

SOCIAL MOBILITY OF THE SCHEDULED CASTES :
mid-nineteenth century to the present day.

LALITA CHANDRASHEKHAR

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CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL SYSTEMS
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI

**Centre for the Study of Social Systems
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110057**

C E R T I F I C A T E

This Dissertation entitled "Social Mobility of the Scheduled Castes ; mid-nineteenth century to the present day", submitted by Mrs. Lalita Chandrashekhar for the degree of Master of Philosophy has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any University. We recommend that this thesis should be placed before the examiners for their consideration for the award of the M. Phil. degree.

M. N. Panini

**Mr. M.N. Panini (Advisor),
Assistant Professor,
Centre for the Study of
Social Systems,
Jawaharlal Nehru University,
New Delhi-110057.**

T.K. Oommen

**Dr. T.K. Oommen,
Professor and Chairman,
Centre for the Study of
Social Systems,
Jawaharlal Nehru University,
New Delhi-110057.**

Lalita Chandrashekhar
MRS. LALITA CHANDRASHEKHAR

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Introduction

Social mobility refers to the "moving up and down of individuals from their positions in class, caste and power hierarchies."¹ According to Lipset and Bendix, social mobility is;

"the process by which individuals move from one position to another in society - positions which by general consent have been given specific hierarchical values."²

This paper is mainly concerned with the phenomenon of upward mobility, though immobility and downward mobility are alluded to.

All stratification systems allow for some degree of social mobility. To the extent that they do, they may be regarded as relatively 'open' or 'closed'. M.N. Srinivas has shown that even in the traditional, pre-British Indian society, considered as the 'closed' system par excellence, social mobility was possible through the avenue of Sanskritization.³

In this paper, we will examine the avenues of social mobility available to, and pursued by, the untouchables during the last century of British rule, and in the post-independence period. Throughout, we will bear in mind the changes occurring at the societal level, such as introduction of a cash economy, institutionalization of a system of parliamentary democracy, initiation of a policy of "protective discrimination" etc. While the changes in society may be regarded as exogenous changes, the social movements of the untouchables themselves, be they Sanskritization or politicization, may be viewed as instances of endogenous change.

1. K.L. Sharma, The Changing Rural Stratification System (New Delhi, 1974), p.125.
2. S.M. Lipset and R. Bendix, Social Mobility in Industrial Society (California, 1959), pp 1-2.
3. M.N. Srinivas, Social Change in Modern India (Bombay 1966). Apart from Sanskritization, conditions of political fluidity and availability of large tracts of marginally/ settled land offered other avenues of mobility. The new status was legitimized by the traditional bardic castes or by the king. The varna framework also provided an easily comprehen-

We have utilized the Weberian framework of analysis to understand the social mobility of the untouchables. Max Weber analytically separated the three dimensions of social stratification.⁴ He took 'class' to mean a position of economic power (similar to Marx's concept), which is a matter of objective judgement; 'status' on the other hand, refers to the position based on some standard of value such as breeding, goodness, racial superiority. He recognized that in many societies, status is closely related to class, but not always. Some positions are respected, though its incumbents are poor. Thus, Weber argued that class, status and power are analytically separable variables in the system of social stratification.⁵

Following this line of analysis, we have considered not only the economic variable, but cultural mobility and mobility through the avenue of politicization as well. We have sought to interrelate the three dimensions of social stratification, and to view it in the wider perspective of changes at the societal level.

The purpose of this paper, then, is to see to what extent have the avenues of Sanskritization, Westernization, conversion to other religions, political participation, education, occupational mobility and urbanization been adopted by the untouchables, which of these avenues have been dominant in the two time periods under consideration, and how successful have these avenues been in the social mobility of the untouchables.

sible, all-India, theoretical model, and the upwardly mobile castes or jatis could claim membership in one or another varna. M.N. Srinivas, Ibid.

4. Max Weber, "Class, Status and Party", Class, Status and Power; Social Stratification in Comparative Perspective R. Bendix and S.M. Lipset (ed.) (London, 1954).
5. W.G. Runciman ("Class, Status and Power" Social Stratification, J.A. Jackson (ed). (London, 1968)) and A. Betelle are of the same view. Betelle says, class, status and power "are basic structural phenomena ... which are found to exist in all societies. These must properly be described as social facts. They are social facts to the extent that they exist independently of what individuals think or feel about them and in the sense that they cannot be changed according to the will and pleasure of individuals." A. Betelle, Inequality and Social Change, (Delhi, 1972), p 3.

Thus, we will consider the social mobility movements of the untouchables in both the ritual and secular spheres. Andre Beteille points out "the competing demands of status and power"⁶ and hypothesizes that the lower castes will increasingly turn to power as an avenue of mobility.

"Since independence ... the emphasis seems to be shifting from Sanskritisation to competition for positions of office and power. It appears that at many points the demands of prestige and power come into conflict. In the years to come, they will increasingly turn to politics as an avenue of mobility."⁷

T.K. Oommen suggests that the secular avenues of education and economic advancement be given priority over the ritual sphere. In a study of attitudes based on data collected from seven Rajasthan villages, he found that:

"secular prestige affecting behaviour is more change prone than ritually polluting behaviour. There is much greater resistance to inter-marrying with the untouchables or permitting them to enter temples than there is to making available to them opportunities for education or extending to them special economic concessions."⁸

Hence, he says, education should be taken as the strategic point of entry in social change, as it would entail minimization of social costs.⁹

6. A. Beteille, "The Future of the Backward Classes: The Competing Demands of Status and Power", India and Ceylon: Unity and Diversity, P. Mason (ed.), (London 1967).

7. Ibid, p. 93.

8. T.K. Oommen, "Strategy for Social Change: A Study of Untouchability", Economic and Political Weekly, June 22, 1968, p 933.

9. S. Shukla contends that an attack on the institution of untouchability should be carried out on both fronts - ritual and non-ritual. For, "the very provision of effective educational facilities involves, most often, those change - initiating activities, both ritual and non-ritual, to which the non-untouchables show such great resistance. Thus, their less unfavourable attitude to education, special developmental programmes and economic concessions tends to get nullified by the resistance to ritual matters like sitting together (at school) touching or drawing water from the same well." Also, the strategic point of entry may be political organization, and not education. S. Shukla, "Strategy for Social Change: A Comment", Economic and Political Weekly, Dec. 14, 1968, pp 1918.

The question arises as to whether any social mobility that may have occurred, is in the nature of individual or group mobility. Pitrim Sorokin defines individual mobility as "an infiltration of the individuals of a lower stratum into an existing higher one",¹⁰ and group mobility as "an insertion of such a group into a higher stratum, instead of, or side by side with, the existing groups of this stratum."¹¹ He states that while individual mobility is "relatively common and comprehensible", it is "the rise and fall of groups (that) must be considered more carefully."¹²

Sorokin also identifies two types of social mobility: vertical and horizontal. By vertical mobility he means "the relations involved in a transition of an individual from one social stratum to another."¹³ Vertical mobility may be either "ascending or descending, or social climbing or social sinking."¹⁴ The channels of vertical mobility are education, wealth-making, political parties, familial ties, etc. On the other hand, "by horizontal social mobility or shifting, is meant the transition of an individual or social object from one social group to another situated on the same level."¹⁵ Thus, the shift from agricultural labourer to factory hand is an instance of horizontal mobility. At the same time, the untouchable who enters the top ranks of the government bureaucracy, or who becomes a small farmer on his own piece of land, may be regarded as having experienced vertical mobility.

In any study of social mobility, it is important to define the unit of mobility. As stated above, we will consider the phenomenon of individual mobility. The

10. Pitrim A. Sorokin, Social and Cultural Mobility (New York 1959)

11. Ibid, p 134.

12. Ibid, p 133.

13. Ibid, p 133.

14. Ibid, p 133.

15. Ibid, p 133.

mobile man serves as a model of emulation to his caste fellows, and may also provide them with leadership. But what level of grouping is this paper concerned with?

J. Silverberg suggests a series of units of mobility ranging from "extended family or localized lineage" through "intra-village occupational aggregate, village jati representation, marriage circle, multivillage lineage or clan" to "entire endogamous association".¹⁶ McKim Marriott distinguishes three units of analysis by their structures and activities in stratification: ritual corporations, kin groups and individuals.¹⁷

(As the unit of mobility, we will take large, inclusive caste clusters such as Mahar, Nadar, Ezhava, Pulaya, Mala, Madiga, Khatik, Dhanak, Pasi, Chhimbe, Sikligar, etc. Bearing in mind the constraints of the M. Phil. programme, for which the data is derived from secondary sources, we have had to employ the same unit of analysis as is used in the available literature, such as Census Reports, monographs by Indian and foreign scholars, articles in journals and newspapers, etc. Needless to say, for the Ph.D., the definition of the unit, as also the measurement of social mobility will be more precise and specifically related to a local area. (The present study may be regarded as a macro-study, concerned as it is with investigating certain trends of social mobility among the untouchables during the period of British rule and in the post-independence period.

The Scheduled Castes constitute a large part of the poor and backward sections of our society. In addition to their economically depressed position, they have to contend with various ritual disabilities. It is important to study their social mobility movements, and the problems they encounter in their attempts to be integrated into Indian society. For, no society can regard itself as modernized as long as its members

16. J. Silverberg, "Colloquium and Interpretive Conclusions", Social Mobility in the Caste System in India, (The Hague, 1968) p 120.

17. McKim Marriott, Ibid, p 121.

practise the kind of discrimination based on ascriptive criteria, which is associated with the institution of untouchability.

The Scheduled Castes

The untouchables were at first officially known as the "Depressed Classes" and the "exterior castes". In 1861, the Depressed Classes, according to the then Indian Legislative Council, included criminal and wandering tribes, aboriginals and untouchables. But soon, the criteria for inclusion in the Depressed Classes became 'untouchability'. In 1917, Sir Henry Sharp, Education Commissioner, Government of India, stated that "the depressed classes form the unclean castes whose touch or even shadow is pollution..."¹⁸ Accordingly, he prepared a list of Depressed Classes. The Indian Franchise Commission emphasized in its report that aboriginal tribes should not be included in the list of Depressed Classes.

Later, B.R. Ambedkar felt the need to do away with the term "Depressed Classes". At the Second Round Table Conference he said,

"the existing nomenclature of Depressed Classes is objected to by members of the Depressed Classes It is degrading and contemptuous and advantage may be taken of this occasion for drafting the new constitution to alter for official purposes the existing nomenclature."¹⁹

In response to this request, the new term "Scheduled Caste" was introduced.

The criteria adopted for inclusion in the Scheduled Caste list were social, educational and economic backwardness arising out of the stigma of untouchability. Thus, "Scheduled Caste" has been defined on ritual grounds, but the Indian government has tried to improve the secular condition of the untouchables. "By design or by happenstance, it has been more concerned with

18. Report of the Indian Franchise Committee, Vol. 1, 1932, p 109, para 279.

19. K. Santhanam, Ambedkar's Attack (New Delhi, 1946), pp 4-5.

power and poverty, education and employment, than with pollution and related disabilities"²⁰

Thus, the Constitution provides for reservation of seats in the legislatures and for reservation of appointments or posts in favour of the Scheduled Castes, as well as many educational and welfare schemes. Termed by some scholars as the "policy of protective discrimination", it is an attempt to help the untouchables to "catch up" with the general population regarding the various indices of secular status.

Today, there are about 80 million members of the Scheduled Castes. They are not concentrated in any particular region, but are scattered throughout the length and breadth of the country. The better known Harijan castes include Palla, Paraiya (Tamil Nadu), Mala, Madiga (Andhra Pradesh), Mahar (Maharashtra), Chamar, Bhangi (Punjab, U.P., Bihar), Cheruman, Pulayan (Kerala), Holeya (Karnataka) and Bagdi (West Bengal).

The Scheduled Castes are by no means a homogenous category.

"In each linguistic area there are a few Harijan castes which form a hierarchy. The leather-working Chamar in Uttar Pradesh considers himself superior to the Bhangi, a sweeper. The Kannada Holeya places himself above the Madiga. He proudly stresses the fact that he does not accept even water or betel leaf from either the Smith or the Marka Brahmin."²¹

There is a traditional rivalry between Mala and Madiga.

