Ambedkarite discourse on political representation: A critical study of Scheduled Caste parliamentary representation

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Declaration

I declare that the dissertation title: *Ambedkarite discourse on political representation: A critical study of Scheduled Caste parliamentary representation* submitted by me in partial fulfilment of the requirements for award of degree of Master of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University.

KHOBRAGADE PRATEEK PAWANKUMAR

Certificate

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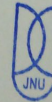
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Dedicated to the countless nameless people and emancipatory movements seeking to establish the norm of equality.

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Chapter I: Introduction

The question of representation arguably since the origin of politics in human history, has remained at the heart of any and all politics. An egalitarian, emancipatory politics especially necessitates a foregrounding of an equitable and empowering representation of all the stakeholders in that polity, especially the unrepresented, underrepresented and the oppressed. Ambedkarite politics, that emerges against the peculiar graded inequality ordained by the caste system, radically reconceives and reconfigures, the notions and politics of political representation, especially of those marginalized, dehumanized and oppressed by the conservative though elusive, and all pervasive caste order. Such a radical reconfiguration entails an institutional mechanism of ensuring formal representation of the most oppressed in the ultimate law-making bodies of the Indian Republic, the Parliament, or at least the Lok Sabha. The representatives of the same oppressed communities are arguably constitutionally obliged to ensure a substantial representation of the interest of their oppressed people. Examining how the subsequent parliamentary discourse ensued informs us on critical aspects of the practicality of these mechanisms. It is therefore imperative to analyze this discourse produced by the representatives of the oppressed through the framework of the Ambedkarite thought so as to evaluate to what extent or not, has it been materialized or has been instrumental in enhancing the efficacy or representation, articulation and advocacy of the interests of the oppressed, in pursuit of the end goal of their emancipation and establishment of an egalitarian order. But in order to contextualize the Ambedkarite thought on representation, it is imperative to first understand the recent context of Indian democracy especially after the consequential changes in the economic policies as well as the social milieu that has impacted the very fabric of Indian democracy. In the words of Jayal and Mehta, democracy is the unwritten subtext of Indian polity:

> The idea of democracy (in India) suffuses almost everything that is central to the Indian political experience, from its institutional arrangements and political processes, to public policies and ideological contests.

(Jayal, Mehta, 2010. p.xv)

Late capitalism in the 21st century has developed into a sophisticated and dominating ideology, as well as an institutionalized system of governance through the idea and structure of

the nation-state. Liberal democracy is at the centre of this system of governance. The Republic of India, which is the largest democracy in the world in terms of population, is one of the many major democracies throughout the world that has made indirect parliamentary democracy part of its constitutional framework. Because of the contradictory nature of Indian democracy, it continues to be one of the most hotly debated cases in the academic study of democracy.

Numerous academics have dissected a variety of Indian democracy's enigmas, drawing attention to the many cracks and schisms the system contains while also highlighting the numerous opportunities it presents. According to Amartya Sen, the phenomenon known as "Indian democracy" has an exceptional track record for being a robust democracy in a non-Western culture (Sen, 2005). The decision made by the voters of India in 1975 to oppose the state of emergency and the watering down of democratic guarantees has stood the test of time. Despite the fact that it is faulty and flawed in a number of ways (Ibid), it has miraculously survived and is now firmly established in institutions (Varshney, 2014). While recognising its successes and shortcomings, Pratap Bhanu Mehta (2003) has praised the experiment of bringing democracy to a mostly illiterate and unpropertied India as particularly courageous. He calls for the realisation of democracy as it is envisaged by modern constitutionalism. Atul Kohli (2001) provides an assessment of the success story of the Indian democracy, thinking it to be a fascinating aberration in the process. Niraja Jayal (2007), in the course of outlining the different debates that have been held over Indian democracy, makes the observation that some people have referred to democracy in India as an oddity, while others have considered it as the ideal situation for testing democratic theory. The conventional understanding of Indian democracy is that it takes the form of a liberal democracy; nevertheless, ever since the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party came to power in 2014, academics have been debating the precise definition of the term "Indian democracy." Doniger and Nussbaum (2015) contend that "the meaning of India's democracy is yet uncertain" in light of the fact that the ideology of the BJP is being accused by its detractors of being fundamentally incompatible with democracy. This apparent fuzziness in the meaning of democracy in recent times is a reflection of a global trend. Right-wing parties are gaining significance in liberal democracies, which is seen by critics as a threat to these democracies. This apparent fuzziness in the meaning of democracy is a reflection of this global trend. It is vital to have an understanding of the development of both the theory and practise of

democracy in order to have a proper comprehension of what democracy should entail and what elements make up democracy.

The current investigation, on the other hand, limits its focus to one of the many inconsistencies that exist within the democratic system of India; more specifically, it examines the problem of how to fairly represent a specific minority within the population of India that is constitutionally referred to as Scheduled Castes. It is essential to do research into the social fabric of Indian society in order to investigate and expose the numerous inconsistencies that are present in Indian democracy. In South Asia, the caste system, which is an extremely old kind of graded social hierarchy, is still very much a social reality, albeit in increasingly ambiguous and shifting forms. The Scheduled Castes, who were historically referred to as the downtrodden classes or the Untouchables and who are now occasionally also referred to as Dalits, continue to be one of the most oppressed, discriminated against, and disenfranchised sections of India's population. Since the Scheduled Castes (SCs) are one of the minority groups in South Asia that has been historically discriminated against and marginalized the most, a study of their parliamentary representation is required primarily to evaluate the degree to which they have integrated, or failed to integrate, into the mainstream Indian society since the establishment of the Republic of India as a formal constitutional democracy in 1947 and its evolution into a contemporary liberal democracy. This evaluation will help to determine whether or not the SCs have been successful in integrating themselves.

Through the allocation of reserved seats in the political system, members of the Scheduled Castes have, for the first time in modern history, been granted the right to participate in the legislative, policy-making, and governing processes. When evaluating the performance of this minority group's representatives in parliament, it is important to take into account the unprecedented challenges they face on a structural, institutional, and psychological level. This is because these challenges prevent what is known as a "substantive representation" (Pitkin, 1967) of the needs, grievances, opinions, and overall interests of this group of people who are in the minority. Some may claim that submissive elected representatives lead to appropriation, misrepresentation, and misarticulation of their group's interests, which is an observable trend of co-option by the dominating, hegemonic majoritarian groups and castes. To evaluate the efficacy of this electoral mechanism of representation as opposed to alternative systems such as a separate

electorate system, proportionate representation, etc. in carrying out a substantial representation of such minority group interests, a detailed and comprehensive content analysis of the parliamentary submissions of the cohort of SC parliamentarians, including an ethnography of their extra-parliamentary political career, is in fact required. This analysis is necessary because it is the only way to determine whether or not this electoral mechanism of representation is more effective than alternative systems. It is necessary to examine the writings and speeches of these politicians in their capacities as representatives of the Dalits in order to unearth the individual narratives of the members of this cohort and their approaches to the issues that they face collectively. It is equally important to understand the public discourse on the common people's understanding of representation.

The word Dalit, which has been the subject of considerable debate, is most commonly used to politically connote the untouchable communities that exist in India. These people have a long history of being the most disenfranchised in the Indian subcontinent. Anti-caste movements that acquired significant articulations throughout the 19th century evolved into mass movements, particularly under the leadership of B.R. Ambedkar. One of the most stalwart proponents of democracy, Ambedkar focused on constitutional reforms during the time of the colonial regime. He did this by representing the Depressed Classes or the Scheduled Castes (SCs) at the Round Table Conferences, where he won the Communal Award in 1932. This award was given under the patronage of the British Prime Minister Ramsay McDoald, and it provided separate electorates for the SCs. Ambedkar is widely regarded as The award was met with fierce opposition from Hindu reformists, in particular Congress thinker M.K. Gandhi, who embarked on a fast to the point of death in order to express his demand for the elimination of separate electorates for the SCs. When it came time for Ambedkar to sign the famous Poona Pact with Gandhi, he was coerced into making a compromise, which he subsequently conceded was a political error on his part (Biswas, 2008). The Poona Pact did away with the practice of having distinct electorates and instead authorized the reservation of seats in legislative bodies for social castes. Ambedkar later went on to become the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly for Independent India. He was most instrumental in abolishing untouchability and safeguarding in the Constitution, reservation of Seats for the Scheduled Castes as well as Scheduled Tribes, and thus institutionalizing the political representation of these minority groups. In addition, Ambedkar was most instrumental in safeguarding in the

Constitution, reservation of Seats for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Ambedkar's goals of constitutional safeguards for minorities, which he envisioned in The State and Minorities (1945), a document that his party, the Scheduled Caste Federation, adopted and which served as a proto-constitution, could only be partially realized as a result of this. The document in question was a draft constitution. On the cusp of the transfer of power in India, the Indian National Congress emerged as the largest mass party, and under the leadership of J.M. Nehru, the party had a peculiar relationship with Ambedkar and his cause of safeguarding minority interests, which at times was in conflict with each other and at other times was cooperative with one another. In spite of its opposition to some of Ambedkar's ideas, such as the Hindu Code Bill, INC did implement several of his policies, such as ending untouchability. The Reservation Policy, on the other hand, quickly rose to prominence as one of the most important laws enacted by the Indian state. Political reservations, as opposed to reservations in employment and education, were at first slated to last for a period of ten years, but this time frame was extended on multiple occasions. The legislation to further extend it until January 25, 2030, was approved by the present administration during the winter session of Parliament in 2020. This policy of maintaining the political reservation by the established governing parties is also criticized by many Ambedkarites, including B.R. Ambedkar's grandson and politician Prakash Ambedkar, as an instrument that intends to co-opt the elected representatives rather than initiating radical institutional or electoral mechanism reforms to enhance their representation. It is therefore imperative to examine the Ambedkarite discourses on representation, particularly in the context of parliamentary and legislative representation.

1.2 Context of Research Problem:

Despite the fact that significant portions of SC communities have made significant strides in terms of educational attainment and social mobility, a large portion of these communities still remain on the margins of society and frequently engage in occupations such as manual scavenging, landless labor, and wage workers in the informal sector. There has been a failure on the part of the political administration, policy-makers, and bureaucrats to make the inclusion of SC masses in the mainstreams a priority. The scope, severity, and callousness of the horrors committed against the SCs are appallingly obvious, and it is possible that they amounted to genocide. At this rate, it is most necessary to have strong representation of SC members at the

policy-making and political executive level in order to articulate and protect their interests. Individuals who identify as members of the SC have, with very few notable exceptions, been unable to occupy or, more accurately, have been prevented from occupying the highest positions of power. Because of this, it is necessary to conduct an investigation and assessment of the group of political representatives of the SCs. Individuals of the SC political elite class and politicians from the SC have been active members of political parties that represent a wide variety of beliefs. Although the majority of them hold beliefs that are more to the centre left or socialist, there are a few instances in which they also support ideas that are more to the right and more libertarian. Despite the fact that Ambedkar became an undisputed icon of the SCs, several political parties have appropriated or misappropriated different versions or reproductions of Ambedkar. However, an increasing number of parties, most notably the many factions of the Republican Party of India (RPI), the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), the Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA), the Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK), and the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP), directly claim to be the political legatee of Ambedkar's Scheduled Castes Federation (SCF) or his movement.

Kanshiram, arguably one of the most authoritative interpreters of Ambedkarite thought, and the founder of the Bahujan Samaj Party, which distinguishes itself as the most politically successful Ambedkarite parties, propounds a visionary autonomous politics of the Bahujan classes with the SCs as its base components accompanied by the other backward classes as well as religious minorities. Kanshiram also founded the Bahujan Samaj Party, which distinguishes itself as the most politically successful Am Kanshiram's form of autonomous Bahujan politics was successful historically thanks to Kanshiram's occasional and pragmatic coalitions with groups who were ideologically opposed to one another. The Kanshiramian Bahujan Ideologues criticize the co-option, misappropriation, and misrepresentation of the Bahujans, especially by SCs, by select individuals who ally with dominant, majoritarian parties for the purpose of securing their own self-interest and largely staking and compromising the larger community-interests. Kanshiram criticized the incorporation of dalits into the symbolic order of Indian politics and described such politicians as stooges (Ram, 1982) in the hands of Brahminical parties. As an example, Kanshiram criticized the likes of Jagjivan Ram, a SC politician from the Indian National Congress who, at one point in time, served as a Deputy Prime Minister of India. Notable Dalit individuals and leaders like Mallikarjun Kharge, Sushilkumar

Shinde, Ram Vilas Paswan, Ramdas Athavale, and Udit Raj hold the opposing view to the Kanshiramian autonomous Bahujan politics. These individuals have all denied the charge of playing stooge and argue that they are committed to the interests of the SCs and are able to better safeguard their interests by allying with the majoritarian parties like the INC and the An investigation of the real legislative performance of such specific legislators becomes important. This does not mean that such assertions should be fully disregarded.

The stooge argument may be able to explain the greater institutional problem that may have hampered a substantial ensuring of Dalit participation; nonetheless, it underestimates and ignores the individual agency of the representatives, which is a significant flaw in the argument. It is consequently essential to unearth specific narratives in order to better expose the nature of the Dalit representation that has been historically produced. Regardless of whether or not these particular representatives were incorporated into the political system, the psychological barriers that were produced by the cultural processes imposed a rule of brahminical hegemony on the minds of the majority of dalit representatives, which prevented them from fulfilling their representational responsibilities to a significant extent.

1.3 Identified Research Gap and Problem Statement:

A preliminary literature review for the research discloses a dearth of qualitative scholarship on parliamentary and legislative politics in India as opposed to say electoral politics. There have been previous attempts that have been limited to the study of Constitutional Assembly Debates or Lok Sabha Debates in late sixties. Narayana G (1980) observes a gradual emergence of homogeneity among Indian political elite with symbolic incorporation of Dalit MPs and their aspiration imitation of the upper caste elites. Hugo Gorringe's more recent inquiry, Panthers in Parliament (2017) culminating from extensive fieldwork of the radical Dalit party *Viduthalai Chiruthaighal Katchi* underscored the transition of radical activists into formal politicians. Rai and Spary (2018) view the Indian parliament as a 'deeply gendered' institution. However, no recent studies have sought to explore the structural, institutional, procedural and cultural limitations that are imposed on caste minorities, particularly SC representatives. Recent researchers have shown more interest in quantitative analysis of sociopolitical profiles of the MPs such as carried out by the Trivedi Centre for Political Data. Moreover, there lacks a

systematic methodological framework to explore the identified research area. Emma Crewe's ethnographic work on the British Parliament informs the researcher with an ethnographic methodological perspective however an ethnographic study is well beyond the scope of this research but can be followed as a future endeavor. The concerned research problem is to acquire more qualitative data including personal narratives of the SC MPs underscore the problems arising in and impeding and effective or substantial representation of the cause of the SCs. Importantly, the present scholarship on the subject is largely value neutral and does not take into account the significance of political and discursive categories such as Dalit, Bahujan, and Ambedkarites discourse. Given the inevitable influence of these categories, the present scholarship fails to evaluate the representation of SCs from the perspective of the Ambedkarite discourse. There therefore is a pressing need for doing the same.

2.1 Research Questions:

Following preliminary questions arise from the above stated research problem:

How do the SC MPs articulate, advocate and symbolically represent the interests of the Scheduled Castes and how far do or not, do they further an Ambedkarite political discourse in the Parliament? How do the elected SC MPs navigate the conflicting space between representing the Dalit cause and negotiating with higher authorities in the ruling parties that are either antagonist or indifferent to Dalit issues. How much are they able to bargain for their Dalit constituency? How does the interaction between individual SC politicians conforming to the larger structure of parliamentary politics and the ethical/political project of Ambedkarite or Kanshiram's vision of Dalit-Bahujan autonomy informs but also transcends Dalit Parliamentary politics?

2.1 Research Objectives:

The present research will evaluate the efficacy of representation of the Dalit cause and Ambedkarite discourse by the SC parliamentarians, particularly in the Lok Sabha, within the existing parliamentary system in India with the following main objectives:

1. To identify larger structural and institutional lacunae that limit a substantive representation (Pitkin, 1967) of the SC constituency.

2. Through a critical analysis of the SC constituency as represented by the MP, to understand their priority issues and disclose, if any, the gap between their interest and its articulation in the Lok Sabha.

3. To understand in detail the tension between political parties, social movements and legislative business for the social upliftment of the SC masses.

4. To underscore underlying narratives of the institutional challenges of complex nature that individual SC MPs face as representatives of an oppressed minority.

5. To provide a basis for consideration of potential structural and institutional reforms and alternative electoral mechanisms for ensuring a substantial representation of minority interests.

6. To develop a methodological framework to carry out similar research on the questions of minority representation in Parliaments for the case of various other minority and marginalized identities.

2.3 Hypothesis and Arguments:

Drawing from the popular discourse and general observations, the research hypothesizes that a lack of engagement and association with the Ambedkarite discourse and with specifically Dalit interests as well as the present institutional mechanisms and procedures hinders the SC MPs in substantially representing the dalit interests.

Conceptual framework:

The research seeks to clearly delineate, conceptualize and articulate the political and discursive categories of dalit interests from the constitutional category of SC and probe into the problems of identifying and not identifying with the same.

Theoretical framework:

The research will draw from the work of various classical and contemporary theorists of representation, agonistic democracy as well as the caste and particularly dalit question.

Research Perspective:

The value-laden research is informed by egalitarian Ambedkarite politics and will endeavor in articulating the same through critical reflection on Ambedkarite thought and thinkers.

3.1 Preliminary Literature Review:

The research seeks to categorize the literature in themes pertaining to the above mentioned frameworks and perspectives. The literature review will further delineate the literature particularly dealing with the methodological aspects of the research. Following is a brief review of literature explored so far.

Narayan (1978) while studying the early Dalit representatives observes a gradual emergence of homogeneity among the Indian political elite that resembles both the symbolic incorporation of Dalit politicians by the majoritarian parties as well as an aspirational imitation of the general or upper caste political elite by the dalit representative. Further, Wallack (2008) notes the effect of parliamentary procedures which are largely dictated by the ruling party in limiting the representing capacity of individual politicians. The ruling disposition has essentially been Brahminical in nature and has invariably wielded a patronizing attitude towards the Dalit representative. As Narayan further notes, the lawmaking with relation to the Dalit interest has been a slow process as the discussions were mostly ritualistic and the time allotted to such debates too short. He claims that the Dalit issues were not rigorously pursued (Narayan 1980). However Narayan does not provide detailed evidence for his claims and his conclusion need to be reexamined from the individual representative perspectives.

The SC politicians across the spectrum have contributed to political discourse and policy making from the perspectives of their individual disposition, regional environment and more importantly respective parties. It becomes necessary to compare the political careers of these SC

representatives vis-a-vis each other to be able to comment on which parties are able to represent the SC interests more effectively and substantially. Comparisons are also warranted across time and space i.e. in the early independence period as well as post-liberalization and recent past as well as across regions and states. Other parameters which can be of interest are gender, class, occupational and educational background.

The theoretical framework needs to be employed to further understand dalit representation. It is imperative to be informed by theories of representation, particularly the distinction between descriptive representation and substantive representation as explicated by Hanna Pitkin and her distinction between representation and democracy (1967). The contemporary theories of democracy, especially the radical theories of democracy such as the agonistic theory that is critical of liberal universalistic hegemonic order and foregrounds identity struggles (Mouffe 1999). The discourse on dalit representation cannot pretend to be value-neutral as it foregrounds the philosophical thought of B.R. Ambedkar and his legatees particularly Kanshiram's Bahujan discourse while at the same time be critical of it. It also needs to evaluate representational performance by examining the social equality thesis and the secular participation thesis as done by Ansari for Muslim representation (Ansari 2006). Hugo Gorringe's more recent inquiry, Panthers in Parliament (2017) culminating from extensive fieldwork of the radical Dalit party Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi underscored the transition of radical activists into formal politicians. Rai and Spary (2018) view the Indian parliament as a 'deeply gendered' institution. However, no recent studies have sought to explore the structural, institutional, procedural and cultural limitations that are imposed on caste minorities, particularly Dalit representatives. Recent researchers have shown more interest in quantitative analysis of sociopolitical profiles of the MPs such as carried out by the Trivedi Centre for Political Data. Emma Crewe's ethnographic work on the British Parliament informs the readers with the essential methodological perspective through an ethnographic analysis of British Parliamentarians. There indeed is a dearth of such an approach to study representation in the Indian Parliament.

Thorat and Kumar (2008) by reviewing Ambedkar's writings and speeches highlight Ambedkar's thoughts on the need for inclusive policies for Dalits that later culminated into the constitutional provisions for reservation. They present four decades of writing which show the

sustained thoughts over discrimination and exclusion are explained in a lucid manner, over time. Ambedkar's writings and the relevance to current political dilemmas requires the texts to be read not chronologically but also within a historical framework of time. What stands out in their work is the deliberation and analysis of Ambedkar's analysis of the system of caste-- which he saw as a form of economic, social, cultural and political oppression. This multifaceted oppression led to denial of rights in all frames and forms of society, culture and politics too and Ambedkar witnessed this, be it in the Gandhian ideology where ritual degradation was paramount or in the case of social reformers.

Gundimeda (2015) in his monograph traces from colonial times onwards, the emergence of Dalit consciousness and its different regional histories in the north as well as the south of India. While archival material is mainly made of research, extensive fieldwork and case studies buttress his work. One important observation is the dominance of the Hindu-Muslim binary and polarization in the North as opposed to polarization across caste lines down South. In the South the Bahujan castes have historically mobilized and sustained their anti-Brahmanical movement. A disruptive intervention on Dalit politics in India, as the name suggests it uses a comparative framework to understand the Dalit mobilizations for political power, social equity and communal justice. A critical look at the various Dalit movements and leaders from the colonial period up to the present-day and the frankness about his own Dalit status and the issues confronting anybody researching this topic, offers a dispassionate look at the successes and failures of Dalit politics.

Amit Ahuja (2019) in his analysis of ethnic parties views political equality as a precondition to remedy social and economic inequality, the three components of equality as identified by Ambedkar. Ahuja elaborates the challenge before Dalits and other marginalized to attain political equity in the face of socio-economic exploitation and exclusion. The remedy he reiterates remains in the electoral mobilization of the masses. His work consists of extensive fieldwork, surveys and interviews in the states of UP, Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, the prime criteria for selection of these states being that these states account for 43 percent of India's Dalit population. However his argument that Dalit social mobilization undermines their electoral mobilization in my opinion is a hasty conclusion. Given the historic nature of marginalizations of Dalits to expect simultaneous social and electoral mobilization seems uncalled for. While it may be true that in states such as Maharashtra where high social mobilization of Dalits can be

observed despite lack of electoral success of Dalit parties cannot be compared with a state like Uttar Pradesh where Bahujan Samaj Party has enjoyed historic electoral success. The mistake that Ahuja makes is that he differentiates politics of recognition and politics of redistribution as mutually exclusive and seems to assume that Dalit politics at large is preoccupied with the politics of recognition and undermines politics of redistribution. This is a common misconception as Dalit movements across where states have demanded redistribution of resources as well as opportunities to acquire resources. The Bahujan Samaj Party across India raised the political consciousness for land redistribution with their slogans such as '*jo zameen sarkari hai, woh zameen hamari hai*' (the land that belongs to the state belongs to us) and even implemented land redistribution when it came to power in UP. Similarly Dalit movements in Bihar have historically demanded land redistribution. A recent case in point is the Una movement in Gujarat where Dalits gave the slogan, 'gay ki pooch aap rakho hame hamari zameen do' rejecting the caste based occupation of skinning the dead cows and demanding land for agriculture. Hence it is the need of the hour to view electoral and Parliamentary politics of Dalits and Dalit representatives with a broader perspective that are informed by the nuances of Dalit politics and its vision for liberating itself from the dual oppression of Brahminism and Capitalism and establishing democracy in its true sense.

4.1 Research Operationalization:

The project employed qualitative research combining the methods of literature review, archival research, and field based study and survey. The research was operationalized in the following manner:

The project is divided into two main parts. The first past consists of a preliminary overview of select parliamentarians who have had remarkable influence in large on Dalit politics from the Constituent Assembly to present day, through reviewing parliamentary archives which will include the submissions they have made in the Parliamentary debates, questions asked, bills introduced etc. A particular case exemplifying the general discourses on representation is presented. The case informs the reader of the general trends in legislative participation of SC MPs but traces the legislative history of Dalit interests. With a historical perspective informed by

this context, qualitative data was collected in March 2020. Two weeks long fieldwork was conducted in an SC constituency in one of the most backward and feudal states of India-Bihar.The impact of Anti-defection law or the 10th schedule on the prospects of building a cross-party solidarity among SC MPs was critically evaluated in this context.

4.2 Method and techniques of data collection:

Qualitative data was collected through an in depth interview with a Dalit MP apart from field observations. Critical discourse analysis of parliamentary submissions of select SC MPs as well as the submissions by SC MPs on relevant legislative pieces and political events as explained above was undertaken. The project is a value-laden inquiry rooted in anti-caste politics and ideologies advocating egalitarian ideals and politics of emancipation and will be further developed with emergent knowledge acquired in the process with a view to contribute to knowledge production for the oppressed and not the oppressor.

Research Significance: The proposed interpretive research seeks to serve as an original and systematic enquiry into the stated problem and is novel and unique in many ways. As it will further apply ethnographic techniques as a significant mode of collecting data, the nature of knowledge production ought to be in the context of discovery more than the context of validating theories. However, the researcher anticipates contributing to larger debates in contemporary theories of democracy. With that purpose, the ethnographic data will serve as both deductive and inductive. It would serve as a precursor for a future endeavor of conducting perhaps the first ethnography of the political elite in India and may serve to reverse the ethnographic gaze from top-bottom to bottom-up.

Ethical concerns:

The major ethical dilemma that poses the researcher is locating the subjects of the research in a nuanced manner. As SC MPs are the subjects of the research it is important to underscore the

elusive nature of their socio-political location. The SC MPs in relation to the larger SC masses would be situated as political elite while at the same time, their location within the political structure is arguably marginalized and subsidiary. The research will have to be conducted bearing this conundrum in mind. Nature of some information sought from the MPs could be particularly confidential and anonymity of the respondents will be maintained if they consent to publish the information on that clause.

Chapter II: Contextualizing Ambedkar's thought in Political Theory

The chapter attempts to reinforce the contemporary theories of democracy by examining two main axioms namely emancipation and republicanism in Ambedkar's political thought. While major debates on the contemporary theories of democracy are rooted in the context of the global north, the case of Indian democracy informs and enriches the knowledge of democracy in myriad ways. B.R. Ambedkar, arguably one of the most important ideologues of democracy from India, has systematically, critically and rigorously engaged, experimented and laid down the foundation of democratic institutions as well as culture in India. Reexamining his intellectual thought and political action leads to recurrent invocation to the ideas of emancipation and republicanism that are yet to be fully deliberated by contemporary theorists. In critically engaging with each piece of literature, this paper in its course will outline the contours of Ambedkar-thought and synthesize a set of arguments that will run as an undercurrent to buttress the main thesis of this research project which seeks firstly to systematically construct an Ambedkarite theory of democracy, and then to place it in conversation with contemporary theories, discourses and political movements, particularly of the oppressed.

"This is the birthplace of republican democracy (referring to the Licchavi republic of Vaishali 6th century BCE). Doesn't a republic mean that the power has to remain with the people? Our representatives have to ensure that power comes back to us. We need to educate ourselves to take the power back."

- Sanju Kumari, 42 (field informant, Vaishali, Bihar, March 2022)

Just before the COVID-19 pandemic was about to hit India, the Indian public sphere was replete with a powerful symbolic metaphor of resistance in the image of 'Shaheen Bagh'- a peaceful sit-in blockade, primarily led by Muslim women, protesting the discriminatory citizenship act enacted by the Hindu right wing regime. The act by design, they argued, would strip them of their equal citizenship and relegate them along with many oppressed sections to a second grade citizenship. As much as the Shaheen Baug protests, which marked as a precursor

and arguably in some aspects influenced the historic farmers protest (2020-21), resorted to peaceful sloganeering and singing of protest songs by women, it introduced a singular reportiere of public collective reading aloud of *the Preamble* to the Indian Constitutions that enshrines the aspirational values of *Justice, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity* of and among the Indian people in the republic. Invoking the Constitution to enforce their rights and demand justice has historically been a method of protest for oppressed minority groups in India such as Dalits and Adivasis- the Shaheen Baug witnessed another oppressed minority invoking their Constitutional rights and exhibiting in the public sphere what scholars call constitutional patriotism (Habermas 1997, Müller 2007). Under the conditions of late capitalism where liberal democracies across the globe are faced with challenges of growth of right wing populism, oppressed minorities are seeking refuge in democratic and republican constitutional values. The inducement of these minorities, the paper argues, is two fold: one to seek self-emancipation from historical structures of oppression and the other to establish an egalitarian order by employing, as I will elaborate, a republican method. In the context of South Asia, particularly India, B.R. Ambedkar emerges as an universal ideologue of democracy, particularly from the standpoint of emancipation and republicanism. Not only Ambedkar's thought and political work but his ideological legacy embodied in the Ambedkarite movement and the creation of an Ambedkarite public furthers the above mentioned values as essential and complementary to democratic values. While enormous literature of democratic theory is burgeoning in contemporary academia across the world, South Asian insights of democracy informed by Ambedkarite emancipatory and republican thought would serve as an unique and universally relevant addition to the contemporary theory of democracy. The chapter argues for and eventually summarizes a set of prescriptions from the Ambedkarite standpoint that, if adopted, would enhance the democratic content on ethnically diverse and socially unequal liberal democracies.

An Ambedkarite intervention as this in contemporary political theory, although ambitious, is requisite given the emerging public discourses locused in South Asian incongruity of Indian democracy. At the hotbed of perilously mushrooming Hindu Nationalism (Jaffrelot 2010) and Indian democracy's self-destructive leaning in toward democratic authoritarianism, Ambedkarite resistance to it, remains the silver lining for democrats, silhouetting the dark threatening cloud of Hindu, arguably Brahminical supremacy. For Indian democrats, Ambedkarism, though not a systematically defined or elaborated ideology but an organically and

pragmatically emerging one, bolsters a radical hope of an elusive revolution that may undo the seemingly irreversible damages done to what supposedly was at least a formal and perhaps quasi-substantive structure of democracy, and further the good old cause of egalitarianism. To comprehensively grasp this phenomenon of what essentially is an egalitarian movement of Dalits or the oppressed ex-untouchables, whose world population approximates to upward of 2.7% of the world population (that is more than the entire population of countries like Pakistan, Brazil and Russia, 60% of the population of the USA and five times the population of Iraq), the emerging phenomenon of Ambedkarism, has to be traversed through the theoretical framework of contemporary theories of democracy. The same is further buttressed by employing methodological tools of political ethnography, intellectual history and discourse analysis. The purpose of this paper is twofold. Firstly, to review the relevant literature in order to lay out a broader theoretical paradigm in which to place the above mentioned thesis and secondly, to assemble and develop a toolkit of mutually supplementing methods that will help in outlining the contours of systematically constructing an Ambedkarite theory of representation and therefore inevitably of democracy.

