denies the existence of Hindus as a single community or society.¹⁰ I quote: "The first and

foremost thing that must be recognised is that Hindu society is a myth. The name Hindu itself is a foreign name. It does not occur in any Sanskrit work prior to the Mohammadan invasion.

While the caste system, in spite of the strictures it has received as coming in the way of cohesiveness of Indian society, has not roused post-independent animosity as it should have done, it is in fact getting a new respectability on account of adult franchise and election politics. As Dr Radhakrishnan¹¹ pointed out as early as 1962: "Caste has ceased to be a social evil, but has become a political and administrative evil. We want to get our votes and we set up candidates suited to the people which have to note. If it is a Nadar constituency we set up a Nadar. If it is a Harijan constituency we set up a Harijan. If it is a Kamma constituency we set up a Kamma. It is therefore essential that politics should as far as possible be lifted out of this kind of morass". The Indian scenario 18 years later only shows how this casteism has grown stronger than weaker over the years and is now threatening to play a disruptive role in Indian society which it had not done in the years before independence or even during the earlier years after independence. Any attempt at societal change or reconstruction in this country cannot now escape from tackling the problem of caste and now casteism, though how it can be done through social planning is perhaps a 64 million dollar question.

Linked with the caste system and much more terrible in its consequences for the individuals concerned is the vast numbers of Indians who were called untouchables and were later styled by Mahatma Gandhi as Harijans. No doubt Gandhi meant well when he called them the children of God, thinking that would make for a better human treatment of this suppressed conglomeration of fellow human beings. In a way this was the basic difference between him and Ambedkar. Gandhi thought that an appeal to ^{the} Hindu conscience and bringing in God to assist the process may help. Ambedkar, on the other hand, traced the entire caste system with its allied phenomenon of untouchability to the Hindu doctrine of pollution which he identified with

the Hindu religion and the differential treatment enshrined in the Manusmriti and the Shastras which again he identified with the Hindu religion. To him therefore the Hindu religion, the caste system and the practice of untouchability all constituted one integrated and inextricable complex which was not amenable to reform, therefore there could be no mending of the Hindu system, and the only solution was its ending, which meant that the untouchables should renounce the Hindu religion en-masse and strive for a position of 'separate but equal' in place of the current position of 'unified but unequal'. Quite apart from the fact that change in religion has not brought about the desired social change, the problem would still remain with the Hindus being left with the caste system minus untouchables and therefore still nursing the canker that left them without what he called a consciousness of its own being and the lack of equality, fraternity and cohesiveness and striving for common action that it brought into Indian society. Caste was the dominant factor behind untouchability and no social planning that left out the caste system and only dealt with untouchability could deal with the problem of lack of social cohesiveness and social mobility which constitutes a major area of societal planning.

Social backwardness, however, is not the monopoly of the untouchables who are outside the pale of the Hindu varnas. There are the large numbers of Indian people who are called Scheduled Tribes and generally reside in hills, forests and other areas largely outside the mainstream of Indian social and economic life. Their social status does not have the stigma associated with that of the untouchables and, unlike the latter, they are concentrated in certain areas and regions in the country like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and the now troubled areas of the North-eastern region like Nagaland, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura and parts of Assam. Having been outside the mainstream of Indian life for many centuries, they retain customs, beliefs and ways of life alien to the rest of India, are educationally and economically backward (except for

Nagaland and some allied regions where Christian missionaries brought in a higher level of English education than in the rest of the country) and have suffered more economic exploitation than the rest of the country, thanks to the administrative unification of India brought about by the British and the entry of men, trade, capital and modern industry from the rest of India after Independence. Unlike the untouchables, now styled by the Constitution as "Scheduled castes; the Scheduled tribes do not suffer from a feeling of social inferiority. Their problem has been that of isolation from the mainstream and the backwardness that this brought in its train. But this backwardness is sufficiently conspicuous and the numbers involved are sufficiently large, apart from their strategic territorial concentration from the point of view of national security, to have merited special attention from the Constitution-makers for special treatment. Because of this tag of overt backwardness, though caused by dissimilar factors, the Constitution has lumped together the Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes as needing special protection and differential treatment from the rest of the Indian population. Articles 46, 330, 335, 338 and 341 of the Constitution deal with the special provisions made for these sections of the Indian population.

Apart from these two categories, there are also other sections of the population which suffer from backwardness, even though they do not share either their social stigma or isolation from the national mainstream. These are what are generically termed as other backward classes. Article 46 which deals with Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes also deals with these other backward classes. I quote below the text of this article:

"The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular, of the Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation". The Article contains no definition of what are called the weaker sections.