"Mala and Madiga between themselves observe scrupulous segregation There is such a deep-seated antagonism between these communities that the very name of the one causes irritation in the other. The sword dance of the Madiga which forms an essential part of their ceremonies is the most despicable thing for the Mala."²²

20. Lelah Dushkin, "Scheduled Caste Politics", Untouchables in Contemporary India, J.M. Mahar (ed.) (Arizona 1972), p 176.

21. M.N. Srinivas, "Social Structure", The Gazetteer of India (New Delhi, 1965) Country and People, Vol. 1, p 505.

22. N. Subba Reddy, "Community Conflict among the Depressed Castes of Andhra", quoted in Census of India 1971, Scheduled Castes of Tamil Nadu, Vol.II, Series 19, Part VB, p 329.

In fact, the Harijan castes may be said to represent a microcosm of the caste system, having all the characteristics of hierarchy, endogamy and dispute about relative status. The attempt of particular castes to rise through the avenue of Sanskritization results in further differentiation between the Harijan castes, since the Sanskritizing caste refuses to interact with the other Harijan castes on the same level, in order to establish its superior status. On the other hand, politicization calls for group cohesion and unity of the Scheduled Castes. Efforts have been made in this direction, but have met with limited success. For instance, the Mala and Madiga co-operated in the Adi-Andhra movement in South India in the 1930s.

The Scheduled Castes are an integral part of the Hindu social structure, though outside the fourfold varna scheme. Srinivas writes,

"According to the varna model, the Harijans or untouchables are outside the caste system and contact with Harijans pollutes members of the other four varnas. But if economic, social and even ritual relations between the castes of a region are taken into account, Harijans form an integral part of the system.' They perform certain essential economic tasks in agriculture, they are often village servants, scavengers and sweepers and they beat the drum at village festivals and remove the leaves on which people have dined at community dinners."²³

Though a part of the Hindu social structure, the Harijans have suffered a particularly degraded position in Hindu society, which was sanctioned by the concept of purity and pollution in the Hindu religion. According to Louis Dumont, the principle underlying the hierarchy of the caste system is the structure of oppositions between the pure and impure.

"This opposition underlies hierarchy, which is the superiority of the pure to the impure, underlies separation because the pure and impure must be kept separate, and underlies the division of labour because pure and impure occupations must likewise be kept separate."²⁴

23. M.N. Srinivas, Social Change in Modern India, p 4.

24. Louis Dumont, Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and its Implications, (London, 1966), p 43.

In India, says Dumont, the removal of impurity is entrusted to specialists, such as the barber and washerman, who by virtue of their functions find themselves living permanently in a state of impurity, which the others enter into only temporarily.²⁵ As the cow is considered sacred, the untouchables who have the onerous task of disposing of the dead cattle, are regarded as imbued with impurity. Even the drums used by village bands are regarded as impure, since they are made of skin, and the members of village bands, the Paraiyan in the south and Dom in the north, are regarded as being in a permanent state of impurity. Thus, Dumont considers the rationale behind the institution of untouchability to be primarily a religious one.²⁶ But, according to A. Beteille, it is also related to the notion of hygiene.²⁷ For scavengers, or removers of dirt are also regarded as ritually unclean by the Hindus.

It is not surprising then, given the segregation of the untouchables, that their lifestyle was qualitatively different from that of the upper castes. A. Beteille notes,

"The religious practices of Harijans are markedly different from those of the upper castes. Sanskrit elements occupy a minor position in their religious system. This is understandable since Harijans are traditionally not admitted to the major Hindu temples and they are not served by Brahmin priests. Their worship centres largely around local deities and demons who are propitiated with animal sacrifice and non-Sanskritic rites."²⁸

Writing about the Chamar, G.W. Briggs says,

"There is much in their superstitions and in their customs that sets them off by themselves so far as the Aryan or the Hindu is concerned The fear of demons and the principles of spirit possession are everywhere taken into account, and malicious spirits and demons of disease are universally feared. None of these elements of primitive belief are borrowed, they come from the

25. Ibid, p 46.

26. Ibid, p 47.

27. A. Beteille, "Pollution and Poverty", Untouchables in Contemporary India, J.M. Mahar (ed).

28. A. Beteille, "The Harijans of India", Castes: Old and New: Essays in Social Structure and Social Stratification, (Bombay 1969), p 91.

strata in which the Chamars themselves are found."²⁹
Thus, the Harijans were at the lowermost level of the Indian social stratification system. However, it cannot be said that there was no social mobility of the untouchables prior to British rule. Raidas, a cobbler, and Kabir, a weaver, were accepted by the great Brahman teacher and philosopher Ramanand, and became bhakti saints themselves. The bhakti cult held that salvation was possible for the Harijan who was a sincere devotee of God. In his famous kirtans (devotional songs), Sankara Deva, the great bhakti saint of Assam said,

"The Mlecchas who eat dogs purify themselves by singing the name of God. The Chandala who only sings the name of Hari will properly execute the function of a sacrifice."³⁰

In another hymn he teaches,

"That Chandala at the tip of whose tongue is the message of Hari is to be placed in the highest estimation."³¹

Conversion to Islam offered a potential avenue of social mobility during the period of Muslim rule. But did it bring about a change in status?

Conversion to Islam

According to Imtiaz Ahmed,

"it is doubtful if conversion of lower groups to Islam actually brought about a rise in their status. All available evidence goes to show that status inequalities continued to exist such as before. It may, however, have brought about a psychological reevaluation of themselves."³²

For, Muslim society had developed its own hierarchy in the Indian context, and the Harijan converts were located at the bottom of that hierarchy. Ghaus Ansari writes,

"Thus present-day Muslim society in India is divided into four major groups. They are (I) the Ashraf who trace their origin to foreign lands such as Arabia, Persia, Turkistan or Afghanistan, (II) the Hindus of higher birth

29. G.W. Briggs, The Chamars (1920), reprint (Delhi, 1975), p 234.

30. Stephen Fuchs, Rebellious Prophets (Bombay, 1965) p 130.

31. Ibid, p 130.

32. Imtiaz Ahmed, "Exclusion and Assimilation in Indian Islam", Socio-Cultural Impact of Islam on India, Attar Singh (ed) (Chandigarh, 1976) p 102, Note 8.

who were converted to Islam, (III) the clean occupational castes and (IV) the converts from the untouchable castes: Bhangi (scavenger), Chamar (tanner) etc."33

Thus, conversion to Islam did not bring about any change in the status of the Harijans, who continued to be regarded as low and polluting by the other Muslims. In a study of Moplahs in Kerala, V.S.D'Souza notes that the lowest Muslim castes "have separate mosques, separate religious organizations and separate burial grounds."³⁴

In a study of Muslims in Calcutta, it was found that

"the most disfavoured group is the Lal Begi (sweepers) from whom no other group will receive food. Qalander and Dhobi come next with whom other groups avoid having commensal relationships while these will not eat with the Lal Begi."³⁵

In the following chapters, we will see the nature and extent of social mobility of the untouchables, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards.

33. Ghaus Ansari, Muslim Caste in Uttar Pradesh (Lucknow, 1960) p 31.
34. V.S.D'Souza, "Status Groups among the Moplahs on the South-West Coast of India", Caste and Social Stratification among the Muslims, Iftiaz Ahmed (ed). (Delhi, 1973) p 53.
35. M.K.A. Siddiqui, Muslims in Calcutta : A Study of Aspects of their Social Organisation (Calcutta, 1974) p 96.

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Social Mobility : mid-nineteenth
to mid-twentieth century ✓

The social mobility movements of some untouchable castes during British rule received an impetus from success obtained in the economic dimension, which made these castes, to some extent, economically independent of the patron-client relationship prevailing in the villages. Many members of these castes were able to afford an education. The "status dissonance" or incongruence created by this situation was sought to be removed by resorting to Sanskritization and Westernization. These may be regarded as the "upwardly mobile castes". On the other hand, a large number of castes were pauperized by the mechanization introduced by the British.

In the traditional, pre-British, Indian society, the untouchables were economically dependent on the upper castes. The exploitative nature of the jajmani system, under which they laboured, has been described by T.O. Beidelman. He defines it as

"a feudalistic system of prescribed hereditary obligations of payment and of occupational and ceremonial duties, between two or more specific families of different castes in the same locality."³⁶

In the jajmani system, he says, land is the most important power determinant, and as it is unequally divided, it gives rise to an exploitative system.³⁷ The jajmani haqq or rights were treated as property as they could be sold, subdivided, mortgaged, inherited or given in dowry. The upper castes tended to be jajmans and the lower castes kanins.

In some parts of the country, slavery was practised. Sardesai writes,

"Pulayas in the beginning of the nineteenth century did not have a life of their own. They never worked or earned a living for themselves. Their entire life was dependent on their masters. They did not even own their children. They begot children so that the masters could have a continuous supply of

36. T.O. Beidelman, A Comparative Analysis of the Jajmani System, (New York, 1959), p 6.

37. Ibid, p 6.

workers. Naturally, they did not make decisions or plans either for themselves or for their children. Their time was wholly their master's, and they had no particular hours they could call their own. Not a day in a week was granted them for rest or for prayer."³⁸

Apart from labouring in the fields, the occupations of the untouchables were limited to certain defiling tasks, such as scavenging, dealing in hides and skins, weaving and the like. Trade and other lucrative occupations were denied to them.

Economic Impact of Colonial Rule

The British abolished slavery in 1843. They introduced a cash economy, and hired labour on a contractual basis to work on their tea gardens. The missionaries, with an eye on gaining converts, provided education and financial assistance to the lower castes, and even pressurized the local government to introduce changes which would benefit them. Some occupations of the low castes were recognized and rewarded. On the other hand, others were adversely affected by the mechanization introduced by the British. Below, we will see the differential impact of colonial rule on the economic condition of the untouchable castes.

1. Some cottage industries or crafts such as weaving, tanning, pottery, basket-making, rope-making, makers of feudal means of warfare etc. were hit by the mechanization introduced by the British. The members of these castes were pauperized, and they had to supplement their income by taking to agriculture labour. On the whole, their economic condition has deteriorated. Recent studies of these communities show that, in spite of government aid to these cottage industries,³⁹ they have

38. Sardasani, quoted by Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer, 'Social Justice to the Weakest Societal Segments through Legal Political Strategies in the Indian Setting', Ambedkar Memorial Lectures' 1976, (to be published).

39. In the post-independence period, the government has tried to help the handloom industry, which is the largest cottage industry in the country. It has levied excise duty on mill made cloth, restricted monthly production of dhoties by mills, set up an All-India Handloom Board, helped to market the finished product by organizing sales depots, handloom fairs and exhibitions, etc.

not recovered from the colonial impact on their occupations.

A study of the traditional weavers of Ahmedabad district shows that they were unable to compete with the rapid expansion of the textile mills in that city.⁴⁰ The mill produces cheaper and finer cloth in bright colours and vivid designs, compared to the coarse cloth produced by the traditional weavers, the Vankers. The weavers are faced with dwindling supplies of yarn of an inferior quality. They adhere to out-dated methods of production, like pit-throw shuttle looms, which yield low units of output per day.⁴¹ Each weaver works on his own, failing to realize the benefits of organization.⁴² They also have problems of marketing their material. Thus, they are unable to stand up to the competition from the textile mills. Sixty percent of the Vankers were compelled to give up their traditional occupation for agricultural labour, while the rest supplemented their meagre income with work in the fields.⁴³

The tanning industry, with which the Chamar is traditionally associated, has also been unfavourably affected by mechanization. Mechanized tanneries are responsible for tanning more than half of the available hides and skins in the country.⁴⁴ The consumers prefer machine-made products, which are of superior quality and available at a cheaper rate. The tanners follow centuries-old methods of flaying and curing, which damage the hides and skins.⁴⁵

Similarly, the village potter has been hit by mechanized

40. B.V. Pandya, Striving for Economic Equality (Bombay, 1959)

41. Ibid, p 15.

42. Ibid, p 15.

43. Ibid, p 6.

44. Ibid, p 97.

45. Ibid, p 74.

potteries.