The chapter is broadly divided into four parts. Part I reviews the contemporary theories of democracy including its genealogy and its relationship to constitutive ideas such as representation and complementary ideas such as republicanism. Part II elaborates the case of Indian democracy in the context of post-liberalization reforms that were followed by the growth of Hindu Nationalism in India. Part III contextualizes the political history of anticaste and Dalit emancipation movement. It particularly focuses on Ambedkar's intervention in this emancipatory movement and underscores his democratic republican method. Part IV focuses on the post-Ambedkar movement through an analysis of the leadership as well as the Ambedkarite public. The paper eventually seeks to propose a general theory of Ambedkarite axioms and prescriptions derived from a careful discourse analysis of various aspects of the Ambedkarite movement that would contend and inform contemporary democratic theory.

Part I: Contemporary democratic theory

Democratic theory treads on ever expanding grounds from descriptive, explanatory to empirical and normative theory. Inherently interdisciplinary (Christiano, 2006) normative theory

is dependent on insights from political science, sociology, anthropology and economics and concerned with the moral desirability of democracy. For Sen (1999) democracy is not regionally contingent therefore universal and is intrinsically important in human life. If we trace back the scholarship on democratic theory, one of the pioneering essays comes from Robert Dahl where he discusses the contemporary trends in the scholarship and anticipates an emergence of democratic theory. In his *A Preface to Democratic Theory* (1956). Interestingly, among other observations, Dahl focuses on the role of an individual ideologue- a constitution-maker who later went on to become the President of the USA, namely James Madison. Given the influence of Madison on the institutions and ideology of American democracy, Dahl proceeds to formulate a model of what he calls the Madisonian democracy. Right from its genesis, democratic theory is deeply interlinked with republican thought and theory. Madison is known as one of the pioneers of republican thought. For Madison, Dahl explains, a republic can be defined as a government:

(a) That derives all of its powers from directly or indirectly from the great body of people, and
(b) Is administered by persons holding their office during pleasures, for a limited period, or during good behavior. (Dahl 2006, p. 32)

In Madisonian democracy, Dahl also highlights the fundamental role of factions that can be either majority or minority in nature. Faction here is defined as "a number of citizens… who are united and actuated by common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community." (Ibid). This idea of understanding of democracy composed of several factions with adversarial passions and interests is also central to Ambedkar-thought as well as the Agonistic theories of democracy that will be discussed later. Here, Dahl finds in Madison two important conditions for the existence of a non-tyrannical republic. These are:

First Condition: The accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive and judiciary, in the same hands, whether of one, a few, or many, and whether hereditary, self-appointed or elective must be avoided.

Second Condition: Factions must be so controlled that they do not succeed in acting adversely to the rights of other citizens or to the permanent or aggregate interest of the community. (Dahl, 2006 p.33)

Dahl also underscores the axiom that frequent popular elections will not be sufficient to prevent tyranny in the republic. These Madisonian notions, although contestable, are deeply influential in the growth of democratic as well as republican theory. Before we draw parallels of the Madisonian democracy with an Ambedkarite democracy, it is important to review other important work on democracy that will inform our understanding further.

In Schumpeter's groundbreaking work (2013), he discusses and problematizes in detail what he calls a classic doctrine of democracy. This doctrine emphasizes on letting the people themselves set up and assemble an institutional arrangement wherein democratically elected people would take up the political decisions in order to carry out the people's will. By problematizing the processes of democracy, he subsequently engages with the question of competitive leadership that arises from these processes. This he does in the context of his fundamental question whether a socialist state with a planned economy as it claims can be the only way for democracy to thrive or whether such a system is completely incompatible with democracy. His arguments raises as many questions as it answers but one important point that needs to be highlighted is that in considering the practical functioning of a democracy, the economic ideology and policies thereof it adopts become most consequential in composing the nature of that democracy.

Skinner's (1973) review of the contemporary trends and criticism of empirical theorists of democracy gives us insight into how even these empirical approaches inquiring the facts of political life perhaps never intended purely neutral and scientific results and indeed bore 'normative implications' in their investigations. Apart from this, more relevant to our discussion is Skinner's conceptualization of republican liberty where he draws from Machiavelli's as well as Hobbesian (1996) idea of negative freedom to imply that a coercive force of law is essential for the maintenance of liberty. Skinner being critical of Hobbes' conceptualization of freedom as absence of constraints in the context of slaves and seeks to extend the idea to a general citizenry where freedom would entail one's ability to act according to their volition. Such a republican view of freedom emphasizes the citizen's capacity for a proactive participation in the democratic processes for ensuring the common good of all. This principle that promotes the idea of civic participation becomes central to the idea of republicanism.

This idea of civic participation is further reinforced and enhanced in Pateman's (1970) critical work where she conceals the banality of formal democracies that promote apathy among the masses by limiting popular participation to general elections which take place once in 4-5 years. These processes train the masses to be subservient adding up to the psychological underconfidence engendered in them by economic-under-privilege (ibid p. 51). Production of such a passive and under confident citizenry resembles according to her to 19th century anti-democratic polity justified by the control of elite over power. Pateman's critique of social contract theorists like Locke, Hobbes and Rousseau uncovers the underlying systems of hierarchy such as women's subordination to men (Sexual Contract, 1988) before the social contract would even come into play. This leads us to understand the democratic need to proactively spell out and foreground the underlying social hierarchies and compensate for those in the realm of civic participation.

In a democracy, public institutions are built by the state but legitimized and reinforced by the public. This broad theme remains central to Putnam et al.'s (1994) conceptualization of a "civic community". Seeking an answer to the question why some democratic governments succeed creating stable and effective institutions and others do not, the authors evaluate empirical evidence for two decades comparing efficacy of regional governments in various subfields of governance. The most crucial insight from this seminal work underscores the paramount importance of a robust citizenry practicing the values of civic humanism for an efficacious functioning of the democratic institutions. Moreover the work reinforces the idea that an unrepresentative government kills the economic initiative that is essential for wealth and prosperity of the state.

Bohman and Rehg's edited volume on deliberative democracy (1997) brings together important contemporary theorists to examine the ideas of rational lawmaking, the legitimacy of which is traced to the public deliberations in the domain of civic participation. Through its various enriching chapters, the project seeks to investigate the very possibility of a mass participation of the citizenry in a rational deliberation process. Whether ethnically and culturally diverse and structurally hierarchical societies can engage in rational solution-seeking exercises to political problems and whether they can reach upon an organic consensus is still a matter of contestation. Theorists are divided on the fundamental questions of rationality, human nature and

conflict of interests. While a section of them emphasize on the plurality of interests among the citizens and the potential for civic conflict, others count on a possibility of civil harmony based on interests that are common to a larger section of the citizenry. The former invoke the Kantian notion of 'public use of reason' while the latter are suspicious of any such public deliberation drawing from the Schumeterian conclusion that "uniquely determined common good" does not and cannot exist. The latter argument evolves into an elite theory where democracy can only exist in indirect forms wherein the masses exercise indirect control over the ruling elite. Post the 1970s as liberal democracy came under heavy criticism from leftists activists and academia, trends emerged viewing deliberation with a renewed interests in democratic motifs such as: "direct democracy, town-hall meetings and small organizations, workplace democracy, mediated forms of public reason among citizens with diverse moral doctrines, voluntary associations, and deliberative constitutional and judicial practices regulating society" (ibid p.xiii). On a side note, investigating these motifs, rituals and repertoires interpretatively also becomes central to the emerging discipline of political anthropology which is beyond the scope of this research.

Deliberative theorists arguing that political processes are more than pure conflict and competition evoked by self-interest, upheld John Stuart Mill and Hanah Arendt's view of democratic engagement or deliberation as an end in itself. Jon Eslter complicates this view by introducing the perpetual impact of market institutions on public behavior by reconceptualizing the classical civic republican idea of "common good" as consensus oriented discourse as borrowed from Habermas. Habermasian elaboration "Popular sovereignty as procedure" attempts to synthesize the two distinct forms of democracy namely liberalism and civic republicanism. The primary matter of inquiry for Habermas is the way in which public deliberation influences governance against the force of political compulsions. The rational discourses in the larger public sphere in constitutional democracies constrains the political executive to act in accordance with them. The autonomous public sphere bodies according to Habermas signal their representatives in the formal legislative bodies to make the needful political decisions thus upholding the popular sovereignty.

As will be discussed in detail in the upcoming chapter, agonistic theorists like Chantal Mouffe, William Conolly, Bonnie Honig, James Tully and Mark Wenman have presented a critique of the liberal deliberative model of democracy. Although these authors have developed

their own distinctive theories of agonism, they focus on related themes and acknowledge their proximity to one another (Wenman 2013). The broader similarities between these agonistic theorists are very significant which sets them apart from the theorists of the liberal tradition. As Wenman (Ibid.) has identified, the agonistic theorists agree upon the larger themes of *Agonism*- derived from the Greek word agon meaning conflict or strife, which includes the centrality of conflict, acknowledgement of pluralistic identities, and a tragic- non-utopian view of the world (Ibid., p. 4). Their common critique of the liberal theory of democracy, as articulated by Mouffe, is the tendency of the liberal theories to universalize, homogenize and essentialize categories which are a subject of these theories (Mouffe 2000). Mouffe argues that the liberal theory because of their essentializing approach arguing for transcending conflict and reaching at a consensus, render invisible the diversity of collective identities in a polity and undermines the role of hegemony in arriving at consensus (Ibid.). Wenman (2013 p. ix) systematically situates agonistic theory in what he calls 'politics in a new century' which is constituted by politics of diversity, politics of fundamentalism and politics of globalization, and argues that the agonistic theorists come from the socialists tradition and seek alternative ways of theorizing a socialist politics without idealizing the communist utopia. The two normative values which are argued to be central to the agonistic theories of theorists like Mouffe and Wenman are as follows:

1. Recognition of the centrality of identity in politics and

2. Promotion of material equality among the masses.

These two values, according to these theorists, are essential constituents of a radical democracy with less democratic deficit. Apart from the contemporary debates on democracy, emerging scholarship on exclusively on republicanism, adds to the debate in numerous ways.

Reflecting upon the contemporary crisis of democracies and its future, Elazar and Rousselière (2019) invoke the question: can republican theory contribute to reforming our political norms and institutions? Scholars have started revisiting the classical republican tradition in reconstructing an alternative to liberalism. This recent revival of republican political thought, also known as Neo-republicanism redefines freedom as non domination. In its relation to democracy and populism, the ideal of the common good, domination in the workplace and in the family, republicanism in a globalized world, and radical republican politics (Ibid).

For Brettschneider (2007), democracy is ideally composed of the three core values of political autonomy, equality of interests and reciprocity which are implied procedurally, as well as substantially. In a globalizing world, political autonomy would imply the immunity of the state's decision-making from global forces of international organizations that would hamper the autonomy of the state. Equality of interests on the other hand ensures that the citizenry would be entitled to rights which are not merely procedural but substantive in nature. In line with but also transcending what is understood as liberal theory of democracy emanating from the ideas of Rawls and Habermas, Brettschneider (ibid) underscores rights as an essential feature of a self-governing democracy. Thus his emphasis on rights to privacy, property and welfare along with his conceptualization of the above-mentioned values, runs the undercurrent of his "value theory of democracy". His compelling arguments in a way try to rehabilitate the right to property from the conventional domain of liberal principles of individual rights to the domain of democratic principles.

Urbinati and Warren (2008) examine the past two decades which have seen a surge in literature within contemporary democratic theory focusing increasingly on the questions concerning political representation. Increasing interest in the questions of representation can be attributed to a significant yet paradoxical manifestation of informal kinds of representation outside the ambit of formal representation ensured through electoral mechanisms. The manifest necessity of extant informal or extra-formal representation hints toward an evident inefficacy of formal existing mechanisms for ensuring representation, particularly of the minorities. The contemporary literature along with the above concerns also probes into the questions of political judgment, constituency definition, fairness of electoral representation and various nonelectoral forms of representation.

For a long time, political representation has been a function of territorially based electoral representation (p. 388). Conventionally in Western theories of representation, the political constituency has been defined in terms of a population confined within a territory delimited by drawing curves on a map. It is extremely interesting to view Ambedkar, as early as in the 1920s, identifying and comparing various ways of defining political constituencies beyond the traditional ways of territorial delimitation. New patterns and forms of representation that may be

associated with bureaucracy or administrative policy development, civil society etc. have come forth as significant as the formal mechanisms of representation.

Classical thinkers of democracy have had myriad opinions on representation and democracy. While Rousseau views representative democracy only as a diluted 'instrumental substitute' for democracy, neo-Schumpeterian theorists opine that democracy primarily is about selection and organization of political elites (Ibid). Montesquieau, on the other hand, contests that election is only aristocratic, arguing that selection of political class through lottery only can be truly democratic (p. 392). Amid these contesting opinions also lies the debates that seek to focus on the other aspects of representative democracy from leadership within the legislative bodies, its impact on formation of public opinion, the problem of electoral design including suffrage or franchise, and definition, delimitation of constituencies. While many contemporary theorists of democracy are revisiting the nature of political representation itself, some like Pitkin trace origin of representation in feudal relationships between the medieval Christian church of the Holy Roman Empire, with its monarchies, municipalities and principalities (p. 391). This feudal origin of political representation offers an insight in the contingent feudal nature of democratically elected representatives that enjoy a semi-feudal power over their constituency.

With the coming up of modernity by the early twentieth century, the electoral franchise hitherto limited to a select class of citizenry inevitably expanded to the masses. This evolution of the feudal regimes into the modern mass democracies characterized by liberal and constitutional values, Urbinati and Warren argue, enabled a 'balance between the rule of elites and the social and political democratization of the society' (p. 389). Castiglione and Warren (Ibid), propound a theory of 'standard account' of representative democracy characterized by four main features namely, agent relationship, the sovereignty of the people, electoral mechanisms and universal franchise ensuring political equality. In characterizing the role of agents in representative democracy the possible disjunction between interest groups and decision making elites can be identified as the fundamental problem of representative democracy. The interest groups further need to be defined as constituencies as against the residency based territorial notion of constituencies for minimizing the above suggested disjunction. Non-territorial issues ranging from religion to ethnicity to nationalism that have come to occupy central place in contemporary

electoral politics require the expansion or rather conversion of territory based constituency to interest based.

It is important here to underscore the idea that political representatives often have to attend to and advocate interests and issues that do not strictly or directly confine to the territorial constituency of the representative. In doing so the representative can be said to be performing an 'extraterritorial representation'. This idea of extraterritorial representation can help bridge the gap between representation of territorial constituencies and interest-based constituencies. Another problem arising in formal modes of representation is the increasing influence of extra-state institutions and nongovernmental organizations on policy, decision making, and governance overall. Another problem arising in formal modes of representation is the increasing influence of extra-state institutions and nongovernmental organizations on policy, decision making, and governance overall. Since the influence of the global capital market and neoliberal institutions on governmental affairs has increased manifold, the accountability of the representatives has also diminished as they are no longer fully responsible for a range of important decisions taken in Parliaments and legislative bodies.

Part II: Indian democracy in the post-liberalization era: the politics of *Mandal* and *Kamandal*

At the dawn of economic reforms:

Beginning in the late 1980s, the state of India began to adjust to the ever-shifting conditions of the global environment. The fall of communism in the U.S.S.R. and the purported success of capitalism altered the trends in the political and economic arenas more toward the market. It was inevitable that this transformation would have some kind of an effect on the social sphere, or more specifically, on the people who live in liberal democracies. Mouffe sees this as a strengthening of neo-liberal hegemony and observes it as such (Mouffe, 2000, p.6). An increase in 'archaic' or post-conventional identities that occurred at the same time signaled the return of political particularism, in contrast to what liberals had anticipated, which was the establishment

of a universalist 'New World Order' (Mouffe , 1993, p.1). Numerous pundits attempt to evaluate what these significant occurrences have meant for the democratic process in India. This section examines the impact of two subsequent events that occurred in the early 1990s and were significant in the context of India. These events were the economic reforms and the growth of Hindu nationalism, which was exemplified by the demolition of the Babri Mosque in 1992. Both of these events occurred in the early 1990s. It has been suggested that these two events have contributed to a reduction in the democratic deficit that characterizes Indian democracy in terms of its economic and social components, respectively. To begin, let's take a look at the ways in which economic liberalization has affected democratic institutions in India.

Scholars have observed that economic reforms were implemented all of a sudden, despite the fact that there was a history of unsuccessful attempts to implement reforms in the late 1980s. The tale of how economic liberalization in India got its start is told from an insider's point of view by Deepak Nayyar, who served as the Chief Economic Advisor to the Government of India before he left that position. He asserts that the economic challenges faced by the government were the primary factor in determining the direction that liberalization took, rather than the economic preferences of the population or the goals of long-term development (Nayyar 2017, pp. 41-48). Since the beginning of economic liberalization, he notes that joblessness has increased, rising inequality has occurred, and chronic poverty has remained a problem. He thinks that economic liberalization has therefore led to the competitive politics of populism because of these trends (ibid).

According to Nayyar, the rise in the price of crude oil around the world that occurred after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August of 1990 was the impetus for the economic changes that were implemented in India. The problem was a legacy that was passed down to the government of V. P. Singh, who took power in December of 1989. Unrest on other backward classes' reserves, which was growing at the time, made the situation worse. In light of all of this, Prime Minister Singh gave his approval at the beginning of October 1990 for the beginning of negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In direct contrast to this was Rajiv Gandhi's decision in September 1989 to reject a plan that advised engaging the International Monetary Fund (IMF). As a continuation of Singh's stance, the subsequent Prime Minister, Chandrashekhar, gave the green light for the government to resume talks with the International

Monetary Fund (IMF). In the meantime, Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was killed in May 1991 for his involvement in the Sri Lankan Civil War, which was predominantly an ethnic struggle. He was assassinated for his role in the conflict.

In light of these circumstances, P.V. Narasimha Rao was sworn in as Prime Minister on June 21, 1991, and he appointed Manmohan Singh to the position of Finance Minister. Within the span of one month, these executives came to crucial conclusions and judgements. The immediate economic compulsions of crisis management, combined with a political realization that the rest of the world was no longer willing to lend to India and that governments can become insolvent even if countries do not go bankrupt, led to these changes, as Nayyar argues. These changes were dictated by the immediate economic compulsions of crisis management (ibid). In addition, India was left without a support structure with the fall of communism and the dissolution of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), which it was a part of. Neoliberalism emerged as the dominant ideology, displacing the previously contending political philosophies. The changes to the economic system were therefore unavoidable.

Nayyar emphasizes that the primary goal of these reforms was to increase economic growth while simultaneously increasing economic efficiency. Earlier worries about equity were pushed aside in favor of the pursuit of growth on the assumption that it would result in a reduction in levels of poverty (ibid). He points out that the focus of structural reforms was on the industrial sector, the trade regime, foreign investment, foreign technology, the public sector, and the financial sector, while poverty and employment were simply not part of the discourse on economic liberalization. He says this was because structural reforms were focused on the industrial sector, the trade regime, foreign investment, foreign technology, and the public sector and financial sector. The Indian state operated under the presumption that economic growth would both combat poverty and boost employment opportunities. Therefore, the focus of economic liberalization was so heavily on the short-run or the medium-term that national development goals in the long-run were completely overlooked. This is because the focus of economic liberalization was so heavily on the short-run or the medium-term. In an economy where enhancing the quality of human resources was the only means of mobilizing our most plentiful resource, people, for development, very little was spoken or done about social areas like education and health (ibid).

According to Nayyar, the economic reforms have not been successful in addressing the issue of poverty, as well as unemployment and growing economic inequality. He states:

> The biggest failure of the past 25 years is that, despite such rapid economic growth, employment creation has simply not been commensurate. In 2011–12, at least 25%, possibly 30%, of 1.2 billion people live in absolute poverty below the critical minimum in terms of food and clothing. These are the perennial poor. If we were to use a higher poverty line that allows for other basic needs such as appropriate shelter, adequate healthcare and education, it is estimated that about 75% of the population lives in absolute poverty. These are the vulnerable poor. The population between the two poverty lines, more than 40% of the total is vulnerable to any shock such as a bad harvest, high inflation, or an illness in the family which could push them deeper into poverty. Between 1990 and 2010, the Gini coefficient of consumption inequality in India (estimated from the National Sample Survey Office [NSSO] data) rose from 29.6 to 36.8. (Nayyar 2017)

In addition to poverty and income inequality, the problem of long neglect of the agriculture sector, argues Nayyar, has worsened in the era of economic liberalization. Nayyar, thus submits that this conjuncture in time (collapse of communism), reinforced by the dominant political ideology of the times (markets and capitalism) has worsened these problems, especially in the Indian context.

Atul Kohli, in his analysis of liberalization in India, draws attention to the challenges given by India's existing pro-business model of economic growth. At the same time, he examines the effects that the neoliberal economic system has on the level of democratic participation in India (Kohli 2006 pp. 1361-1370). Kohli brings up a few salient things in his commentary. He notes that the rate of expansion of India's manufacturing industry was not significantly changed by the changes, and that as a result, the reforms have neither benefited nor damaged India's overall growth or employment levels. The second significant point that he raises is in reference to the division that has occurred amongst the capitalist class in India. According to him, the reforms were able to gain more support during the 1990s as a result of a political split in Indian capital, which resulted in a sizable portion of the population being at least willing to experiment with a more open economy. This occurred in the context of growing global economic integration (ibid). Kohli brings to light in a significant way the movement of the Indian state toward business and growth through the progressive elimination of import quotas, the reduction of tariff levels, and the adoption of rules that govern the entrance of foreign money. Kohli questions the hegemonic status of the pro-business development model and challenges academics to investigate alternative growth models that are more conducive to substantial democracy. He does

this by describing how Indian democracy is becoming more subservient to the interests of corporations. He says:

> We are now living in a world in which democracy and capitalism have emerged as the most desirable modes for organizing national political economies. The real debate about national choices is thus increasingly about "varieties of capitalism". With advanced industrial economies providing mainly three alternatives – the neo-liberal model of Anglo-America, the social democratic model of Scandinavia, and the statist model of Japan and South Korea – the debate for developing countries increasingly is, which model is best to emulate. My personal preferences are social democratic, but for now that is not too relevant. The neo-liberal model has in the recent years been hegemonic, or near hegemonic. (Kohli 2006 p. 1368)

Kohli contends that the evidence is more consistent with the view that the development model pursued in India since about 1980 is a pro-business model that rests on a fairly narrow ruling alliance of the political parties. Kohli expresses concerns about India's growth acceleration being accompanied by growing inequalities, growing capital intensity of the economy, growing concentration of ownership of private industry, and nearly stagnant growth in employment in manufacturing industries. He states that the evidence is more consistent with the view that the development model pursued in India (ibid). The preceding assessments make it abundantly evident that the unleashing of a pro-market economy in India, despite the high growth rates, has resulted in a significant increase in the material disparity that exists between different people and classes.

Growth of Hindu Nationalism:

The rise of Hindu nationalism as a prominent force in modern Indian politics is well documented. Since the introduction of the neoliberal economic system, it has demonstrated a significant increase in its overall size. Its proponent, the Sangh Parivar, with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) as the major constituent of the Sangh Parivar, has been essential in the development of Hindu nationalism's tightly codified ideology. The RSS is the principal constituent of the Sangh Parivar. According to Jaffrelot (2010), the RSS was established in 1925 as a response to what was regarded as militant pan-Islamism on the side of the Muslim minority. This view was prevalent at the time. It prompted a type of majoritarian inferiority complex among some members of the Hindu elite, for which the groundwork had previously been established by the colonial caricature that portrayed Hindus as a mild-mannered and even

effeminate 'race' (Jaffrelot 2010 p. 205-206). Main proponents of Hindu nationalism, such as K.B. Hegdewar and V.D. Savarkar, glorified the ethnic Golden Age of what they identified as the Vedic era in an effort to restore the supposed grandeur of the Hindus' culture. This general strategy of stigmatization and emulation of the so-called threatening others (mainly Muslims and Christians) was part of the Hindu nationalists' attempt to restore the supposed grandeur of the Hindus' culture (p. 206). The RSS shakhas or local branches recruited members regardless of caste or class with the goal of building a "brotherhood in saffron," a phrase borrowed from Anderson and Damle (1987), and consolidating a "Hindu identity." This is despite the fact that the majority of the people who started the Hindu nationalist movements were Brahmins from Maharashtra. I will argue that a goal to establish such a homogenizing and hegemonizing majoritarian identity goes against the value of pluralism and inhibits the mission of social democracy. This is because the Indian society is highly unequal and hierarchical as a result of the divisions of class and caste.

Over the course of many years, the Hindu nationalist movement has experienced substantial expansion. According to Jaffrelot's research, the movement had 33,758 shakhas and 48,329 upshakhas (sub branches) in the year 2004. The majority of its members were young Hindus (ibid). In 1980, the political wing of the RSS was renamed the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), which marked the beginning of an important era that was characterized by a significant expansion of the Hindu nationalist movement. During this time period, the Hindu nationalist movement experienced significant growth. Jaffrelot makes the observation that throughout the 1980s, a considerably higher Hindu mobilization was formed as a result of the reactivation and rekindling of the majoritarian inferiority mentality of the Hindus. This took place in the same decade. In terms of scope, duration, and electoral influence, this mobilization was significantly more significant than its predecessor (p. 210). The strategy of the Movements to concentrate their efforts on the Mandir agitation is the primary factor that can be credited for such a large-scale mobilization. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad is another organization that is affiliated with the Sangh Parivar. They demanded that the temple (mandir) that once stood above the supposed birthplace of the Hindu god Ram be reconstructed in the city of Ayodhya, which is located in the state of Uttar Pradesh in northern India. After the Mughal dynasty came to power in the sixteenth century, the edifice was supposed to have been replaced by a mosque known as the Babri Masjid. However, this never happened (p. 210). In 1989, the BJP started taking an

active role in the ongoing controversy regarding the Mandir. The temple, which was going to be made out of bricks with Ram's name stamped on them, was going to be dedicated by the activists who were fighting for the Mandir. The BJP was able to garner great political success in the 1989 elections for the Lok Sabha thanks to this emotionally motivated subject. The strategy of mobilizing the Hindu population over Hindu symbols became more evident in 1990, when L.K. Advani, who was serving as the President of the BJP at the time, made a Rath Yatra (chariot march) covering 10,000 kilometers in a car designed to resemble the chariot of Arjun, a central figure in the Mahabharata (ibid). Because of this milieu, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was able to achieve major electoral success in the subsequent election for the Lok Sabha and in the state elections of several states, including Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka.

Jaffrelot investigates the stance taken by the Sangh Parivar toward India's political democracy in an article that he authored on the subject of Hindu nationalism and democracy. He asserts that he would demonstrate the limitations of the democratic credentials of Hindu nationalists as well as the type of democracy that they prefer to support. He contends that historically, Hindu nationalists have backed democratic rule, despite the fact that their vision of democracy is very different from the traditional one (p. 509-534). He contends that Hindu nationalists are in support of democracy because they consider it to be the most practical form of government for a democratic state (p. 517 ibid). The Hindu elite, which is fascinated with demographic numbers, saw an issue with the declining percentage of Hindus relative to the number of Muslims in India's population. They considered this as a problem. The Hindu nationalists asserted that Hindus were the original inhabitants of India because Hindus made up a majority of the population in the Indian political system. They were well aware of the electoral advantages that their vast numbers would provide them with in a democratic system. In light of this, Savarkar was a supporter of the universalist discourse of democracy because he believed that it would ensure the dominance of the "vast majority" of Hindus (p. 518). On the other hand, they put out their very own version of democracy, which they asserted was grounded in the ground.

This "traditional" democracy, which is championed by Hindu nationalists, is very dissimilar to the paradigm of parliamentary democracy that is based on Westminster. An organicist perspective of society, as espoused by M. S. Golwalkar, serves as the conceptual

underpinning for their version of democracy. Jaffrelot draws attention to the viewpoints of Hindu nationalists towards the democratic framework that is already in place in India by providing an account of D. Thengadi, who was a leader in the RSS in the 1970s. According to Thengadi:

> The Constituent Assembly imposed British-type institutions on the people. India too had a democratic traditions, a tradition of thousands of years, and the temperament of the Indian people can be easily molded accordingly. But the Indian democratic system has been different, its nature is different from that of the British democratic system. (Jaffrelot, 2001, p. 513)

Jaffrelot contends that the organicist vision of society held by Golwalkar provides the foundation for the traditional kind of democracy practised in India, as it has been perceived by Hindu nationalists. Golwalkar believed that elections should be conducted using the method of "unanimity," and that a type of governance that included functional representation would be the most effective (p. 515). Ideologues of Hindu nationalism such as Golwalkar, Thengade, and Mookerjee held the perspective that the diverse communities that made up the Indian country were merely different limbs of the same body. In 1955, Thengadi made the following proposal:

> Bhartiya culture believes that the 'Nation', and not the 'class', is the basic unit of human society. Horizontal division of the world is a fiction. Vertical arrangement of it is a fact....The Bhartiya social order thus implied the industry-wise arrangement and not class-wise arrangement. (p. 514)

Thengadi's assertion clearly reflects the influence of the hierarchical Varna system as an ideal arrangement of the society. Moreover, this traditional view of democracy claimed to be consensus-based undermines the operation of hegemonic structures of the society. K.N. Govindacharya, a recent leader of the BJP articulates the consensus based view of the Indian society:

> The Constitution is not a product of our soil; a minimum addition is required to make it more responsive. Consensus, instead of the majority minority concept, suits the country better. Occupational representation (participation of various groups based on their occupation) in the system will deliver the goods. Such a system will conform with our tradition and ethos... (p. 514)

The movement of Hindu nationalists has grown a lot over the years. Jaffrelot says that the movement had 33,758 shakhas and 48,329 upshakhas in 2004. Most of the people in these groups were young Hindus (ibid). When the RSS's political wing was renamed the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 1980, a big change in the Hindu nationalist movement began. During this

time, the movement grew in a big way. As Jaffrelot points out, the majority inferiority complex of Hindus was brought back to life and rekindled in the 1980s. This led to a much larger mobilization of Hindus. This mobilization was bigger, lasted longer, and had a bigger effect on the election (p. 210). The strategy of the Movements to focus on the Mandir agitation is the main reason why there was such a big turnout. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad, which is also part of the Sangh Parivar, wanted to rebuild the temple (mandir) that once stood above where the Hindu god Ram was said to have been born. Ayodhya is a city in the state of Uttar Pradesh in northern India. After the Mughal dynasty came to power in the 1600s, the building was supposed to be replaced by a mosque called the Babri Masjid (p. 210). In 1989, the BJP became an active part of the Mandir movement. The people who worked for the Mandir movement blessed the bricks with Ram's name on them that would be used to build the temple. In the Lok Sabha elections of 1989, BJP did very well because of this emotionally charged issue. The plan to rally the Hindu population around Hindu symbols became clearer in 1990, when L.K. Advani, who was President of the BJP at the time, went on a 10,000-kilometer "chariot march" in a car that looked like Arjun's chariot from the Mahabharata (ibid). This created an environment that helped the BJP win big in the next Lok Sabha election and in State elections in places like Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh.