Article 340, which deals with the weaker sections other than the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes now uses a new nomenclature, namely, "Socially and Educationally backward classes" and authorises the President to appoint a Commission to investigate their conditions and the difficulties under which they labour and to make recommendations as to the steps that shall be taken by the Union or any State to remove such difficulties and to improve their condition and as to the grants that should be made for the purpose by any Union or State. The Commission's report was required to be placed before Parliament together with a memorandum on the action taken thereon. Article 16, Clause 4, limits the provision made by clause 1 for equality of opportunity for all citizens in employment under the State. Thus, clause 4, Article 16 reads:¹³ "Nothing in this Article shall prevent the State from making any provision for the reservation of appointments of posts in favour of any backward class of citizens which, in the opinion of the State, is not adequately represented in the services under the State". State in this context includes both the Union and the State Governments.

There has been no accepted definition of these other backward classes. While there is no ambiguity about the definition of Scheduled castes because of untouchability and of Scheduled Tribes because of their isolation, and both these categories have been given concrete connotation by the official listing of specific communities that are brought under these categories, there is no such concreteness attached to the expression 'backward classes' other than the Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes. An attempt was made to draw up such a list by the Backward Classes Commission appointed by the President in 1953. As pointed out by Mare Galanter,¹⁴ the Commission did not use its criteria of backwardness to isolate categories of backward persons but to isolate backward communities. He pointed out "The units to which these tests were applied were for the most part caste and sub-caste groups. In identifying the backward, the Commission used caste in two ways: first, it used caste groups as units or 'classes' to be classified, and second, it used the position or standing of these groups in the social

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hierarchy as the principal criterion for determining their backwardness". And it made extensive and far reaching recommendations for the improvement of their conditions mainly in terms of economic position, reservation in Government service, and educational institutions and in property relations in the obvious belief that this would also improve their social hierarchical status. The Commission's recommendation¹⁵ ran into trouble from their very inception, the Chairman stating in his forwarding letter that 'it would have been better if we could determine principles of backwardness on principles other than caste', and expressing the view that the caste test was repugnant to democracy and inimical to the creation of the desired 'casteless and classless society'. The report also ran into rough weather when it was placed before Parliament, the Home Minister asserting that its emphasis on caste was only strengthening the greatest hindrance to national progress towards an egalitarian society and asserted:¹⁶ I quoted: "The recognition of specified caste as backward may serve to retain and perpetuate the existing distinctions on the basis of caste".

The Central Government decided that no national list of other backward classes should be drawn up and asked the State Governments to draw up their own lists, adding however that "it was better to apply economic tests than to go by caste". The Central Government's efforts to get the States to adopt economic criteria for determining backwardness was strengthened by the Supreme Court's striking down the Mysore Backward Classes list which included exclusive reliance on caste standing as a measure of backwardness. And the Report of the Backward Class Commission was given a final rejection by the Central Government in 1965 with its spokesman informing Parliament that caste criteria were not only administratively unworkable but also contrary to the first principle of social justice in their unfairness to the other poor. The matter thus reverted to the States with the result that the composition of the other Backward classes, the scope of preferential programmes and the level of benefits continued to vary widely from State to State. These lists however continued to retain caste and communal units as the predominant classes deemed backward, with income tests also being employed in many cases and sometimes also independently. Summing up

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the position as it prevailed in 1978, Mr Galanter writes:¹⁷
"Some would confine this category to the lowly - those 'far below' the mean in welfare and resources, or those whose deprivations are comparable to those of Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes; others use the term Backward classes to describe a wide middle stratum of Indian society, who require and deserve special help because they are lagging behind the most advanced groups. There is further disagreement on whether the term refers to the less well-off in all communities or whether it encompasses only those communities that suffer backwardness as a group". And now the ball lies in the court of the Second Backward Classes Commission appointed by the Janata Government in December 1978 and now getting ready to submit its report to the Indira Gandhi Government. As far back as 1971, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had said in a statement to the Hindu¹⁸ (May 22) and referred to by Mr. Justice Krishna Iyer in his Ambedkar Memorial Lectures, and I quote:

"We should be against making backwardness a vested interest. We thought the word 'backwardness' would gradually go out of our vocabulary but we find more and more people seeking to get listed as backward. It is being joked that at this rate the whole population would get listed as backward. This is a backward-looking approach".