II - Some castes have experienced status immobility, e.g. the sweeping and scavenging castes. The continuing necessity of the services rendered by them has assured them of a secure, though paltry, means of livelihood. A study made on these communities notes that "in the urban areas, the majority of the workers belonging to the S.S.A.O. (Sweeping Scavenging and Allied Occupations) castes continue to be in S.S.A.O."⁴⁶ In the urban areas, they are employed by Municipal Corporations and by private households. Thus, urbanward migration has not resulted in occupational mobility for these castes, although it may have brought them increased earnings.)

III - Some castes benefitted economically from the exigencies of British rule, and it is with these that we are mainly concerned. It is not implied that all members of the "upwardly mobile castes" benefitted economically, but that a significant number of them did so.

The Nadars were traditionally toddy tappers, whose occupation was considered polluting. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, they were climbers and petty traders of the products of the tree.

"With the aid of the missionaries, the Nadars extracted themselves from many of the burdensome taxes and the corvee labour demanded by the government. But, more important, they began to advance economically. (Some of the Nadars turned to trade and secured sufficient wealth to purchase their own lands. Others purchased land with financial assistance from the mission. In the years following the establishment of the mission in South Travancore, the Nadar converts benefitted by education and by the general protection of the mission."⁴⁷

R.L. Hardgrave ascribes their rising economic power to the improved communications and the effective police force established by the British, which enabled the Nadars to extend their trade into the interior of the province.

46. Census of India 1961, Social Mobility among the Sweepers of India (New Delhi) pp 4-5.

47. R.L. Hardgrave Jr., The Nadars of Tamilnad: The Political Culture of a Community in Change (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969), p 58.

Thus, in the towns of Ramnad, the Nadars established themselves as middlemen and moneylenders, and acquired wealth. ✓

The counterparts of the Nadars in Kerala, the Iravas, were also to experience a measure of prosperity during this period. By tradition, Iravas had a monopoly over climbing of the coconut palm, and extracting from the coconut all its various products, such as toddy, arrack, coir fibre and copra. While cash was little used and the products of the coconut palm were not in great demand outside Kerala, these traditional occupations held little promise but drudgery. ✓

(But, when the demand for coconut products in Europe and America increased towards the end of the nineteenth century, Iravas were able to take advantage of a cash economy, and their labour became indispensable to the merchants in towns like Alleppy. Thus, the Iravas experienced an improvement in their economic bargaining position, and some became prosperous. 48

"By the turn of the century a few Iravas owned coir factories while Irava women who collected and sold coconut shells for fuel were said to earn more than enough to feed their families. Iravas' traditional occupation was, in short, an economic asset. This was different from the cases of other low castes, such as potters or blacksmiths, to whom the greater availability of manufactured goods in the late nineteenth century was injurious." 49

"Another aspect of Iravas' traditional vocation was embarrassing yet profitable. This was the toddy and arrack trade which more than doubled between 1860 and 1880." 50

The economic position of the Iravas also improved as a result of certain policies initiated by the Travancore government, who were pressurized by the missionaries on the one hand and the Madras government on the other. 51 The large-scale construction works begun by the Public Works Department during Dewan Madhava Rao's tenure ensured salaried employment to thousand of low caste people and introduced them

48. Robin Jeffrey, The Decline of Nayar Dominance: Society and Politics in Travancore, 1847-1908 (New Delhi, 1976)

49. Ibid, p 141.

50. Ibid, p 141.

51. Ibid

to a cash economy. By widening the scope for employment for labourers, it forced up their wages.

In 1865, Madhava Rao issued full ownership rights to the holders of the 200,000 acres of sirkar pattam land, thus bringing the once inalienable land into the market.⁵²

It was now possible for prosperous Iravas to invest in land.

Thus, while the short-term policies, such as keeping Iravas out of the 'sirkar' service and out of the 'sirkar' schools, favoured the Nairs and other high castes, (some of the long-term policies like introduction of a cash economy, extensive public works, increased trade and large-scale planting, was to the advantage of the low castes, particularly the Iravas.) The Pulayas did not benefit to the same extent. "The position of the slave castes (Pulayas) was in fact so debased that they were little touched by the rapid changes of the late nineteenth century."⁵³

Table I*

<u>Alienations and acquisitions of property by Nayers, Christians, Iravas, Shanars and Samantas in Travancore for 18 months prior to 1 Makaram 1083 (about 15 January 1908)</u>				
<u>Category</u>	<u>Sales in Rupees</u>	<u>Mortgages in rupees</u>	<u>Total in rupees</u>	<u>+ or - in Rupees</u>
NAYARS				
- Buyers or mortgagees	12,20,264	76,40,804	88,61,068	
- Sellers or mortgagors	17,39,607	89,98,463	1,07,38,070	- 18,77,002
CHRISTIANS				
- Buyers or mortgagees	22,44,641	80,07,137	98,51,778	
- Sellers or mortgagors	19,82,647	66,98,124	86,80,771	+ 11,71,007
IRAVAS				
- Buyers or mortgagees	11,71,197	42,31,665	53,92,862	
- Sellers or mortgagors	10,53,763	40,44,083	50,98,476	+ 2,94,386
SHANARS				
- Buyers or mortgagees	3,08,643	12,49,291	15,57,934	
- Sellers or mortgagors	3,03,261	11,71,664	14,74,925	+ 83,009

52. Ibid

53. Ibid, p 25.

* Robin Jeffrey, The Decline of Nayar Dominance, (New Delhi 1976), p 248.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Sales in rupees</u>	<u>Mortgages in rupees</u>	<u>Total in Rupees</u>	<u>+ or - in rupees</u>
SAMANTAS				
- Buyers or mortgagees	11,829	63,423	75,252	
- Sellers or mortgagors	17,298	94,605	1,11,903	- 36,651

Table I gives an idea of the economic position of the Iravas at the turn of the last century.

From the table, we find that Iravas had a net gain of Rs.2,94,386 and Shanars Rs.83,009, while Nairs had alienated by sale or mortgage property worth Rs. 18.77 lakhs more than they acquired.

The Tiyas, the counterparts of the Iravas in north Malabar, took up jobs in the administration such as munsif, tehsildar, etc. Adrian Mayer says, "in the administrative field, the British threw open the job of village headmen to any qualified person, rather than to Nairs alone, and recruited available persons from the lower castes for services as clerks and officers. Though in fact the Nairs still largely occupied the post of village headmen on a hereditary basis, it was possible for a small but growing group of Tiyas and others to gain practical administrative experience, and this paved the way for lower caste entrance into the wider field of politics."⁵⁴

A more northerly example of group mobility was that of the Ramgharias of the Punjab, who were traditionally engaged in blacksmithy. In 1881, Ibbetson had reported that the Jats and other high castes "classed (the Lohar) as an impure caste."⁵⁵ The Lohar and Tarkhan did low status jajmani work for the landowners.

The traditional occupation of the Ramgharias was appreciated and rewarded by the British, resulting in comparative economic prosperity for this caste. Today, many of them are successful industrialists and entrepreneurs.

54. Adrian Mayer, quoted in Census of India 1971, Scheduled Castes of Tamil Nadu, Series 19, Part VB, Vol.1, p 190.

55. Satish Saberwal, "Status and Entrepreneurship : The Ramgharia Caste", Dimensions of Social Change in India, M.N. Srinivas, S. Seshalah, V.S. Parthasarthy (ed). (Bombay, 1977) p 155.

Satish Saberwal ascribes the impressive achievements of the Ramgharias to their technological base in mid-nineteenth century India.

"During British rule their traditional skills were harnessed to new purposes : making high quality furniture and producing metalware for the British and doing skilled work on the railways, both in laying of the track and in building rolling stock."⁵⁶

Apparently, the railway officials held "the native artisans in the Punjab in high esteem".⁵⁷ Having built a reputation for good work, the Ramgharias found new openings in Assam and as far as East Africa, where they helped to build the railway lines.

Saberwal also attributes their success to their conversion to Sikhism. Sikhism has an egalitarian theme and Sikh scriptures place high value on manual work. The Sikh congregation or sangat is neutral to caste; so also the panjat or row of participants in public contexts. Besides, people outside Punjab were not aware of the finer hierarchical divisions within Sikhism, and tended to treat all Sikhs in a uniform manner. The Ramgharias seized on this, and worked their way to lucrative roles, such as the contractors, normally associated with persons of relatively high status.⁵⁸

56. Ibid, p 160.

57. Baden-Powell 1872, quoted by S. Saberwal, Ibid, p 160.

58. A study by V.S.D'Souza shows a positive relationship obtaining between social mobility and Sikhism. An examination of the educational, occupational and income hierarchies of castes in Chandigarh revealed that the Scheduled Caste converts to Sikhism had higher ratings than Scheduled Caste Hindus.

Regarding educational level, while Hindu Scheduled Castes had 0:0 rating, Sikh Scheduled Castes had 29.0 rating. Regarding occupation, Hindu Scheduled Castes scored 3.6 while Sikh Scheduled Castes scored 5.4. The median family income of the Hindu Scheduled Castes was Rs.58 while for the Sikh Scheduled Castes, it was Rs.138. Thus, in all three indices of secular status, Sikh Scheduled Castes of Chandigarh scored higher ratings than Scheduled Caste Hindus. V.S. D'Souza, "Caste, Occupation and Social Class in Chandigarh", Urban Sociology in India, M.S.A. Rao (ed). (New Delhi, 1974)

Another caste which made substantial economic gains were the Jatav Chamars of Agra. Before the growth of the shoe industry, the Jatav Chamars were mainly stone cutters, labourers, scavengers and tanners of leather. They performed these occupations as part of the village economy.

Near the turn of the last century, the shoe industry began in Agra, and over the years it has grown so that Agra shoes are now an important item in the internal and international markets. While a large share of the profits went to the Muslim merchants in the pre-partition period, and the Punjabi immigrants in the post-partition period, the Jatavs were not left untouched by the expansion. They were assured of regular employment. As leather work is traditionally assigned to them, they faced little competition from other castes. Thus, they experienced a measure of economic emancipation and even prosperity. They were no longer bound to the upper castes in patron-client ties. The economic changes brought leisure, wealth, independence and security, particularly to the wealthier Jatav contractors.⁵⁹ A number of them were able to buy land and to build houses of their own.

The Noniya Chauhans, traditional salt-sellers of U.P. made use of the changing opportunity structure during British rule to acquire wealth.

"During the last half of the nineteenth century an increasing number of Noniya acquired considerable wealth through contracting for earth work, brick making, and other traditional work for the British government. These Noniya contractors found a profitable business in road and bridge building and in the general expansion of public works during the period after the 1857 movement and before World War I."⁶⁰

The Boad Distillers of Orissa improved their economic position during British rule. Before 1855, the high caste warriors owned all the land. By 1953, the warriors had

59. Owen M. Lynch, The Politics of Untouchability : Social Mobility and Social Change in a City of India (New York 1969)

60. William L. Rowe, "The New Chauhans : A Caste Mobility Movement in North India" Social Mobility in the Caste System, J. Silverberg (ed) p 70.

only 28 per cent of the land.⁶¹ Most of the land had gone gone to the distiller castes.

F.G. Bailey attributes the phenomenal success of the distillers to government policy regarding the drink trade. In 1870, home-stills were closed down, and Konds had to patronize out-stills, run by the Ganjam and Boad Distillers. By the time the drink shops were closed in 1910, the distillers had made large profits. These were invested in land so that now they are in the second wealthiest category of landholding.⁶²

The Mahars of Maharashtra took up new occupations. Perhaps this was facilitated by the generalist nature of the Mahars' traditional work, that of village servants. S. Patwardhan writes, "the Mahars who have no specialized skills show the maximum degree of change from traditional to non-traditional occupations."⁶³ Here they differed from the Chambhar and other castes who continued with their hereditary crafts, as is evident from Table 2.