Jaffrelot looks at how the Sangh Parivar deals with India's political democracy in an essay called "Hindu Nationalism and Democracy." He says he wants to show what kind of democracy Hindu nationalists tend to like and how far their claims to be democratic go. He says that Hindu nationalists have always supported a democratic government, but their ideas about democracy are very different (p. 509-534). He says that Hindu nationalists like democracy because they think it's the best form of government for a democracy (p. 517 ibid). The Hindu intelligentsia, which was obsessed with numbers, thought it was a problem that the number of Hindus in India was going down while the number of Muslims was going up. Hindu nationalists said that Hindus were the first people to live on the land because Hindus made up most of the Indian government. They knew that in a democratic system, their sheer number would help them win elections. So, Savarkar also liked the universalist discourse of democracy because it made sure that the "overwhelming majority" of Hindus would be in charge (p. 518). But they came up with their own version of democracy, which they said was rooted in the ground.

From what has been said, it is clear that the Hindu intellectuals pictured a democratic system based on unanimous agreement and vertical, not horizontal, division of society. It is one reason why Hindu nationalists don't agree with what B.R. Ambedkar wants to do with reservations based on caste. I say that an organicist model of democracy like this hides the important differences between the groups that make up society. The "Hindu identity" is making people more alike, which makes the social inequality in India worse. Even though Hindu nationalists say that Dalits and the Other Backward Classes are included in the Hindu category as a whole, this does not mean that these groups are actually included in society. In addition to making people more alike, the Hindu identity also makes the interests of the upper castes, especially the Brahmins, more important. Many scholars, like Jaffrelot, agree that Brahminical hegemony is at work in the Hindu nationalist project.

Jaffrelot has said that even though Hindu nationalists say they speak for all Hindus, they mostly look out for the interests of the upper castes. He has also said that the Sangh Parivar is a stronghold of the social status quo and that BJP is still the party of an elite few (p. 526 ibid). He says that the rise of the OBCs and Dalits in Indian politics since the late 1980s was not due to the BJP. He shows with strong evidence that there are too many MPs from the upper castes in the BJP who were elected in the Hindu belt and Gujarat. Also, he says that the Hindu nationalist movement has always had too many people from the upper-caste middle class. This was so true that the Jana Sangh was called a "Brahmin-baniya" party (p. 532). He thinks that the Sangh Parivar's appeal to these groups was mainly due to two things: its Sanskritized style and defense of social hierarchy, and its economic liberalism and defense of the middle classes, which are made up of provincial professionals, small industry, and country trading and banking. So, the upper-caste middle class and the Hindu nationalists have a lot in common.

The Brahmanical hegemony perpetrated by the Hindu nationalist movement under the guise of a unitary 'Hindu identity' can be understood in terms of the over-representation of Brahmins at important ranks in the Sangh Parivar as well as by the process of Sanskritization of the Dalits and other communities. Jaffrelot (2009) notes that:

Hindu nationalism is imbued with the Brahminic ethos. Its chief ideologues all come from this milieu. The thinkers cited in the first part of this (Hindu Nationalism: a reader) reader are, for example, all Brahmins, excluding notably Lal Chand, Lajpat Rai, Balraj Madhok, and Arun Shourie—of Punjabi origin—and one Vaishya, H.B. Sarda. The belief system of the Arya Samaj and the Sangh Parivar borrows many of its features from Brahminism. For instance, the key notion of Shuddhi orsamskar in the discourse of the Arya Samaj and the RSS echoes that of sanskritization: new converts to Hinduism accede to this religion through a purification process invented by (and for) upper-caste men; and, in the RSS shakhas, swayamasevaks are requested to emulate Brahminical values as embodied in their pracharaks. While the RSS is virtually open to each and every caste, its modus operandi implies imitation of 'the purest'. (Jaffrelot, 2009, p.255)

With the exception of Rajendra Singh who was a Rajput, all the RSS chiefs so far have been Brahmins. Such an over-representation of the Brahmins is not only emblematic of the social influence of the community, but the growth of its ideology also reflects the deviation of the Indian society from the democratic ideal of pluralism and equal representation of all social groups. It can be remarked as a departure from egalitarianism to a totalitarian imagination of a Hindu Rashtra- A Hindu Nation. As Ananya Vajpeyi notes:

Instead of egalitarianism, the Hindu Right believes in an archaic arithmetic of adhikaar and bahishkaar, entitlement and exclusion, based on caste, religion and gender. If the Indian Republic is built on a plinth of equal citizenship, the Hindu Rashtra (nation) would be founded on ritual hierarchy and patriarchy as laid out for centuries in the castes system. Onto this unequal social order of considerable vintage would be layered a deadly neo-Fascist majoritarian politics that arises out of the Hindutva imagination of the modern nation. (Vajpeyi 2016)

It is therefore clear that the growth of a unitary, homogenizing, and hegemonic identity like the Hindu identity is an illusion and does not represent the people it claims to represent. Socioeconomic groups like the Dalits and the OBCs, on the other hand, better represent the people in terms of being true to who they are. The rise of Hindu nationalism, which is based on the Hindu identity, doesn't recognise the real identities of the other social and economic groups mentioned and works against the idea of a pluralist social democracy. For social democracy to work, the Hindu identity myth needs to be busted, and identities based on socioeconomic groups need to be shown in more real, or at least more socioeconomically relevant, ways. From what has been said, it is clear that the Indian republic was going through two changes at the end of the 20th century.

Part III: Political History of Anti-caste and Dalit Emancipation movement in India

To this point, we have discussed various conceptions of freedom and the significance of factors such as civic participation in democratic republics. However, in the context of India, we have seen how the post-liberalization era has exacerbated the economic as well as social cleavages in India, which raises new questions about the state of democracy in India. The problem of caste, on the other hand, is a key obstacle to democracy in India; experts have touched on this topic here and there, but they rarely make it the primary focus of their analysis. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to question the character of the republic in nations that practiced slavery and deliberately exclude a large portion of the population from civic participation (to use Madisonian terminology). Especially in the context of Hinduism, which is the mother of the institution of caste, it becomes even more vital to understand how the caste cleavages in Indian society have shifted and in what ways they have changed in the period of globalization and the surge of right wing hegemony. In addition, it is of the utmost importance to gain knowledge from the legacies of movements that are working toward the abolition of caste, which, by its very nature, is intrinsically egalitarian, republican, and emancipatory.

By its definition, caste is an institution that organizes society on the principle of graded inequality (Ambedkar, 1916). Ambedkar's lifelong scholarship on caste from anthropological, sociological as well as historical perspectives has many key insights to offer.For Ambedkar, caste in India means an artificial chopping off the population into fixed and definite units each one prevented from fusing into another through the custom of endogamy. (Ibid, p.7) He claims that the "superimposition of endogamy on exogamy" means the creation of caste.The four means by which numerical disparity between the two sexes is conveniently maintained in the Hindu religious order, according to Ambedkar are (1) Burning the widow with her deceased husband ; (2) Compulsory widowhood, a milder form of burning : (3) Imposing celibacy on the widower ; (4) Wedding him to a girl not yet marriageable. His view of caste is that of an enclosed class. As he famously formulated:

> The Caste System is not merely a division of labourers which is quite different from division of labour—it is a hierarchy in which the divisions of labourers are graded one above the other.   (Ambedkar, 1936)

The Caste system, according to Ambedkar has two aspects wherein it divides men into separate communities as well as places these communities in a graded order one above the other in social status .

> Castes form a graded system of sovereignties, high and low, which are jealous of their status and which know that if a general dissolution came, some of them stand to lose more of their prestige and power than others do. (Ambedkar, 1936)

Therefore, casteism can be defined as any individual or collective action or a structural process that serves to uphold and reinforce the institution of caste with not only its enclosed nature but also its graded inequality, with the Brahmin caste at the head of it. Casteism can also be defined as a form of discrimination against members of a caste who do not belong to the Brahmin caste. In this context, "anticasteism" can be theorized in relation to the preceding as any individual or collective action or a counter-hegemonic tradition that seeks to dismantle and annihilate the institution of caste as well as the brahmanical supremacy that shields this institution. Anticasteism can also be thought of as a tradition that seeks to eradicate brahmanical supremacy. Because anticasteism is predicated on the idea that casteism can be reduced to nothing more than the perpetuation of graded inequality, the overarching goal of anticasteism is to eliminate graded inequality and replace it with equality. Because of this, it is very necessary to consider anticasteism to be an egalitarian worldview.

According to Omvedt (2006), the anticaste tradition may be traced all the way back to Buddha and Kabir, but it reaches its pinnacle in the philosophy and work of Jotirao and Savitribai Phule in the 20th century. Omvedt exposes the fallacy of conflating the Indian tradition with the Vedic tradition and the Brahmanical tradition, and he provides a critique of this conflating practice. According to her, new democratic social movements that attempt to overturn the current hegemony are composed of alternative traditions like those that are nourished within Dalit movements. Omvedt differentiates Phule's philosophy of "social revolution," which had an anti-caste and peasant-oriented orientation, from the idea of "national revolution," which was propagated by upper caste elites (1971). Phule's "Non-Brahmanism" was not merely communalism; rather, it was the earliest expression of social revolution, as Omvedt rightly points out (Ibid). EV Ramasamy, also known as Periyar, is credited for making a resounding mobilization of non-Brahminism in the Tamil region. In this region, he tried to construct the

Tamil society on "rational-egalitarian and secular-individualist principles." (Aloysius, 2019, p.4). In what Aloysius refers to as a contextualization of Periyar's articulations and actualizations inside theory, he exhumes Periyar as a "leader-ideologue" (Ibid page 6), advocating a radical reading of equality in periyar as a primary kind of rationality:

> "Social/ ascriptive equality is to be treated as the most elementary and also primary form of rationality. It is irrational to consider humans as same and equal, despite their actual inequalities."   Aloysious (2019, p. 8)

Echoing Ambedkar's insight that the history of India is a mortal combat between Hinduism and Buddhism, Aloysius concludes that:

> The primary ideological contradiction within the contemporary Indian society was the Brahmin versus Non-Brahmin (if not Buddhist) - as two antagonistic ways of life.   (Ibid p.17)

Even though the war of positions between casteist and anti-casteist ideologies is still going on, the upper castes (Brahmin and allied castes) continue to dominate all positions of power, while the Dalit and Shudra castes, along with Adivasi and other minority communities, continue to fight oppression. However, a portion of the Dalit population has achieved some degree of economic mobilization, despite the fact that the condition of Dalits in general has not improved to the extent that was anticipated by the people who drafted the constitution. In his extensive study from 2009, Thorat analyzed the economic and social status of Dalits across states since the year 1947 based on a variety of human development indices from each of those states. The findings of the study, which investigates patterns of discrimination, urbanization, land ownership, educational attainment, employment, and health status, as well as numerous policies and programmes of empowerment, come to the conclusion that the status is bleak with regard to the majority of these indicators.

While the war of positions between casteist and anti-casteist ideologies rages on, the upper castes (Brahmin and allied castes) continue to hold all positions of power, and the Dalit and Shudra castes, along with Adivasi and other minority populations, continue to fight oppression. Although the condition of Dalits in general has not improved to the extent that was hoped for by those who drafted the constitution, a portion of Dalits have achieved significant

levels of economic mobilization nonetheless. Thorat, in his exhaustive study (2009), evaluates the economic and social position of Dalits across states since the year 1947 based on a variety of human development indicators. He does this by looking at numerous statistics. The findings of the study, which investigates patterns of discrimination, urbanization, land ownership, educational attainment, employment, and health status, as well as numerous policies and programmes of empowerment, come to the conclusion that the status is dismal with regard to the majority of these indicators.

Since the pioneering work of Zelliot (1969) and Omvedt (1994), scholarship that seeks to properly establish Ambedkar as a pragmatic political philosopher has come a long way since that time. Recent examples of such scholarship include Jaffrelot (2006), Thorat and Kumar (2008), and Rodrigues (2017). Comparisons of Ambedkar are often made to other significant thinkers, such as Marx (Deshpande 1987, Skaria 2015), Weber (Singh 2018), Gramsci (Zene 2013), Dewey (Stroud 2017), Du Bois (Immerwahr 2008, Cabrera 2019), and Derrida (Sampath 2018), as well as other prominent Indian thinkers, such as Phule (Illaiah,1995), Gandhi (Kumar (Vajpeyi 2012). While Yengde and Teltumbde (2018) reintroduced Ambedkar to the worldwide academic community as a radical thinker, Kapila (2019) and Ramesh (2022) continue to study Ambedkar's potential for agonistic and radical democracy. Choudhury (2018), on the other hand, juxtaposes Ambedkar with the likes of Pericles, Aristotle, Abbe Sieyes, and Alan Badiou in an anachronistic manner in order to explore the possibilities of what he refers to as a possible Ambedkar-thought. Chatterjee (2018) reads Ambedkar as a theorist of minority rights. In spite of the proliferation of scholarly work on Ambedkar, an articulation of Ambedkar's republicanism in a systematic way is still in the works. In the next chapter, I will be locating the parameters of an Ambedkarite republicanism and theory of democracy by drawing inspiration from Dahl's (1956) advocacy of a Madisonian democracy.

Chapter III: Ambedkarite agonism, republicanism and modernity

Ambedkar's political approach for representing the formerly untouchables centered on dividing the concept of the universal, or, to put it another way, refusing to make any concessions on the issue of factional singularity. This method which contemporary theorists now understand as agonism, was a crucial component of the strategy. Choudhury makes the observation that the Ambedkarite technique is to divide the natural consensus that there is such a thing as India as a national-social whole (p.26, ibid.) As a result of this, he understands it to be a tactic that is both divisive and liberatory, one that shields the Dalits from the brutality of consensus. Choudhury offers his philosophical musings on the chutzpah of Ambedkar to try to establish the standard of equality despite the fact that he is fully aware that it is fictitious:

> "...is it meaningful to speak of an idea of equality in the absence of practical and historical equalization of peoples and groups, individuals, classes and 'castes' of society? Contrariwise, how is the very project of practical equalization thinkable without the pure existence of some rudimentary thought of equality?...in Indian history an event (Ambedkar's Mahad movement to claim the rights of untouchables over public drinking water) which brought into existence the notion of equality in a drastically unequal society for the first time."

Choudhury theorizes three forms of equality in Ambedkar's theory, which he refers to as axiomatic equality, predicative equality, and dispositional equality. He does this while highlighting a spectral egalitarian value in Ambedkar's technique (p.33). By doing an in-depth analysis of the documents produced by Ambedkar's political party, the Scheduled Castes Federation (SCF), it is possible to gain a deeper comprehension of the strategy that Ambedkar utilized to incite a conflict between the universal ideal and pragmatic partisanship. His methodological separatism is in direct opposition to the all-encompassing principles of his party that he has articulated. The founding ideals of the SCF were outlined in Ambedkar's manifesto for the Socialist Unity Front, which was published in 1956. The following set of guiding principles will serve as the basis for the party's attitude:

- It will treat all Indians not only as being equal before the law but as being entitled to equality and will accordingly foster equality where it does not exist and uphold it where it is denied.

- It will regard every Indian as an end in himself with a right to his own development in his own way and the State only as a means to that end.
- It will sustain the right of every Indian to freedom- religious, economic and political– subject to limitations as may arise out of the need for protection of the interest of other Indians or the State.
- It will uphold the right of every Indian to equality of opportunity subject to the provision that those who have had none in the past shall have priority over those who had.
- It will keep the State ever aware of its obligation to make every Indian free from want and free from fear.
- It will insist on the maintenance of liberty, equality and fraternity and will strive for redemption from oppression and exploitation of man by man, of class by class and of nation by nation.
- It will stand for the Parliamentary System of Government as being the best form of government both in the interest of the public and in the interest of the individual.

Thus, despite a fully rational evaluation of the highly unequal context of his time, Ambedkar dares to envision a political project unabashedly egalitarian and republic in language and content. His declaration of the Parliamentary form of government as the ideal and his dismissal of Gandhian agitational methods as "grammar of anarchy" reiterates his republican outlook. Nevertheless, this republican outlook is characterized by a historic zeal to equalize the unequal. Thus by obligating the State to provide opportunity to the historically marginalized Ambedkar asserts the key principle of his republicanism which is but a corollary of Madisonian republicanism to prevent the monopoly of a given class of people over the governing bodies of the state. By obligating the State to ensure representation of Dalits and Adivasis in the Parliament, state legislative bodies as well as bureaucracy and educational institutions, Ambedkar guarantees that the power of the state will not be permanently occupied by the power elite. The power will thus be recycled or in other words re-public-ed. Therefore ensure re-presentation of the oppressed in the State machinery of the is to re-public the sovereignty of the State to the oppressed by bringing them to the core of the idea of the 'public'. Ambedkar's republicanism thus makes a teleological shift from the universal equality of the individual to a partisan yet universal equality of the classes. Egalitarianism, social democracy, constitution reform, political representation emerge as key ideas in Ambedkar's theory and praxis. Similarly public education, both professional and civic or political, that may provide the oppressed masses with the consciousness and aspiration to claim equal power transpire as central to Ambedkar's

republican method. This republican therefore promises emancipation of the oppressed through education. Democracy that does not prioritize and enable emancipation of the oppressed minorities fails to be a democracy. Democracy, for Ambedkar, ought to move away from the ideal individualistic notion of Equality of individuals to a practical structure-informed notion that ensures more weightage on minority groups's emancipation. While an elaborate development of these ideas concerning Ambedkar's republicanism is beyond the scope of this essay, it is worth to leave the reader with the following Choudhury's submission that would aptly summarize the design of this groundwork towards an Ambedkarite democratic theory. To paraphrase Choudhury:

> Ambedkar's republicanism is not a mere statism. It takes the extreme risk of enforcing the state's constitution not simply to strengthen and reinforce its given society but to expose the latter to its structural separatism and degradation. (p.35 ibid).

This degradation is nothing but the beginning of the annihilation of caste as envisioned by Ambedkar.

Starting from a comparative study of Ambedkar's conceptualization of modernity with his contemporaries, this chapter attempts to delve into his agonistic method that distinguishes his peculiar brand of republicanism. This section explores imagery of what can be called as an 'Indian modernity' and the Indian democracy as an institution of this modernity as envisioned by founding figures of the Indian nation-state, Ambedkar and his colleague Jawaharlal Nehru , with reference to the Western modernity, which MK Gandhi was extremely critical of. By drawing from theories of modernity, the essay will first present the complications of viewing modernity as singular and Euro-centric. A singular, linear conception of modernity carries with it the cultural baggage of Western civilization and the underlying ideals of the Enlightenment, and it is in a state of perpetual tension with the ideas of Gandhi, Nehru, and Ambedkar, of the Indian nation as an alternative to the modernity of the West. Both the Nehruvian and Ambedkarite ideas concurrently draw from some western ideals and institutions while also proposing indigenous philosophical foundations in order to establish the contemporary liberal bureaucratic Indian

democracy as an alternative to the modernity of the West. This essay argues that the Nehruvian and Ambedkarite rendering of modernity, as well as Gandhi's critique of modernity, is a complicated negotiation with aspects of Western modernity, and that this negotiation took place in the context of the establishment of the democratic state in India. As modernity and the idea of social justice are inextricably linked, this essay explores Gandhian notions of the pursuit of socio economic justice through nonviolence and truth (Dalton 2012), the principles of Sarvodaya and the doctrine trusteeship for the emancipation of the rich, and criticises the same through Ambedkarite thought foregrounding the notions of social justice through the self-liberation of those who are oppressed. This is accomplished through an investigation into these contesting frameworks.

Complications in modernity

Modernity can be understood as a social order and civilization which is characterized by decomposition of older institutional frameworks and the development of new structural, institutional and cultural features and formations (Eisenstadt, 1973). Growing urbanization, commodification of economy and the emergence of industrial societies are the key features associated with modernity. It is a condition which constitutes the modern nation-state and new capitalist market economies. Governed by specific mechanisms such as rules of the market and bureaucratic organization, modernity bears a distinct cultural program of 'civilizing' the non-West. According to Eisenstadt (ibid.) the basic cultural premises of Western modernity is the the "secular" rational worldview, that includes a strong individualistic orientation which are inherently and necessarily interwoven with the structural ones. The Western modernity is though the reference point to other modern civilizations. Based on this Western model, several distinct modern civilizations have developed which do not simply replicate the Western model but are nonetheless influenced by it. Eisenstadt also claims that nationalist movements in colonized countries often promulgated strong anti-Western or even anti-modern ideas—which are basically distinctively modern ones, promulgating distinctive interpretations of modernity. The Indian national movement under the leadership of Gandhi is a clear example of this.

Modernity has been dominantly looked as a positive, emancipating, progressive force which promises of a better, inclusive, emancipated world. However, it is also criticized as a morally

destructive force which overemphasizes and is dependent on technology and also empowers egoistic and hedonistic attitudes and goals which stem from its radical individualistic orientation. While it remains a matter of contestation, it must be recognized that modernity and Westernization are not identical. Over the years scholars have recognized particular forms of modernity which are non-Western and deviate from the essential core features of the Western modernity. As Taylor (1995) identifies the two theories of modernity, namely cultural and acultural, he explains that the acultural theory of modernity characterizes it as the inevitable growth of reason. He defines this growth as: the growth of scientific consciousness, or the development of a secular outlook, or the rise of instrumental rationality, or an ever-clearer distinction between fact-finding and evaluation (Taylor, 1995 p.24). Increased mobility, concentration of populations, industrialization, paradigmatic shifts in communication, and the rise of the modern public sphere mark the essence of modernity. Such a culture-neutral theory of Modernization assumes "rationality as the exercise of a general capacity that was only awaiting for the proper conditions to unfold (ibid). Taylor highlights the conviction of classical theorists in the evolution of modernity is analogous to "rationality". He notes Tocqueville's assumption of creeping "democracy"(by which he meant a push toward equality) and the interpretation of "rationalization" by for Weber as a steady process, occurring within all cultures over time as articulating the acultural theory of modernity (Taylor, 1995 p.25). Taylor critiques the acultural theory and expounds the need to acknowledge the cultural baggage the Western modernity carries. He writes:

> "The belief that modernity comes from one single universally applicable operation imposes a falsely uniform pattern on the multiple encounters of non-Western cultures with the exigencies of science, technology, and industrialization. As long as we are bemused by the Enlightenment package, we will believe that they all have to undergo a range of cultural changes drawn from our experience-such as "secularization" or the growth of atomistic forms of self-identification. As long as we leave our own notions of identity unexamined, so long will we fail to see how theirs differ, and how this difference crucially conditions the way in which they integrate the truly universal features of "modernity." (Taylor 1995 p.28)

Acknowledging Taylor's argument would enable us to explore the possibilities of non-Western modern civilizations.

Timothy Mitchells (2000), similarly identifies the characteristics of modernity which is its autocentric picture of itself as the expression of a universal certainty (Mitchells, 2000, p.xi). Modernity claims that this certainty of human reason is free from particular traditions, or of technological power and from the constraints of the natural world. This claim essentializes a fundamentally singular modernity and rejects the possibility of modernity modified by local circumstances into a multiplicity of "cultural" forms. As Mitchells talks about the modes of imposing modernity through cultural imperialism, he brings up the Indian case, reiterating Partha Chatterjee's argument that a Westernized colonial elite was able to turn modernizing discourse against the civilizing prerogatives of a colonial power, by constructing an Indian "tradition" that was not open to colonization. This traditional culture was not the pure tradition posited by modernist discourses. It was a contra-modernity produced by an 'alternative indexing and defining of the categories of modern and traditional' (ibid). Thus, a different deployment of the difference that produces the categories of modernity giving rise to what appears to the colonial power as a confused and incomplete attempt to imitate European modernity. However, Chatterjee suggests we see it in terms of the particular configurations of power that produced the colonial modern. He proposes that we should understand the emergence of a political society distinct from the realm of civil society as revealing the attempt to create forms of modern community and democracy that cannot be thought of by the social categories of the secularized Christian world (ibid p.xv). It would help us break with the historical narrative that always locates the origins of modernity in the West and represents the non-West only in terms of its efforts to copy or resist an imported, second-handed modernity. However, a closer historical inspection leads us to understand that, neither was Nehruvian-Ambedkarite modernity a plain imitation of the Western modernity, nor was Gandhian resistance a complete rejection. Rather, these were ways of merging some elements of modernity especially its institution of democracy with the indigenous traditions. In the following sections, I attempt to demonstrate this through examples.

Gandhian resistance to modernity

Hind Swaraj is often the central text that is looked at to locate Gandhi within the text of political and economic modernity. Within Hind Swaraj (1997), Gandhi unleashes a powerful and polemical critique of human values within modern economic and political systems. Elaborately

addressing matters of religious, health-related, educational and administrative nature, Gandhi submits that industrial capitalism, which he considers to be central to western modernity, alienates human beings from their true nature and restricts their possibilities for a harmonious existence with nature. To him, western modernity is synonymous with degradation of what he considers to be normative moral, ethical and political values. Gandhi as an uncompromising traditionalist and as a comprehensively anti-modern figure, appears to be a dominant narrative that has found many buyers. One of the most recent is perhaps Arundathi Roy, in her polemical essay titled *The Doctor and the Saint*. Here Gandhi is the Saint, a term that evokes traditionalism, as opposed to Ambedkar, the modernist Doctor. Gandhian critique of modernity has emerged with seriousness in the recent times in the context of the ecological crisis, exemplified by Roy who refers to it as "prophetic" in the same essay. For Roy (2014), the "rival utopias of Gandhi and Ambedkar represented the classic battle between tradition and modernity". To her Gandhi represented a traditionalist evocation of "a uniquely Indian pastoral bliss", while Ambedkar uncritically championed "pragmatic Western liberalism".

However, as Anthony Parel notes in the introduction to Hind Swaraj (1997), Gandhian resistance appears to be oriented primarily only towards institutions of western modern civilisation, not necessarily values of the Enlightenment. Gandhi acknowledges the need to integrate the political with the Enlightenment-based values of "citizenship, equality, liberty, fraternity and mutual assistance" (p. xvi). Gupta (1991) complicates the image of the traditionalist saint further, by attempting to cast Gandhi as a figure central to Indian modernity. For Gupta, Gandhi's engagement in the public sphere, his consistent attempts to draw issues of culture and tradition into the realm of public debate, is sufficient to consider him as a modernist. He argues that "Gandhi helped us to move from tradition to modernity by the very act of bringing up these issues for public debate" (pp. 32). If public debate about questions of tradition and value are central to modernity, then Gupta demonstrates, Gandhi can be thought of as a modernist in many ways. These points of convergences between Gandhi and western modernity were not limited to the realm of culture. Gandhian strategies of independence struggle, and the thought and practice thereof, have often operated on the basis of alliances with the Indian bourgeois, rendering visible a thread of affiliative and pragmatic comfort with the economic realm of industrial capitalism. While Marxist historians such as Sumit Sarkar (1989) have also

demonstrated these mutually reinforcing affiliations in the past, an example of a trade union in Ahmedabad that Gandhi formed is a relevant example here. Founded by Gandhi in Ahmedabad in August 1918, the Textile Labour Association (TLA), exemplifies the co-operational camaraderie between Gandhian politics and urban forces of industrial capitalism. The TLA was founded on the premise of trusteeship, where workers and owners were conceived of as trustees of capital, working in tandem to benefit the enterprise (Bhowmik, 2012, p. 117). The union is known to have collected funds for its labour welfare schemes by advertising the social capital of the employers to potential donors, and has often campaigned for the employers in municipal elections (pp. 117). Here, Gandhian politics seems to show more engagement with industrial capitalism, than the popular image of the anti-modern, anti-urban Saint seems to convey.

While it might be justified to read Gandhian politics as a resistance to industrial modernity, as we have seen, there are points of pragmatic convergences that need to be brought in, which complicate these simplistic readings.

Nehruvian Modernity

Nehru throughout his public career exemplified his disposition towards modernity while simultaneously blending it with traditions. It is a known fact that he was repudiated by the Brahmin orthodoxy for his modern outlook and his disapproval of traditional social customs and ceremonies. Chosen by Gandhi as his successor, Nehru also sought inspiration in the Upanishads and the thought of Buddha. Nehru hardly refrained from reviewing traditions for remaking and modernising India without westernising it. But he still was actively incorporating elements of the Western modernity. His successful experiment of mixed economy, effectively balancing the public and the private sector, helped India endure major economic crisis and led to tremendous growth in agricultural and industrial production. His deep faith in secularism and science is exemplified in various instances. His cosmopolitan orientation was a product of his English education. His role on founding the Planning Commission and other institutions such as the AIMS, IITs, IIMs, NITs and famously dams as 'temples of modern India' to revamp the educational sector and industrial development, by laying out a new infrastructure.