Nearly ten years later, and addressing a function organised by the Backward Classes Commission, Mrs Gandhi said, and I quote from press reports of her speech of December 11, 1980:¹⁹

"We are committed to a secular socialist society and planned development of the country. This is meaningful only when the backward classes are helped to share the progress". After pointing out that there was a controversy over whether the economic factor or caste should be the basis for identifying the backward classes and indicating that she would not like to enter the controversy, she said. "We shall have to devise a formula which commands wide acceptance and strengthen and not weakens the national fabric", she gave expression to her apprehension. "Sometimes it seems to us that there is a competition

to be categorised as backward classes". An ominous ring²⁰ still sounding in the air, however is the conclusions reached by the All India Seminar on Backward Classes which^{was} held in March 1979 and which strongly urged that "the caste alone could be the criterion for backwardness". Among the resolutions it adopted was one describing as deceptive and impractical the egalitarian picture given to the economic criteria of backwardness and another declaring that caste criteria was constitutionally, legally and ethically valid and demanding reservation and special facilities to Backward classes on the basis of their caste.

Apart from this Constitutional reference to backwardness of the Scheduled castes, the Scheduled tribes and other Backward classes which the Constitution also desires to see remedied, there is also the educational and economic backwardness and the poverty and inequality that encompasses the bulk of the Indian population and includes large numbers of people outside the category of the backward referred to in the Constitution. India has the dubious distinction of having the largest number of people below the poverty line and the largest number of illiterate people in the world; and not all these are from the ranks of the Constitutionally indicated backward among the population. The duality that characterises Indian society cuts across caste and communal barriers and the many poor and near poor constitute the bulk of the population with the national per capita income below Rs.4 per day at current prices. That is why the ruling party and most of the other political parties have accepted economic growth with social justice as the national objective for meeting the problem of national backwardness. And the preamble to the Constitution has now been amended to include 'Socialist' among the adjectives describing the Republic. And this has led to the identification of weaker sections of Indian society on an economic basis for special and differential treatment; and we have plan programmes for the agricultural labourers, marginal and small farmers, artisans, slum dwellers and identifiable sections of the rural and urban poor and a national programme for the provision of basic minimum services to the population and maximising of employment opportunities. These are programme

which are not based on caste, though some of these categories cut across the categories based on caste such as Scheduled castes, Scheduled tribes and other backward classes in terms of a large number of their population. How to reconcile the caste concept with the economic aspect for the determination of backwardness or inclusion in the weaker classes still remains an unresolved question in Indian social and economic planning. But there can be no doubt about the validity of what Dr. Ambedkar had said about the baneful effects of the caste system on Indian society. It is threatening the country today with prospects of caste becoming a permanent feature of Indian society by the use of the caste criterion in determining the backward classes for giving them special treatment. Incidentally, it is also threatening to dilute the special treatment (and the benefits therefrom) given by the Constitution to the major victim of the caste system, namely, the untouchables who were kept outside the pale of the caste system and have now been dignified by the Constitution by the nomenclature of 'Scheduled Castes'. The battle that is now on is not between the top caste of the Hindu system who were normally responsible for the theory and practice of the caste system with all its rigidities and social discrimination, but between the intermediate castes who did not suffer the ostracism and the social stigma that was the fate of the untouchables and the untouchables themselves whose untouchability has now been abolished by Article 17 of the Constitution. And the battle is for sharing material benefits conferred by the State on the part of both, and the abolition of social discrimination on the part of the latter mainly against the former who, while claiming the material benefits attached to backwardness also insist in practice in maintaining their caste superiority over their untouchable brethren. And there are the others, who do not come either under the Scheduled castes or Scheduled tribes or other backward classes, but are individually as backward as any of them in their economic or educational status or way of life and who claim the ideology of socialism and or social justice to get the State to take note of their backwardness and help in improving their condition. This is the paradox of Indian backwardness that

it is delineated on the basis of differing criteria, group criteria applied to the Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes, who are outside the pale of the caste system, group criteria sought to be applied to minorities and Hindu castes who are called other backward classes, and individuals irrespective of their caste or religion who are identified with economic or educational or other forms of backwardness. The remedy sought is reservations in Government or Government-aided jobs, reservations in educational institutions, economic assistance and special economic programmes; and the assumption implicitly made is that these would result in the elimination of all types of backwardness and the establishment of social cohesiveness and national integration among the Indian people.