Table 2*

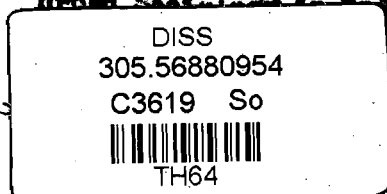
Caste	Percentage of those following traditional occupations
Mahar	Nil
Chambhar	69
Mang	29
Dhor	63
Holar	73

61. F.G. Bailey, Caste and the Economic Frontier : A Village in Highland Orissa (Bombay 1958)

62. Ibid - page -

63. S. Patwardhan, "Aspects of Social Mobility among Scheduled Castes of Poona" Urban Sociology in India, M.S.A. Rao (ed)., p 317.

* S. Patwardhan, "Aspects of Social Mobility among Scheduled Castes of Poona" Urban Sociology in India, M.S.A. Rao (Ed.), p.317.



TH-64



The Mahars took up employment in factories and on building constructions. Service in the army also attracted a large number of them.⁶⁴

According to Stephen Cohen, the cyclical pattern of war and low caste recruitment followed by peace and warrior elites characterized recruitment in the Indian army both in pre-British and early British days.⁶⁵ Thus, before 1857, Mahars were heavily recruited in the Indian army. They numbered between a quarter or a fifth of those units in which they were recruited and perhaps one-sixth of the entire Bombay army. But, due to the "martial races" theory, low caste units were reduced in size between 1870 and 1914, with a corresponding shift in the recruiting base to Jats, Gurkhas, Sikhs and Pathans.⁶⁶ During 1914 and 1918, Mahars and Mashbi Sikhs were again recruited, and Mahars had their own unit - 11th Mahars - which was disbanded after World War I. During World War II, the intensity and scale of combat had the effect of drawing large numbers of untouchables into the army. Thus, 10,000 Mahars and 33,000 Mashbi and Ramdasi Sikhs were taken into the combatant forces.

Whatever be their rank in the army, the untouchable recruits received education and training, and many of them were exposed to modernizing forces during their services overseas.

64. Military service has served as a channel of social mobility for some untouchable castes like Mahar, Mashbi Sikh, Ramdasi Sikh and some Chamar castes of U.P. This is particularly so during periods of warfare, when the army tends to draw heavily from low classes and low castes for manpower. War may thus provide a great, albeit unintended opportunity for social mobility of such groups. In 1943, the Chamar regiment with the status of First Battalion was formed, and served in Assam and Burma. Large numbers of Ramdasi Sikhs were recruited after the 1962 Emergency. Many Scheduled Caste persons were recruited in the non-combatant forces also.

65. Stephen Cohen, "The Untouchable Soldier : Caste, Politics and the Indian Army" Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. 23(3), May 1969, pp 453-468.

66. Ibid.

These individuals appear to have been integrated into or at least not rejected by the Syrian Christian Community.

K.C. Alexander observes,

120 } "In this study it was found that the few Pulayas employed in white collar jobs and those who are university graduates are rarely treated as untouchables. They are never called by such derogatory names as "Eda" and "hee" nor do these Pulayas address Syrian Christians with such honorific titles as Tampuran and Panikke. Educated and well-to-do Pulayas who have attained the appropriate lifestyle are given food inside Syrian Christian homes and they need not wash their plates as other Pulayas are expected to do. Syrian Christian neighbours and friends attend and participate in the wedding feasts of such well-to-do Pulaya Christians, and one case of intermarriage between the two groups was found."⁹⁶

Alexander concludes,

"Judging from these findings it may be inferred that the integration of these two Christian groups is dependent upon the Pulaya's attainment of equality in the secular sphere of life."⁹⁷

The role of Christian missionaries in improving the secular condition of the untouchables is evident in a study of Kaduthuchery, a village in Tamilnadu.⁹⁸ It is practically a single-caste village of Sambavars, a subsect of Paraiyans. Christian Sambavars outnumber Hindus, and they belong to three different Christian missions: Salvation Army, London Mission and Pentecostal.

Today, the village has a high level of literacy (66.47 per cent), higher than that of Madras city (58.8 per cent). The level of literacy among females is also high (55.7 per cent).⁹⁹

Both the Hindus and Christians stood to gain by the educational activities of the missionaries. But the level of literacy among Christians is slightly higher than among Hindus, as is evident from Table 6. ✓

96. Ibid, p 161.

97. Ibid, p 161.

98. Census of India, 1961, Kaduthuchery, Village Survey Monographs, 16, Madras, Volume IX, Part VI.

99. Ibid, p 33.

Table 6*

	<u>Percentage of literacy</u>
London Mission	72
Salvation Army	68
Pentecostal	67
Hindu Sambavars	64

Out of 142 persons who have completed the primary school, only 58 are Hindus. There are 2 Matrics among the Hindus, and 5 among the Christians. All the graduates, intermediates and female matrics belong to the Christian sects. Many of them have become teachers, accountants, clerks, etc.

We have earlier referred to the failure of Sanskritization as an avenue of mobility for the upwardly mobile untouchable castes. Their disillusionment with this avenue, together with the changes in the larger society and polity, gave rise to de-Sanskritization movements and concomitant politicization.

De-Sanskritization

Under the auspices of the Self-Respect Movement, W.P.A. Soundrapandian, leader of the Nadar Mahajana Sangam,

"urged the Nadars to abandon their pretensions (to high caste status) they had adopted without success in the previous generation: discard the sacred thread, cut the tuft, and assert the Dravidian Self-Respect of the Nadar community. He advocated re-marriage for widows and campaigned against the use of Brahmin purohitas in the rituals of Nadar life. Under his influence, the Self-Respect marriage came into almost universal favour among Nadars."¹⁰⁰

The Nadar Mahajana Sangam formulated demands for representation in the Legislative Council and government services; for benefits to the displaced toddy-tappers; and for educational benefits as a Backward Class.

O.M. Lynch expresses this change in terms of the reference group of identification. He says of the Jatav Chamars,

* Census of India 1961, Kaduthuachery, Village Survey Monographs, 16, p. 33.

100. R.L. Hardgrave, op. cit, p 179.

"their reference group of identification now became the Scheduled Castes with whom they identified as the oppressed, unenlightened, and deprived section of the population. These characteristics of the Scheduled Castes became the basis of a new Jatav self-image; it was a striking about face from their march to Kshatriyahood."¹⁰¹

The untouchables had realized the potential of their numbers in the newly emerging democratic polity.

Politicization

The Scheduled Castes, as we have seen, are a disparate category in terms of social and economic status. It was the British rulers who gave them a shared identity and status by denoting them as "Depressed Classes". Uma Ramaswamy says,

"The most significant act of the British, which set the trend for subsequent policy, was the denotation of castes rather than individuals as depressed."¹⁰²

Under the leadership of B.R. Ambedkar, the untouchables realized the importance of their collectivist stand in the politically fluid situation of pre-independence India, if they were to be ensured a position of equality in free India. Lloyd and Susan Rudolf regard this form of political participation as "horizontal mobilization".¹⁰³

The first impetus for collectivist action came with the act of 1909, which inaugurated a period of constitutional reform in India. Separate representation for Muslims provided under the Act opened up the possibility that other minorities like the untouchables may be similarly treated in the future. The increasing democratization of the political system raised the importance of numerical strength and brought home to the caste Hindus

101. O.M. Lynch, op. cit. p 86.

102. Uma Ramaswamy, "Self-Identity among Scheduled Castes: A Study of Andhra", Economic and Political Weekly, 23 November 1974, p 1959.

103. Lloyd I. Rudolf and Susanne Hoebber Rudolf, The Modernity of Tradition ; Political Development in India. (Chicago, 1967)

the political importance of the untouchables. According to Galanter, "it was only after 1909 that fears of diminished Hindu majorities and proposals for special legislative representation for 'untouchables' propelled 'untouchability' from the realm of philanthropy into the political arena."¹⁰⁴ (The establishment of the Depressed Classes Mission Society and the yearly All-India Depressed Classes Conference provided a venue for articulating the interests of the untouchables at the national level.)

The non-Brahmin movement also contributed to the politicization of the untouchables.¹⁰⁵ In need of allies, the non-Brahmin leaders brought untouchable groups into the movement, and Dr. T.M. Nair championed their cause at the Spur Tank meeting on 2 October 1917.¹⁰⁶ But, the association was shortlived, and its importance lies in the fact that it politicized the untouchable movement.

Civil Rights

Although British rule had established a nationwide system of law, formally espoused a norm of equality before the law and spread a consciousness of rights, yet "in practice, legal institutions often adapted themselves to prevailing patterns of disability."¹⁰⁷ Thus, "damages were awarded for purificatory ceremonies necessitated by the pollution caused by the presence of lower castes...".¹⁰⁸ "The practices which came to be called untouchability received limited and for the most part indirect support from the law...".¹⁰⁹

104. Marc Galanter, "The Abolition of Disabilities, Untouchability and the Law", Untouchables in Contemporary India, (ed) M.J. Mahar.

105. The movement was spearheaded by the middle-ranking castes of the then Madras Presidency who feared that with independence, power would pass to the well-entrenched Brahmin minority, who constituted 3 per cent of the population and held 90 per cent of the posts in government.

106. Eugene F. Irschick, Politics and Social Conflict in South India: The Non-Brahmin Movement and Tamil Separatism 1916-19 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969).

107. M. Galanter, op. cit. p 229.

108. Ibid, p 229.

109. Ibid, p 228.

The untouchables turned to militant techniques of non-violent direct action for removal of these civil disabilities. The first major satyagraha was organized by Ramaswamy Naicker at Vaikom in 1924. The purpose of the satyagraha was to gain the right to use a temple road for the depressed classes. In 1927, Ambedkar led the Mahad satyagraha, and later in the year he burned the Manusmriti. In 1929, he led the second Mahad satyagraha in an attempt to gain entry to the Parvati temple in Poona. The last of the Mahad satyagrahas took place at the Kalaram temple in Nasik.

The satyagrahas drew the attention of the general population to the plight of the untouchables. Between 1932 and 1936, a number of temple-entry and anti-disabilities bills were introduced in the Central Legislative Assembly and in the Madras and Bombay Legislatures. In 1938, the Madras Removal of Civil Disabilities Act was passed.¹¹⁰ Madras again took the lead in enacting a comprehensive temple entry act.¹¹¹

Political Rights

Simultaneous with the movement for removal of civil disabilities began the movement for political rights. From 1919 onward, the conviction grew among the untouchables that political rights and political power were necessary if the wrongs they had suffered were to be righted. In 1928, some eighteen Depressed Class organizations testified before the Simon Commission demanding adult franchise, separate electorates, and full representation for their people, who, they said "are unwilling any longer to depend on nomination by the government, and are tired of the lip sympathy of other parties which evaporate whenever the time for practical

110. The Act made it an offence to discriminate against untouchables, not only in regard to publicly supported facilities such as roads, wells, and transportation, but also in regard to "any other secular institution" to which the public was admitted, including restaurants, hostels, shops, etc. Marc Galanter, *Ibid.*

111. The Act made it a criminal offence for any person to prevent any Hindu from entering or worshipping at any temple to the same extent as Hindus generally. Marc Galanter, *Ibid.*

action comes? ¹¹² In 1930, Ambedkar said at the First Round Table Conference,

"We feel no body can remove our grievances as well as we can, and we cannot remove them unless we get political power in our own hands. I am afraid the Depressed Classes have waited too long for time to work miracles." ¹¹³

Ambedkar's solution to the problem was to ensure adequate representation of the harijans in the legislatures and civil services of the country. He said in 1930,

"The safest remedy for the protection of your interests seems to me lies in securing control over the future executive in self-governing India in your own hands, and that you can have only by means of adequate representation in the legislatures of the country." ¹¹⁴

Ambedkar's demand for separate electorates met with strong opposition from the Congress leaders, who were concerned at the consequences of a separate political identity implied in the demand. The Poona Pact, following negotiations between caste Hindu and untouchable leaders, supplanted separate electorates with joint electorates, where untouchables could vote along with caste Hindus. It retained the principle of reserved seats, increasing in fact, the number of such seats for untouchables in the provincial legislatures from 78 to 148. (In the Central Legislature, 18 per cent of the general seats were reserved for them) The Poona Pact became the basis on which the untouchables' rights and privileges were defined in the Government of India Act of 1935.