Bhattacharjee (2015) notes that Nehru makes a conscious effort to fuse India's cultural past and modern democracy. He argues that Nehru had a unique cultural identity of 'part insider' and 'part outsider' with reference to the Indian culture, and uses Zygmunt Bauman's phrase to call him a 'nomad' of modernity (Bhattacharjee p.20). According to him, Nehru's modernity came from a lived experience of cultural heterogeneity. Bhargav (2017) while commenting on Nehru's views on religion and secularism notes that are unusually subtle and more complex than a simplistic comparison with his contemporary Kemal Ataturk, who can be said to have adopted secularism as it was in the West. For, Bhargav, Nehru was a modern humanist and a rationalist and had an understanding that the Indian state cannot stay aloof from religion. He thus espoused what can be called as a multi religious secularism instead of the Western secularism which strictly separates the state and religion. Neera Chandoke (2014) reads Nehru as a radical cosmopolitan. According to her, Nehru's cosmopolitanism was also distinct as it emphasized the 'embeddedness in national culture' in contrast to transcendental moral orders and foregrounded hierarchies of power in opposition to empty and abstract notions of equality (Chandoke, p.39). Moreover, scholars like Bipin Chandra (1936) and Sabyasachi Bhattacharya (2015) have highlighted Nehru's active participation in labour and working class movements and his being a radical leftist in his early career from 1933-1936 up until 1947 where he ultimately had to negotiate with the capitalist class for political exigencies. Nonetheless, his critique of the capitalist system and the rejection to import the capitalist model to India is noteworthy. Nehru's brilliant ability to formulate an independent and very effective foreign policy resounds his commitment to not emulate or join any of the erstwhile superpowers. Nehru's prowess lies not only in balancing between superpowers but also between contemporary politicians. His equipoising of the sometimes conflicting interests of Gandhi and Ambedkar is remarkable and his take on modernity further complicates the Western notions of it.

Ambedkarite Modernity

In the recent and hugely successful tamil-language Indian film Kabali (2016), there is a popular sequence featuring the central character Kabali, a self-styled don with an ethical bent, played by the actor Rajnikanth. The character's story is a classical rags-to-riches narrative, but set within the context of indentured tamil labour, predominantly Dalit, in the Malaysian

plantations of the 20th century. Kabali's rise as the aggressive political face of the labour union is simultaneous with a change in his fashion. He is shown to adopt an archetypally western attire, complete with a tailored tuxedo and dark sunglasses. At one point in the movie, a supporting character asks him about the seemingly obvious contradiction in his use of Western clothing and the poor standard of living of the people he represents. Kabali's response to this is perhaps one of the recent documentations of the political modernity within Ambedkarite thought. Kabali responds,

> This too is one of the ways in which we register our dissent. There is a lot behind Gandhiji choosing to give up his shirt, and Ambedkar suiting himself up. Politics.

This short response by Kabali is an interesting segue into the Gandhi-Ambedkar debates, which in many ways were debates about the role of modernity in Indian political thought. As we have described above, Gandhi was positioned uneasily in the context of the processes of modernization within the industrial societies of the West. In this context, contrary to the "pastoral bliss" of Gandhi, Roy positions the "pragmatic Western liberalism" of Ambedkar. While this strict binary of an oppositional nature between Ambedkar and Gandhi can be an enticing political rhetoric, it is not without its own problems. As Palshikar (1996) has attempted to demonstrate, Gandhian and Ambedkarite positions were not antithetical within the project of political modernity, if the ideal of the project can be taken as emancipation. While Palshikar concedes that Ambedkar does not seem to have been influenced by the Gandhian exposition of the 'evils' of modernity, he simultaneously submits that it would be a mistake to take this to mean that Ambedkar "upheld (industrial) Capitalism uncritically". While Ambedkar foregrounds the modern values of liberty, equality and fraternity, it appears clear to Palshikar that he, like Gandhi, simultaneously observed industrial capitalism to be a threat to these values. Jadhav (1991) similarly contends that Ambedkar's economic thought has largely been neglected, a neglect that can lead to simplistic understandings of his position vis-a-vis modern economies.

However, it is simultaneously clear that Ambedkar embraced urbanization far more strongly, and in deep tension with Gandhi. In Jaffrelot (2005; 110), we see Ambedkar speak of the village as nothing but "a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow mindedness and communalism",

and refer to arguments of intellectuals that romanticize the village (perhaps alluding to Gandhi) as nothing short of "pathetic". Roy, among many, uses this trend within Ambedkarite thought to locate Ambedkar's thrust towards values of liberty, equality and fraternity strongly within the tradition of Western modernity. But this, too, is a claim that needs to be complicated. For example, Vajpeyi (2011) notes that Ambedkar, in his political addresses, chooses explicitly to locate his affiliation towards these values within the Buddhist tradition rather than Enlightenment-driven modernity.

Concluding remarks

Kabali himself, as we saw, did not explain to his interrogator what exactly is behind the two contradictory strategies of Gandhi and Ambedkar. He merely shrugged the question off after mentioning that it is "politics", with a promise to explain what that means later. Perhaps this silence is illustrative of the complexity that I have attempted to present in this section.

Any simplistic delineation of the modern versus the traditional, in cultural, socioeconomic or political senses, is visibly problematic. However, a contextualization of these figures (of Gandhi, Nehru and Ambedkar) could help express these complexities better. Their engagement with modernity, comes in the liminal context of the Indian independence struggle and the formation of the Indian democratic state. This engagement is at a time where movements, mobilizations and strategies were urgent and pragmatic political requirements, perhaps at the context of inviting complex, mutually incohesive threads within thought and praxis. In these moments of exigency and intense political participation, Gandhi could politically affiliate with the industrial capitalists while resisting industrial capitalism in thought, Ambedkar could embrace economic modernity as a vehicle for emancipation while remaining critical of industrial capitalism, and Nehru could form coalitions with these figures and engage with their thought in the direction of political modernity of the Indian democratic nation-state. These multiple political thoughts, drawn from and resulting in a milieu of Western Enlightenment, Buddhist tradition, Gandhian swaraj, Ambedkarite and Nehruvian thought, is illustrative of Mitchell's argument about multiplicity of modernities. This perspective of Ambedkar's conceptualization of a distinct modernity forms the

basis for his peculiar understanding of democracy as well as his 'divisive method' which many scholars such as Shruti Kapila and Hari Ramesh situate as an agonistic theory of radical democracy. It is therefore pertinent to delve more deeply into the debates on agonistic models of democracy to unearth an Ambedkarite theoretical perspective to understand legal-constitutional and parliamentary forms of representation.

The contemporary theorists of the Agonistic model of democracy, such as Mouffe and Wenman, argue that contemporary liberal democracies are moving further and further away from fundamental democratic values such as equality and popular sovereignty. This condition is referred to as a "democratic deficit." If a democratic deficit is understood to be a decline in the 'democratic content' of a democracy, in terms of its deviation from these fundamental democratic values, then it becomes necessary, for the benefit of democracy, to analyze significant events that indicate such declines. In other words, if democratic deficit is understood as a decline in the 'democratic content' of a democracy, in terms of its deviation from these core democratic values, In light of this, the following section will describe a certain change in the course that democracy in India has taken in relation to the political parties in India that exhibit certain agonistic value characteristics. Agonistic theory proposes that in order to establish a radical form of democracy predicated on the understanding of the centrality of conflicts, it is necessary to uphold values such as "recognition of collective identity" and "promotion of material equality." These are two examples of such values.

In Mouffe's terms, the major political parties in India that are active in Indian politics pursue their separate hegemonic projects of defining the norms of Indian democracy. These initiatives are referred to as "hegemonic projects." I will illustrate the case of two major contemporary political parties in India, namely the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M)), as examples of agents that propose to advance a "politics of representation" and a "politics of redistribution" respectively. These parties are the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M) respectively. It has been demonstrated that these two parties, in an ideal situation, respectively display the antagonistic values of "recognition of collective identity" and "promotion of material equality." [Citation needed] The argument advanced in this thesis suggests that democracy can be understood as fundamentally comprising three pillars, namely the "political," "social," and

"economic" pillars. The liberal theory of democracy, which informs the contemporary public understanding of democracy, gives priority to the 'political' aspect of democracy. This aspect of democracy refers to the formal political rights that are awarded to people. According to this interpretation, the function of the democratic project as a project to actualize social and economic equality, which are both essential values of democracy according to agonistic theory, is not sufficiently brought to the forefront. Since Mouffe's observation of democratic deficit is a problem that results from a democracy deviating away from these values, it is important to re-conceptualize a model of democracy that is grounded in those values. This is because Mouffe's observation of democratic deficit is a problem that results from a democracy deviating away from these values. In this regard, it has been proposed that democratic deficiency can be better conceived of and possibly corrected if models of social and economic democracies are used to bring these fundamental ideals to the forefront of discussion. This prioritization of social and economic democracy ought to imply the pervasiveness of the values of social justice and material equality in both the public discourse and the policies of the state.

If the 'politics of representation' of the BSP and the 'politics of redistribution' of the CPI(M) are considered to be attempts to realize 'social' and 'economic' democracy, then it is possible to present the idea that a decline in the influence of such parties in the politics of India is a decrease in the aforementioned 'democratic content' of Indian democracy. This idea can be supported by pointing out that the BSP and the CPI(M) are One school of thought that contends that there should be an antagonistic relationship between these two categories of politics in order for them to mutually supplement one another and bring about a democracy that is profoundly substantial. I shall now proceed to create a theory of agonistic-republicanism in Ambedkar based on the democratic idea that I have just presented. In spite of this, it seems appropriate at this juncture to revisit the development of democratic and republican ideas in India, as was done earlier, but this time in a more conceptual sense.

In 1950, when it was first created, the Republic of India proclaimed itself to be a sovereign socialist secular democratic republic. Many political experts agree that it is the most robust democracy in the world and that it is also the largest democracy in the world. It is arguable that the establishment of a democratic government in India should be seen as a

watershed moment in the annals of democratic history, on par with the revolutions that took place in France and the United States. It is widely held that the Constitution of India contains several references to democratic principles and values. The Indian Constitution was written with a mindset that admirably supports the democratic ideal and envisions a state that is "of the people, by the people, and for the people2." As Granville Austin identifies:

> "The (Indian) Constitution embodied the philosophy of: protecting and enhancing national unity and integrity, establishing the institutions and spirit of democracy, and fostering a social revolution to better the lot of the masses of the Indians." (Austin, 1999. p.6)

According to Amartya Sen, the phenomenon known as "Indian democracy" has an exceptional track record for being a robust democracy in a non-Western culture (Sen, 2005). The decision made by the voters of India in 19753 to oppose the state of emergency and the watering down of democratic guarantees has stood the test of time. Despite the fact that it is faulty and flawed in a number of ways (Ibid), it has miraculously survived and is now firmly established in institutions (Varshney, 2014). While recognising its successes and shortcomings, Pratap Bhanu Mehta (2003) has praised the experiment of bringing democracy to a mostly illiterate and unpropertied India as particularly courageous. He calls for the realisation of democracy as it is envisaged by modern constitutionalism. Atul Kohli (2001) provides an assessment of the success story of the Indian democracy, thinking it to be a fascinating aberration in the process. Niraja Jayal (2007), in the course of outlining the different debates that have been held over Indian democracy, makes the observation that some people have referred to democracy in India as an oddity, while others have considered it as the ideal situation for testing democratic theory.

The conventional understanding of Indian democracy is that it takes the form of a liberal democracy; nevertheless, ever since the right-wing Bhartiya Janata Party came to power in 2014, academics have been debating the precise definition of the term "Indian democracy." In this light, Doniger and Nussbaum (2015) have claimed that "the meaning of India's democracy is yet uncertain" due to the fact that the ideology of the BJP is currently in power. The ambiguity surrounding the meaning of democracy in recent

times is a reflection of a global trend that is occurring as right-wing parties are gaining significance in liberal democracies, which is seen by critics as a threat to these democracies. This haziness surrounding the meaning of democracy in recent times is a result of this global trend. It is vital to have an understanding of the development of both the theory and practise of democracy in order to have a proper comprehension of what democracy should entail and what elements make up democracy.

The objectives of theories of democracy are to define, describe, explain, and evaluate democratic political regimes and ideals, as well as to comprehend the prerequisites of democracy and provide normative models for democracies that function more effectively. The idea of democracy is intricately connected to various political ideas and ethical ideals, some of which include representation, collective self-determinism, social justice, civil liberties, pluralism, deliberation, and the inclusion of various minority groups. The International Encyclopaedia of Political Science (Badie, B., Berg-Schlosser, D., & Morlino, L. (2011, p. 571-594), while analyzing the evolution of democracy from ancient to modern democracy, identifies three semantic transformations of the concept and explains how democracy was predominantly criticised by the ancient political philosophers and how it came to be popularly accepted as the most legitimate form of government in modern times.

From Pseudo-Xenophon, who described it as a selfish and destructive rule of the majority, to Plato, who formulated his model of philosopher-king to counter the prevalent democratic practises, philosophers highlighted the paradox of democracy, which is that it appears to be an unjust regime from the perspective of the aristocracy, while it appears to be at least internally rational from the view of the majority. This paradox was brought to light by the fact that democracy was a popular political system in ancient times (Ibid). Plato, upon coming to the conclusion that the model of an idealist philosopher-king cannot be implemented in practise, suggests a second-best regime that is based on the system of rules. He is willing to make concessions to certain democratic practices, such as the involvement of the many in elections, but he still favors aristocratic authority and is inclined to prevent the rule of the many. One example of this is the participation of the many in elections. A more empirically educated Aristotle demonstrates a more realistic

knowledge of political reality, and he advocates for an integrated moderate constitution. Although he acknowledges the logic behind democratic deliberations and makes the point that democratic assemblies are able to obtain more information than oligarchic assemblies, he is critical of the "extreme" democratic order of Athens and, like Pseudo-Xenophon, he warns against the dangers of demagogy and rhetorical betrayal. Aristotle's moderate constitution is distinguished by the rule of law and a combination of democratic and oligarchic institutions. By abandoning the Athenians' practise of direct democracy and laying the groundwork for a representative democracy, Aristotle established the foundation for a representative democracy. As a result of the antidemocratic nature of their writings, philosophers such as Pseudo-Xenophon, Thucydides, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Polybios are referred to as "intellectual critics of popular role" in Josiah Ober's (1998 in IEPS) terminology. Other examples include Polybios.

The IEPS goes on to explain that by the Middle Ages, democracy had come to be seen as an illegitimate system, and the derogatory connotation of the word "democracy" persisted and remained popular until the democratic upheavals of the 18th century. This was the case until the Middle Ages (Ibid). Additionally, during this historical period, the direct rule of democracy gave way to the rule of elected representatives in democratic governments. As was indicated up above, the three stages of democratic semantic transformation are known as positivation, futurization, and completion. The process through which a negative idea, such as politics, is transformed into a positive one, at least in Western societies, is referred to as positivation. The term "democracy" was given a favourable connotation in the writings of Baruch Spinoza, a philosopher who lived in the 17th century, and other thinkers associated with the Dutch Republican movement in the 1780s. These efforts to support and elevate democracy were ultimately successful as the concept of democracy came to be associated with favourable qualities over time, particularly in the decades following the French Revolution and continuing throughout the 19th century with the expansion of voting rights in the United States, Western Europe, New Zealand, and Australia (Ibid, p. 573). The process through which democracy is eventually recognised as a workable concept for the future is referred to as futurization. In the same way that the ancient Roman philosopher Cicero regarded democracy as something that belonged in the past, other prominent thinkers of the time, such as Baron de Montesquieu, John Locke, and the founding fathers of the United States, did not consider democracy to be a viable option for the political future. Even

Hegel and Rousseau, who held a more optimistic vision of democracy, were uncertain or, more accurately, anxious about the future of democracy in a practical sense.

However, the book that Alexis de Tocqueville published in 1835 on democracy in the United States was the impetus for many philosophers to begin conceptualizing democracy as a goal for the future. Despite the fact that he offered his own critique of democracy, he made the observation that the majority of North America and Europe are already democracies or will become democracies in the near future. It underwent institutional change and was being installed as a representative system because direct democracy was no longer feasible in the modern political order of nation-states. This occurred as the concept of democracy evolved over the course of centuries, shifting from a negative to a positive connotation and being projected as a legitimate political order in the future. In addition, democracy was also projected as a legitimate political order in the future. After then, republican concepts like constitutionalism, federalism, division of power, and multi-stage representation systems evolved to become the embodiment of modern democracy, which is referred to as completeness.

The IEPS examines and discusses both the diachronic and the synchronic approaches to democracy. These are the two primary ways of analysing democratic systems (Ibid, p. 574). The first one analyses the historical progression of democratic philosophy, while the second one considers different democratic models, such as liberal, republican, and so on. In addition to these two methods, a third distinction is drawn, and it pertains to the scientific modalities that are used in theorising democracy. On the basis of this distinction, contemporary conceptions of democracy are categorized as either empirical, positive, or normative (p. 574). While empirical theories attempt to rank different political systems on a scale or degree of democratic values by empirically measuring it (see, for example, Robert Dahl's seven indicators of "polyarchy" (1971) or Lipset's investigation of the correlation between democratization and socio-economic variables), positive theories attempt to construct formal models of democratic processes such as voting behavior. Empirical theories seek to rank different political systems on a scale or degree of democratic values. The Positive theories, such as the Rational-Choice theories and Luhmann's System theory, are openly non-normative in nature and strive to do nothing more than characterize and explain the democratic processes. Although more discussion of either of these ideas—empirical or positive—would be interesting, it will not be possible within the confines of

this dissertation to do so. The literature supporting both of these hypotheses is considerable. The normative conceptions of democracy are the primary focus of this dissertation's methodological framework, which is written in the form of a dissertation.

The normative theories don't shy away from ethical neutrality and value judgment like some of the other theories do. The nature of these statements is one that is overtly analytical, critical, evaluative, and prescriptive. One more crucial quality of normative theories is that they are grounded in the past in some way. They are significantly impacted by the political discussions that are happening at the time when they are being developed. They are attempting to produce normative remarks regarding various political systems and methods. Recent years have witnessed a resurgence in the field of modern normative theory, which may be attributed to the unfolding of significant historical events in the 1980s, as well as the development of the contemporary political economy and the conditions of late capitalism. According to Wenman (2013), the contemporary Anglo–American political theory consists of arguments between liberals and communitarians on concepts of democracy and fairness (p.3). Through their individual bodies of work, John Rawls and Jurgen Habermas are credited with bringing about a revolution in the academic field of normative theory. These two influential theorists are identified as the proponents of liberal conceptions of democracy by Wenman and others, and they have been criticized by newer theoretical models. Wenman is one of the individuals who made these identifications. Many observers, such as Macpherson (1979), Held (2006), and Cunningham, have recognised the new theoretical frameworks, which include deliberative democracy, radical agonistic democracy, and cosmopolitan democracy (2002).

The liberal theory of democracy is implemented within the context of classical liberalism, which promotes civil rights and political freedom within the confines of the rule of law while also advocating for free market capitalism (Hudelson, 1999). Since the beginning of the twentieth century, liberal democracy has emerged as the preeminent form of government around the globe. Generally speaking, liberal democracies practise universal suffrage, which means that voting rights are extended to all adult citizens of the state. One of the most essential characteristics of a liberal democracy is its emphasis on fundamental civil rights as well as universal human rights. Because liberalism is based on individualism as a political philosophy, a liberal democracy will always place a strong emphasis on the moral value of its citizens. This is

one of the defining characteristics of a liberal democracy (IEPS). It is argued that liberal values, such as a focus on individual human rights, rule of law, and economic liberalism, are fundamentally in conflict with democratic values such as equality and popular sovereignty. Mouffe (2000) identifies these values as liberal values, and he argues that they are fundamentally in conflict with each other. Mouffe re-articulates the age-old dispute between freedom and equality, individualism and communism as the struggle between these fundamental liberal ideals and fundamental democratic values (Ibid, p. 3). She goes on to explain that the main trend in contemporary times consists of imagining democracy in such a way that it is virtually solely connected with Rechtsstaat, which is a liberal philosophy that literally translates to'state of law' (Ibid.). This tendency has resulted in what she refers to as a "democratic deficit," which was created when the elements of equality and popular sovereignty were ignored (Ibid, p.4). According to Mouffe, the essence of the present liberal democracy is paradoxical, and it has given precedence to the principles of liberalism over the values of democracy. She proposes agonistic democracy as an alternative to the liberal model of democracy as well as a model of democracy that is more radical than the liberal model.

A critique of the liberal model of democracy has been made by agonistic theorists such as Chantal Mouffe, William Connolly, Bonnie Honig, James Tully, and Mark Wenman. Despite the fact that each of these authors has established their own unique theory of agonism, they center their work on topics that are connected to one another and recognise their proximity to one another (Wenman 2013). The liberal theorists can be distinguished from the agonistic theorists because of the strong similarities that exist between these agonistic theorists and broader philosophical concepts. Agonism is derived from the Greek word agon, which means conflict or strife. The agonistic theorists agree on the larger themes of Agonism, which include the centrality of conflict, acknowledgement of pluralistic identities, and a tragic-non-utopian view of the world, as Wenman (Ibid.) has identified (Ibid., p. 4). The tendency of liberal theories to universalize, homogenize, and essentialize categories that are the subject of these theories is a common criticism leveled against the liberal theory of democracy, as articulated by Mouffe. This criticism is based on the fact that these theories are themselves subjects (Mouffe 2000). Mouffe contends that the liberal theory, as a result of its essentializing approach, which argues for transcending conflict and arriving at a consensus, renders invisible the diversity of collective identities present in a polity and undermines the role of hegemony in the process of arriving at a

consensus (Ibid.). Wenman argues that the agonistic theorists come from the socialist tradition and seek alternative ways of theorizing a socialist politics without idealizing the communist utopia. He does this by systematically situating agonistic theory in what he calls "politics in a new century," which is constituted by politics of diversity, politics of fundamentalism, and politics of globalization. The following are the two normative norms that are argued to be fundamental to the agonistic theories that are put out by theorists such as Mouffe and Wenman:

1. Recognition of the centrality of identity in politics and

2. Promotion of material equality among the masses.

These two values, according to these theorists, are essential constituents of a radical democracy with less democratic deficit. This thesis, subscribing to the norms of agonistic theory, uses its theoretical framework to analyze contemporary Indian political situation, the deficit in Indian democracy by providing evidence from contemporary Indian politics.

Contemporary Political Scenario in the world and in India:

The weakening and eventual collapse of the Soviet Union was an occurrence in world history that had profound and far-reaching repercussions. There is no doubt that the fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent release of globalized capitalism in the countries that were formerly a part of the Eastern Bloc as well as those that are classified as Third World countries in Asia and Africa irrevocably altered the political economies of these nation-states. David Held makes the observation that:

The revolutions which swept across Central and Eastern Europe at the end of 1989 and the beginning of the 1990 stimulated an atmosphere of celebration. Liberal democracy was feted as an agent of progress, and capitalism as the only viable economic system. Some political commentators even proclaimed (to borrow a phrase from Hegel) the 'end of history'- the triumph of the West over all political and economic alternatives. (Held, 2006)

The viewpoint that liberal democracy will soon lead to the formation of a utopian world with an end to all conflicts posed a challenge because of the many problems that exist, such as the growing material inequality between classes across liberal democratic countries, the growth of religious fundamentalist groups, and the rise of identity-based politics. As I shall demonstrate

in the following chapter, the liberal theory of democracy is no longer relevant given its inability to adequately describe the political phenomena of the modern day. It is unable to comprehend the present degradation of democracy and is unable to make appropriate proposals for the extension and strengthening of democracy in democratic countries. In addition, it is unable to comprehend the contemporary demeaning of democracy. On the other hand, its most significant criticism, the agonistic theory, with its more realist approach of accepting the inevitability and permanence of conflicts, its criticism of the neo-liberal hegemony, and its focus on "identity" as a fundamental component of politics, is better able to explain the contemporary political crisis of liberal democracy, even in the Third World developing countries like India.

Ilan Kapoor (2002) has presented a discussion on how contemporary conceptions of democracy can be relevantly applied to the politics of the Third World. Since the agonistic theory, in particular that of Mouffe, is anti-essentialist, anti-universalist, and open, he contends (p. 447) that it may be applied to a variety of cultural contexts because of these characteristics. In addition to this, he makes the point that Habermas's point of reference is Western History and not the history of non-Western countries while he is developing his deliberative theory of democracy. As a result, it raises questions about whether his theory is really just a cover for conceptual imperialism hidden behind the veneer of universalism. Although Kapoor is correct in pointing out the limitations of these theories when applied to the politics of the third world, he nevertheless indicates that these theories are not exclusive to liberal democracies in the West. In the following paragraph, I will go into further depth about this topic. It may be argued that these theories are more pertinent when applied to the situation of India, which is without a doubt one of the most diverse countries in the world.

During the final decade of the 20th century, India experienced a complete transformation into a globalised and liberal economy across its entire political and economic landscape. The economic reforms that were launched by the Indian state in 1991 were to have a tremendous impact on the Indian democracy, particularly in terms of the increasing influence of the Indian middle class on politics, as was covered in the chapter before this one. Another significant event took place during this time period, and it took place at the same time as the destruction of the Babri Mosque at Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, in the year 1992. This event is illustrative of the expansion of right-wing Hindutva politics in India. This expansion found its political

manifestation in the elections that followed, in which parties claiming to represent the Hindutva brand of politics emerged electorally successful and posed significant challenges to socialist and communist politics in India. The subsequent political disputes that have been unfolding between these political parties in India, each of which represents a distinct ideology and identity interest, have had a significant impact on the political landscape of the country.

Role of parties in the Indian democracy:

The function of democracy in India is inextricably tied to the part that political parties in India play in the country's political system. Since the year 1950, the number of political parties has vastly increased, and the Indian National Congress's once unrivaled position as the most influential party in the nation has been steadily eroded since the 1970s. In today's Indian political landscape, you can find representation from a wide range of ideologies, communities, and geographic interests thanks to the proliferation of several political parties. It is impossible to deny the close connection that exists between the numerous political parties or politically institutionalized groups in India and the country's democracy. According to the proposal made by Doniger and Nussbaum:

"Political parties and movements are not mandated, as such, in any nation's constitution, but they are omnipresent in democracies, and their functioning is a big part of the story of the functioning of the democracy itself." (Doniger, Nussbaum 2015)

According to Zoya Hassan, who was quoted in Jayal and Mehta's 2010 article, one example of how the democratic process is becoming more robust is how previously marginalised groups are being integrated into the political system in India. She asserts that it is impossible to simply conceive of the democratic system in India and its success without the significant role played by political parties. She also makes the point that the Indian party system does not cleanly fit into any of the theories of liberal democratic politics or the traditional categories of the party system that are common in the West. She says this in reference to the fact that the Indian political system is a democracy (p. 241).

There has been an increase in the number of political parties that are founded on social identities since the proposal of the Mandal Commission about the reservation of seats for the Other Backward Classes was put into action. Although there have been significant parties that

mobilised their voters based on regional and linguistic identities, the rise of parties such as the Bahujan Samaj Party in the late 1990s is significant in terms of its claim of representing the Dalits, one of the most underprivileged and marginalized communities in India. This is despite the fact that there have been significant parties that mobilized their voters based on regional and linguistic identities. Its phenomenal electoral success on the basis of the Dalit-Bahujan social identity, which refers to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, and other religious minorities, allowed the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) to emerge as the third largest political party in India in 2014, only behind the Indian National Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party. The study of the BSP is relevant to this thesis because of its significance in mobilizing masses on the basis of a social identity and its claim that it is an Ambedkarite political party representing the cause of Dalits in Indian Parliament and state legislatures. Both of these aspects make the study of the BSP important.

TThe Communist Party of India is the other main party in India, and it will function as the focal point of this thesis (Marxist). After a schism within the Communist Party of India in 1964, the Communist Party of India (Maoist) was established. Through the course of the years, it evolved into the most prominent Communist Party in Indian politics. It was an important factor in the happenings that are being addressed in the time period after the year 1990. Despite the fact that both the BSP and the CPI(M) only have a considerable presence in some parts of India, both of these parties have had a very big impact on democratic processes in India. It is important to note that these two parties were chosen just as examples of two distinct hegemonic projects or brands of politics, but there are other parties with less significance that could be the focus of such a research. The "politics of representation," as exhibited by the BSP, and the "politics of redistribution," as exhibited by the CPI, are the two varieties of politics that these parties are known to promote (M). In the next paragraphs, the reasons that it is crucial to examine these two distinct types of politics in relation to democracy will be demonstrated.

As was said before, the issue of a "democratic deficit" in liberal democracies is pertinent both to contemporary theories and practises of democracy. The realisation that there is a democratic deficit can be aided by the identification of the absence of fundamental democratic values by agonistic theorists. This is necessary in order to improve democracy. In order for

democratic goals such as "recognition of social identities" and "promotion of material equality," which are derived from agonistic theorists, to be fostered in a democratic polity, it becomes vital to determine the manner in which this can be done. The 'politics of representation' of the Ambedkarite political party BSP and 'the politics of redistribution' of the CPI(M) appear to serve the purpose of upholding the aforementioned values of radical agonistic democracy in the context of post-1990s India. Both parties are affiliated with the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

In this section, I will try to determine the instances in which various political parties have shown a manifestation of these fundamental democratic values. It makes an effort to determine whether or not the politics of these two parties aids in lowering the democratic deficit and increasing the democratic content of Indian democracy. In this context, the purpose of this research is to outline a particular change in the course that Indian democracy has been taking in light of two key events that have occurred in the recent past: the implementation of pro-market economic reforms and the destruction of the Babri Mosque. If democratic deficit is viewed as a decrease in democratic substance, that is, as a deviation of a democracy from the norms of social and economic equality, then the question that needs to be asked is how democracies can be conceptualized to remedy democratic deficit. In addition, if democratic content is understood to be a measurement of the fundamental democratic values of a democracy, then the question becomes: how has the "politics of distribution" of the CPI(M) and the "politics of representation" of the BSP influenced the democratic content of Indian democracy?

I seek to conceive democracy as primarily consisting of three components, namely 'political,'social,' and 'economic,' in order to comprehend the role that various types of politics play in strengthening the content of democracy. In doing so, the author hopes to accomplish this goal. The contemporary public conception of the concept of democracy, which is largely shaped by the liberal theory of democracy, places a greater emphasis on the 'political' aspect of democracy, which refers to the formal political rights that are awarded to citizens. According to this interpretation, the function of the democratic project as a project to actualize social and economic equality, which are both essential values of democracy according to agonistic theory, is not sufficiently brought to the forefront. Because democratic deficit is a problem that arises when a democracy strays from these values, it is essential to re-conceptualize a model of democracy

that is founded on these values. This is because democratic deficit is a problem that results from the deviation of a democracy away from these values. In this regard, it has been proposed that democratic deficiency can be better conceived of and possibly corrected if models of social and economic democracies are used to bring these fundamental ideals to the forefront of discussion.