Removal of all kinds of backwardness, whether economic or social or cultural, and from all sections of society, is certainly a just and acceptable social objective, consistent with the constitutional promise of "a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all the institutions of national life". And it can be operable in terms of the comprehensive social planning to which I referred to in my first lecture. But the question is whether this can be achieved in the context of the caste system in Hindu society and a policy of secularism that leaves out of state regulation the working of religious institutions that deny the concept of mutual respect of all religions and the fraternity of all human beings irrespective of the faiths they profess.

An answer to this question may be found if we look at our post-independence national experience in terms of the methods used and the success we have had in tackling the problem of backwardness, whether of untouchability or economic and social backwardness identified either on group or individuals criteria. In this connection, we have to recognise the distinction between classes who are made up of individuals who have only their economic conditions in common and castes who are constituted by birth and form an enduring group irrespective of the differing economic conditions of their individual numbers. As pointed out

by Prof Beteille,²¹ "The distinction between an aggregate of individuals and an enduring group is of fundamental significance to the sociologist". Directly opposed to this is the view of the learned Chairman of a State Backward Classes Commission,²² Mr. L G Havanur, who has stated in his report that "class is synonymous with caste or tribe so far as Hindus are concerned, with tribe or racial group as far as tribal communities are concerned, and with section or group as far as Muslim, Christian and other religious communities and denominations are concerned". Mr Havanur's obvious emphasis is on the group rather than the individual for the identification of backwardness and, as pointed out by Beteille,²³ "leaves very little room in the new legal order for any mode of classification other than those inherited from the past". And a new legitimacy has been given to the traditional divisions into castes and communities by the communal politics, minority politics and the politics of backwardness that are increasingly dominating the Indian political scene after independence and the functioning of Parliamentary democracy based on adult franchise. In the process, the distinction is being forgotten of the disabilities from which the Scheduled caste and the Scheduled tribes suffered as whole groups and therefore of all its individual members and those suffered by individual members of specified Hindu castes and other communities. Nor must it be forgotten that the economic backwardness of India as a whole has contributed much to the creation and maintenance of a very rigid system of social inequality. Nor must we forget that while traditionally there has been a strong emphasis on collective as opposed to individual identity, this has been ideologically based on the distance between purity and pollution, and it was the stigma of pollution rather than poverty that defined social inferiority. There is no rigid connection between the collective ritual status of a caste (the untouchables were kept outside the caste system altogether and treated as inferior to all Hindu castes irrespective of their relative status among themselves) and the actual material condition of its members. In fact increasing disassociation is taking place both in urban and rural areas between caste and income, caste and occupation and caste and

education. As Beteille has pointed out, this must compel the new legal order to enable the individual to bring his needs to the attention of the State on his own right without the mediation of his caste. His understanding²⁴ as a sociologist of Indian citizenship as an unmediated relationship between the individual and the State and the very antithesis of the traditional idea that caste membership "is an inextinguishable jural capacity and the basic credential for citizenship" also has relevance when we consider our national experience in dealing with the problem of backwardness in Indian society. Nor must we forget his warning, and²⁵ I quote: "Above all in the context of Indian society, here and now, we must realise that the alternative to individualism may not be the cherished dream of socialism, but a moral order in which the individual is once again displaced by clan, caste or community".

The main strategy followed by the Indian Government and its planners in dealing with the problem of backwardness has been legislation, penal provisions for its breach, reservations in jobs and admissions to educational institutions, and special grants and specific programmes for the educational and economic uplift of the backward sections of Indian society. And the backward have been identified either with the Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes or other backward classes based largely on caste or other individuals and classes based on economic criteria of occupation, income and poverty. It is not necessary to add that the last two categories cut into each other and are not mutually exclusive, while both categories compete with the first for the allocations available with Government for social expenditure and the means for implementation of social policy.

Thus untouchability has been abolished by the Constitution itself and all actions involving 'untouchability' were made cognisable offences under the Untouchability Offences Act of 1955 and, in the light of its ineffectiveness, was comprehensively amended with more stringent penalties and less rigid procedures in 1976 and renamed as "Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955". Atrocities on Scheduled castes have however not ceased or diminished; in fact they have tended to increase and,

in recent times, have led to civil disorder with the Scheduled castes showing signs of collective self-defence and sometimes aggressive retaliation. This could be regarded as an improvement in the sociology of their position but it brings no credit to the law-enforcing agency. As regards untouchability in the use of drinking water, the State has followed the line of least resistance and violated the spirit of the Constitution by providing their own sources of drinking water for the Scheduled castes resident in our villages. The gravity²⁶ of the presence of untouchability in this respect can be vividly seen by the following grouping made in the latest available report of the Commissioner for Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes (1977-78). I quote:

1. Villages where Scheduled castes and caste Hindus have common sources of drinking water without any discrimination. -- 5 per cent
2. Villages where Scheduled castes are allowed to use common source of drinking water with some restrictions. -- 10 per cent
3. Villages where Scheduled castes have their own source of drinking water. -- 75 per cent
4. Villages where Scheduled castes are given drinking water by pouring into their pots by caste Hindus or they have to fetch water from agricultural wells or springs and rivers. -- 10 per cent.