Thus, Ambedkar stressed the secular avenues of politics and education in the social mobility of the Scheduled Castes. Here he differed fundamentally from M.K. Gandhi, who had also taken up the cause of untouchables as his own. ¹¹⁵ o

112. Dolbeer, 1929, quoted by S. Verba, B. Ahmed and A. Bhatt, Caste, Race and Politics : A Comparative Study of India and the United States (California, 1971), p 50.

113. Keer, 1962, quoted in *Ibid*, p 52.

114. V.R. Krishna Iyer, *op. cit.*

115. See "Gandhi and Ambedkar - A Study in Leadership" by Eleanor Elliott, Untouchables in Contemporary India, J.M. Mahar (ed).

For, Gandhi tried to make untouchability a moral issue, and sought to bring about a change of heart in the caste Hindus. His ceaseless campaign constantly kept the problem before the public eye. He wrote,

"To remove untouchability is a penance that caste Hindus owe to Hinduism and to themselves. The purification required is not of untouchables but of the so-called superior castes. There is no vice that is special to the 'untouchables' not even dirt and insanitation. It is our arrogance which blinds us, superior Hindus, to our own blemishes and which magnifies those of our downtrodden brethren whom we have suppressed and whom we keep under suppression."¹¹⁶

Thus, the politicization of the untouchables in the pre- independence period brought tangible benefits in the form of the policy of "protective discrimination", to those castes included in the Scheduled Caste list. (However, some of the mobile untouchable castes, like the Nadars, Iravas, Ramgharias, opted out of the list. This may be regarded as the culmination of their social mobility movements, as henceforth they were no longer identified with the Scheduled Castes, and had joined the mainstream of Indian society.

116. V.R. Krishna Iyer, op. cit.

Social Mobility : post-independence period

In the last chapter, we have seen that one of the unintended consequences of colonial rule was the group mobility of some untouchable castes, and we examined the avenues of mobility taken by them. Their economic emancipation was followed by Sanskritization movements, gaining of a modern education, and even Westernization. On the other hand, a large number of untouchable castes were either unaffected, or else pauperized by the mechanization introduced by British rule.

We found that conversion to Christianity resulted in individual mobility, for the resources of the missionaries were too limited to make an impact on the converting group. The mobile individuals, having achieved a better secular status, appeared to be integrated into the upper levels of society.

(In the post-independence period, there has been a conscious and planned effort on the part of the government to improve the position of the Scheduled Castes. The policy of "protective discrimination" as we will see, has resulted in individual mobility on a wide scale, that is to say, among all the untouchable castes there are a few individuals who have joined the mainstream of national life, and can no longer be regarded as marginal men.

Before we go on to discuss the nature and extent of social mobility, we will briefly dwell on the changes in the wider society with the coming of independence.

Exogenous Changes

In the post-independence period, changes have been instituted at the societal level to abolish the civil disabilities suffered by the untouchables, to grant them equality of status and of opportunity, and to promote their educational and economic interests.

The Constitution of India, which came into force on 26 January 1950, declared India to be a secular, democratic republic, and ensured to all its citizens equality of status and of

opportunity. The Constitution provided for a number of safeguards for the untouchables, contained in articles 15, 16, 17, 23, 25, 29, 38, 164, 320, 330, 332, 334, 335 and 338 (see Appendix 1).¹¹⁷ The articles may be grouped under two headings according to their provisions:

- 1) Abolition of social disabilities.
- 2) Special provisions amounting to protective discrimination:
 - a) political reservations,
 - b) reservations in government service.

The Untouchability (Offences) Act outlaws the enforcement of disabilities "on the grounds of untouchability." Now called the Protection of Civil Rights Act, it provides for more stringent punishment for the offender.¹¹⁸

The Constitution requires the reservation of seats in the legislatures, a provision subject to renewal every ten years, and permits but does not require it in education and government service. The time limit for reserved seats has been extended twice. There is no time limit for any other concession.

The other programs include the granting of scholarships and other educational benefits, and a variety of welfare schemes such as providing better housing, revival of cottage industries and allotment of agricultural land to Scheduled Caste persons.

Apart from governmental attempts to abolish untouchability, there have been forces of modernization and social change working in Indian society, which have contributed to the weakening of this age-old institution.

With the urbanization and industrialization of Indian society, the notion of purity and pollution has become less pervasive

117. Vimal Chandra, "Constitutional Safeguards", Seminar, May 1974.

118. The new deterrents include disqualification from contesting elections to the legislatures, making offences under the Act cognizable and non-compoundable, collective fines for committing such offences jointly, enhancement of punishment with both fine and imprisonment, and summary trials in some cases. "A Social Evil", Statesman, Delhi, 11 September 1976.

in the last few decades. Srinivas observes, "As a result of the spread of education among all sections of the population, traditional ideas of purity are giving way to the rules of hygiene."¹¹⁹ According to Satish Saberwal, while caste endogamy has not declined, the notion of pollution is on the wane. With industrial growth, there is a demand for apprentices who are recruited from any caste.¹²⁰

Tables i, ii, iii and iv in Appendix 2 give an idea of the prevalence of untouchability in two southern states. If we assume that untouchability was widely practised previously, the tables indicate that the traditional social disabilities experienced by the untouchables are on the decline. For, some forms of untouchability are not found in any of the villages, and some villages no longer practise any form of untouchability.

However, despite the general decline, the institution of untouchability has by no means ceased to exist, especially in the rural areas. Newspapers occasionally carry reports of Harijan youths and women being beaten and even burned. Sometimes, this is done with the connivance of the police, e.g. in the incidents reported from Gahlaur village in Monghyr district and another village in Gonda district.¹²¹ Harijans are still suppressed, especially when they are economically dependent on the upper castes. B.S. Cohn's study of the Chamars of Madhopur shows how the Thakurs used economic sanctions to quell the rebellion of the Chamars, and effectively quashed their legal case with the connivance of upper caste officials.¹²² According to

119. M.N. Srinivas, Social Change in Modern India, p 124.

120. Satish Saberwal, "Receding Pollution : Intercaste Relations in Urban Punjab" Sociological Bulletin, September 1973.

121. S.C. Kala, "Police hand in burning of Harijan village alleged", Times of India, 2 April 1974. See also Inder Malhotra, "How Harijans Suffer : Prejudice and Persecution", Times of India, 19 July 1973.

122. B.S. Cohn, "The Changing Status of Depressed Caste", Village India, McKim Marriott (ed). (Bombay 1961).

Galanter, the Untouchability (Offences) Act has "followed a 'downward spiral' of ineffectiveness, rather than an upward spiral of increasing use."¹²³ He says, "the present situation then, is characterized by a wide gap between the law on the books and the law in operation."¹²⁴

The inconsistency between attitudes and behaviour must also be born in mind. Often people express support of the anti-untouchability legislation while subtly practising untouchability. M.F. Abraham points out discrepancies at three levels: awareness, attitude, behaviour.¹²⁵ In the village of Alamarathupathy, he found that a favourable attitude towards the Untouchability Act was even higher than awareness. "Though 10 per cent of non-Harijans have no knowledge of legal sanctions against untouchability, there is not a single non-Harijan who is an advocate of untouchability in all spheres of life."¹²⁶ However, in terms of behaviour, he found that while untouchability is not practised in public places, it is a different matter in private life. "Caste Hindus do not accept water from Harijans, nor do they serve them food or drink in their own vessels. Harijans are not usually permitted to enter the houses of caste Hindus Dhobis and Barbers do not serve Harijans in the same manner in which they serve caste Hindus the private life of people is thus influenced by caste consciousness"¹²⁷

123. Marc Galanter, op. cit. p 285.

124. Ibid, p 285.

125. M.F. Abraham, "Social Contours of a South Indian Village", Interdiscipline, Vol. III, pp 135-149.

126. Ibid, p 148.

127. Ibid, pp 137-138. The discrepancy between behaviour towards untouchables in the public sphere and in private life is corroborated by a study of untouchability in rural Gujarat. I.P. Desai, Untouchables in Rural Gujarat, Popular Prakashan (Bombay, 1976) p. 259.

We will now consider the activities and achievements of the Scheduled Castes in the secular - political, economic and educational - dimensions of social stratification.

Political Action

The reservation of legislative seats and government jobs ensures that the Scheduled Castes will find representation in the legislative and executive bodies of the country. It also guarantees that a few Scheduled Caste leaders will reach the pinnacle of the political and administrative hierarchy. It is important to know to what extent the political leaders provide a basis for Scheduled Caste interest-articulation in the system of parliamentary democracy with adult franchise, instituted in India.

According to Rajni Kothari, "the constitutional provision of certain special privileges including reservation of legislative seats and administrative positions has acted as a special catalyst of political mobilization."¹²⁸ But the mobilization has been of the "vertical" kind, as against the horizontal mobilization we saw prevailing in the pre-independence period under the leadership of B.R. Ambedkar. Lloyd and Susan Rudolf state that "most village untouchables remain subject to vertical mobilization by dominant castes upon whom they are economically dependent."¹²⁹ (Thus, untouchable leaders are co-opted into upper-caste factions. Lelah Dushkin notes, "under this arrangement, locally powerful upper-caste notables mobilize the vote to fill the reserved seats with their own Scheduled Caste men, whom they manipulate and control. These men are bound to them by traditional ties, as well as political debts, and the kind of leadership expected by them is good followership."¹³⁰ Similarly, the Scheduled Caste politicians have largely been co-opted into the erstwhile ruling party, the Congress, where they stood to gain immediate benefits.

128. Rajni Kothari, Politics in India (New Delhi, 1970), pp 244-245

129. Lloyd I. Rudolf and Susanne Hoerber Rudolf, op.cit. p 152.

130. Lelah Dushkin, "Scheduled Caste Politics", Untouchables in Contemporary India, M.J. Mahar (ed). p 209.

The Rudolfs state, "Vertical mobilization in one form or another helps to explain the success among Scheduled Caste voters of the conservative Swatantra and the right radical Jan Sangh parties in Rajasthan and of Andhra Reddi notables both within and without the Congress Party." 131

Vertical mobilization, and the co-optation implied in it weakens the interest-articulation function of the group in politics, and its ability to draw attention to and fight the exploitation by the upper castes and classes. As such, it is not conducive to an improvement in the position of the group.

Rather, whatever mobility that does occur is in the nature of individual mobility. The politician invariably, though not always, uses the "vote bank" for his personal ends.

Saberwal gives the instance of the mobile Ad Dharmi Member of Parliament from the reserved constituency of Modulpur.

"The Ad Dharmi Member of Parliament from this constituency - formerly a school teacher - has over the years built himself a large house in a new modern neighbourhood, acquired a substantial farm which his sons cultivate with at least one tractor, and has a jeep. He is rude and brusque in his dealings with Harijans who seek his advice and mediation ..." 132

While the exigencies of electoral politics keep the Scheduled Caste politician in contact, to some extent, with his caste fellows, the reservation of government jobs "simply siphon off and silence the ablest young men, who might otherwise provide effective leadership to their less fortunate caste-fellows." 133 As such, says Lelah Dushkin, protective discrimination may be viewed as a method of social control by the upper castes over the Harijans. 134

131. Lloyd I. Rudolf and Susanne Hoerber Rudolf, ^{op.cit.} p 153.

132. Satish Saberwal, "The Reserved Constituency: Candidates and Consequences", Economic and Political Weekly, 8 January 1972, p 78. See also Mobile Men: Limits to Change in Urban Punjab (New Delhi, 1976) by the same author.

133. Lelah Dushkin, op. cit. p 217.

134. Ibid.

Though vertical mobilization appears to characterize Scheduled Caste political activity in the post-independence period, horizontal mobilization has not altogether ceased. It is evident in the political party of the Scheduled Castes, the Republican Party of India, and in the Dalit Panther Movement.