If the 'politics of representation' of the BSP and the 'politics of redistribution' of the CPI(M), respectively, are considered to be attempts to realize 'social' and 'economic' democracy, then it is possible to present that a decline in the influence of such parties in the politics of India is a decrease in the aforementioned 'democratic content' of Indian democracy. This is because the BSP and the CPI(M) are considered to be respectively attempting to. It will be claimed that there ought to be an antagonistic relation between these two categories of politics in order for them to complement each other and create a fundamentally meaningful democracy.

It is a matter of contention in the normative theories of democracy that what is a good or a bad or a meaningful democracy. The International Encyclopaedia of Political Science defines 'Good Democracy' as:

> A quality democracy or a "good" democracy presents a stable institutional structure that realizes the liberty and equality of citizens through the legitimate and correct functioning of its institutions and mechanisms- that is, a good democracy is first and fore most a broadly legitimated regime that completely satisfies the citizens (quality in terms of result); one in which citizens, associations and communities of which it is composed enjoy liberty, even in different forms and degrees (quality in terms of content); and one in which the citizens themselves have the power to check and evaluate whether the government pursues the objectives of liberty and equality according to the rule of law (quality in terms of procedure). (IEPS p. 566)

The Indian Electoral Participation Survey (IEPS) gives quality of procedures, quality of content, and quality of results as the categories for conceptualizing the qualities of democracy; however, the quality of content of Indian democracy is my primary interest. As I have said in the past, I am a supporter of the viewpoint that the liberal idea of democracy is insufficient. Furthermore, I agree with Mouffe (2000) that the phrase "liberal democracy" is an oxymoron, and that the essence of liberal democracy is contradictory. In this paper, I claim that the agonistic theory is superior to other approaches for conceptualizing a model of radical democracy because

it is informed by the underlying conflict that exists between democratic and liberal norms. I subscribe to Mouffe's (Ibid.) argument that in the neoliberal economic order and under the conditions of late Capitalism, the modern liberal democracies are more inclined towards the liberal values and are shifting away from the core democratic values of equality and popular sovereignty. Having said that, I do agree with the maintenance of a right balance between the liberal and democratic values. She contends that

> The dominant tendency today consists in envisaging democracy in such a way that it is almost exclusively identified with the *Rechtsstaat* and the defence of human rights, leaving aside the element of popular sovereignty, which is deemed to be obsolete. This has created a 'democratic deficit' which given the central role played by the idea of popular sovereignty in the democratic imaginary, can have very dangerous effects on the allegiance to democratic institutions. (Ibid. p. 4)

If Mouffe is correct, then it is essential to conceptualize this category of 'democratic deficiency,' when it becomes required to do so. In other words, in order to judge the level of quality that a democracy possesses, it is essential to develop the idea of the "democratic content" of a democracy. This refers to the lack of democracy that Mouffe discusses, as well as the nature and components of the democracy. In the current era, an attempt will be made in this chapter to define what democratic content entails. In addition to this, it will investigate the various methods through which the democratic content might be enhanced.

Mouffe (1993, 2000) has argued that since the fall of communism, the triumph of capitalism, and the emergence of a 'New World Order,' there has been a shift to the right in modern liberal democracy toward the values of liberalism and away from the values of core democracy. Mouffe's argument is based on the observation that since the fall of communism, the triumph of capitalism, and the emergence of a 'New World Order,' there has been a Equality and the sovereignty of the people are two of the fundamental democratic values that she cites. It is therefore absolutely necessary to have an understanding of the link that equality and the sovereignty of the people have with the concept of "democracy." As we saw in the chapter before this one, throughout history, individuals like Aristotle and others have held the belief that individuality and democracy are inherently incompatible with one another. Even while democracy is universally appreciated and valued in contemporary times, when nation-states came into being, at least in the countries of the West, liberals such as F.A. Hayek are still wary of it. In his book "The Constitution of Liberty," written in 1942, F. A. Hayek argued that democracy

is the most efficient way to protect individual liberty. These types of liberals see democracy primarily through the lens of individualist principles and values.

One may say that the relationship between these three core ideals of democracy, liberty, and equality is analogous to that of means and ends. In this sense, democracy is a method for putting values like liberty and equality into practice. One way to look at it is as a circumstance that allows for the growth and manifestation of these core ideals. It is possible to speak of a democracy as being of low quality or insufficient if it fails to adequately actualize fundamental democratic values such as equality and popular sovereignty. In this context, the idea of a "democratic deficit" can be interpreted as a reference to a lack or an insufficiency of democracy. Therefore, democratic content is the fundamental component that democracy is constructed out of. In my view, the criteria that must be met for democratic content are those that ensure the continued pursuit of democratic ideals such as equality and popular sovereignty. As a result, the democratic deficit of a democratic polity can be evaluated based on a measure of equity and the influence that citizens have over the state. To put it another way, the democratic deficit of a democracy is said to be significant when the disparity exists among the people who live in that particular state. On the other hand, increasing the amount of democratic content while simultaneously reducing the democratic deficit is one way to make a polity more egalitarian. When this occurs, the question that naturally follows is, "In what ways can a democracy be made more equitable?" In order to accomplish this, the thesis suggests breaking down the concept of democratic content into at least three distinct categories, namely political, social, and economic aspects. If there are significant degrees of political, social, and economic equality in a democracy, then we can say that the democracy's level of democratic content is high.

Social and Economic Components of Democracy:

One of the most important claims made in this section is that the common conception of democracy focuses solely on the political connotations of the term. That is to say, democracy is defined exclusively as a way of actualizing or as a condition of cultivating just the political or civic rights. The other parts of democracy that should be taken into consideration are frequently disregarded. This is unfortunate. The argument puts forth the proposition that democracy can be conceptualised as consisting of three essential aspects: the political, the social, and the economic.

Therefore, a complete democracy would be the sum of a political democracy, a social democracy, and an economic democracy. Rather, the phrases "social democracy" and "economic democracy" are not meant to be interpreted in terms of the commonly held ideas of a socialist democratic political system and the socioeconomic philosophy of economic democracy, respectively. These two categories are discussed in this context with an alternative meaning for each. In this context, social democracy refers to the conditions under which social equality can be realised, whereas economic democracy refers to the conditions under which economic equality can be realised. This understanding of these two terms can be traced to B.R. Ambedkar, who was the person responsible for creating the Indian Constitution. In his final address to the Constitutional assembly, Ambedkar used the phrase social democracy to picture democracy in its full sense. He said:

"We must… not... be content with mere political democracy. 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. What does social democracy mean? It means a way of life which recognizes liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life. These principles of 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, equality cannot be divorced from liberty. Nor can liberty and equality be divorced from fraternity. Without fraternity, liberty would produce the supremacy of the few over the many. Equality without liberty would kill individual initiative. Without fraternity, liberty and equality could not become a natural course of things. It would require a constable to enforce them. We must begin by acknowledging the fact that there is a complete absence of two things in Indian Society. One of these is equality. On the social plane, we have in India a society based on the principle of graded inequality. We have a society in which there are some who have immense wealth as against many who live in abject poverty. On the 26th of 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. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of one man one vote and one vote one value. In our social and economic life, we shall, by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man one value. How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. 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 is Assembly has to laboriously built up." (Ambedkar, 1949)

It is important to keep in mind that Ambedkar conceives of social and economic life as being distinct from political life, but not completely separate from it. He is aware of the fact that a formal political structure that is comprised of democratic institutions and processes is unable to meaningfully influence the social and economic structure of the society. Only via significant alterations to existing social and economic systems will it be able to achieve social and economic parity in practise. In order to move forward in this direction, the first thing that needs to happen is that in addition to our current comprehension of political democracy, we need to be able to conceptualise the concepts of social and economic democracy as well. The current conception of democracy is dominated by the liberal discourse, which hides the social and economic aspects of democracy from view. This hegemonic notion of democracy is problematic. At this point in time, the term "democracy" is most commonly understood in a political or civic context, specifically in reference to democratic institutions and formal procedures. To comprehend democracy in its most comprehensive form, it is therefore absolutely necessary to acknowledge the democratic process's role in society and the economy. It is only when all aspects of democracy—political democracy, social democracy, and economic democracy—are fully realized at the same time that one can claim that a democracy has reached its full potential as a political system. For this reason, politics that work toward the realisation of social and economic democracy ought to be sought in order to enhance a democracy such as India, which can be described as a formal procedural democracy.

Representation and Redistribution:

It has been observed that certain types of politics, referred to as "politics of representation" and "politics of redistribution," work toward the goals of social democratization and economic democratization, respectively. In this context, it is important to note that the Agonistic theories of radical pluralistic democracies are compatible with both of these political orientations and can be used to conceptualize them. One of the primary concerns of agonistic philosophy has been the maintenance of pluralism (Wenman 2013). Pluralism is regarded as a commendable quality in communities that are characterized by a wide range of sociocultural identities, customs, and value systems. However, because of the way societies are structured

socially, certain majoritarian or dominating cultures and identities are able to find a place in the greater images of those countries, whilst the identities and cultures of the minority groups are either left out or marginalized. A fundamental requirement for social equality is that all of the identities that make up that society be represented in all elements and realms of that society in a manner that is either proportional or, more accurately, just.

In a social democracy, providing people of diverse sociocultural identities with equal access to opportunities should be the primary focus. If this is accepted as fact, then there is a pressing need for policies that promote equal representations of sociocultural groups in different parts of society, including law, the executive branch, business, the arts, and the media, amongst others. Therefore, the politics of representation is an essential component that must be present in order to successfully implement social democracy. In a similar vein, the fulfillment of economic democracy requires policies that involve the fair division of wealth and other economic resources. Therefore, when taken as a whole, these two different kinds of politics hold substantial relevance for the development of a republican democracy.

The second question that comes to mind in this context is that of the ideal relationship that should be established between these two types of politics, specifically that of representation and redistribution. In order to respond to this question, the first thing that needs to be determined is whether or not the two hegemonic ambitions of these two, namely the establishment of social and economic democracy, coincide. Since achieving equality is the end goal of both of these efforts, it is clear that they cannot compete with one another because of this shared objective. The best that can be said about their relationship is that they are antagonistic, in the sense that they are truly competing with one another. This is made abundantly evident when we look at politics from the perspective of the working class. The politics of redistribution have, throughout history, played a significant role in the mobilisation of the working class. However, the working class is not a monolithic community; rather, it comprises numerous subsets of sociocultural identities. These identities come together to form the working class. It's possible that certain people or groups of people find their socio-cultural identity to be more relatable than their class identity, and that it therefore takes precedence over it. In a situation like this, these individuals have a greater chance of being mobilised over issues that are related to their social identity. Therefore, it is possible for the two hegemonic projects of social representation and economic

redistribution to be agonistic to one another, which means that they might be adversarial to one another rather than hostile (Mouffe 2000). Nevertheless, bearing in mind that the overarching purpose of both of these efforts is to promote equality, it is possible for these two programmes to be complementary to one another if they form an antagonistic relationship with one another. The achievement of such an agonistic equilibrium between the projects of representation and redistribution has the potential to be of great assistance in the building of an agonistic alliance for the fulfilment of democratic content and the improvement of democracy.

In the previous chapter, I went into detail about the adverse effects that economic liberalisation and the rise of Hindu nationalism have had on Indian democracy in the form of an increase in the democratic deficit of the economic and social components of Indian democracy. This deficit has been measured in terms of the percentage of the population that participates in democratic processes. In the following chapter, I will propose two dominant political projects that are important to be performed in order to reduce the democratic deficit. These projects are the politics of representation and the politics of redistribution. In today's world, I believe that the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Bahujan Samaj Party best exemplify the politics of representation and redistribution, respectively (both being electorally most significant examples of these kinds of politics). In order to illustrate the basic contradiction that exists between these two hegemonic objectives, I will use the disagreement that exists between these two parties as an example. I propose that these two distinct political philosophies coexist in a way that is antagonistic to one another, as this would increase the democratic depth of India's democracy.

This view, that of necessarily shifting the focus from political democracy to social and economic democracy, finds resonance in an argument made by Neera Chandoke in the context of what she refers to as the Representation Deficit in Civil Society. This view is taken in this thesis (2013). She accepts the divide that exists between political democracy and social and economic democracy, and she blames the gap that exists between these two forms of democracy to what she refers to as the representation deficit (Chandoke 2013, p. 253). While shifting her attention to the political sphere from the social and economic spheres, she writes as follows:

The separation of political equality from social and economic inequality (...) carries noteworthy connotations. Consider that despite the successful institutionalization of political democracy in India, a majority of the people continue to suffer from unimaginable hardship, with the most vulnerable at tremendous risk in matters of both lives and livelihoods. Not only do a quarter of the world's poor live in India, the number of illiterates, school dropouts, people suffering from communicable diseases, and infant, child and maternal deaths amount to a staggering proportion of respective world totals. It is evident that India has not done too well when it comes to social and economic democracy, even if its gains in political democracy are impressive. (Chandoke, 2013, p. 255)

Her condemnation of political parties as representatives of the people as not being well-substantiated, despite the fact that Chandoke's analysis of the widening gap between equality in politics and that in social and economic spheres is correct. She defines the lack of representation as the insufficiency of political parties to adequately represent the people who belong to them in their respective constituencies. She suggests that civil society is a more effective medium for representing the will of the people. Nevertheless, she does not go into further detail regarding the ways in which the political parties failed to represent the people. I do not dispute the importance that civil societies play in materializing the politics of the people; but, I do think that the role that political parties play in representing the people is not something that can be undercut.

In the context of Indian democracy, political parties have traditionally served as the primary political actors. The Indian party system has developed throughout the course of time, and a major increase in the number of political parties has occurred as a result. For a significant amount of time, the Indian National Congress served as the most influential political party in India. The fragmentation of the party system and the rise of coalition politics throughout the course of the decade contributed to the collapse of the Congress Party's single-party dominance in the political landscape (Hasan 2010). The significance of what Hasan refers to as "the democratic rise among the formerly underprivileged and the effect of subaltern groups on the structure of election outcomes" is brought to light in this article by Hasan (p. 242, Ibid). The Election Commission of India is in charge of managing the registration of political parties, which are then placed into one of several categories, including national parties, multi-state parties, regional parties, and so on. Hasan is correct in pointing out that the 1980s saw the establishment of a number of new political groups. When it comes to Indian politics in this era, the Communist

Party of India (Marxist) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) are two parties that have played important roles. This research will investigate these two parties. In the state of Uttar Pradesh, where the influence of the Congress Party was beginning to wane, the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) surged to power and took over. The Brahmins, Dalits, and Muslims living in this state were the driving forces behind the formation of new political coalitions that had an ethnic flavor and were represented by caste and community-based parties. As Hasan notes:

> The BSP emphasized its distinct character as a Dalit-based party, and attempted to mobilize the underprivileged using caste as a tool to break the existing system, so as to distinguish itself from the Congress and the BJP and create an alternative space as a Dalit Party. (Hasan, p. 245)

Hasan contrasts the rise of BSP in UP with the trajectory of the Left Parties, CPI(M) being the most electorally significant of all the Left parties in this period. She remarks:

> The contrasting trajectory of the Left parties that have been elected to power in Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura stresses the centrality of broad-based mobilization in determining the salience of social cleavages on patterns of voting and party strategies. The most important of these is the CPI(M), which has run the state government in West Bengal for nearly three decades and has deep pockets of influence and support in Kerala and Tripura as well, where too it has regularly won elections. The Left parties were able to establish strong presence in these states by focusing on distributive policies of radical reforms, rather than the politicization of caste differences and subordination. (Rodrigues 2006: 199-252, in ibid)

IIt is quite evident that these two parties mobilise their constituents based on two distinct identities, namely the identity of class and the identity of ethnicity. In the following, I will demonstrate how these two identities have traditionally been at odds with one another in the context of Indian culture. I shall claim that this tension between these two identities is the primary source of conflict between the politics of redistribution and the politics of representation. I will explain why this is the case in the next sentence. But first, in order to understand the underlying conflict between these two political projects of redistribution and representation, it is indeed necessary to understand the politics of the categories of class and caste upon which the politics of these two parties is premised. This can be done by gaining a detailed understanding of the politics of the categories of class and caste.

According to John Harriss, there is a limited amount of substance to the idea that class politics in India is insignificant due to the fact that there are no clear class categories that represent the workers and the capital (Harriss 2010, p.139-151). He asserts that the phrase "class politics" cannot be understood in the restricted sense it is intended. He underlines the vital and strategic role that the middle classes play in Indian politics, and he draws attention to the part that the agrarian classes play in the politics of their respective communities (ibid). It is obvious that as a result of the transition in ideology of the Indian State from socialist to neo-liberal, the balance of class power has decisively shifted towards the upper middle classes, which include the business class and the property-owning class. This shift came about as a result of economic globalisation. Atul Kohli contends that this ideological shift on the part of the state has important repercussions for the political process of redistribution in India (Kohli, 2010, p. 499-509). He contends that as a result of India's increasing economic growth, some of it will inevitably 'trickle down' and aid the poor, but this will not be enough to keep up with the growing inequality that is a consequence of the same growth. Therefore, he makes the argument for deliberate redistribution as well as policies that are pro-poor and redistributive on the part of the state. Kohli highlights the narrative of the Kerala model as an example of significant success achieved via the implementation of efficient redistributive policies:

> Poverty in Kerala has been reduced sharply, and its human development indicators are far superior to that of the rest of India. And this was accompanied even though the economic growth rates in Kerala have been close to the all India average. Underlying these redistributive achievements are complex historical roots, including the political mobilization of lower castes and classes well before Independence. This broadened political base then facilitates the rise of a well-organized Communist party to power. A more pro-poor regime interacted with a more efficacious citizenry, Creating what Drèze and Sen (2002) rightly called a 'virtuous' cycle. (Kohli, 2010, p. 504)

Despite the fact that the tale of the triumph of redistributive politics in Kerala is singular, it primarily illustrates the potentials of redistributive policies advocated by Communist parties inside a democratic political system. In contrast to Communist parties in Western liberal democracies, communist parties in India are thriving despite the shift toward liberalism and market reforms because of the complementary nature of the redistributive politics and politically

democratic environment. This is largely due to the fact that these characteristics work together to create a politically democratic environment. K.C. Suri provides a crucial analysis on the development of communist parties in India (Suri, 2013, p. 230-235). He makes the observation that the communist parties in India have been able to maintain their strength despite the fact that communist parties in the majority of democracies around the world have either become less influential, been dissolved, or reformed themselves under some kind of social democratic label. He makes the observation that the CPI(M), in particular, has presided over the historically democratically elected communist government for the longest amount of time. Even while the party has seen tremendous success in Kerala, particularly in the fields of health and education, many critics believe that the party must make significant changes in order to remain relevant. In recent times, new contours have emerged in terms of social cleavages; however, the issues of landlessness among Dalits and tribals, the collapse of agriculture, and communal problems are issues which the party has not addressed; this is due to the fact that the party has not addressed these issues. The lack of the party to take a strong stance on the issue of oppression based on caste is one of the major issues that the party is concerned about. The CPI(M) was confronted with the difficulty of identity politics as a result of the rise of parties such as the BSP. Identity politics refers to the process of mobilising people based on ethnic identities such as the caste-based identity. The policies of the BSP are founded on caste, and one of their goals is to achieve fair representation in society for marginalized communities such as Dalits. The CPI(M) is incapable of differentiating between the identity politics of the BJP and those of the BSP. Whereas the BJP mobilises people on the basis of the homogenising and hegemonizing "Hindu" identity, the BSP mobilises people on an authentic Dalit identity, which is a social identity that is subject to caste-based oppression. Regarding the issue of identity politics, Prakash Karat articulated the stance of his party in an official paper that was issued by the CPI(M) and which read as follows:

> By the criteria of identity politics the working class will be deconstructed as male and female, dalit and other caste identities and also by linguistic-nationality and ethnic origins. This would mean virtually the negation of the concept of a working class, or other class categories such as peasants, agricultural workers etc. (Karat, 2011, p. 43)

The CPI(M) fails to appreciate the positive element of such an assertion, which is that it tends to universalize all of these interest groups into a homogenized class identity. This is

because the CPI(M) views expression of identity as divisive and sectarian. It makes the existence of social groups within the working class, such as caste groups, as well as the power relations between these social groups, invisible. Despite the fact that the CPI(M) recognises the legitimacy of identity organizations that are founded on marginal identities, the problematic nature of its position is that it insists on the unification of the working class by minimizing the disparities and conflicts that exist within the working class. The question of diverse identity groupings therefore presents a challenge to the idea of political redistribution that is being undertaken by the CPI(M).

On the other hand, the path that the BSP has taken and its ascent to power are both predicated on an essential distinction between the interest groups of the Dalits. The Dalits are an identity formed of the people of the Scheduled castes who, according to the oppressive caste system, were considered to be untouchables. When it was first established in 1984, the BSP had the overarching goal of bringing together members of backward castes, Dalits, and other minority groups as Muslims. The BSP has made it one of its primary goals to ensure that there is equitable representation of all social groups at all levels of government and administration. According to Suri's explanation, the BSP had the belief that a new social order might be established if the Dalits and Bahujans were able to seize power in the state. It made an effort to supplant the welfare strategy of Congress and advocated for tangible benefits for Dalits, minorities, and women, along with their role in political power (Suri, 2013, p.229). Pai places the establishment of BSP within the context of the development of the Dalit movement, which focuses on the elimination of social discrimination against Dalits and the betterment of socioeconomic conditions in conjunction with a larger share of political power (2009). She sees other Dalit groups, such as the Republican Party of India and the Dalit Panther movement, as having paved the way for the BSP, which she sees as an extended continuation of such movements.

According to Suri's observations, The BSP in its early years tried to be both a political party and a movement in order to represent the entire Bahujan Samaj. It was effective in dismantling the patron-client connection that existed between the upper castes and building new horizontal solidarities. By 1995, the BSP had established itself in a prominent role within the newly restructured political system (Suri, 2013, p.229). He goes on to cite Pai's argument that the BSP, since 1995, has entered a regressive phase of manipulative politics and opportunistic

alliances with upper caste parties, and that it has gradually become conservative, elitist, and election oriented, signaling the end of its social revolution. He says that this shows that the BSP has signaled the end of its social revolution. Since 1995, the BSP has entered a regressive phase of manipulative politics and (ibid). In contrast to this viewpoint is the one held by Jaffrelot (2007, ibid), who interprets this shift as the BSP's desire to broaden its social base by extending its influence to new groups. In order to explain the BSP's strategy of appealing to other populations outside of the Dalit constituency, A. K. Verma coined the term "reverse social osmosis" (ibid), which can be found in the previous sentence. In order to cultivate amicable relationships with the Brahmin community, the Brahmin jodo *sammelans* (Connect with the Brahmins-seminars), which were organized by the Brahmin community's bhaichara committees (brotherhood committees), were particularly successful (ibid). Jodhka (2010, page 163) identifies the founders of the BSP, Kanshiram and Mayawati, as political entrepreneurs who have emerged and mobilized the SC community on the idea of "Dalit identity," promising them development with dignity. Jodhka makes this observation in reference to the fact that the BSP was founded by Kanshiram and Mayawati.

In this context, Gopal Guru's observation with regard to caste identity and social democracy are worth stating. He notes:

> Historically, caste identity has been the axis of discrimination and subordination for certain groups. In order to address subordination and bring about justice the state has to 'recognize' caste. It does so by enacting policies that offer opportunities and compensatory benefits along caste lines. The fact that state uses these categories in turn reinforces the incentives in society to use them, and therefore 'solidifies' caste identity. But there are two further disjunctures. First, the benefits within any given state category (SC, ST, OBCs) are not evenly distributed- and so there is a demand of further sub-classification of state categories. Second, while there was a consensus in society that Dalits should be beneficiaries of state affirmative action, other groups also mobilize there numerical power in a democracy to seek the same benefits. So the narrative of subordination and discrimination gets broadened to include the OBCs and minorities. The aspirations of social groups are now determined by the logic of democracy and state power, rather than the logic of justice. (Guru, 2010, p.366)

The realization of social fairness does not necessarily entail that Guru's account of the increasing propensity among social groupings to vouch for benefits from the state, purely on the basis of their numerical power, is correct. However, the BSP's politics of representation supports

equitable representation for interest groups who are on the margins of the political system. As a result, it offers a politics that contributes to the expansion of social democracy.

Both the redistribution and representation political projects have a tendency to build their own hegemonic projects at the expense of other projects, which is a sign that there is competition between the two political projects. While the politics of redistribution have a tendency to bring together members of the working class, the politics of representation have a tendency to bring to light the tensions that exist between different social groups that are part of the working class. While advocates of a politics of redistribution emphasize the vertical division of society and are committed to reducing this division, advocates of politics of redistribution hold that it is not easily possible to erase the division and, as a result, argue for making the divisions horizontal. This is in contrast to advocates of redistribution, who highlight the vertical division of society and are committed to reduce this division. It would appear that there is no way to resolve the tension that exists between these two distinct political approaches. If what you say is true, then it is necessary to answer the question of what kind of an arrangement should be made between both of these projects. Considering that both of these projects are necessary projects for democracy, it is impossible for one of them to be privileged at the expense of the other. In my opinion, the arrangement that should probably be made between these two enterprises is one in which they act as antagonists to one another. An agonistic co-existence of these two projects seems to be a possibility if these two parties consider the existence of the opposing party as legitimate and complementary to their own existence, consider the opposing party as an adversary but not an enemy, and keep open the window of pragmatic negotiation with the adversary. The respective aims of social democracy and economic democracy are able to be pursued with such an agonistic arrangement, and the overall democratic content of the democracy has the potential to be increased as a result. Over the course of time, these two political parties have come together to form political coalitions, which they have used to their advantage in their efforts to restrict right-wing politics, which are detrimental to the democratic value of equality. Using previous temporary and restricted alliances between these two political parties as an example, I propose that it would be beneficial for the realization of social and economic democracy as well as the completion of an aggregate substantial democracy for these two political projects to form a larger agonistic alliance in which they acknowledge the adversarial complementarity between them.

This would allow for the formation of an alliance that would be beneficial for the completion of an aggregate substantial democracy.

The democratic uprising in India is an ongoing process that is not yet complete. The protagonists and antagonists will agree that nothing will change. Nevertheless, it is imperative that the concepts of social democracy and economic democracy be brought to the forefront of the public's understanding of democracy. This would make it possible for us to have a better understanding of how the current language of Indian democracy diverges from the values of material equality and social justice. The pursuit of these values is necessary for the purpose of politics, regardless of the question of whether or not these ideals can actually be attained. It gives us the view that a continual necessity of battle and agonism for the realization of such objectives is the very condition for the existence of human kind and makes their political existence more robust. In other words, it is a necessary requirement for human existence. My belief is that what Alexis de Tocqueville, a pioneering thinker of democracy, once said about the United States of America, the world's oldest democracy that is still in existence, is true for all democracies at all times and in all places. He said:

> A great democratic revolution is taking place among us. Everyone sees it, but not everyone judges it in the same way. There are those who regard it to be an accident, still hope to arrest it, while others deem it irresistible because in their view it is the oldest, most continuous, most permanent fact known to history. (De Tocqueville, 2003)

In light of this, I would like to call attention to the ever-present chance that a democratic endeavor will ever be finished. A democracy can only have the potential to become a complete democracy; yet, the question of whether or not it can truly realize its ideal state remains open to debate. Nevertheless, democratic polities have shown their zeal throughout history to realize the desired state of democracy. This zeal has been shown by democratic polities. This thesis emphasizes that the current form of democracy in countries like India, which drastically undermines the principles of social and economic equality, is not the desired form of democracy because it is the kind of democracy that is being practiced in such nations. As a result, it has been suggested that the emphasis on social and economic democracy be brought into the public conversation by utilizing a politics of representation and a politics of redistribution that operate in conjunction with one another. A substantial democracy, which is an aggregation of political

democracy, social democracy, and economic democracy, can be realized if these political systems are able to substantially transform them into public policy and public culture. This is the definition of substantial democracy. Understanding the interconnections between democratic and republican concepts and principles requires not only an understanding of their respective ideologies, but also an appreciation of how they have been historically carried out in practice. In the following chapter, which focuses on Ambedkar's jurisprudence and constitutional values, I will seek to emphasize the case of post-Ambedkar representatives of Dalits to navigate through these very elusive ideas of agonism, democracy, and republicanism.

Chapter IV: Legal-Parliamentary perspectives and the Public discourse

Ambedkar was an exceptional jurist, and none of his contemporaries can compare to him in that regard. He had cultivated an expertise in a variety of areas of law, with a specific interest in constitutional law; as a result, he would spend a number of hours each day studying the constitutions of a variety of nations all over the world. He had a particular interest in constitutional law (Kataria 2017). During the 19th century, there was a significant increase in the number of people pursuing legal education; concurrently, the gap between legal academia and legal practise widened. Due to the fact that the legal profession was seen to be associated with prestige and influence, upper caste families began investing in their children's legal education toward the latter half of the 19th century. All of the upper caste leaders who were at the forefront of the Indian nationalist movement, including Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Vallabh Bhai Patel, Madan Mohan Malaviya, and Dr. Rajendra Prasad, were trained in law, and some of them are also well known as practitioners of law After completing his postgraduate studies at Columbia University in economics and sociology as well as his PhD studies in economics at Columbia University, Ambedkar enrolled in Gray's Inn for Law in October 1916. This was during the height of the nationalist movement. Ambedkar received his license to practice law on June 28th, 1922, making him one of the most highly qualified Indians of his day. He also established himself as a "promethean" scholar, to use Omvedt's words. After being approved for membership in the Bombay Bar Council in 1923, he immediately began his legal career in the district courts of Thane, Nagpur, and Aurangabad. At a time when parties to legal disputes preferred British lawyers, Ambedkar nourished the aspiration of becoming a judge of the Bombay High Court. One of Ambedkar's earliest cases was his representation of Dinkarrao Jawalkar, who was accused for his book *Deshanche Dushman* (Enemies of the Country). This book was written as a rebuttal to the false information about Jotirao Phule that had been disseminated by Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Vishnu shastri Chipluknar. The fact that Jawalkar refers to Tilak and Chiplunkar as Bramhanwadi and enemies of the country in his book is what prompted those individuals' followers to file a lawsuit against Jawalkar. The significance of Ambedkar's defense of Jawalkar in the larger framework of the anticaste movement cannot be overstated. Phule, who was a leader in the non-Brahmin movement in Maharashtra and was

challenged by Brahmins in Pune such as Tilak and Chiplunkar, was considered a pioneer in the movement. The competition that existed between them and Phule is illustrative of the struggle that existed between Brahmanism and Anticasteism. Despite the fact that Ambedkar defended Jawalkar's views, it was clear that he believed Brahminism to be a threat to the nation and its people, particularly the downtrodden population of the nation. Ambedkar's defense of the book in 1926 is an example of his advocacy for free speech as well as the right to express oneself and reasonably criticise others' ideas. Since Tilak's and Chiplunkar's defamation of Phule was founded on irrational arguments, the defense of the book also needs to be interpreted as an exercise in propagating rationality and rational argumentation.