The Report concludes that untouchability is thus prevalent in about 95 per cent of villages regarding access to drinking water resources, though it admits that these percentages are based only on general observations in the field and not on any survey. Even with this limitation, the position does not certainly square with the constitutional obligation for the abolition of untouchability and makes nonsense of the attempt by backward caste organisations to bring the untouchables under a common political banner for the redress of social and economic backwardness.

As regards the position regarding reservation in the services under the major State Governments, the Report gives the following data for the Scheduled castes:²⁷

State	Percentage of reservations prescribed.	Percentage of posts filled			
		Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV
Andhra	13.27	3.80	3.00	8.00	12.00
Assam	6.10	--	--	--	--
Bihar	14.10	--	--	--	--
Gujarat	6.84	1.48	3.47	8.75	70.70
Haryana	18.88	3.50	3.20	8.40	27.90
Jammu & Kashmir	8.25	--	--	--	--
Karnataka	13.14	4.70	4.60	7.60	17.20
Kerala	8.30	2.34	3.76	6.97	13.40
Madhya Pradesh	13.09	0.93	1.97	7.00	12.30
Maharashtra	6.00	4.60	5.90	12.70	24.70
Orissa	15.09	1.00	5.96	7.70	17.80
Punjab	24.71	7.21	12.30	12.13	37.63
Rajasthan	15.82	8.60	10.86	11.20	21.80
Tamil Nadu	17.75	4.00	3.31	11.00	--
Uttar Pradesh	20.99	4.10	3.40	8.40	16.40
West Bengal	19.89	1.35	2.00	3.07	11.70

No information was received from the Governments of Assam, Bihar and Jammu & Kashmir, while the blank under Class IV in Tamil Nadu is accounted for by the footnote that there is no separate reservation for SC/ST in Tamil Nadu. The data make clear the deficiency in the percentage of posts filled to the percentage reserved declines sharply from Class IV to Class I and therefore to the failure of the system of reservation to bring about a significant improvement in the economic condition of the members of the Scheduled castes. I have not given the data relating to Scheduled tribes for reason of not complicating the table, but their position is also not significantly different in respect of percentage of posts filled to posts reserved.

The position regarding their unemployment status, to the extent it can be inferred from the statistics of job-seekers on the live register of Employment Exchanges, by education level and occupational groups, is given in the following two tables taken from the Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.²⁸

Educational level.	Number on live register as on 31-12-1977
1. Below Matric, including illiterates.	786,964
2. Matriculates	299,963
3. Persons who passed the Higher Secondary, including Intermediates/Undergraduates.	130,391
4. Graduates, including post-graduates (all disciplines)	64,563
Total (educated - matric and above)	494,917
Grand Total:	1281,881

Occupational groups	Number on live register as on 31-12-1977
1. Professional, technical, related	42,790
2. Administrative, Executive and Managerial	298
3. Clerical and related	42,398
4. Sales	119
5. Service	156,062
6. Farmers, Fishermen etc.	3,612
7. Production and related including transport equipment operators and labourers	103,751
8. Work seekers not classified by occupations	510,366
Total:	1281,881

The main body of the Report gives the following further information regarding the work performed by the Employment Exchanges²⁹ during 1977 in respect of Scheduled caste members.

No. of registrations made	:	637,372
No. of placements affected	:	68,973
Percentage of placement of registration.	:	10.82%
No. of reserved vacancies notified:		57,960
No. of reserved vacancies filled:		31,961
Percentage of reserved vacancies filled		55.15%
No. on the live register at the end of the year,	:	1281,881

The problem of unemployment is also a notional problem, involving many more millions than that shown for the Scheduled castes, but the data given show the relative ineffectiveness of the special treatment given to the Scheduled castes.