Party-wise mobilization

B.R. Ambedkar visualized the Republican Party of India which was formed in 1957 as a party built on greater numerical strength than its precursor, the Scheduled Caste Federation. ¹³⁵

He conceived of it as an alliance of Harijans, backward classes and tribes. Among the R.P.I.'s specific aims are fighting for equality of opportunity for every Indian, provision for giving the 'have nets' of the past special consideration, and fighting for removal of exploitation of man by man and class by class. ¹³⁶

Over the years, the R.P.I. has not emerged as a strong political party, voicing the interests of the Scheduled Castes. There are a number of reasons for its limited effectiveness.

The issues on which the party sought to win an election were often incorporated into the Congress Party programme, thus taking the wind out of the party sails. For instance, in the 1957 elections, the S.C.F., in alliance with other opposition parties, demanded the creation of a Maharashtra State. On this basis it won a sufficient number of caste Hindu votes for a victory, but its popularity was shortlived following the creation of Maharashtra State after the elections.

135. The Scheduled Caste Federation was established by Dr. Ambedkar in 1942 with the objective of securing political rights and representation for the Scheduled Castes. This was a direct appeal to them to win power through unity. However, the S.C.F. was trounced at the polls in the 1946 elections, and the Congress Party won an overwhelming victory in the reserved constituencies. Ambedkar blamed the defeat on the system of joint electorates in which Congress Scheduled Caste candidates rode in on the coat-tails of their party running mates. The 1946 election result was a major blow to the S.C.F.

136. T.K. Oommen, "Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes", India Since Independence : Social Report on India 1947-1972, S.C. Dube (ed). (New Delhi, 1977).

The strength of the party is too meagre and localized. Its membership is drawn mainly from the Mahars of Maharashtra, and the Jatav Chamars and Ad Dharmis of U.P. and Punjab. It has not been able to bridge the vast spatial, cultural and linguistic differences between the Scheduled Castes of the country by giving them a common political identity. Its close association with Buddhism has alienated those untouchables who are unwilling to change their religion.

An overwhelming majority of Scheduled Caste politicians function through the Congress Party, which, till recently, was in power. The R.P.I. leaders are not accepted as the exclusive or even important champions of the Scheduled caste cause.

Over the years there has been a deterioration in the quality of leadership. After the death of Ambedkar, N. Sivaraj was its leader upto 1964, till his death. The next president of the party, B.S. Gaikwad was sympathetic to the Congress, and a large number of R.P.I. leaders joined the Congress during this period. The party gradually weakened and its strength was considerably eroded by 1970, when a formal split took place, giving rise to two factions.

By and large, the R.P.I. has been co-opted into the Congress, where it sometimes worked as a pressure group in the factional fights within the Congress Party. Alternatively, it entered into alliances with other political parties. It was the inane politics of the R.P.I. which prompted a section of the Mahar Youth to break away and start the Dalit Panther Movement.

Dalit Panthers

The R.P.I. accepts the fundamental tenets of the Constitution and aims to pursue the goals laid down in the Constitution through the system of parliamentary democracy. An important reason for its attachment to parliamentary democracy is that Ambedkar was a staunch constitutionalist, and he piloted the Constitution through the Constituent Assembly, of which he was Chairman. The Dalit Panthers, on the other hand, are a group of young, militant radicals,

disillusioned with the leadership of the R.P.I. They have opted for confrontation and revolution. They declare, "we want to rule the whole country. Our target is not individuals, but a whole system rotten to the core."¹³⁷ They draw their inspiration from Marxism, which gives them a broader orientation, including all "dalits" or depressed peoples such as factory workers, farm labourers, landless tenants, poor peasants etc., many of whom belong to the non-Scheduled Castes.

However, notwithstanding their ambitious programme, the Dalit Panthers have scarcely initiated any action programme. Perhaps the only known political confrontation led by the Panthers was the electoral boycott of the Central Bombay parliamentary election in 1974. The Scheduled Castes of the constituency abstained from voting, leading to the defeat of the Congress candidate.

The main thrust of the Dalit Panther Movement seems to be in the sphere of intellectual awakening and creation of a revolutionary consciousness through literature. Writers like Namdeo Dhasal, Raja Dhale and J.V. Pawar are spearheading the movement through their highly emotive writings in Marathi. The strength of their feelings is evident in their poems. (See Appendix 3)

As yet, they have only a limited following, mainly among the urban Mahar youth. In order to become a political force, they need to extend their support base beyond the Mahars.

"If the Dalit Panthers are to survive as a party, they will have to beware of becoming in effect a fourth faction of the R.P.I., enmeshed in the caste politics of the Mahar community."¹³⁸

Another theoretical possibility of horizontal mobilization is the formation of a scheduled caste power bloc in the legislatures.

137. Ibid, p 184.

138. "Dalit Panthers : Another View", From a Special Correspondent, Economic and Political Weekly, 4 May 1974, p 716.

Power bloc in the legislatures

One such power bloc existed in the Lok Sabha under the active leadership of Jagjiwan Ram, and it has sometimes worked to secure benefits for the untouchables. Its success has depended on the political circumstances prevailing at the time. For instance, in the 1967 elections, the Congress, though strong in the reserved seats, suffered a diminished majority, which dropped from 71 to 55 per cent. The defection of little more than half the Congress reserved seat holders would have brought down the government. This seems to have given them a position of strategic importance, and to have provided them with a political leverage which they earlier lacked.

Again in November, 1969, when the Congress Party split took places, Mrs. Gandhi retained a governing majority largely through the loyalty of Jagjiwan Ram and the reserved seat holders, and this gave them a crucial importance.

As a result, many of their demands were met. They secured a number of ministerial posts. On 13 November 1967, three of the five deputy ministers appointed were Scheduled Caste M.P.s. In 1968, reservations for promotion in government service were liberalized. In the fall of 1969, Buddhists became eligible for Scheduled Caste post-matric scholarships. In December, the Constitution was amended again, by unanimous vote, to extend reserved seats for another ten years. In January, 1970, government proposed to stiffen the Untouchability (Offences) Act. In April, reservations for Scheduled Castes regarding direct recruitment to the central services were raised from 12% to 15 per cent.

In the states, ad hoc Scheduled Caste groups do exist in every assembly, but they vary in their degree of organization, continuity and effectiveness. One such bloc existed in Andhra Pradesh with D. Sanjeeviah as leader. But the fact that the states' per capita expenditure on Scheduled Caste welfare was the lowest in the country, and in 1968, its politicians proved indifferent to the Kanchikacherai harijan burning incident which horrified people elsewhere

in the country, points to the limited effectiveness of this power bloc.

Perhaps the effectiveness of such blocs is limited because they rest more on reservations - statutory numbers in the legislature than on a power base with the voters. Also, the Scheduled Caste M.L.As. tend to concentrate their efforts more on distributing the benefits of 'protective discrimination' such as government jobs, scholarships and ministerships, among the more prosperous of the Scheduled Caste members, than on building up the 'horizontal unity' on which such a power base must rest. Besides, they are called upon to represent the non-Scheduled Caste members in their constituencies, who, in almost all cases outnumber the Scheduled Castes, even in the reserved constituencies. Though the integrating function of electoral politics is thus performed, the unity of the Scheduled Castes vis-a-vis the others, is broken.

As Lelah Dushkin says, "The kind of power that will be respected in the long run will have to be generated outside the legislatures and beyond the devices of protective discrimination."¹³⁹ Such a power base is yet to be created.

This is all the more important if we accept Myron Weiner's understanding of the Indian political situation, operating in an economy of scarce resources. For, he says, the government is only responsive to organized demands, which sometimes deteriorates into violence. "Only when public order is endangered by a mass movement is the government willing to make a concession, not because they consider the demand legitimate, but because they then recognize the strength of the group making the demand and its capacity for destructiveness. Thus, the government often alternates between unresponsiveness to the demands of large but peaceful groups and total concession to groups that press their demands violently."¹⁴⁰ In such a

139. Lelah Dushkin, op. cit. p.226.

140. Myron Weiner, The Politics of Scarcity : Public Pressure and Political Response in India (Bombay, 1962) p 216.

political environment, the organized sectors of society (students, labour, civil servants), representing a relatively privileged class are able to extract benefits while the demands of relatively unorganized, depressed sections of the population go unheeded.

Thus, the unity and vigilance of the Scheduled Castes is necessary if the rights for which Ambedkar fought, and which were guaranteed to them in the Constitution, are to be translated into reality. For power is rarely, if ever, handed down from one group to another. Such power largely remains a legal fiction. It has to be fought for and won, and this requires strength, unity and leadership. The vertical mobilization of Scheduled Caste politicians which we have seen prevailing in the post-independence period, and their cooption into the, till recently, ruling Congress Party, is not conducive to an improvement of their position in society.

According to V.R. Krishna Iyer, the mobilization of Scheduled Castes at the village level is an essential prerequisite for an improvement in their conditions. He suggests that Special Courts be set up for trial of offences against untouchability.

"The Special Courts must be located in villages where harijans mostly live Special Courts must be sitting solely for cases under this Act and the composition must be of two laymen of whom one must be a harijan and the third a lawyer." 141

N.K. Bose, ex-Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Tribes suggested that the only effective way to end untouchability "is direct action, over and above other measures in the form of a non-violent assertion of their constitutional rights by the Scheduled Castes."¹⁴²

141. V.R. Krishna Iyer, op. cit.

142. "Government told to give Harijans their due", Indian Express (Delhi), 26 February 1970.

Reservation of government jobs

A chief avenue of occupational mobility in post-independence India has been through the system of reserved posts in government. Government jobs offer security and prestige. A few Scheduled Caste individuals have gained positions of power and status in the highest ranks of the bureaucracy, by virtue of the reserved posts. In a society of widespread unemployment and stiff competition for jobs, the reserved posts ensure that the Scheduled Castes find representation in the civil services. Table 7 gives the Scheduled Caste employment in the Central Government Services from 1959 to 1966.

Table 7.

Scheduled Caste Employment in Central Government Services, January 1959 and January 1966

Class of Post	Total Employees	1 9 5 9	
		S. Caste Number	S. Caste Per cent
I. Senior administrative	10,403	123	1.18
II. Other administrative	20,501	498	2.38
III. Clerical, stenographic	829,471	57,625	6.95
IV. Attendants, peons (excluding sweepers)	914,705	157,704	17.24
	<u>1,775,080</u>	<u>215,940</u>	<u>12.16</u>
		1 9 6 6	
I.	20,379	361	1.77
II.	30,001	974	3.25
III.	1,117,754	99,017	8.86
IV.	1,176,826	211,073	17.94
	<u>2,344,960</u>	<u>311,425</u>	<u>13.28</u>

From the table it is clear that (1) the recruitment of Scheduled Caste persons in government service falls short of the 15 per cent reservations made for them. (2) There is a lop-sided distribution over the four categories or classes of posts, so that in 1966, over two-thirds were menials, and all but 1,335 of the rest were clerks. Thus,

* Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes 1966-67, p 15.

"while reservations have had some impact on clerical posts, the Scheduled Castes have entered higher ranks only very slowly."¹⁴³ Table 8 shows the deficit in representation in the different categories:

Table 8*

Deficit in Representation in Different Categories of Posts from 1.1.1957 to 1.1.1970 in the case of Scheduled Castes

General increase in posts	Scheduled Castes			
	Actual increase	Expected increase	Deficit	
Class I	18,244	549	2361	1812
Class II	23,595	1223	3114	1891
Class III	6,57,052	94,622	96,062	1440
	6,98,891	96,394	1,01,537	5,143

143. Lelah Dushkin, op. cit. p 179.

* T.K. Oommen, "Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes", India since Independence, S.C. Dube (ed.) (New Delhi 1977), p.165. The part of table on Scheduled Tribes is omitted.

Certain problems stand in the way of full utilization of reserved posts.

Most Class I and Class II posts are filled by promotion where reservations do not apply, unless the Ministry adopts special rules. The only one to do so was the Railway Board in the early 1960s, when the Railway Minister was an untouchable.

The maintenance of a roster indicating the recruitment from these categories is not centralized and this leads to inadequate dissemination of vital information. Since the reservation is proportionate to annual vacancies, by the time the non-fulfilment of target is discovered, the time lapses. ¹⁴⁴

Thirdly, the prejudice of recruiting authorities to candidates from the Scheduled Castes and the built-in inferiority complex of the latter are additional obstacles in the process of recruitment.