Another important contributing underscoring Ambedkar as a jurist comes from the legal Historian Rohit De (2018). In his chapter in Yengde's edited Volume *Radical in Ambedkar*, De argues that Ambedakr practiced lawyering as a means of politics and public service. According to De, Ambedkar who was also on the editorial committee of *Bombay Law Journal* was invited to be a judge in the Bombay High Court twice, but chose public service as his ultimate vocation. Describing Ambedkar as a one of his contemporary lawyer-politicians mentioned above, De highlights his self-conscious decision to train himself as a lawyer as against Gandhi and Jinnaj who came from trading communities and took up lawyering as a skill needed to run their respective businesses. Apart from passing on the offer to become a Judge of the Bombay High Court, Ambedkar also declined the offer made by the Nizam of Hyderabad to become the Chief Justice of Hyderabad State. While even as a lawyer, Ambedkar was discriminated against on the basis of his caste, he mainly fought cases for working class individuals as also for worker's unions becoming the go-to lawyers of trade union leaders of all parties. Ambedkar also famously defended the British communist, Philip Spratt in his sedition case where he drew his arguments from the precedents set in the famous sedition cases of Annie Besant and Bal Gangadhar Tilak. He similarly defended the Indian Communist B.T. Randive in his sedition case in the Bombay High Court. De argues that Ambedkar consciously chose to work outside the conventional framework of colonial law. He also argues that delineating fine distinctions in law and jurisprudence were Ambedkar's primary strategy in legal practice and argumentation. A major part of Ambedkar's legal practice involved winning rights of the untouchable to access civic amenities such as public tanks and to enter Hindu temples. During the five years from 1927 to 1932, Ambedkar was spearheading the Chavdar Tank movement and also other temple entry

movements such as Kalaram temple entry movement in Nashik and Bhuleshwar and Parvati temple entry movements in Pune. While in the Chavdar tank movement, the major method of the movement was through litigation coupled by legal agitation, in the rest of the movements the method of agitation took precedence over litigation methods. This gradual shift from the legal means to political means can be attributed to the efficiency of the latter movements. While the Chavdar tank movement took ten years for the legal access to be granted by the court, the other temple entry movements were won in a matter of three years. In 1932 itself five such temple entry movements were won by Ambedkar in the state of Bombay. This resulted in a remarkable shift in the strategy of moving away from litigation as during litigations, once the matter is presented before a court of law and becomes *sub judice*, the right to resort to agitational methods is compromised. Street agitations were more effective in terms of the time duration spent in winning the rights of untouchables to enter the Hindu temples and shrines.

De also remarkably enlists the Gore case wherein the argument of Chitpavan Brahmans being a distinct community from the Palshe Brahmans was made in the court by Ambedkar. This distinction was made on the basis of what Ambedkar called 'social practice'. He argued that social practice ought to be taken as a defining criteria of a community and the social practice of the Chitpavan Brahmans was different from that of the Palshe Brahmans. While it may appear as ironic to some that Ambedkar indulged in establishing Chitpavan Brahmins as a distinct community, it is important to note that Ambedkar's emphasis was on establishing the rationale that a community ought to be identified by its social practice as against the religious doctrines as was argued by his opponents in the court of law. By establishing social practice as a defining feature of law, Ambedkar makes the case for his academic arguments of the salience of caste in Indian society as well as of separateness of Untouchables from the Hindu fold as their social practice was entirely different from that of the caste Hindus. Apart from these major cases, there were many interesting other cases that have been documented. Be it the famous obscenity case against R.D. Karve's journal, be it the case of possession of alcohol by a Catholic man violating prohibition of alcohol laws, or be it his argument about independent agency of a sex worker, Ambedkar has argued in a republican spirit defending equal individual rights of all citizens of the Indian state. Ambedkar was also known for offering free legal advice to the poor and the needy that made him popular as a 'poor man's barrister'. While he refused to work as a judge on a couple of occasions, he nonetheless went on to become the Chairman of the Drafting Committee

of the Indian Constitution as well as the first Law Minister of India. His legal practice demonstrates his acumen as a lawyer empathetic to the cause of the poor and the downtrodden, his Constitutional genius is revealed in the Constitution Assembly Debates as well as in the Parliamentary Debates. Key insights and his legal perspectives on establishing India as a republican democracy. I argue that while India became a democratic-republic on 26th Jan 1950, it has an uphill task ahead of it to become a republican-democracy in a true sense.

Ambedkarism emerges as a distinct manifestation of constitutional republicanism in the South Asian context. Republicanism manifests as the central theme in Ambedkar's ideological scheme. Ambedkar's inclination towards republicanism remains independent of his criticism of communism and his later reinvention of Buddhism. While many of his policy recommendations such as nationalization of major sectors of production, collectivization of agriculture etc. resonate socialist ethos; Ambedkar distinctly articulates his affiliation with the republican values endorsing universal centrality of the individual. This 'individual' in Ambedkar is by no means divorced from their context or class. This 'individual' in Ambedkar is very much a representative of their class as much an embodiment of it. Equality of all individuals therefore in Ambedkar's thought necessarily means equality of all classes, economic, political or social. As he considers the individuals to be a means unto themselves, this moral position of his develops further in his axiomatic declaration of equality as a virtue in itself. Republicanism then becomes an instrument to ensure equality, political equality in particular.

One has to redefine republicanism as an extension of its central tenet which is the prevention of any kind of monopolization, hegemonization or domination by a class or clique of the political power in that particular political system so as to maintain popular sovereignty in its true essence. Recycling of political power or the political executive, therefore, becomes a key feature of republicanism. Popular sovereignty can be maintained only if all sections of the populace or the citizenry have an equal opportunity to partake in political decision making and exercise political power. Since only a limited number of citizens can assume office of political executive in the state, rotation of the political power that be, by recycling of the political executive presents a certain way to ensure representation of all sections of the society in the political executive. This recycling becomes all the more important in the case of modern states which are scaled up versions of ancient republic states. Since the size of the citizenry has

expanded remarkably in the modern times, for the republic to truly manifest the norm of popular sovereignty, both the size of the political executive and the mechanisms for ensuring the recycling of the political executive has to be derived from the size and context of the citizenry. The size of the political executive, the bureaucracy, the judiciary, in totality the size of the state in terms of its personnel ought to be proportionate to and substantively reflect the size of the citizenry. The mechanism for recycling the political executive such as elections, selections and other ways of appointing the personnel of the state have to be suited to not only the size of the citizenry in raw numbers but also cognizant and remedial of the social context of that state. For instance if the society is deeply divided and historically hierarchical, the institutions and mechanisms of the state ought to be designed in a way that they remedy the inequalities and prejudices inherent in that society in electing and selecting its public personnel. In a context where the amount of people in the constituency (territorial or non-territorial) is large and unequal in terms of social and economic status, the role of the political representative becomes all the more crucial and consequential. It therefore is imperative to analyze the tenets and features of representation not only in Ambedkar's thought, but also in the historical manifestation of his ideology by his ideological legatees, by Scheduled Caste representatives and legislators as well as by understanding from the emergent public discourses at the grassroots of the Ambedkarite public. Ambedkar's own speeches in the Constituent Assembly along with parliamentary submissions of a select post-Ambedkar representatives from the SC communities as well as interviews with Ambedkarite masses would constitute the source of anti-caste discourse Ambedkarite on representation. It is argued that despite the institutional mechanism of representation through reserved quotas, the SCs or Dalits have remained as a population that cannot significantly alter the outcome of the elections in their favor. To present an analogy:

"…in ancient Rome the class struggle took place only within a privileged minority, between the free rich and the free poor, while the great productive mass of the population, the slaves, was merely the passive pedestal for these combatants."   (Karl Marx, 1869 [2020])

What Marx wrote about ancient Rome fairly applies to Indian society albeit in a more complex manner. For in Indian society, the conflicts between the unequally graded caste Hindus-between the Brahmins and the Kshatiryas and later between them with the Muslims and much later with the European colonizers has discounted, for centuries, the plight of the outcastes or the

untouchables. Thus, for a historically oppressed minority like Untouchables, it was a historic moment when the process of their recognition began, first as a citizen and then as a formally equal citizen by the colonial and postcolonial India state. As the representatives of these communities began to represent themselves in legislative bodies and the Indian Parliament. The legal-parliamentary discourse of the SCs can be traced back to Dr Ambedkar's own parliamentary submissions starting from his involvement in the Bombay Legislative Council and then his later work in the Constituent Assembly. Thus to begin a proper discussion of the legal-parliamentary discourse of the SCs, it is imperative to understand Dr Ambedkar's articulations in the constituent assembly, particularly on the issues of republicanism, rights, constitutionalism and so forth.

In December 1946, as the Constitution Assembly was discussing the resolution on aims and objectives of the constitution, Ambedkar contemplated and responded to the controversy on the usage of the term 'republic''.

Ambedkar submits:

"The controversy seems to be centered on the use of that word 'Republic'. It is centered on the sentence occurring in paragraph 4 "the sovereignty is derived from the people". Therefore it arises from the point made by my friend Dr. Jayakar yesterday that in the absence of the Muslim League it would not be proper for this Assembly to proceed to deal with this Resolution. Now, Sir, I have got not the slightest doubt in my mind as to the future evolution and the ultimate shape of the social, political and economic structure of this great country. I know to-day we are divided politically, socially and economically; We are a group of warring camps and I may even go to the extent of confessing that I am probably one of the leaders of such a camp. But, Sir, with all this, I am quite convinced that given time and circumstances nothing in the world will prevent this country from becoming one. (Applause): With all our castes and creeds, I have not the slightest hesitation that we shall in some form be a united people. (Cheers). "

Debates, C. A. (1948). *Part I* New Delhi.

The above quoted submission highlights both an optimistic vision as well as a wise note of caution with regards to the newly birthing Indian republic. As the Muslim League was absent from the debates on aims and objectives, Ambedkar's recalling of the principle of sovereignty of the people highlights the precondition for republic- that is the presence of representatives of various interest groups in the legislative bodies and parliaments who can represent their interest

groups. The above submission also carries a notion of evolution and progress towards harmony and egalitarianism. It nonetheless acknowledges the contemporary antagonism between factions and interest groups. Similarly, in the subsequent debates of the constituent assembly, Ambedkar clearly articulated the principle of minority rights in the Indian context. Discussing on Clause 18, he affirms:

> "Rights of minorities should be absolute rights. They should not be subject to any consideration as to what another party may like to do to minorities within its jurisdiction. If we find that certain minorities in which we are interested and which are within the jurisdiction of another State have not got the same rights which we have given to minorities in our territory, it would be open for the State to take up the matter in a diplomatic manner and see that the wrongs are rectified. But no matter what others do, I think we ought to do what is right in our own judgment and personally I think that the rights which are indicated in clause 18 are rights which every minority, irrespective of any other consideration is entitled to claim. The first right that we have given is the right to use their language, their script and their culture. We have stated that "there shall be no discrimination on the grounds of religion, language, etc." in the matter of admission into State educational institutions. We have said that "no minority shall be precluded from establishing any educational institution which such minority may wish to establish". It is also stated there that whenever a State decides to provide aid to schools or other educational institutions maintained by the minority, they shall not discriminate in the matter of giving grant on the basis of religion, community or language."

Debates, C. A. (1947). *Part III* New Delhi.

Enshrining cultural and education rights for the minorities in the Constitution was not to relegate the rights of minorities to these spheres but to imply the principle of autonomy of the minorities in these spheres as much as in the political sphere. Here, Ambdekar is affirming uncompromised belief in the separate and exclusive governing practices of various minority groups profoundly anticipating the dangers of majoritarian homogenization in the guise of integration. Thus preserving the reasonable and egalitarian practices and culture within minority communities is of utmost importance in Ambedkar's schema of minority rights. Contemporary agonist theorists may be served well by drawing from Ambedkar's emphasis on separate and autonomous rights for minorities to buttress their arguments on the preservation and reinforcement of identity politics in the context of minority groups. While remaining suspicious of empty categories of nationalism under a majoritarian dispensation, Ambedkar was also well cognizant of the need for the larger citizenry including various minority factions to imbibe their faith in some instrument envisioning a larger republican state. He thus created a discourse of

invoking the sovereignty of the Constitution. It is important to recount that after seven decades of the republic, various minority factions in India continue to invoke the values of the constitution and so with increasing rigor for their constitutional rights. In the constituent assembly, Ambedkar argued for the sovereignty of Constitution by invoking Greek historian Grote's idea of 'constitutional morality':

"Grote. the historian of Greece, has said that:

"The diffusion of constitutional morality, not merely among the majority of any community but throughout the whole, is the indispensable condition of a government at once free and peaceable; since even any powerful and obstinate minority may render the working of a free institution impracticable, without being strong enough to conquer ascendency for themselves."

By constitutional morality Grote meant "a paramount reverence for the forms of the Constitution, enforcing obedience to authority acting under and within these forms yet combined with the habit of open speech, of action subject only to definite legal control, and unrestrained censure of those very authorities as to all their public acts combined too with a perfect confidence in the bosom of every citizen amidst the bitterness of party contest that the forms of the Constitution will not be less sacred in the eyes of his opponents than in his own." *(Hear, hear.)"*

Ambedkar's reverence towards the constitutional values has to be distinguished from other forms of reverence or hero-worshiping that he was severely critical of. It has to be viewed in the context of the directive principle of the constitution that directs the state and the citizens to inculcate a scientific outlook among them. Reverence of constitutional morality emerges as a rational act of the citizen as against hero-worship of authority or ideologue. Ambedkar further elaborates:

While everybody recognizes the necessity of the diffusion of Constitutional morality for the peaceful working of a democratic Constitution, there are two things interconnected with it which are not, unfortunately, generally recognized. One is that the form of administration has a close connection with the form of the Constitution. The form of the administration must be appropriate to and in the same sense as the form of the Constitution. The other is that it is perfectly possible to pervert the Constitution, without changing its form by merely changing the form of the administration and to make it inconsistent and opposed to the spirit of the Constitution. It follows that it is only where people are saturated with Constitutional morality such as the one described by Grote the historian that one can take the risk of omitting from the Constitution details of administration and leaving it for the Legislature to prescribe them. The question is, can we presume such a diffusion of Constitutional morality? Constitutional morality is not a natural sentiment. It has to be cultivated. We must realize

that our people have yet to learn it. Democracy in India is only a top-dressing on an Indian soil, which is essentially undemocratic.

Debates, C. A. (1948). *Part VII* New Delhi.

Thus, Ambedkar argues for nurturing of a republican culture among the Indian citizens. After seven decades of the Indian republic, as I will further show through my field surveys, the democratic values enshrined in the Indian constitution have percolated to the grassroots and the common masses. However the republican values have still not been disseminated to the larger public. The Indian republic continues to be a top-dressing in the Indian context. One way to strengthen the values of the republic would be to ensure a substantive representation of the oppressed minorities in all spheres of the social and political life of the nation, but especially in the legislative bodies and the Parliament. In this sense, the proportion of the representatives representing minority groups also becomes especially significant. In the context of the Scheduled Castes, Ambedkar argued that the State should make provisions proactively to eliminate the deficiencies in effecting a proper representation of the Scheduled Castes:

"The other point of some substance was the one raised by my Friend Mr. Muniswamy Pillay with regard to the representation of the Scheduled Castes in the Provisional Parliament. The position is this. There are at present 310 Members of this Assembly, and the Provisional Parliament will also continue to consist of 310 Members. On the basis of population which is the principle adopted for the representation of the Scheduled Castes in the future Parliament, on a purely population basis, they should get 45 seats out of this 310. They have, as a matter of fact, today only 28 seats. The article makes a definite provision that there shall be no diminution in the 28 seats they have now. But with regard to making good the difference between the 45 to which they are entitled on the basis of population and the 28 which they have got, I think we have left enough power in the hands of the President to adapt and modify the rules so as to make good the deficiency, as far as it would be practicable to do so under the provisions of new article 312F."

Debates, C. A. (1949). *Part X* New Delhi.

Effective political representation thus comes out as a key feature in Ambedkar's democratic and republican vision. It is crucial here to note that Ambedkar clarifies that the source of his understanding of democratic and republican values comes not from the Western tradition so much as from the ancient Buddhist traditions of the Sanghas. As Ambedkar's

primary ideological influencer Gautam Buddha's family of birth was a part of the republic of the Shakya, Ambedkar believes that the democratic and republican practices of his time were reformed by the Buddha for the constitution of his Sanghas. He elaborates:

"It is not that India did not know what is Democracy. There was a time when India was studded with republics, and even where there were monarchies, they were either elected or limited. They were never absolute. It is not that India did not know Parliaments or Parliamentary Procedure. A study of the Buddhist Bhikshu Sanghas discloses that not only there were Parliaments-for the Sanghas were nothing but Parliaments – but the Sanghas knew and observed all the rules of Parliamentary Procedure known to modern times. They had rules regarding seating arrangements, rules regarding Motions, Resolutions, Quorum, Whip, Counting of Votes, Voting by Ballot, Censure Motion, Regularization, Res Judicata, etc. Although these rules of Parliamentary Procedure were applied by the Buddha to the meetings of the Sanghas, he must have borrowed them from the rules of the Political Assemblies functioning in the country in his time."

Debates, C. A. (1949). *Part XI* New Delhi.

Ambedkarite thus attempts to disclose the underlying republican practices within the Buddhist traditions in India. He also sets a robust discourse on the ideas of political representation, minority rights and need to inculcate a social and economic democracy. The post-Ambedkar leadership has both succeeded and failed in strengthening these discourses set in motion by Ambedkar. It has succeeded to the extent of politicizing the subsequent generations of SCs and to a very small extent the STs and some OBCs but it has failed to create a pan-India discourse of Ambedkarism. It is crucial at this juncture to assess a select discourses and debates that have been flagged by post-Ambedkar Ambedkarite parliamentarians representing the Scheduled Castes. After Ambedkar's demise in 1956, his colleagues reconstituted the Scheduled Caste Federation as the Republican Party of India. The SCF under the leadership of BC Kamble and Dadasaheb Gaikwad performed decently in the two subsequent elections after Ambedkar's death but declined steadily thereafter. After a negligible presence in the Indian Parliament for nearly two decades, the RPI won 4 seats in the year 1999. Meanswhile, Kanshiram an Ambedkarite organizer from Punjab who worked with and got disillusioned by the RPI in Maharashtra steered the Bahujan Samaj Party to a remarkable electoral performance throughout the 1990s. Examining the two instances of Parliamentary representation of Scheduled Castes MPs in the 1950s and 4-5 decades later when the Ambedkarite politics was reinvented by Kanshiram through his refashioning of the Bahujan category, we get a fair glimpse into the

legal-parliamentary Ambedkarite discourse. Following is an example of SCF leader BC Kamble's submission on the issue of extending the rights given to SC "Hindus" as they convert Buddhism. Kamble makes a compelling argument reinforcing the value of popular sovereignty by considering the down-trodden masses as the end of rights. Making his remarks on the address by the President on May 16th, 1957, Kamble states:

"Now there are two points with regard to the safeguarding of the interests of these people. The first is with regard to the facilities which will be required to be given to them as Buddhists, as Scheduled Caste Buddhists, or Buddhist Scheduled Castes, purely as those who are converted to Buddhism. In the Constitution there is a provision made that the interests of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes shall be taken into consideration and accordingly certain facilities are given. An argument will be advanced. The moment they cease to be Scheduled Castes they will not be entitled for any facilities. This will be a wrong argument. I have come across an enactment which has been made by this hon. House in 1956 where a certain kind of amendment was made. I do not know whether the intention of the amendment was to facilitate the withdrawal of concessions which were enjoyed by these people or it is to make the meaning clear. I submit that the concessions which were given by the Constituent Assembly to the Scheduled Castes were given as a people. That is to say, the principle adopted was the concessions were for the people, not the people were for the concessions. We have accepted the principle of democracy which says Government for the people, by the people and of the people; that is to say, that the people are not for the Government, the Government is for the people. In the same way the concessions are for the people; the people are not for the concessions. Therefore, it comes to this , wherever these people go, the concessions must follow."

As the SCF leadership steadily declined, the initial discourse created by Ambedkar and his colleagues was virtually lost from the parliamentary debates and stayed out of the public sphere for a very long time. Although grassroots movements such as Dalit Panthers movements during the 70s tried to re-envision a radical and universal Ambedkarite politics, the parliamentary discourse became more diluted. G Narayana argues that the SC leadership during the late sixties and early seventies was accommodated into the political elite class by the upper class political elite. This becoming elite of the SC leadership in the Parliament, led to a virtual muffling of the Ambedkarite voice in the Parliament. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, the rise of the BSP during the nineties provided a newfound voice to the Ambedkarite discourse. This newfound voice was manifested by Kumari Mayawati as BSP's earliest MP and emerging leader. During her speech on the 6th of April 1990 in the Parliament, Mayawati invokes Ambedkar for stripping off the divine right of the royalty and the feudal lords and granting the same to the down-trodden masses. Thus reinforcing the republican idea of renewing

the political executive in the republic, she further argues for immediate and relevant electoral reforms and proper implementation of those reforms. She speaks:

"Sir, after the country became independent and after the new Constitution was framed, the framer of the Constitution Baba Saheb Ambedkar had said that the king/queen of this country used to by birth but after country's independence and after enforcement of new Constitution the king/queen of this country will not be by birth. They will be elected by people by adult franchise. I would like to ask you as to whether the dreams of our great leaders have been realized by the past or present government sincerely during the elections."

"…during the Congress regime government machinery was misused, but now under the National Front Government regime feudal powers have raised their heads because V.P. Singh is a son of a landlord. He belongs to an old royal family and during the elections held in 8 states the feudal lords took help of anti-social and other elements in the name of Shri V. P. Singh did not allow the oppressed persons to cast their votes. Mr. Chairman, we say that the Election Commission holds free and fair elections in the country, but in my view it does not hold free and fair elections. It works under the pressure of the Government. If we want there to be free and fair elections in the country, we will have to make the Election Commission an independent body and it should be free from any government pressure." "Money power and muscle power are not used against the capitalists, rich persons and feudal lords. These powers are used against oppressed persons, scheduled castes/ tribes and linguistic minority communities including Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, Pares, Buddhists whose total population is 85% in the country. In order to check the use of money power and muscle power during elections in the country, polling booths should be set up in those areas where people belonging to scheduled caste/scheduled tribe and other weaker sections of society live. I have seen that throughout the country polling booths are set up in areas where capitalists, landlords and elitists live."

"In order to give political reservation to scheduled castes/tribes Baba Saheb Dr. Ambedkar had fixed the criterion for the constituency. where oppressed persons, scheduled caste and scheduled tribe people live in large numbers, should be made reserved seats because in this way they can get due representation in Parliament and Vidhan Sabhas. If such constituencies are rotated after every 2-3 years, it will not be beneficial for these people. Keeping in view the criterion fixed by Baba Ambedkar, the reserved seat which is backward and where scheduled castes/tribes are in majority, should not be converted into a general seat."

Mayawati, 16th May 1990
Parliament Digital Library: Text of Lok Sabha debates.

A very important case in point with regards to the legal-parliamentary discourse of Ambedkarite politics is demonstrated in the debate regarding the Eighty-Fourth Amendment of the Constitution in 1999. Article 334 was amended to increase the tenure of political representation of the SC and ST which has now arguably become a convenient ritual for the

political elite in India who represent the class interests of the upper and feudal castes. As the discussion was inaugurated by the then Law Minister, Mr Ram Jethmalani, he generously, and also poetically, praised Dr. Ambedkar's vision. Jethmalani urges the upper sections of Indian society to prioritize their commitments towards the downtrodden. To quote Jethmalani:

"The Constitution makers did envisage the indignities and the cruelties that had been perpetrated upon one section of society by another section. The Constitution did decide very consciously that special steps would have to be taken to create a level playing field, that we would have to neutralize the damage and the disability that has been caused by centuries of persecution. But the pain arises out of the fact that the Constitution makers expected a speedy change in the life standards and the method in which society deals with these somewhat downtrodden sections of society within fifteen years. But the pleasure arises out of the fact that at least our commitment to the goals which Dr. Ambedkar and that galaxy set before us has not been been diluted and every section of this House is agreed that special measures have to be kept in tact and not only kept in tact but must be strengthened much more than they have hitherto been strengthened because we must now make a solemn resolve that we will achieve within the next ten years what we have failed to achieve during the last fifty years. This may sound a little utopian. This may sound a little too optimistic. But unless we put our shoulders to the wheel altogether, we utilize all our material, moral and spiritual resources in this great cause, I think my future successor Law Minister will have again to appear before this House again and say that we have failed to achieve the objects and we should extend it for another ten or fifteen years."

Parliament Digital Library: Text of Lok Sabha debates.

The discussion thus ensued in the parliament presents a mixed and diverse response from the Scheduled Castes representatives in the Parliament. Notably, Kumari Mayawati, Ramdas Athawle, Ramvilas Paswan and Prakash Ambedkar, all notable Ambedkarite leaders representing different ideological and strategic standpoints, manifest their differences in the debate. Kumari Mayawati, who at that time was representing the Akbarpur constituency in UP made a very robust and radical speech for fundamental reforms in the scheme of political representation:

"Honorable Chairman, today the Law Minister has introduced the Eighty-Fourth Constitutional Amendment Bill to further amend the Indian Constitution.

I stand by it. Many things have been said about this Bill before me. It is said about reservation that there should be a time limit and by setting a time limit the reservation should be ended soon. Our parliamentarians who have this type of thinking should understand why reservation was needed in this country. The need for reservation

arose because social inequality has existed in this country for a long time and even today, flaws are seen in every aspect of life. To remove that inequality, our great men have struggled a lot from time to time. Mahatma Jotirao Phule, Chhatrapat Shahuji Maharaj, Param Pujya Babasaheb Dr.Ambedkar ji, Periyar ji and other great men and gurus have passed away from this country from time to time.

They struggled to remove social inequality, due to their struggle only a little bit in the form of reservation for scheduled caste and scheduled tribe people. Basically it is their gift. Most Reverend Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar took this matter seriously while framing the Indian Constitution and the constitution making committee kept this non-equivalent thing in front of him."

Kumari Mayawati here affirms Ambedkarites ideas of social and economic democracy. She holds both the Congress and non-Congress governments accountable for the plight of SCs and STs. She states:

"I would like to tell this House through you that as long as there is no social, economic and educational inequality in this country till then the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes living in this country, the downtrodden people of this society will continue to feel its need. This reservation is needed because there is an unequal social system here. These people are further promoted in every aspect of life in the Indian Constitution reservation has been arranged for giving. We have to think seriously that ever since the provision for their reservation has been made in the constitution, what has happened since then? Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe people are getting reservation in every aspect of life, I think it is not getting it. Every ten years when it comes to extending the reservation period, I know that leaders of every party support this bill because of their political interests. Whenever ten years are completed and the amendment bill comes, the leaders of every party keep a stone on their heart to get the votes of SC and ST people who definitely support it. Many people do not want from their heart that this reservation should continue and its continuance should be maintained. That's why I said this because if the people of the party want that the benefit of reservation should be given to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, then I think that if their intentions are clear then they should get full benefit of reservation.

Mr. Chairman, after independence, Congress governments have been formed at the center and in the states. For some time there were non-Congress governments and for some time even joint governments. Whether it has been in the center or in the state, no party has fulfilled the reservation quota for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. This is the reason when the Indian constitution was being made, it was not their intention that reservation should continue. SCs and STs The people have been left behind in every aspect of life and due to social equality, reservation should be given to such people. which party the government If it is possible, fulfill this quota with a clear intention so that people can stand at their places as soon as possible. This was the intention of the makers of the Indian constitution. initially no If you had worked within that period after the formation of the constitution, then the task of running the government would have been clear, and especially within the first ten years. The quota of reservation is fulfilled by running a campaign and those officers or people of the department who do not fulfill the quota of reservation, strict action is taken against them.

Had the previous governments enacted some laws to take action, I think the reservation quota would have been fulfilled in the first ten years itself. I have to say with sadness When he talks about reservation for Scheduled

Castes and Scheduled Tribes, many people get hurt, upper castes get hurt. Why are they getting this benefit? But we Scheduled Tribe people do not want us to get this bailout, provided that you people change your mindset Take it If the people of scheduled castes and tribes are brought on par with the upper castes, brought on social equality, the economic inequality Remove it, remove social inequality, then we don't need this bailout. I want to tell that as long as there is social equality in this country, economic

Inequality will remain, educational equality will remain, till then crores of people belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes feel the need of reservation in this country. Will remain Mr. Chairman, I would like to say one more thing about reservation. I had also said during the previous government that sometimes the state governments and Sometimes the governments at the center try to make the reservation ineffective by interfering. I had said during the previous government that full benefit of reservation Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes should not be tampered with and for this reservation should be kept in the 9th Schedule of the Indian Constitution. This Regarding Honorable Law Minister, I would like to say through Honorable Minister, you are a great expert of law and you have made this proposal, the bill, it was said that we will hold a conference for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in which Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are members of parliament and we would like to take the opinion of the people to take steps for their welfare, I think this is a good decision of yours. I support this suggestion and I am eager to support the Constitution Amendment Bill that you have put forward, but at the same time I also pray that in any state, the government of any party or the central government should not interfere in the matter of reservation or to make reservation ineffective. If you can't, then you should also bring a bill to include it in the 9th Schedule of the Constitution of India. On the 22nd, when I was elected to the post of Speaker in this House It was happening, even on that point it was said that sometimes the Supreme Court interferes in the matter of reservation and sometimes the lower courts interfere, due to which People belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are not getting the full benefit of reservation. I had requested the speaker that day that you Honorable Prime Minister Talk to and I also request the Law Minister that you should also think very seriously with the Honorable Prime Minister that from time to time

The Supreme Court and the lower courts interfere in the matter of reservation and if the reservation is made ineffective, then the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes

People suffer a lot and they have to come out on the streets again, they have to agitate. That's why I want Honorable Prime Minister on this matter Talk to the minister and bring such a bill so that the Supreme Court and the lower courts cannot interfere in it, I understand that you

Will definitely think seriously. Without taking much time, I would like to tell you again that a special campaign should be launched to fulfill the reservation quota in every department.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to tell the Minister through you that a special campaign should be started for the upliftment of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes. Under this, by making a tome bound program, it will have to be ensured that in this time the reservation quota will be completed and the officers who will complete the reservation quota Will not take strict action against them. Till you don't do this and don't take any steps to take strict action, till then their quota is full Will not done. Mr. Chairman, I feel that after 10 years, even if you are no longer a minister, another minister may come in your place, even if he brings a constitutional amendment bill. You have to be

brave. That's why Serra says that in order not to have to bring a bill again to extend the reservation period, it is necessary that the Scheduled Castes and You should launch a special reservation campaign with a clear intention to fulfill the reservation quota for the Scheduled Tribes. I would especially like to thank the Rajya Sabha and State. I want to tell the Legislative Councils that this quota should be implemented there as well. At present, it is applicable in the Lok Sabha and the Legislative Assemblies of the States, but the State

Not applicable in the Assembly and Legislative Councils. That's why it should be implemented immediately there too. Minister, you should think about whether the Jan Lok Sabha and the Legislature There is reservation for them in Assemblies, then why not in Rajya Sabha and Legislative Councils. I request that this system should be implemented there also and for this you I hope they will try to bring a separate bill.