Our planning has also provided for special development programmes for meeting the needs of the Scheduled castes as a supplement to the total developmental efforts made by the general sector of development for promoting the social and economic wellbeing of the people. The Report points out,³⁰ that under the successive Five Year Plans, an amount of Rs. 322.25 crores was spent for the welfare of the Scheduled castes of which more than 60 per cent was on educational schemes, 10 per cent on economic development schemes and the remaining 30 per cent on health, housing and others. The Scheduled castes were also expected to share in the overall plan expenditure for economic and other development to the extent of their population to the total population; but that this had not achieved can be seen from the attempt initiated in recent year to quantify funds from the identifiable general programmes and orient them to the extent possible to the needs of Scheduled caste persons. This programme was started in 1975-76 and gathered some momentum over the succeeding years but there has been no evaluation of how far it actually reached the Scheduled caste population and in what proportion as compared to their proportion to the total population.

Our planning has also set up special projects for creating employment and additional income to the poor in rural areas by creating agencies for small farmers, marginal farmers and agricultural labourers and providing them with funds. Special instructions were given by the Union Government to see that persons belonging to the Scheduled castes got adequate benefit from this general scheme. The Office of the Commissioner made³¹ efforts to collect information regarding the benefits obtained by Scheduled castes and got replies only from 78 out of the 171 SFDAs, and it was found that 12.48 per cent of the beneficiaries belonged to the Scheduled castes and got a share of 11.36 per cent in the expenditure incurred. (Besides, 9.48 per cent of the expenditure was incurred on SC/ST taken together). But the proportion of the Scheduled castes among this category of the population is much higher than their proportion in the total population and correspondingly also their needs. The data collected by the Commissioner seems to indicate that the Scheduled castes were not getting their due share from the expenditure incurred for the alleviation of the poverty of these categories, even though they undoubtedly constituted a majority, especially among agricultural labourers and marginal farmers. Evidently, the intermediate castes, who come under other backward classes, got the larger share.

The Report of the Commission contains a great deal of information about the various special schemes and expedients by which the State tried to cater to the needs of Scheduled castes, but it has not been possible for me to use them in this lecture. They all reveal however, that these schemes have not been able to bring about a radical change in the social status of the Scheduled castes nor any significant change in their economic condition. There have been some significant gains in the educational sphere but these have benefited mainly some individuals and the better off among them; and as pointed out by Harold Isac's account of educated untouchables interviewed in large cities, there was found but little indication of their active concern with bettering the lot of their less fortunate caste fellows. This has also been the finding of Prof Parvathanna

who calls the Scheduled caste politicians as pro-people, who legitimising their behaviour pattern as the most forward or progressive section do not see any contradiction between availing facilities and then continuing to look down the illiterate unfortunate Scheduled Caste masses. 32

The fact of the matter is, as pointed out by the Commissioner for Scheduled castes, that "laws are not enough to conscientise the nation when the problem to be attacked concerns a perpetuating national scheme. The practice of untouchability which arises from the mental attitude and behaviour of the so-called higher sections has to be tackled by enforcement of law as well as developing social conscience of the people. This is a programme which would require involvement of voluntary workers of all sections of the community". 33

As Prof. Parvathamma has pointed out, and I quote: 34

"The element that has contributed to divide people into discrete groups is obviously the caste system which should be legally abolished. If religion is private and personal, caste in the Indian context is a social fact which publicly upholds high and low status. If untouchability continues today, it is as a part of the caste system. Religion can be used as a powerful instrument of social change or conservatism. Unfortunately, much that is found in caste system has been enmeshed with Hinduism. Whether it is caste or Hinduism which is the stronghold of untouchability is difficult to decide. However for centuries they have co-existed and buttressed one another. The need of the hour is to cut the gordian knot which binds them and allow the religion to float and sink the caste. (italics mine). Unless this is done, caste will take strange new forms under democracy and there will be increased competition and tension to safeguard the vested interests of each group". Dr. Ambedkar however would doubt the possibility of caste being abolished from Hindu society. Calling such belief a gross error, he said: "Caste is Religion and religion is anything but an institution. It may be institutionalised but it is not the same as the institutions in which it is embedded. Religion is an

influence or force suffused through the life of each individual, moulding his character, determining his actions and his reactions, his likes and his dislikes. They are forces and influences which can be dealt with by controlling them or countervailing them. It follows that the political structure must be so formed that it will contain mechanisms which will bottle the prejudices and nullify the injustices which the social causes are likely to cause if they are let loose".³⁵ He wrote this in a paper he submitted to the conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations held at Quebec in December 1942. But the political mechanism which he himself had a major hand in designing has not succeeded in either controlling or countervailing the social forces behind the caste system. On the contrary, caste as a social force has now turned into a political force and castes have re-emerged as political lobbies seeking political power and control of Government, even though the ritual status which lay behind their origin has now ceased to be of social relevance. At the same time, the casteless untouchables continue to suffer from the disabilities imposed on them by these castes, even though the latter have lost their original ritual binding.