Economic Dimension

B.W.C. Allotment of land is one of the major programmes for improving the economic position of the Scheduled Castes. As owner of a piece of land, however small in area, the Harijan farmer acquires a prestige earlier denied to him in an agricultural society in which land is an important source of wealth.

The three main sources of land for distribution are (1) land through reclamation of cultivable waste lands (2) surplus land released through imposition of ceilings on agricultural holdings and (3) lands made available through Bhoodan and Gramdan. The Government of India has spent Rs.100 crores during the last eighteen years on allotment of land to Scheduled Castes. In the First, Second and Third Plan periods, 117.46 lakh acres of land were distributed to landless agricultural workers, including Scheduled Castes. ¹⁴⁵

This again has led to individual mobility, as a few Scheduled Caste persons in each area are allotted land for cultivation, while the vast majority continue as landless agricultural labourers.

144. T.K. Oommen, Ibid, . p 166.

145. T.K. Oommen, Ibid.

But, bestowing land on the Scheduled Castes is not enough, and there should be follow-up measures to ensure that the new landowners derive the maximum benefit from the conferral of land on them.

As it stands today, it appears that the Scheduled Caste agriculturists have to contend with a number of difficulties. Sometimes, the land allotted to them remains merely on paper, and they are unable to take possession of it. Secondly, the land holdings are very small, and usually of fallow or waste land. This requires a lot of investment, which the Harijan agriculturist lacks. Moreover, the small acreage of land does not make it an economically viable unit capable of supporting his family, so he has to supplement his income. Table 9 gives the size of the holdings of Scheduled Caste agriculturists in Gujarat.

Table 9*

Size of Cultivating Holding	Gujarat Total Population	Gujarat Scheduled Castes
Less than one acre	32	88
1.0 - 2.4 acres	142	264
2.5 - 4.9 acres	178	219
5.0 - 7.4 acres	153	145
7.5 - 9.9 acres	89	75
10.0 - 12.4 acres	94	64
12.5 - 14.9 acres	37	21
15.0 - 29.9 acres	175	89
30.0 - 49.9 acres	73	25
50.0 + acres	23	4
Unspecified	4	6
Total	1000	1000

Thirdly, where they are share-croppers, an inordinately large share of the produce is appropriated by the landowner.

According to B.V. Pandya, the landowner takes as much as 89.97 per cent,¹⁴⁶ but 60 per cent is not an uncommon figure.

The Harijan cultivator has also to contend with the opposition of the upper castes arising out of the notion of untouchability, and which is manifested in various forms of harassment and

* V.N. Kothari, A Study of Economic Profiles of the Scheduled Castes in Gujarat (Baroda 1976), p 35.

146. B.V. Pandya, Striving for Economic Equality p 134.

prejudice. As mentioned earlier, these difficulties are compounded by the lack of unity and organization of the Scheduled Castes. The complaints registered by the Scheduled Castes give an indication of the problems they face, ranging from preventing them to cultivate their own land to murder.

"In the year 1952-53, two Chamar families of village Zekda (Dholka) were deprived of their ownership in land by the higher caste agriculturist. In the same year, one protected tenant of Moti-Boru village (Dholka) was prevented from cultivating his land. In 1953-54, one of our selected cultivating families from Jawa village (Sanand) had undertaken joint cultivation with a Koli (higher caste) cultivator to safeguard his life and crops." 147

Discrimination by village artisans like blacksmiths and carpenters, who refused to repair their agricultural implements, was also reported. Normal requirements of water for irrigation purposes were not met with. Complaints were made by the Harijans that they did not get any benefit from the government irrigation scheme, although they had to bear their share of the cost. There were also complaints that their crops were grazed away. It was believed by the Harijans that the chief reason for frequent thefts from their farms was due to the fact that threshing operations took place in a corner of the threshing ground, as they were not allowed to use the central place for this operation. Finally, the Harijans had to employ hired labour from the upper castes for obtaining water from the village well, and this unduly raised their production costs. The losses suffered by the selected sample of Scheduled Caste cultivating families revealed that they amounted to 8 per cent of the aggregate value of their agricultural produce. 148

While the economic position of a few individuals has improved as a result of the measures initiated by government, the economic condition of the Scheduled Castes in general in

147. Ibid, p 142.

148. Ibid, p 143.

the post-independence period continues to be poor.

A study of four districts of Tamilnadu reveals the difference in economic standing of Harijan and non-Harijan families.¹⁴⁹

In a comparison of the poorest households in both groups, it was found that the per capita income of the poorest Harijan households is less than that of the poorest non-Harijan households; Similarly, a comparison of the affluent households in both groups shows that the per capita income of the latter is very much higher than that of the former.¹⁵⁰

Only 11 per cent of the Harijans came near the average per capita income of the state as a whole.¹⁵¹

The non-Harijans enjoy a better standard of living than the Harijans as is evident from Table 10.

Table 10*

Average of certain important economic factors of Harijan and non-Harijan households, for the four districts combined.

	<u>Harijans</u>	<u>Non-Harijans</u>
Average per capita income	227.0	406.0
Average per capita expenditure	349.0	434.0
Dependency ratio	1.6	3.0
Average household size	4.8	5.4
Percentage fully employed	17.0	43.0
Percentage of owners	13.0	40.6
No. engaged in non-agricultural work	22.5	39.08
Total acres of land owned	525 acres (800 households)	446 acres (197 households)
Size of holding	2.8	4.4
Per capita land per household	0.66	2.3
Literacy	24.6	43.0

The study shows that poverty is more widespread and acute among Harijans than among Non-Harijans. In 1970, 76.1 per cent of Harijans were found to be living below the poverty line while the corresponding figure for non-Harijans was

149. Alladi Vagiswari, Income-Earning Trends and Social Status of the Harijan Community in Tamil Nadu (Madras, 1972).

150. Ibid

151. Ibid

* Alladi Vagiswari, Income-Earning Trends and Social Status of the Harijan Community in Tamil Nadu (Madras 1972). Page - 109

50.8. 26 per cent of non-Harijans experience extreme poverty, i.e. their per capita expenditure is less than 50 per cent of the subsistence level.¹⁵²

Very few Harijan families were able to save. On the contrary, 566 of the 800 families in the sample, were in debt. Of them, 453 families, or 80.5 per cent borrowed for unproductive purposes. The gravity of the situation is clear from the fact that most of them had borrowed merely in order to survive.¹⁵³

Thus, while there has been individual mobility through the reservation of seats in legislatures and in government service through allotment of land and other schemes, on the whole the economic position of the untouchables is far from good. In the rural areas they constitute the agricultural labour force, which is unorganized and unregulated. The wages are low and the work is seasonal, resulting in underemployment. Their monetary indebtedness to their employers gives rise to the pernicious system of bonded labour .

From this, we may conclude that there has been a qualitative change in that some Scheduled Caste persons now occupy high offices in the political and administrative hierarchy. But the magnitude of change is limited, confined as it is to a few individuals. As such, the individual mobility which has occurred in the post-independence period appears to be mainly of a symbolic nature.

Education ✓

In the post-independence period the Scheduled Castes have been the beneficiaries of a number of government schemes to promote their education. They are granted facilities such as award of scholarships, midday meals in schools, monetary aid to buy books and clothes, hostels, etc. The number of post-matric Scheduled Caste scholarship holders rose from 655 in 1947-48 to 1,04,098 in 1967-68.¹⁵⁴ The number of overseas

152. Ibid.

153. Ibid.

154. T.K. Oommen, op. cit.

4.30
2-22

scholarship holders has also been steadily increasing. Reservation of seats in professional institutions like Sainik schools, Industrial Training Institutes have also been made.

As a result of all these measures, the literacy rate of the Scheduled Castes rose from 1.3 per cent in 1931 to 10.27 per cent in 1961.¹⁵⁵ However, it falls far short of the literacy rate of the general population, which stood at 24 per cent in 1961.

J.P. Naik has developed the concept of 'coefficient of equality' to compare the enrolment of Scheduled Castes in educational institutions with that of the general population.¹⁵⁶ If their enrolment is in the same proportion as their population to the total population, the coefficient of equality is 100. But the coefficient of equality of the Scheduled Castes, as in Table 11, was found to be only 64.7 in 1960-61 and 68.4 in 1965-66.

Table 11+

Percentage Enrolment Ratio and Coefficient of Equality for Scheduled Castes in different Categories of Institutions (1960-61 and 1965-66)

Sl. No.	Type of Institution	Percentage Enrolment Ratio		Percentage Enrolment Ratio	
		1960-61	1965-66	1960-61	1965-66
Schools					
1.	Pre-Primary	3.8	5.9	20.3	31.6
2.	Primary/Junior Basic	14.5	15.1	77.5	84.5
3.	Middle/Senior Basic.	9.9	10.8	52.9	57.8
4.	High/Higher Secondary	7.7	8.5	41.2	45.5
5.	Vocational	*	8.5	*	45.5
6.	Special	*	11.3	*	60.4
7.	Others	*	16.5	*	88.2
8.	Total (Schools)	12.1	13.1	64.7	70.1
9.	Colleges for General Education	5.4	4.9	28.9	26.2
**10.	Colleges for Professional Education	14.7	5.1	78.6	27.3
11.	Colleges for other Education	*	*	*	*
**12.	Universities, etc.	*	2.8	*	15.0
13.	Total (Colleges and Universities).	12.1	4.9	64.7	26.2
14.	Grand Total	12.1	12.8	64.7	68.4

*Shown against Colleges for Professional Education, as separate figures are not available.

**Included under Colleges for General Education.

*** Includes Schools for Vocational, Special and other Education also.

+ J.P. Naik, Education of the Scheduled Castes, ICSSR, (New Delhi, 1971) p12

As J.P. Naik says, "This implies that the Scheduled Castes have still a fairly long way to go to even up with the educational development of the other communities."¹⁵⁷

The Scheduled Castes have taken differentially to education. Some, like the Chhimbe have made fairly rapid progress in literacy, and gaining an education has taken on the dimensions of a movement among them. Table 12 gives the literacy rate of the Chhimbe compared to that of the general population.

Table 12*

Percentage of literacy among Chhimbe	:	23.93
Percentage of literacy among Scheduled Castes of Himachal Pradesh	:	8.46
Percentage of literacy of the general population of Himachal Pradesh	:	17.15

Thus, the literacy rate of the Chhimbe is nearly three times higher than for the Scheduled Castes of Himachal Pradesh, and it is even higher than that for the general population.

Another feature is that a significant number of Chhimbe (43.6 per cent) have achieved some educational level. The bulk of them have gained a primary level of education (39.43 per cent). And, during the last decade, the Chhimbe have made some progress in the higher levels of education, so that there are now among them a few graduates and post-graduates, as well as persons with technical qualifications.¹⁵⁸

While some like the Chhimbe have made rapid strides in education, other Scheduled Castes have resisted it. The reasons are many. Firstly, they cannot afford to keep a

155. T. K. Oommen, *op. cit.*

156. J.P. Naik, Education of the Scheduled Castes, I.C.S.S.R., 1971.

157. *Ibid.*, p 12.

* Census of India 1961, Chhimbe Scheduled Castes of Himachal Pradesh, Ethnographic Study 19, Monograph Series, Part VB(IV), p 12.

158. *Ibid.*

child in school for a number of years. "Sending a child to school meant an immediate fall in family income and a long term investment of doubtful nature."¹⁵⁹ Secondly, education does not guarantee a job in the employment market. Thus, the Sikligar have not encouraged education for their children.

"They feel that higher education would be economically disastrous for them. In polishing of metals they have a fairly prosperous industry, and they want their children to stick to it. They apprehend that if the boys receive higher education they will aspire for white-collar jobs which they may or may not get. They will not acquire skill in their traditional occupation. Thus, for an uncertain social goal, they will lose the security of livelihood they have at present."¹⁶⁰

This highlights the drawbacks of the present system of education, which has mainly a theoretical content and neglects teaching of practical skills. Education is also not related to the needs of the rural environment. Lakshman of the Vannan caste who was interviewed said, "the most urgent problem facing the community is that of the unemployment of the half educated people."¹⁶¹ He suggested that more emphasis be given to imparting technical education to his people.