Mr. Chairman, with these words, without taking much time, I would like to share with you the views expressed by the leaders of different parties and express my agreement with them. I hope that you will pay special attention to the things that I have placed here. Mr. Chairman, through you I want to specially reiterate those two things and again I want to request the law minister that if your intentions are clear and the government is sincere Wants to uplift the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and wants to give them full benefits of reservation, then neither the Central Government nor any State Neither the governments nor the Supreme Court and the lower courts should interfere in any way. For this, bring the matter of reservation in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution of India. Along with this, you should bring another such bill, in which it should be mentioned that according to the arrangement made in the constitution, in every department, the Scheduled Castes and To make the reservation of tribal people ineffective, neither the Supreme Court will interfere nor any lower courts will obstruct it.

Mr. Chairman, since you have rung the bell to indicate that the time for speaking is over, I conclude with these words Would like to Because if mother will say something on Manuwadi system, then the people of the ruling party will be shocked, but I want to tell that it is because of Manuwadi system that today Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes people have been in such a condition due to which arrangements for reservation had to be made for them. I believe that the reservation will be fulfilled. To do this you will take special steps."

Parliament Digital Library: Text of Lok Sabha debates.

While Kumari Mayawati suggested radical reforms with respect to political representation, her colleagues from the other parts of the country had both to add to her arguments as well as to contest it. Mr. Ramdas Athawale, the then MP from Pandharpur who was in alliance with the Congress and later went with the BJP in 2014, had other things to add. It is also remarkable here that Athawale as an MP presented many private member bills during his parliamentary career but all of them lapsed. Athawale spoke:

"Respected Deputy Speaker Sir, the government has brought the bill to increase reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. You must be thinking that you are doing a great job. Whatever rights the Constitution

has given to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, any government should come to power. If the Bharatiya Janata Party has also come to power, then they should have brought a proposal to increase the reservation for these rebels. If this proposal is not made, they have no right to come into this house. That's why the proposal that has come is perfect. Your proposal to increase reservation for ten years is our stand. As long as casteism exists, reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes should continue."

Athawale also importantly highlighted the over representation of upper castes in state bureaucracy and public jobs. He also argues for due share of the Scs and STs in the political executive:

" If we say that we should not get reservation, then we will say that there are 3 percent Brahmins in the country, Rajput society There are 10 percent, Maratha 12 percent, Jat 12, they should get that many percent jobs. The 87-50 percent jobs they are getting are too many. I want to say that we are not getting much. We are getting according to our population or less than that. Mr. Chairman Sir, now our friends from Madhya Pradesh were saying that socially backward and economically backward people should get reservation. I tell them I would like that but at present there are only five percent Scheduled Castes and Tribes in the cabinet of the Central Government. Let them get 25 percent ministers from our caste in his cabinet. You haven't given us enough representation in the executive so you have no right to say anything about it. First 25 percent from SC and ST should be made ministers. After that Something should be said about this. We are told that we do not know how to run the government. I want to say that we know how to run the government. We had the power earlier, But we kept fighting with each other. That's why the power went out of our hands and came into your hands. That's why it is wrong to say that we do not have the experience of running the government. We know how to use power well. If you want to stay in the government for five years, then our reservation will have to be increased by 10 years. How many years will you live, it is unknown. It doesn't depend on us. We may not thrash you, but your people will thrash you."

<div align="right">Parliament Digital Library: Text of Lok Sabha debates.</div>

It is interesting here to note that in response to these radical Ambedkarite leaders, the then law minister Jethmalani, borrowed the language of the Ambedkarite movement to present himself and his party as "Ambedkarwadi" or Ambedkarites. He states:

"Sir, we all Members who take our seats in this House take an oath of loyalty to the Constitution of India. It is the Constitution of India which talks of human dignity and brotherhood. It is the Constitution of India which talks of the equality of all irrespective of caste, creed, color or religion. It is a little unfair to characterize those who solemnly swear by the Constitution as Manuwadis. I liked the speech of my sister Kumari Mayawati. It was one of the most delightful speeches that I have heard from her, but if she said it in good humor, then, I will not even take the trouble of combating this assertion. But we are not Manuwadis, we are Ambedkarwadis."

<div align="right">Parliament Digital Library: Text of Lok Sabha debates.</div>

While many SC MPs argue for furthering radical measures for the improvement of the material conditions of the SCs and STs, Dr. Ambedkar's grandson, Adv. Prakash Ambedkar, the

then MP from Akola, disagreed with Kumari Mayawati and Athawale and took a more integrationist position at that time. Prakash Ambedkar argues that after five decades of the republic, time has come to de-caste the society by doing away with the very category of caste. He claims that the caste attitude has become stronger which is reflected in most of the SC politicians contesting from SC seats only. At the same time he raises concerns about the growing private sector and diminishing public sector which according to him would result in diluting the power of the State as the market would become more powerful in determining the social structure. He presents a fundamentally different position from that of his Ambedkarite colleagues as follows:

"Sir, I rise to support the amendment moved by the hon. Minister. Every ten years, a similar bill is moved to extend the reservations in Lok Sabha and Assemblies by ten years. At the beginning, it was necessary to de-caste the Parliament itself, and with that intention, that is, to de-caste the Parliament, the reservation policy was introduced in the Constitution. Fifty years have passed, the society has moved forward, and we have landed ourselves into a system where we see casteism on wane but castes becoming stronger day by day. This is the social analogy which we are facing today. If we continue with the present system that we have, then we will be landing ourselves in a static state where neither those from the reserved category nor those from the general category have any chance of coming together. There is no attempt in this country, which is a heterogenous mass, to evolve itself under some common platform. Time and again, the situation is changing where, in the beginning, the government machinery was used to settle the reservation policy, and now, what we see is that the courts are being used to settle the reservation policy. Sir, it is time that we wake up to the social realities in this country. I know that the reservation has to continue because the attitude of the masses has not changed. But we have to give an opportunity to the masses also to change their attitude. I would welcome the Hon. Minister's offer for a detailed discussion on the issues of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, but I think not only the Government but also those who are in the Opposition, will have to come forward to see how we are going to overcome this dichotomy in which the Scheduled Castes claim themselves as Scheduled Castes and the general class remains as general class. This is a division in the society which, I think, we have to win over. As I see the situation today, which is going from bad to worse, it is not because of casteism but because of the caste being stronger. At the beginning of the Constitution, we de-caste the parliamentary system. Today, it is necessary that the political parties are de-caste. Except myself and Shri Sushil Kumar Shinde, I do not find anyone either being contested as a general candidate or being set up by the political parties. This is the attitude. The attitude of the political parties has to change now. I see a situation where masses are changing but the political parties are reluctant to change. Therefore, there has to be some means by which we can force the political parties to change their character itself. But I do not think we are having means whereby we are going to change the masses. It is only the attitude as to how you look into the situation, how you look at the issues that is going to change the society. If we do not bring about a change in the attitude, I see confrontation developing in the country itself. May I express my concern regarding the privatisation in the economic sector that is taking place, which is supported both by the Congress and the BJP? In the days to come, the entire public sector is going to

become the private sector. I see two different things in this: (i) in the private sector, there is no reservation at all and (ii) if the entire public sector becomes private one day, indirectly we will be taking away the reservation benefits. There is a social change taking place in the Parliament itself, though it is slow. The proportion of the downtrodden is increasing day by day. We are following the liberalisation policy. What is the effect of the liberalisation policy? The effect of the liberalisation policy is that the economic power of the Parliament is being diminished day by day. We are facing a new situation in the times to come. If there is a total separation of economic power and political power and if there is a character change, a social change in this whole House itself, the House will be deprived of the economic power. They will be left only with the political power which has no meaning in the real sense at all. It is time that we sit and debate over this before the situation develops to such an extent that it becomes out of control. Lastly, may I raise another issue? As I said, caste is becoming stronger day by day. Are we not to follow social mobility at all? Caste has a stigma, as it had in the eighties when the use of the word "Harijan" was banned by the Government itself because it reflected upon certain parts of communities. If you want social mobility in this country, if you want different societies to come together, I think it is time that we decide that the use of the word "caste" will also be banned in this country. If you start referring to them as different communities, we go into a wider plane where a community does not mean any detachment or it does not mean any privilege to anybody. We have to move out, upwards and if we have to move upwards, if we have to give social mobility, I do not think, just merely extending reservation by ten years we are going to achieve anything. It was in the year 1952 when the father of this Constitution, Dr. Ambedkar made a demand to the Government to kindly make a process where the reservation is done away because he knew that one day these reservations are going to become in itself a hindrance to development. I know that today there is a confrontation in the judiciary and other places. Let us move along a social mobility plan, a social mobility where we bring communities together, we bring this heterogenous mass together and bring a feeling of oneness."

<div align="right">Parliament Digital Library: Text of Lok Sabha debates.</div>

It is clear from the above illustration that the legal-parliamentary discourse among various SC representatives varies greatly even if they all claim to adhere to the Ambedkarite ideology. Since Ambedkarism is not a systematically articulated system of thought or ideology, it is often interpreted by scholars and ideologues from their perspectives and with their biases. For the SC interests then to be represented before the Parliament in a more substantive manner, a larger solidarity between these contesting ideologues with their interpretations of the Ambedkarite ideology ought to be collectively cultivated. It is also important to take into cognizance the larger Ambedkarite public's demands and desires to make recommendations with regards to the constitutional infrastructure for representation of their interest. The following concluding chapter will summarize the arguments and analyses of the previous chapters along

with getting a sense of the larger Ambedkarite public's discourse on political representation to make concrete representation in the context of institutional reform.

Chapter V: Conclusion

As we have seen thus far, theories of representation in political theory describe how elected officials or leaders are supposed to represent the interests and views of the people they serve. People's perception of their leaders is often based on how well they believe the leader is fulfilling this role of representation. If a leader is seen as effectively representing the people's interests and views, they may be viewed more positively. Conversely, if a leader is seen as not effectively representing the people, they may be viewed more negatively. Additionally, people's perception of their leaders may also be influenced by factors such as the leader's personal characteristics, actions, and policies. Similarly, Theories of representation and republicanism are closely related in political philosophy, as they both deal with the idea of how citizens are represented in government. Republicanism is a political ideology that emphasizes the importance of civic virtue and the common good, and is often associated with the idea of a "representative republic." In a representative republic, citizens elect representatives to make decisions on their behalf, and the representatives are expected to act in the best interest of the people they represent. This is similar to the idea of representation in political science, where elected officials are supposed to represent the interests and views of the people they serve. Additionally, republicanism is often associated with the idea of "popular sovereignty," which means that the ultimate authority in government comes from the people. This also ties in with the idea of representation, as representatives are elected by the people to make decisions on their behalf. Therefore, theories of representation and republicanism are closely related as both deal with the idea of how citizens are represented in government, and how elected representatives should act on behalf of citizens.

The evolution of republicanism as a political ideology has occurred over centuries and has been shaped by various historical, social, and political factors. In ancient times, the Roman Republic was one of the earliest examples of a political system that was based on the principles of republicanism. The Roman Republic was a form of government in which power was held by elected officials and citizens had a direct say in the political process through the election of officials and the ability to participate in public assemblies. During the Middle Ages, the concept

of republicanism was largely forgotten and was replaced by monarchies and feudal systems. However, during the Renaissance and Enlightenment, ideas of republicanism re-emerged and began to influence the political thought of Europe. The American Revolution and the drafting of the United States Constitution in 1787 marked a major turning point in the evolution of republicanism. The idea of popular sovereignty and the separation of powers in the Constitution were based on republican principles. In the 19th and 20th century, republicanism evolved to include the idea of social and economic equality, as well as the protection of individual rights and freedoms. This was influenced by the ideas of thinkers such as Ambedkar, as well as the struggles for civil rights and social justice around the world. Today, republicanism is understood as a political ideology that emphasizes the importance of civic virtue, the common good, and the protection of individual rights and freedoms. It continues to evolve and adapt to changing social and political circumstances.

Madison believed that a representative republic would address the problems of direct democracy, such as the "tyranny of the majority," by allowing for the diverse interests and views of citizens to be represented and protected. One of the key principles of Madisonian democracy is the separation of powers among the different branches of government, as well as the system of checks and balances between the branches. Madison believed that this would prevent any one branch of government from becoming too powerful and would ensure that power is distributed and balanced among the different branches. Madison believed that federalism would allow for the representation of regional and local interests, and would also provide a check against the power of the national government. Madison also believed that a diverse and large republic would be more resistant to faction and interest groups, in which a small minority could dominate the majority. He thought that the larger and more diverse the republic, the more difficult it would be for any one group to control the government. In summary, Madisonian democracy is a system of government based on the principles of representation, separation of powers, checks and balances, and federalism. It is designed to protect individual rights and the common good, while also preventing the tyranny of the majority or any one faction or group from dominating the government. Establishing constitutional regimes in societies that have developed deep social cleavages is another task that has bothered political scientists and social theorists. In this context, Lijphart comes up with his set of recommendations of constitutional design for divided societies.

Lijphart (2007) presents a set of recommendations for constitutional needs of countries with deep ethnic cleavages. He recommends institutional design that would accommodate the demands for power sharing and group autonomy by communal groups. Power sharing here, is denoted as the group's demand for participation of their representatives in decision-making, while autonomy indicates the group's authority over its internal matters. Lijphart seems to hold a liberal democratic view that societal divisions pose hindrance to democracy.While the above mentioned demands are also understood as primary attributes of consociational democracies, they are also discussed beyond the said framework. Lijphart importantly observes that:

> Political scientists merely discovered what political practitioners had repeatedly—and independently of both academic experts and one another—invented years earlier. (p. 97).

In the context of Brian Barry's suggestions that 'cooperation without cooptation' model observed in the case of Northern Ireland, Lijphart problematizes Barry's proposal by arguing that: it is naive to expect minorities condemned to permanent opposition to remain loyal, moderate, and constructive. (p. 98). In the manner of Barry who hopes for election of moderate representatives, Horowitz devises the mechanism of 'alternative vote' (explain) to elect moderate representatives who are more sympathetic to minority rights, but does not concern itself with ensuring representation of representatives from minority groups themselves. By illustrating the examples of power-sharing in various countries from Belgium, South Africa to Lebanon, Lijphart analyzes the efficacy of these various mechanisms to propose his own model that he claims is a 'one size fit all' model that would work regardless of the individual characteristics of various countries. He offers a power-sharing model that prescribes recommendations in nine key areas of constitutional choice. In the area of choosing the optimal electoral system, He underscores the scholarly consensus against majoritarian systems in divided societies. Discussing semi-proportional, 'mixed' and majoritarian systems, without much substantial argumentation, he favours the PR system simply on the grounds that it treats all groups in an 'equal and even handed fashion'. In the same breath, he criticizes the Indian system which he describes as 'plurality combined with guaranteed representation for specified minorities', as one that would lead to 'invidious' determination of which groups are 'entitled' for guaranteed representation. Owing to the nature of his comparative study of various electoral systems, Lijphart seems to have missed out the nuanced discourse on choosing of the particular electoral system in the Indian case including Ambedkar's criticism of the PR system for historically excluded

minorities. Lijphart also misses out on the important discourse distinguishing between equality and equity and the need to ensure the latter as an essential feature of democracy. The second recommendation delves further into the specificities of the PR system and identifies simplicity as a pivotal criteria especially for newer democracies. Regardless of the simplicity criterion, he praised the Danish model of list PR which apart from smaller constituency size that enables minority parties to perform well, and representatives elected from designated districts, there are compensatory seats with a substantially low threshold that favours minority groups that are not geographically concentrated or cannot emerge as national parties. In this context, Ambedkar's role as a constitution-maker for the caste-ridden Indian society emerges as one characterized by profound statesmanship with a relentless commitment for equality and popular sovereignty. The Indian system of affirmative action engineered by Ambedkar emerges as a monumental model of constitutional design for unequal societies. Renowned American economist William Darity Jr. notes that India has a "far more aggressive and well-developed system of affirmative action than the USA" notably because the parliamentary system has never been the purview of affirmative action in the US." (Thorat and Kumar, p.xiii, 2008)

Galanter (1986) in his reading of the Indian commitment to the value of equality describes equality as a cardinal constitutional value adopted by the constitution makers. He acknowledges their awareness of the entrenched and cumulative nature of group inequalities and their commitment for the needed assurance of personal fairness, a guarantee against the persistence of discrimination in subtle and indirect forms. He says the constitution makers place importance on promoting integration, use of neglected talent, more equitable distribution, etc. At the same time he recognizes the necessity of distinguishing between compensatory discrimination for the SC, ST and the OBC. Galanter underscores the fact that the policy produced substantial redistributive effects by providing a substantial legislative presence, and swell the flow of patronage, attention and favorable policy to SCs and STs that enabled a major redistribution of educational opportunities to these groups but also led to substantial clustering in the utilization of these opportunities. The use of joint electorates, he argues, deliberately muffles the assertiveness and single-mindedness of that representation as the reserved seat legislators must aggregate broad multi-group support in order to get elected and, once elected, must participate in multi-group coalitions in order to be effective which gives rise to relations of reciprocity and

interdependence. He observes that a very few members of these groups are nominated for non-reserved seats and only a tiny number are elected and there is a massive withdrawal by voters from participation. Galanter also notes the effects of hostility experienced by the members of SC ST communities on being identified as a recipient of preferential policies.

Importantly, he notes that the design of the legislative reservations —the dependence on outside parties for funds and organizations and the need to appeal to constituencies made up overwhelmingly of others—tends to produce compliant and accommodating leaders rather than forceful articulators of the interests of these groups. He argues that the policy also deflects the most able into paths of individual mobility that remove them from leadership roles in the community. This has also resulted in a widespread lack of concern to provide for their inclusion, apart from what is mandated by government policy as it absolves others of any responsibility for their betterment on the ground that it is a responsibility of the government. Galanter states that a mixed pattern of inclusion and rejection, characteristic of urban India and of the 'organized' sector, is echoed in the villages by a pattern of increasing assertion and increasing repression. He examines why the argument for merit selection cannot rest on the moral desert of individual candidates and how it instead rests upon the supposed consequences: those with more merit will be more efficient or productive; awarding them society's scarce resources will produce more indirect benefits for their fellows. Towards the latter part of his paper he analyzes the relationship between secularism and continuity of the compensatory discrimination policy. He argues that the elimination (or minimization) of caste and religious groups as categories of public policy was the national goal in the 1950s and 1960s and was frequently expressed as the pursuit of a 'casteless' society. According to him, proponents of such a transformation were not always clear whether they meant the disestablishment of social hierarchy or the actual dissolution of caste units. In his concluding remarks, he argues that the compensatory discrimination policy is not to be judged only for its instrumental qualities. He underscores the fact that these policies are also expressive as through it, Indians tell themselves what kind of people they are and what kind of nation. The policies, he concludes, express a sense of connection and shared destiny as this has led to a visible turn away from the older hierarchic model to a pluralistic participatory society as expected by the constitution-makers. In this backdrop, it becomes pertinent to probe the popular discourses on the ideas of democracy, republicanism, political representation and Ambedkarism. I present here the fieldwork I conducted after the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March

2022 in the state of Bihar, in the Hajipur Lok Sabha constituency, mostly among Ambedkarite voters. The second part of my field research consists of an in-depth interview with an incumbent Ambedkarite MP, Dr. Ravi Kumar from Viluppuram who is a General Secretary of the Tamil Nadu based Ambedkarite party, *Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi.*

In the 10 day long qualitative field survey conducted in Bihar, I administered a questionnaire among rural Ambedkarite voters, mostly dalits, that included both objective as well as subjective questions. Interviews with 12 respondents were conducted among which 4 were women and 8 were men. The age group was 18 to 65. Although majority were SC, OBC and General caste respondents also participated. These respondents were from various villages of Patna Sahib, Vaishali and Hajipur districts of Bihar. As the questionnaire for the voters was prepared in Hindi, following is a translated version of the questionnaire.

Questionnaire for Ambedkarite voters:

Question 1. What do you consider to be appropriate political representation? How should the ideal politician conduct themselves? What according to you is the definition of correct political representation? How should an ideal political representative be?

Question 2. What are the primary concerns and requirements of the SC class in the present day? What are the main questions and demands of the SC class in today's era?

Question 3. What are or ought to be the fundamental tenets of Ambedkarism? What is/should be Ambedkarite ideology's primary goal? What are or should be the basic principles of Ambedkarism? What is/should be the main objective of Ambedkarite ideology?

As is clear from the above questions, the aim of the study was to guage voter's understanding of the concepts of political representation, their primary concerns as voters and citizens of India coming from marginalized communities and their articulation of the Ambedkarite ideology. Following is a presentation of select responses that were audio recorded during the research.

Select responses:

1. Ritik Roshan.

1. Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar, Honorable Kanshi Ram Sahab, Ram Vilas Paswan ji have done a lot for us. Wherever something has happened on Dalit or on any caste, they

have come forward and given their cooperation. Babasaheb Ambedkar ji has written the constitution, because of which we have got a lot of achievements, otherwise earlier we were severely suppressed.

2. The main question and demand of Dalits is that the children of every class/caste should study together, become educated. Since the leader's child attends a private school, we want our children to have the same opportunities and privileges to study there as well. We want to close the employment and education gaps.

3. The main objective of Ambedkar's ideology is to be educated, be organized, and to agitate. All people should be treated equally. Ambedkar ji's ideology was that the children of all the poor and rich should move forward together by education.

2. Sameer.

1. The purpose of having a political representative is so that whoever represents us from our parliamentary constituency will be able to advocate on behalf of the citizens of that constituency within the parliament. There is a problem with unemployment or poverty, there is no school, there is no college, there is no hospital, and the road is in poor condition, all of these problems should be brought up in the Parliament by the member of Parliament.

2. The biggest demand is to remove unemployment. SC class people are mostly laborers. The most important demand is to completely eliminate unemployment. The majority of people who belong to the SC class are laborers. If we talk about achieving equality, then everyone should have the opportunity to work, be treated with respect, have access to quality education, and have access to hospitals that prioritize their health.

3. The three pieces of advice given by Babasaheb are to get educated, get organized, and fight for what you believe in. Since there is a lot of discrimination in our society, it is necessary to get educated, fight, and get organized in order to remove this discrimination. Only then will we be able to fight against any government or anything else.

3. Sanju Kumari

1. Representatives who do justice and development are needed, and the girls who go to school should come freely while coming and going from home. Politicians from the oppressed communities should walk on the path of Babasaheb's ideology. We need political leaders who will do this.

2. Politicians from the community need to follow Babasaheb's ideology,and only then the voice of our people will be raised, and their justice and development will be achieved. Moreover, the issue of men who bully our girls is the first issue, and it should be raised. Young boys and girls are wandering even after getting educated. These individuals should be given employment opportunities; Sometimes those who are not receiving any employment opportunities are committing suicide by jumping off a bridge into Ganga ji or a railroad track. What are these youngsters to do if they are able to read and write but are unable to find a job in the field? If you are not getting a job from the government, even after studying, then should they start working in farms, this is why young people are taking their own life. So a great deal of importance should be placed on employment and quality education for people.

3. The main objective is for those who are oppressed to adhere to Baba Saheb's ideology, maintain peace, engage in education, and gain awareness. Baba Saheb himself was knowledgeable and educated, so the child should heed his thoughts. This will lead to the progress of our children.

4. Poonam Kumari

1. The government representative should be good, it should be that those who are Mahadalits should get reservation, then the political representative should work for them, they should get employment and their problems and issues should be presented in front of the government effectively.

2. People of every society (community) should get work, employment should be there for every group, even a Brahmin Bhumihar Baniya. There are some poor among them too. Then they should also get reservation and if they do not have much land, then they should also get employment.

3. The biggest demand of the Dalits is that the educated people are not getting any new vacancies and they are not getting any jobs. There should be more job vacancies as many educated people from our communities are wandering for employment.

4. It is that all our caste people should become educated and all should be organized and awareness should be there in our society.

5. Radhika Devi

1. Because the representative conveys to the people what he himself has learned, explains things to them, and directs, it is extremely important that he be good, knowledgeable, that he comprehend Ambedkar and share his ideas with everyone.

2. Everyone should be educated in our society, from women to children to old people, and everyone should read. This is what Babasaheb Ambedkar had said. And we all should keep moving forward, this is Ambedkarite ideology.

6. Sangita Devi

1. Politicians hailing from Dalit communities, should think about problems of Dalit men, women, and children, irrespective of how big or small a person is, and they should work on the community's problems. For example, unemployment. Politicians should consider and work to solve it in order to facilitate the progress of our society.

2. As of right now, there is a lot of discrimination between SC people and general people, such as Mahadalit caste or especially Chamar caste. People of general castes say to Chamar, "go away, you cannot stay here, we will not let you stay". Chamars are told things like "in front of me you will sit on the cot! you will sit on the chair?," and this is how the general people talk to them. There is still a lot of casteism, especially in places, like Baad, Lalpur, Karnauti, Bakhtiyarpur, you can find such practices there. But it is also everywhere. They don't do it with us but do

it with other people, but it is sad to see all this because they all belong to my communities.

3. The basic principle of Baba Saheb and his thoughts is that casteism, discrimination should be annihilated and any festival celebrated, such as death rituals or something else, we should not perform (Brahminical/religious) rituals. Many women like going to church, going to temples, worships and prays, all this is wrong.

Quantitative survey:

Question 1.

भारत की संसद में अनुसूचित जाती के प्रतिनिधित्व से आप कितने संतुष्ट हैं?
12 responses
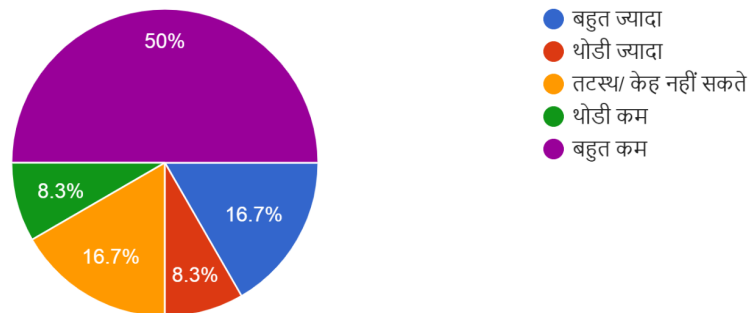
1. On being asked, "How satisfied are you with the representation of Scheduled Castes in the Parliament of India?" majority (50%) of participants were not satisfied with the representation of Scheduled Castes in Parliament.

Question 2. To what extent do the leaders elected from SC reserved seats represent your demands, questions and problems?

SC आरक्षित सीट से चुने जाने वाले नेता, आपकी मांगे, प्रश्न और समस्याओ का कितना प्रतिनिधित्व करते हैं?
12 responses
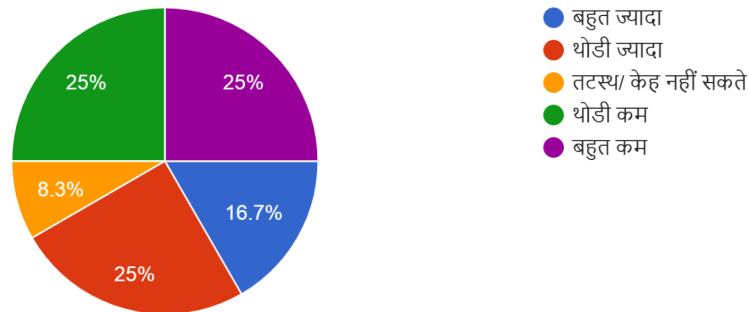
While 25.% of respondents believed that their demands, questions, and problems were not in any way represented by SC parliamentarians, the remaining 16.7% of respondents believed that it was very much represented. Another 25% of respondents shared the sentiment that it was little or inadequately represented, while the same number of respondents shared the opinion that it was adequately represented to some extent.

Question 3. How much need is felt to increase the number of SC representatives?

SC प्रतिनिधिओ की संख्या में वृद्धी करने की कितनी जरुरत मेहसूस होती हैं?
12 responses
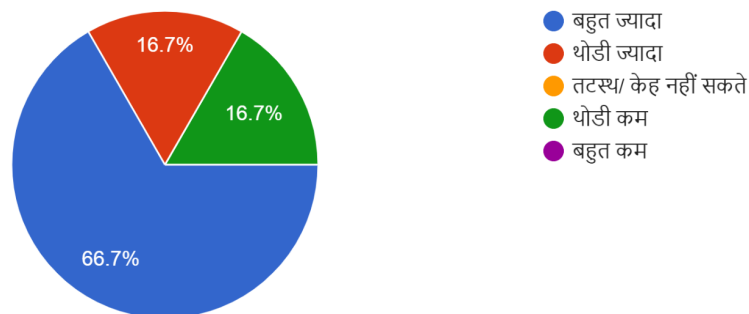
The majority of participants, consisting of 66.7% of those who took part, were of the opinion that there is a pressing requirement to boost the number of SC representatives. Although 16.7% of

respondents believe that there is a rather great need, the same number of people felt that there was slightly less of a need for the same.

Question. 4. To what extent does everyone agree that the quality of the representation provided by the leaders needs to be improved?