The political power given to the Scheduled castes by reservation of seats in Parliament and State Legislatures does not seem to have helped them either in improving their social or economic position. As has been pointed out by Prof. Upendra Baxi,³⁶ another of my distinguished predecessors in the Ambedkar Lectures series, the representatives of the untouchables have not been able to form blocks of their own nor develop a spirit of group consciousness. On the contrary, they have become dependents of the ruling party and tag along with them obtaining some small favours in return. The abolition of Double Member Constituencies have further weakened their position and increased their dependence on the ruling or other parties. Prof Baxi quotes, Mr M R Masani who spoke in Parliament on the costs of continued legislative reservations for the Scheduled groups and argued that this had an opiate effect and had only put the conscience of the upper classes and upper castes to

sleep. He also refers to the speeches made by the surviving Ambedkarities in Parliament on the bill for abolition of Double Member Constituencies. Ironically enough, these gentlemen denounced the measure as "Un-Gandhian" and against the spirit of the Poona Pact. They pointed out that the whole idea of the Poona Pact was that the savarnas or the caste groups were to work with the Scheduled groups or vice-versa in search of a new social order of equality, dignity and fraternity, while the bill led to a new form of segregation which over time may lead to demands for separate electorate. Prof. Baxi³⁷ concluded that "the device of reservation, designed to redistribute political power, as an aspect of social justice, operates in fact as an 'efficient' and 'inexpensive' means of social control and demanded that there should be a national debate on the whole subject of legislative reservation as a means for securing redistributive social justice. In fact, these reservations had only quieted the conscience of the top castes in regard to untouchability and produced a feeling of inertia in regard to the continuing evils of the caste system, while the intermediate castes saw in the caste system a means of securing political power and using the principle of reservation to secure for themselves economic, employment and educational concessions even though they did not have the justification of the social stigma that identified the untouchable classes. Caste is thus getting a new and more mischievous of life and preventing the abolition of untouchability in practice and at the same time stimulating new caste-based divisive forces in the Indian polity and society. And both untouchability and caste are linked with the Hindu religion.

It does appear to me therefore that without religious reform that would be revolutionary in respect of Hindu religion and therefore its institutions, it would be difficult either to bring about a major social improvement in the lot of the untouchables or prevent the politicising of caste into formidable and discordant lobbies for the seize of Governmental powers.

I do not understand the religious sanction that is attached to the caste system. The four varnas that are enshrined in the Purusha Soukta are certainly in no way a description of the caste system as it operates in India. I know of no religious authority behind the multitude of castes and sub-castes that sprawl all over our sub-continent and I see no reason for their separate identities with their rigidity of entry and exit to claim any kind of religious alibi for their continued existence. Nor can I see how the Chatur-varna theory could base itself on birth instead of performance nor how the Hindu dharmic code could claim the sanctity of religion for their discriminatory treatment of different individuals on the basis of birth. What is Hindu religion? I do not know if it is the Upanishads or the Vedas or the rituals or the various forms of pollution and sanctity handed down by traditions and linked to birth and not to conduct or performance. Is it not high time to re-examine the basic index of what Hinduism is and redefine it in terms of which will be allied to modern ethos, consistent with the modern (and also Vedantic) ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity which are also enshrined in our Constitution, and be acceptable to those who call themselves Hindus in terms of a reinterpretation and rejuvenation of the best in their ancient thought which is consistent with the best in modern ethical and spiritual teaching? Why should our constitution give freedom to anti-social and socially divisive and discriminatory institutions which are seeking to keep India in the medieval age in the name of Hindu religion? After all, we have abolished sati which claimed religious sanctity, raised the age of marriage in spite of shastric injunctions to the contrary, and legalised divorce and widow-remarriage despite Hindu religious orthodoxy and set up a new Hindu Civil Code enshrining equality before the law in place of the discriminatory Manusmriti of ancient and revered Hindu vintage. Why cannot we take a similar stand on the subject of caste and abolish it by law so that at least legal recognition can be taken away from this social cancer in the Indian polity? I know that constitutional abolition of the caste system may be no more effective than the constitutional abolition of untouchability. But at least it sets the record

straight as far as our social ideal is concerned and give a just societal goal for our overall societal planning and help to create a cohesive and integrated Indian society. If Hindus are to be treated as a religious group, then the caste system must go. If the caste system is to remain, it must be shed of the myth of religious sanctity, and castes and sub-castes must be made to stand on their own, adducing whatever secular reasons they could find for their continued existence. I have no hesitation in suggesting that the caste system has no religious sanction and, even if it has, it has to be ended in the interests of societal cohesion, emotional integration and national survival. Excepting the untouchables and the tribal communities who are admittedly outside the pale of the caste system and have to be helped to overcome social stigma that has attended the former and the isolation that has accompanied the latter, to treat caste groups as units for discriminatory treatment and differential political favours and material benefits is to commit the same mistake that was made by our ancestors in respect of social status and privileges and disabilities. It would also be to go against the direction and spirit of modern history, economic development and political and social ideology.

The question may be raised as to what instruments of social planning can we use to bring about this major societal change. There is no easy answer. We have seen that even in the case of Scheduled castes and tribes, all the programmes and allocations we have used for their special benefit have not yielded significant results or the expected dividends in emotional integration, and in fact are threatening to create new vested interest in the continuity of group backwardness and give it an undesired permanence in a society that is, at least ostensibly, pledged to the abolition of all backwardness from all its members. But the remedy is not to give up in despair. The time spirit is all on the side of the elimination of backwardness, provided we divorce caste from religion, look to the working of class and not caste for the fight against social injustice and for the securing of egalitarian conditions of living³⁸ and use the forces of economic development, mass media, education, science,

technology, and a policy of protective or compensatory discrimination and special allocations in favour of individuals who are economically and educationally or socially handicapped to enable them to realise their potential and stand erect and without crutches in the national mainstream along with their more privileged brethren. After all, it is the individual whose betterment and realisation of potential for growth and development which constitutes ^{the} motive force for the creation of a good society, social institutions and social groups can serve only to the extent they enable the individual to rid himself of his fetters and fulfil the material and material potential for development which is latent in his being. We cannot afford to turn social institutions and social groups into vested interests and enduring lobbies either for backwardness or anti-social aggression if we want to build a good society. Nor can we rely only on Governmental power and patronage for achieving a good society. There must be a due balancing of merit and need if we want to create a socialist society that will abolish poverty and promote growth with social justice. Above all, a value system based on individual humanism and social cohesiveness has to become a nationally propagated programme, using all the instruments and institutions at its disposal and enlisting the cooperation of dedicated individuals and voluntary institutions in the process. If we are to create a new social order 'in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all the institutions of the national life' as our constitution promises, it cannot be done by any planning that does not give a prominent place in its instruments to the propagation of the values essential for the creation and subsequent maintenance of the desired new social order. It is the teaching profession and the student class who have to play the biggest role in this matter and it is to them and the socially dedicated individuals and voluntary institutions in our country that I would direct my appeal for helping our politics and economics to take the right direction and proceed forward to the fulfilment of our national aspiration for the just society that we have promised ourselves in our Constitution.

I am in good company. I shall quote therefore from the Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes, who has more competence as well as more authority for speaking on societal change. I quote:³⁹

"Apart from anything else, it is the younger generation that could be made the vehicle of social change by inculcating in them the spirit of cosmopolitanism and by socialising the children in the villages and mobilising the energies of nearly 3 million teachers at various levels to give it a sense of renaissance".

I would end with the suggestion that every voter in the land be supplied with the text of the directive principles of state policy embodied in Part IV of the Constitution in the language he can understand (written if he is literate and oral by a tape record if he is illiterate) and then ask every voter to ask the candidate who seeks his vote to explain how he proposes to implement these principles and, if he had been elected earlier, what he did to get them implemented.

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- Page 22 31 "Constitution, Caste and Protective Discrimination: The Case of Indian Scheduled castes and Tribes by Dr C Parvathamma -- Social Democracy, Vol.III, No.1. She adds: "The ignorance of the millions of Scheduled caste people grounded to earth in rural India today is exploited not only by caste Hindus but sometimes perhaps by the aspiring Scheduled caste politicians also who style themselves as Leaders".
- Also compare what she says in a paper submitted to the VIII World Congress of Sociology held in Toronto in 1974:
"For the masses S.C.Politicians are as unapproachable as anybody else. The ignorance of the S.C. is exploited by the S.C.political leaders. Given this the deliverance of the S.Cs is no longer in the hands of S.C.political leaders".
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- Page 23 35 Ambedkar's paper submitted to the Conference of I.P.R. held at Quebec in 1942.

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