नेताओ द्वारा किये जानेवाले प्रतिनिधित्व की गुणवत्ता सुधारने की कितनी जरुरत मेहसूस होती हैं?
12 responses

- बहुत ज्यादा
- थोडी ज्यादा
- तटस्थ/ केह नहीं सकते
- थोडी कम
- बहुत कम
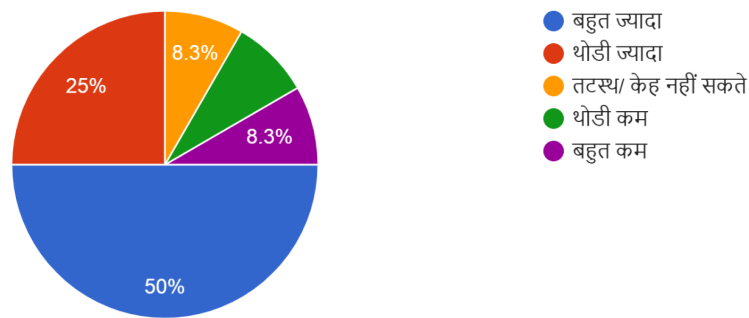
Fifty percent of those who took part in the survey strongly agreed that there is a pressing requirement to improve the overall quality of representation. Only 8.3% of respondents strongly disagreed and believed that there is no need to increase the quality of representation in and of itself, while another 25% of respondents agreed that there is a need to do so.

Question. 5. How much need is felt for a new alternative system to ensure proper representation?

सही प्रतिनिधित्व सुनिश्चित करने के लिये नई वयकल्पिक प्रणाली की कितनी आवश्यकता मेहसूस होती हैं?

12 responses

- ● बहुत ज्यादा
- ● थोडी ज्यादा
- ● तटस्थ/ केह नहीं सकते
- ● थोडी कम
- ● बहुत कम
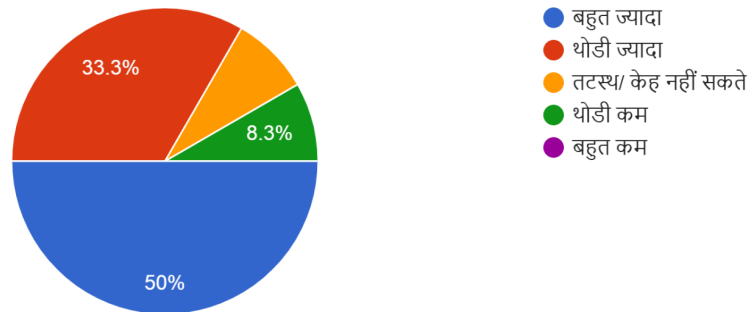
The majority of participants felt there was a need for a new alternative system to ensure quality representation, with 50% (very much) and 33.3% (rather much) of respondents feeling this way respectively. Some individuals have the opinion that there is no need for something like this and are content with the existing system.

Question 6. How effective have been the leaders representing the SC caste who came after Dr. Ambedkar?

डॉ. आंबेडकर के बाद आये हुए SC वर्ग का प्रतिनिधित्व करने वाले नेता कितने कारगर साबित हुए हैं?

12 responses

- ● बहुत ज्यादा
- ● थोडी ज्यादा
- ● तटस्थ/ केह नहीं सकते
- ● थोडी कम
- ● बहुत कम
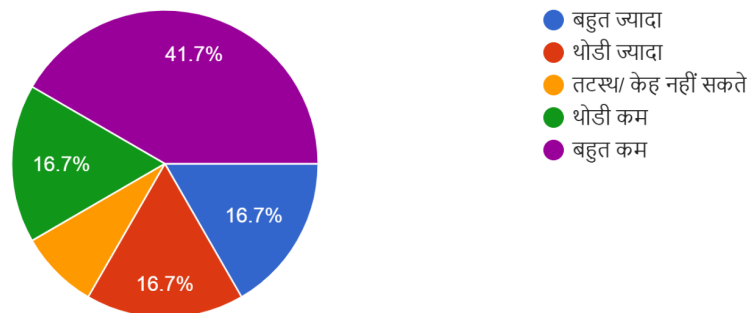
The majority of those who participated in the survey are of the opinion that leaders of Schedule Castes who came after Dr. B. R. Ambedkar has either been completely ineffective (41.7%) or only slightly effective (16.7%). Some people also think that leaders post Dr. Ambedkar has been highly effective.

Question 7. How much have the leaders who represent the SC castes and who came after Dr. Ambedkar been able to implement the Ambedkarite ideology?

डॉ. आंबेडकर के बाद आये हुए SC वर्ग का प्रतिनिधित्व करने वाले नेता किस हद तक आंबेडकरवादी विचारधारा पर अमल कर पाये हैं?

12 responses

- ● बहुत ज्यादा
- ● थोडी ज्यादा
- ● तटस्थ/ केह नहीं सकते
- ● थोडी कम
- ● बहुत कम
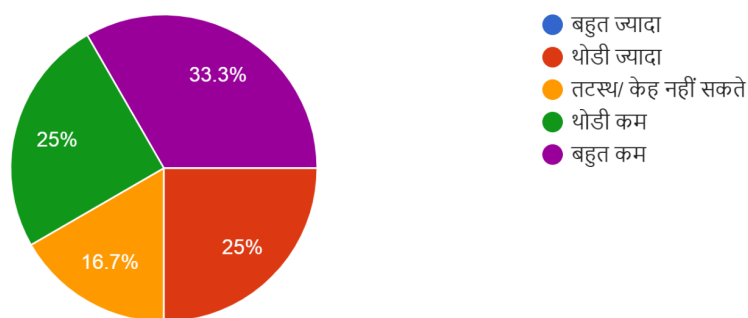
33.3% of participants expressed the opinion that leaders who represent SC castes and who came after Dr. Ambedkar had not at all implemented the Ambedkarite ideology. 25% of respondents believed that the Ambedkarite ideology was inadequately implemented by the leaders of the SC, while another 25% believed that it was partially implemented.

Question 8. How much support do the leaders representing the SC castes get from their parties?

SC वर्ग का प्रतिनिधित्व करनेवाले नेताओ को उनकी पार्टीयो से कितना साथ मिलता हुआ मालूम होता हैं?

12 responses

- ● बहुत ज्यादा
- ● थोडी ज्यादा
- ● तटस्थ/ केह नहीं सकते
- ● थोडी कम
- ● बहुत कम
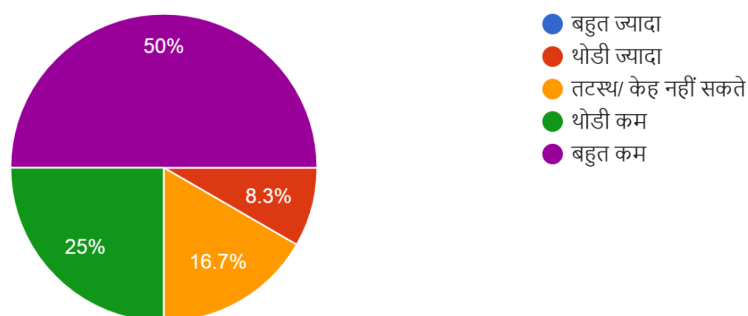
Fifty percent of respondents were of the opinion that SC leaders do not receive sufficient support from their parties. 25% of respondents believed that they get some support, while only 8.3% said that they get good support. 16.7% had moderate views.

Question 9. How much work do the leaders representing the SC do for non-SC voters?

SC वर्ग का प्रतिनिधित्व करनेवाले नेता गैर SC वोटरो के लिये कितना काम करते हैं?
12 responses

- बहुत ज्यादा
- थोडी ज्यादा
- तटस्थ/ केह नहीं सकते
- थोडी कम
- बहुत कम
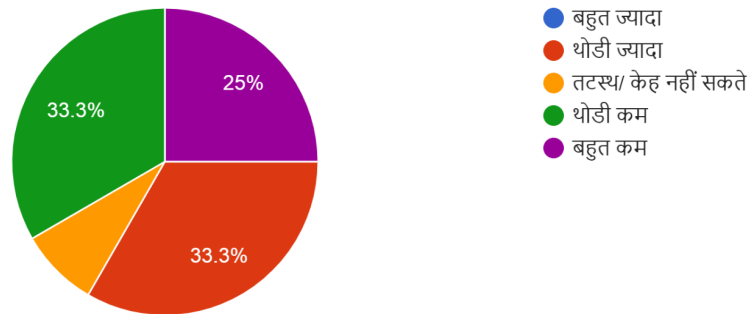
The same number of people had the opinion that SC leaders do work for non-SC voters as had the opinion that SC leaders do not work for non-SC voters (33.3%). 25% of respondents believed that very little work was done for voters outside of SC communities.

Question 10. How successful has India's parliamentary democratic system been in providing social justice to the SC class?

भारत की संसदीय लोकतंत्रिक प्रणाली SC वर्ग को सामाजिक न्याय दिलाने में कितनी सफल हुई हैं?

12 responses

- बहुत ज्यादा
- थोडी ज्यादा
- तटस्थ/ केह नहीं सकते
- थोडी कम
- बहुत कम
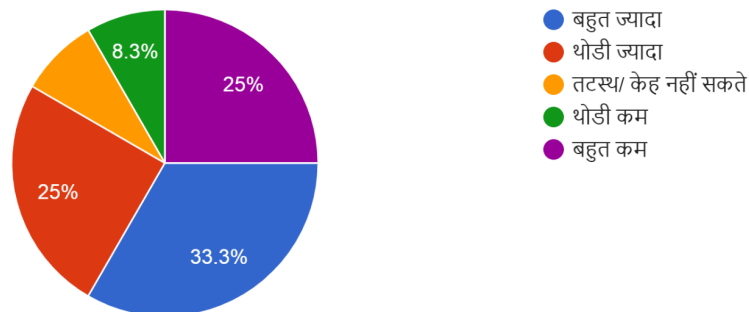
Although the majority of respondents (33.3% of those surveyed) believe that the democratic system in India has been successful in assisting SC communities in achieving social justice, 25% of those surveyed believe that it has not been successful at all, while 25% believe that it has been somewhat successful.

From the responses, it may be deduced that the voters representing the Ambedkarite public at large have a rudimentary understanding of the concept of democracy and their rights as citizens. It may be deduced that the basic values of democracy have percolated to the masses. However the republican values have not percolated to the masses and are still not a part of public culture. One of the key finding from the responses of these Ambedkarite voters is their material demand for employment and particularly education. The unanimous response stressing on the need for education discloses and underscores the link between democracy and education as illustrated by Dr Ambedkar's teacher and American pragmatist John Dewey. This link was further emphasized in the Indian context by Dr. Ambedkar through his movement for education of the masses as he established various educational institutions such as the Siddharth College and Milind College through his People's Education Society. Unlike Dewey, Dr. Ambedkar not only emphasized on vocational education but also professional education. He further foregrounded the need for political education of the masses to actualize social and economic democracy. The responses from the voters were complemented by an in-depth interview with Dr. Ravi Kumar, incumbent MP from Tamil Nadu conducted and audio recorded in March 2022. Following are the excerpts from the Interview:

Interview with MP Dr. Ravi Kumar:

Q. How do you see the present system of political representation through the reservation system?

Response: The reservation system practiced in the legislative assemblies or Lok Sabha is not the one created by Babasaheb Ambedkar. When he introduced the constitution he ensured the representation of SCs through double member constituencies, not just conduct single member constituencies. So, this system came only after the demise of Babasaheb Ambedkar, cunningly by Congress (in 1961), using judiciary in the degree case, then that legislation passed in the parliament, not in majority support. So, it is a great injustice done to the Dalits of the country. I, myself, have raised the issue in the parliament, I spoke, I consider the government to reintroduce because of this injustice done by Congress. If you are really interested in the welfare of the reservation of representation of Dalits, bring the original arrangement of Babasaheb Ambedkar, one of the double member constituencies.

Q. How do you understand the role of an MP elected from specifically a SC reserved constituency?

Response: Not only reserved constituency MPs, all the MPs have three main responsibilities. First to serve his constituency. The next one is serving the state then raising the national issues. How to work these three spheres simultaneously. And the MP elected from a reserved constituency has one more responsibility, to safeguard the interests of the Dalit people not only of his constituency , but of his state, and all over the country. So I'm trying to do justice to these four responsibilities.

Q. How do you ensure that you represent the interest of the SC population of your constituency and beyond in the parliament?

Response: First I, constantly keep working along with the district administration, district collector and project director of DRDA, these are the two persons who are implementing various

state and union government schemes to attend to Dalits. So I'm constantly working with them to ensure the scheme is implemented correctly. And I'm continuously raising questions through memorandums also in the media about the issues of Dalits of Tamil Nadu. State, with the state objective. So only because of continuous intervention, now the state government has created a state commission for SC, STs. The first time in Tamil Nadu history. And also they control the vigilance and monitoring committee and they have raised the income limit for overseas scholarships from 2.5 lakh to 8 lakh. These are all things done after my intervention for the past one year and also I brought many schemes, industrial schemes to a consultancy and many title food parks and by doing this I have created thousands of jobs not only for SCs but also for other communities. My constituency has a sizable population of tribal people. A vulnerable group of tribals called Irulas and I raised many questions in Parliament. Also, I persuaded the government to implement a scheme especially schemes meant for them and because of my intervention now they have handed over hundreds of house *pattas* and they have constructed more than three four hundred houses and I also personally have been there. I have directed my first month salary to construct a hostel for Irula tribes. So I am continuously supporting and fighting along with them to ensure their rights.

Q.How do you associate or disassociate with the Dalit question?

Response: I consciously associate with the Dalit question because I'm not a politician. Basically, I am an activist, I am a writer. I have been fighting for this caste issue for the past 40 years. So I'm well associated with Dalit question. And also as an ideologue with the Dalit movement in Tamil Nadu, so I have formulated, reformulated many foreign questions, theoretical issues and then tell them the positively many government schemes, so I continuously deal with that.

Q. How do you associate or disassociate with Ambedkarite politics?

Response: Dalit question is not away with Ambedkarite politics. Ambedkarite politics is Dalit question. We are all Ambedkarites. We are not Jagjeevan Ram, Mayawati brand of Dalit politics. We believe in the ideas of Ambedkar. We are strong followers of Ambedkar. I am proud to identify myself as Ambedkarite.

Q. What are the procedural institutional problems you face as an MP in representing the SC interests in the Parliament?

Response: Yes, it's not a personal issue. It is a large issue faced by all the MPs from respective constituencies. See you cannot win an election with the support of Dalit vote only. So you have to win the support of other communities. When you raise the issue of Dalits, it automatically alienates non-dalits from you. So what are the issues we have to take up, atrocity issues immediately alienate other communities from you when you take up an atrocity issue. So when an atrocity happens, I immediately speak to the officials. I work along with bureaucrats and the officials, superintendent of Police and district collector, to book the culprits and to implement the POA (Prevention of Atrocities) act. I'm not going to the spot and encouraging people to struggle, this kind of gesture, this kind of identification will alienate you from others. So as a representative I have to work carefully. So I put maximum pressure on officials to properly implement the POA act and book the culprits. So this is one strategy and also I took on non antagonistic issues. Education! It's non-antagonistic that we will fight for the educational developments of the SCs and STs; nobody has antagonistic views against that. So it's a good thing that everybody should learn, everybody should be educated, everyone accepts it. If you fight for the reservation rights, if you fight for the economical development, nobody gets agitated against you. So I am taking on that kind of issue. But atrocity issues only are immediately antagonized by other voters. I am taking the atrocity issue but through an official way.

Q. Specifically when it comes to representing in the parliament in terms of time being allotted, number of opportunities given, is there any kind of problems that you face?

Response: See in the parliament system it is distributing time to smaller parties proportionately. Naturally, Dalits won't get sufficient time to speak. Dalit from Congress, Dalit from BJP, Dalit from communist party or other regional parties don't get sufficient time as other MPs. So they are marginalized in their parties. But in our party, as representatives of Dalits, we try our maximum to get even one minute or two minutes per issue. So, I think I have done well in the sphere. I have spoken many times in the parliament and I brought many provisions or bills highlighting

not only Dalit issues but also other issues and I am also using questions and memorandum to highlight the issues. I focus on the issues of education, and economic development.

Q. Did you observe any kind of censorship from higher authorities in the issues you want to raise in the parliament?

Response: No such thing. Because the speaker takes questions only in a lot of systems, so no kind of censorship. If you try to raise some sensitive issues like defense, the occupation of Arunachal Pradesh, Chinese aggression, that kind of issue they're very reluctant to give answers. It is not censorship that is the attitude of other government.

Q. What are your views on the anti-defection law? Does it hamper a potential cross-party solidarity among SC MPs?

No. The anti-defection law is not a problem for SC MPs. If you want to fight for the Dalit issues you can do it. Many avenues are there. The party does not permit you to speak, you can put questions, you can send memoranda. You can raise issues in various manners. Speaking in the parliament is not the only duty of an MP. So he can use his office to highlight an issue in various ways. Political party cannot affect everything. I think the sensitization of MPs and MLAs from SC communities is very essential because instead of obeying to party discipline, they are themselves not interested in raising the Dalit issue associated with the Dalit caste.

Q. In your observation is there some kind of cross party solidarity among the Dalit MPs if there is a Dalit issue?

Response: No. I don't see that kind of solidarity.

Q. Wouldn't it be good if there was solidarity?

Response: It would be good but for that you need sensitization of the Dalit issues. So solidarity, who needs solidarity? Who wants to fight needs solidarity. For people who don't want to fight, what is the need for solidarity? So here, the problem is not the support of other Party MPs. The problem is with the elected MPs. Whether he is aware of Dalit issues, whether he is ready to raise the Dalit issues. There is a problem.

Q. How do you think this kind of sensitization can happen?

Response: Every political party has separate wings for various issues. But they don't want to sensitize their own party people on issues like human rights, Dalit rights or gender rights. So not only on Dalit issues, no political will to sensitize their cadre over gender issues, or human rights issues. So these are problems with political parties, the political system.

Q. What kind of institutional reform do you think would better serve the purpose of substantial representation?

Response: See, I think the two member constituency that makes a Dalit elect is comparatively more vibrant. Separate electorate is not possible because Ambedkar himself compromised with such constituency. But during his last days Ambedkar again spoke for separate electorates. But if you want the constitution to create separate electorates then they will scrap all the reservations. All the *Sanatani* forces are very strong. Now the state is not a welfare state. It is an authoritative state. Now you cannot demand the rewriting of the constitution. So safeguarding your rights is very important. You can ask for the double member constituency, earlier it was there, for better representation.

Ambedkar by introducing the constitution assured political equality, one man one vote, all votes are of equal value, but the system practiced in India, the FPTP has its own inherent weaknesses. So, some people call for proportional representation. But that demand has been raised even in the constitutional assembly. But Ambedkar rejected the idea because the propositional political system perpetuated the majority and minority. A minority cannot be a majority in propositional

representation. So he rejected that idea. The FPTP system does not ensure democratic representation. So some kind of reform is needed in the political representation system.

Q. You mentioned that you had taken this issue to the parliament. What was the response?

Response: No, they don't respond. In parliament we raise the issue. It creates discourse.

Thus, the interview with MP Dr. Ravi Kumar sheds light on many important questions central to this research. It summarizes the concerns of the research and calls for urgent electoral reforms for ensuring substantive representation for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, before parliamentary democracy loses the meaning left to it. The justification for these reforms comes directly from Ambedkar's Ambedkar's republicanism which emphasizes the importance of social and economic equality, as well as the protection of individual rights and freedoms. He believed that true republicanism could only be achieved through the elimination of caste-based discrimination and the establishment of a society based on equal opportunities for all. Ambedkar's perspective on republicanism also emphasized the importance of political and economic empowerment of the lower castes and marginalized groups, as well as their active participation in the political process. True republicanism could not be achieved without the participation and representation of all citizens, regardless of their background or social status. Ambedkar's ideas on republicanism were deeply influenced by his own experiences of caste-based discrimination and marginalization, and his vision of republicanism was closely tied to the struggle for social and political justice in India.

In a parliamentary system of government, representatives are elected to the parliament, which is the legislative body of the government. The representatives are typically elected from specific geographic regions or constituencies, and are expected to represent the interests and views of the people who live in those regions or constituencies. Representatives in a parliamentary system have a responsibility to represent the views of their constituents, as well as to act in the best interest of the country as a whole. They are expected to be responsive to the needs and concerns of their constituents, and to work to address those needs and concerns through the legislative process. However, it's important to note that there may be instances where the interests of the representatives' constituents may not align with the interests of the country as

a whole, or with the views of the representatives' political party. In such cases, representatives may face difficult decisions about how to balance the interests of their constituents with their own views and the views of their party. It's also essential to note that the representation in parliamentary systems is often not direct. There is no direct link between citizens and the government, and representation is done by elected officials. Representation is often seen as a representative democracy rather than a direct democracy, since citizens do not have the possibility to vote on each law, but on the overall direction of the government. Overall, parliamentary representation is a system that aims to balance the interests of the people with the needs and concerns of the country as a whole, through the election of representatives who are expected to act in the best interest of their constituents and the country. Drawing from the thought of Dr Ambedkar and his movements, I argue that democracy ought to move away from the ideal individualistic notion of equality of individuals to a practical structure-informed notion that ensures more weightage on minority groups's emancipation. Democracy that does not prioritize and enable emancipation of the oppressed minorities fails to be a democracy. I identify the following five as core principles of Ambedkarism:

1.Egalitarianism

2.Social Democracy

3.Republican Constitutionalism

4.Progressive Constitutional reform for political representation of the oppressed minorities

5.Public Education for substantive democracy

In this interpretation of Ambedkar's republicanism, equal collective decision making that defines democratic norm is contrasted with the republican idea of recurring renewal of executive. Ambedkar's republicanism stems from his discontent with democracy and his skepticism of democracy that can be molded into democratic authoritarianism or majoritarianism. To prevent such a withering away of the aspiring egalitarian regime, Ambedkar envisions and proposes a republican view that I would want to call as: revolution institutionalized. With a republican order, the political executive of the state ought to be renewed recurrently after a certain tenure. This renewal of the political executive ought to be implemented not only in the context of

individual leaders but in the context of larger class and caste interests that these leaders represent. If Madisonian democracy seeks to prevent monopolizing of political power by any faction, class or clique, Ambedkarite republic seeks to catalyze this prevention by ensuring representation of the oppressed public, thus upholding popular sovereignty in its true spirit. This frequent and regular act of renewal of the political executive is what I call the act of: Re-public-ing. Republicing with substantive representation, I argue, is a significantly effective means of reinforcing popular sovereignty. On the basis on this analysis, I propose the following as Ambedkarite prescriptions for strengthening republicanism:

The political system ought to make a teleological shift from equality of individual to equality of group.

1. Foreground the values of republic-ing.
2. The most oppressed ought to be brought to the core of the idea of "the public".
3. Striving towards social and economic equality.
4. Public Education: civic and political has to be ensured
5. Constitutional reform and democratic agitation

With the above mentioned principles for strengthening the republican regime, the following interventions and institutional reforms would enable a more substantive representation of the oppressed minorities such as SCs and STs in India.

1. Introducing a multi-member with cumulative voting
2. Declaring the practice of whip as undemocratic and unconstitutional
3. Prevent gerrymandering
4. Making political campaigning accessible to oppressed groups by providing public infrastructure as well as finance for electioneering.
5. Increasing Parliamentary seats to accommodate the growth in population of the Indian citizenry.
6. Preference in time allocation in Parliamentary debates for SC, ST MPs.
7. Private member bills by SC, ST MPs to be given special preference.
8. SC ST Parliamentary Committees be empowered with statutory powers.

The fact that even after 73 years of establishment of the Indian republic, if SC, ST representatives have not had the opportunity to serve as the prime political representatives of India, exposes the travesty of the Indian republic. If the Indian republic ought to attain its true meaning, the monopoly and hegemony of the oppressed classes and castes over the political power ought to be destroyed through persistent constitutional reform and the political executive ought to be revolutionized with the representatives of the oppressed at the helm of political power. In the lack of such a revolutionary republicing event, the Indian republic is doomed to become meaningless, or more so.

Appendix:

Questionnaire for voters:

<div align="center">

"संसदीय प्रतिनिधित्व" विषय पर अंवेशन प्रश्नावली
मार्च 2022

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अंवेशक : प्रतीक खोब्रागडे
संस्था : जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय, नई दिल्ली

<div align="center">

विषय :-

</div>

भारत में संसदीय लोकतंत्र के तहत दलित शोषित जाती जनजातीयो को संसदीय प्रतिनिधित्व में आरक्षण प्राप्त हैं. इस संविधानिक आरक्षण की बदौलत इस वर्ग से आनेलवाले अनेक नेताओ ने इस वर्ग का प्रतिनिधित्व किया हैं. इसी संसदीय प्रतिनिधित्व की परिणामकारक्ता की जांच करना इस अनुसंधान का ध्येय हैं. इसके साथ ही, यह अध्ययन आंबेडकरवादी दृष्टिकोन से राजकीय प्रतिनिधित्व और लोकतंत्र के मूल सिद्धांतो को विकसित करने का भी प्रयत्न हैं.

<div align="center">

प्रत्यर्थी की जाणकारी :-

</div>

नाम :

उम्र :

लिंग :

वर्ग :

गांव :

संसदीय क्षेत्र :

मोबाईल नंबर :

<div align="center">

सहमती पत्र :-

</div>

मैं उपरोक्त अंवेशन में सहभागी होकर अंवेशक को अपने मत अपनी इच्छा से प्रकट करता/करती हुं. अंवेशक ने मुझे अंवेशन की पर्याप्त जानकारी दी हैं और मेरे द्वारा दी गई जानकारी का केवल उचित उपयोग करने का आश्वासन भी दिया हैं. मेरे साक्षात्कार की ऑडिओ रेकॉर्डिंग करने की अनुमती मुझसे ली गई हैं. मैं प्रश्नावली एवं साक्षात्कार की प्रक्रिया से संतुष्ट हुं और अंवेशन में प्रत्यर्थी के रूप में सहभागी होने की सहमती प्रदान करता/करती हुं.

हस्ताक्षर

तारिक

प्रश्नावली :

भाग 1

1. भारत की संसद में अनुसूचित जाती के प्रतिनिधित्व से आप कितने संतुष्ट हैं?

   बहुत ज्यादा
   थोंडी ज्यादा
   तटस्थ/ केह नहीं सकते
   थोडी कम
   बहुत कम

2. SC आरक्षित सीट से चुने जाने वाले नेता, आपकी मांगे, प्रश्न और समस्याओ का कितना प्रतिनिधित्व करते हैं?

   बहुत ज्यादा
   थोंडी ज्यादा
   तटस्थ/ केह नहीं सकते
   थोडी कम
   बहुत कम

3. SC प्रतिनिधिओ की संख्या में वृद्धी करने की कितनी जरुरत मेहसूस होती हैं?

   बहुत ज्यादा
   थोंडी ज्यादा
   तटस्थ/ केह नहीं सकते
   थोडी कम
   बहुत कम

4. नेताओ द्वारा किये जानेवाले प्रतिनिधित्व की गुणवत्ता सुधारने की कितनी जरुरत मेहसूस होती हैं?

   बहुत ज्यादा
   थोंडी ज्यादा
   तटस्थ/ केह नहीं सकते
   थोडी कम
   बहुत कम

5. सही प्रतिनिधित्व सुनिश्चित करने के लिये नई वयकल्पिक प्रणाली की कितनी आवश्यकता मेहसूस होती हैं?

बहुत ज्यादा
थोडी ज्यादा
तटस्थ/ केह नहीं सकते
थोडी कम
बहुत कम

6. डॉ. आंबेडकर के बाद आये हुए SC वर्ग का प्रतिनिधित्व करने वाले नेता कितने कारगर साबित हुए हैं?

बहुत ज्यादा
थोडी ज्यादा
तटस्थ/ केह नहीं सकते
थोडी कम
बहुत कम

7. डॉ. आंबेडकर के बाद आये हुए SC वर्ग का प्रतिनिधित्व करने वाले नेता किस हद तक आंबेडकरवादी विचारधारा पर अमल कर पाये हैं?

बहुत ज्यादा
थोडी ज्यादा
तटस्थ/ केह नहीं सकते
थोडी कम
बहुत कम

8. SC वर्ग का प्रतिनिधित्व करनेवाले नेताओ को उनकी पार्टीयो से कितना साथ मिलता हुआ मालूम होता हैं?

बहुत ज्यादा
थोडी ज्यादा
तटस्थ/ केह नहीं सकते
थोडी कम
बहुत कम

9. SC वर्ग का प्रतिनिधित्व करनेवाले नेता गैर SC वोटरो के लिये कितना काम करते हैं?

बहुत ज्यादा
थोडी ज्यादा
तटस्थ/ केह नहीं सकते
थोडी कम
बहुत कम

10. भारत की संसदीय लोकतंत्रिक प्रणाली SC वर्ग को सामाजिक न्याय दिलाने में कितनी सफल हुई हैं?

बहुत ज्यादा
थोडी ज्यादा

तटस्थ/ केह नहीं सकते
थोडी कम
बहुत कम

<div align="center">भाग 2</div>

1. आपकी समझ में सही राजकीय प्रतिनिधित्व की व्याख्या क्या हैं? आदर्श राजकीय प्रतिनिधी कैसे होने चाहिये?

2. आज के दौर में SC वर्ग की प्रमुख सवाल क्या हैं और मांगे क्या हैं?

3. आंबेडकरवाद के मूल सिद्धांत क्या हैं या होने चाहिए? आंबेडकवादी विचारधारा का मुख्य उद्देश क्या हैं / होना चाहिए?

Field Survey in Bihar, March 2022:

Questionnaire for MP:

Q.1 How do you see the present system of political representation of the SCs through reserved constituencies?

Q.2 How do you understand your role as an MP elected from a SC reserved constituency?

Q.3 How do you ensure that you represent the interests of the SC population of your constituency and beyond in the Parliament?

Q.4 How do they associate or disassociate with the Dalit question?

Q.5 How do they associate or disassociate with Ambedkarite politics?

Q.6 What are the procedural, institutional problems you face as an MP in representing SC interests in the Parliament?

Q.7 Is there any kind of censorship from the higher authorities in the issues you want to raise in the Parliament? How do you navigate such a situation?

Q.8 What are your views on the Anti-Defection law (1985)? Do you think it hinders a cross-party solidarity of SC MPs on questions related to SC interest?

Q.9 What kind of institutional reform do you think would better serve the purpose of substantial representation of SC interests?

Q.10 How democratic in your opinion is the present system of representation for historically marginalized sections such as the SCs?

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Interviewing Dr. Ravi Kumar

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