Tables 13 and 14 give the literacy rate and level of educational attainment of some of the Scheduled Castes.

Table 13*

<u>Percentage of Literacy</u>		
<u>S. Caste</u>	<u>S. Castes of State</u>	<u>General population</u>
Thandan (T.Nadu)	32.31	17.20
Shenva (Gujarat)	14.59	22.46
Vannan (Madras)	38.0	17.2
Vettuvan (Kerala)	25.19	24.7
Dhanak (Punjab & Haryana)	6.72	9.64
Khatik (U.P.)	9.51	7.10
Mala Jangam (A.P.)	20.00	8.5
Maladasaria & Maladasu (A.P.)	23.78	8.47
Mitha Ayyalavar (A.P.)	27.70	8.47
Tiyar (W.Bengal)	8.1	13.6

159. B.R. Chauhan, "Special Problems in the Education of the Scheduled Castes" Sociology of Education in India, op.cit, p234.

160. Census of India 1961, Sikligar of Delhi, Ethnographic Study 1, Monograph Series, Part VB(IV) p 8-9.

161. Census of India 1961, Vannan, a Scheduled Caste of Madras, Ethnographic Study 4, Monograph Series, Part VB(IV).

Table 14***Percentage of Literacy**

S. Caste	Male	Female	Rural	Urban
Thandan	40.28	27.48		
Vannan	47.3	28.9		
Vettuwan	31.5	18.82	24.15	32.45
Dhanak	12.25	0.56	5.94	10.52
Khatik	15.66	2.73	7.26	17.85
Mala Jangam	36.10	3.60		
Mala Dasu & Dasari	38.45	9.24		
Mitha Ayyalavar	51.20	1.90		
Tiyar	14.50	1.70	12.70	21.80

Levels of Education

S. Caste	Literate	Primary or Junior Basic	Matric and above
Thandan	73.45	24.07	2.46
Vettuwan	76.0	-	-
Dhanak	57.78	38.44	3.71
Khatik	76.28	19.91	3.81
Mitha Ayyalavar	83.33	27.71	0.57

From the tables, the following features regarding the education of the Scheduled Castes are evident:

- 1) On the whole, their rate of literacy is lower than that of the general population.
- 2) They have made the greatest strides in education at the primary level. Their progress in higher education is still very limited.
- 3) The men have a higher literacy rate than the women.
- 4) The urban Scheduled Castes have a higher literacy rate than the rural Scheduled Castes.

We have seen that in the post-independence period, the policy of protective discrimination has encouraged individual mobility in both the political and economic spheres. This has been spread out in the sense that all or most of the untouchable castes can boast of a few individuals who have made it good

* Tables 13 and 14 ^{are} compiled from Census of India 1961, Monograph Series, Part VB(IV).

and acquired wealth or high positions. But the "upwardly mobile castes" discussed in the last chapter, who benefitted from colonial rule and led the untouchable movement in the pre-independence period, have had an advantage over the other untouchable castes in the post-independence period. Many of them, as we noted, were not included in the Scheduled Caste list. But those who were, as were the Mahars, have almost cornered the "protective discrimination" benefits.

"A study of the relative performance of the different Scheduled Castes in Maharashtra shows that the Mahars have appropriated the lion's share of concessions and privileges extended by Government to the Scheduled Castes.¹⁶² The study sample shows that 51 per cent of the Mahars were employed as railway workers, watchmen or peons in government service, while only 22 per cent of Chambhars were so employed.¹⁶³ There were no Holars or Dhors in government service.

The utilization of scholarships which is an index to the degree of access to higher education, shows a differential rate among the various Scheduled Castes. Table 15 gives the differential impact of the special facilities.

Table 15*

<u>Caste-wise Absorption of Post-Matric Scholarships</u>		
<u>Caste</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Mahar	7817	85
Chambhar	749	8
Mang	199	2
Dhor	161	1.4
Total no. of beneficiaries — 9136		

As one observer says,

"with greater political pull and better educational opportunities, the Mahars have inevitably outdistanced the rest of the Scheduled Castes in terms of the other indicators of economic betterment, such as the level and quality of employment, the degree of urbanization, etc." 164

162. Sunanda Patwardhan, "Aspects of Social Mobility among Scheduled Castes in Poona", Urban Sociology in India, M.S.A. Rao (ed.) (New Delhi, 1974).

163. Ibid, p 309.

* S. Patwardhan, Change among India's Harijans, Maharashtra, A Case Study (New Delhi, 1973), p 88.

We have earlier seen the political mobilization of the Mahars in the pre-independence period under the leadership of Ambedkar. In recent years, the R.P.I. has acted as a political leverage of the Mahars, by a shrewd strategy of collaboration and confrontation with the Congress, making the latter highly solicitous of the interests of the Mahars. There has been no comparable concern for the other Scheduled Castes in Maharashtra, who have been supportive of the Congress for lack of any alternative, and on whose loyalty the Congress could therefore count on without having to offer them any rewards. "Not only have these castes not been organized for achieving a general social and economic transformation of their condition, but they have not had the levers for extracting even limited concessions from the government."¹⁶⁵

The politicization of the Mahars has paid off.¹⁶⁶ The Congress bestowed ministerships on prominent Mahars like N.K. Tirpude and D.T. Rupavate. The Congress Party accommodated Mahar candidates in the Rajya Sabha. B.K. Gaikwad and N.H. Kumbhare were elected to the Rajya Sabha with the help of the Congress.

164. "Dalit Panthers: Another View", From a Special Correspondent, 'Economic and Political Weekly, 4 May, 1974, p 716.

165. Ibid, p 717.

166. The political mobilization of the Mahars was reinforced by their mass conversion to Buddhism. According to S. Patwardhan, "neo-Buddhism was not merely a symbol for the realization of certain fundamental ethical values; it was also a means to achieve certain well defined political and socio-economic ends." S. Patwardhan, "Aspects of Social Mobility among Scheduled Castes in Poona", p 324. O.M. Lynch writes, "Buddhism provides a psychological justification and an ideological rationalization for political militancy." O.M. Lynch, op. cit. p. 96. See also 'Buddhism and Politics in Maharashtra' by Eleanor Zelliot in Religion and Politics in South Asia, D.E. Smith (ed.), (Princeton, N.E., 1966).

✓ The upwardly mobile untouchables appear to have an ambiguous and marginal status, alienated as they are from their own caste fellows, and not fully accepted by the upper castes. Harold Isaacs expresses this state of being as in a "Semi-limbo". He says,

"As the educated ex-untouchables pull up and away from the sodden bleakness of their past estate, they do not quite get nowhere, but neither do they get somewhere. They are people who want above all to become different from what they were and what their fathers were. They want to leave all that behind, to forget it, to blot it out, but they came into a situation where too little is changing too slowly; a society still governed by caste does not allow them to abandon their past, to forget it, to blot it out. What they move into becomes a kind of semi-limbo." 167

Many of them resort to "passing" especially in the urban milieu, just as do the mulattoes in the United States of America.

Another avenue of social mobility open to the untouchables is urbanward migration.

Migration to Urban Areas ✓

✓ According to Lipset and Bendix, urbanization tends to stimulate a greater flexibility and status mobility in the social structure by precipitating cityward migration and anonymity, by giving rise to an occupational structure not subservient to the traditionally oriented agricultural economy but to the fast changing industrial, monetary and capitalistic economy, and by promoting an ever-increasing high degree of specialization of functions which result in a complex division of labour.¹⁶⁸ McKim Marriott contrasts

167. Harold R. Isaacs, "The Ex-Untouchables", Untouchables in Contemporary India, M.J. Mahar (ed), p 396. See also India's Ex-Untouchables (New York, 1965) by the same author.

168. Lipset and Bendix, quoted by G.S. Bhatt, "Trends and Measures of Status Mobility among Chamars of Dehradun", Eastern Anthropologist 1961, Vol. 14(3), pp 229-242.

rural stratification system in India with the metropolitan system of social stratification. He sees the latter as an "open", "universalistic" and "infinitely expansible" system while the former he characterizes as a "closed" system.¹⁶⁹

From the above, it appears that urbanward migration is the panacea for the ills suffered by the untouchables.

However, urbanward migration per se does not result in upward mobility. Firstly, the urban-rural dichotomy is not as sharp as McKim Marriott makes it out to be. There appears to exist rather, an urban - rural continuum. Srinivas observes that "rural barbers when they migrate to towns work in 'hair cutting saloons', Washermen start laundries, Smiths work in furniture shops Oilmen sell, if not press, oil, Malis work as gardeners, Chamars work in shoe-shops and Brahmins are cooks, teachers and lawyers."¹⁷⁰ G.S. Bhatt, in his study of Chamars in Dehradun, notes that the Jatiya and Haidasa Chamars continue in their traditional occupation of leather work. They have their own residential localities, separate from the caste Hindus and even from one another.¹⁷¹

Thus, in the case of Scheduled Castes, migration to urban areas results mainly in horizontal mobility. According to B.V. Pandya, they take up low income yielding occupations such as factory worker, scavenger and sweeper, handcart driver, cobbler, construction worker, scrap collector, dustbin scrutinizer, ekka driver, etc.¹⁷²

In the factories they are sometimes eased out of employment even at the lower levels, by the caste Hindus, who "will seek and accept all jobs in the industrial sector ..."¹⁷³

169. McKim Marriott, "Multiple Reference in Indian Caste System", Social Mobility in the Caste System in India, J. Silverberg (ed).

170. M.N. Srinivas, Caste in Modern India, p 94.

171. G.S. Bhatt, op. cit.

172. B.V. Pandya, op. cit.

173. M.D. Morris, "Caste and the Evolution of the Industrial Workforce in India", Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, Vol. 104, No. 2, April 1960, p 124.

When the Scheduled Caste Vankers entered the textile industry, they secured admission only to the throstle spinning section, and have been confined to it ever since. B.V. Pandya says, "It is a strange paradox that a community whose inherited skill in weaving rendered them eligible for securing employment in the weaving section were prevented from entering it on grounds of its inferior social status."¹⁷⁴ But, even here they could not retain their employment and in the post-rationalisation period of the industry, they found themselves displaced by the caste-Hindu workers.¹⁷⁵ Thus, regarding employment in factories the Scheduled Castes face stiff competition from the caste Hindus.

Perhaps, this explains why the Scheduled Castes are under-represented in the urban areas. For, except in Assam, in all the states, the percentage of Scheduled Castes in urban areas to the urban population was lower than the percentage of Scheduled Castes in the total population. By the 1961 Census, the percentage of Scheduled Castes in urban areas to total urban population was 8.7 per cent, while the percentage of Scheduled Castes in India was 14.7 per cent. The relative rate of urbanisation of Scheduled Castes, according to V.N. Kothari is 0.59, i.e. 40 per cent less than for the general population.¹⁷⁶ While 18 per cent of Indian people live in urban areas, only 10.7 per cent of Scheduled Castes live in urban areas.

V.S.D'Souza's explanation for the underrepresentation of Scheduled Castes in the urban areas rests on the presumption that the urban communities are socio-economically more complex than rural communities, and have a lower proportion of lower prestige occupations which require less skill and education.¹⁷⁷ Since the Scheduled Castes by and large, lack

174. B.V. Pandya, op. cit. p 214.

175. Ibid.

176. V.N. Kothari, A Study of Economic Profiles of the Scheduled Castes in Gujarat, (Baroda, 1976) p 14.

177. V.S.D'Souza, "Scheduled Castes and Urbanization in Punjab: an Explanation", Sociological Bulletin, Vol. 24, No.1, March 1975.

education and skill, they can fill only the lower prestige occupations and are therefore underrepresented in the urban areas. Thus, it is not urbanization per se which is related to social mobility, although the urban ethos is less imbued with notions of purity and pollution, and there is greater scope for individual initiative and achieved status. Rather, urbanisation^{migra} has to be accompanied by other factors like education, kin and friendship networks, etc.

Above, we have discussed the phenomenon of individual mobility which followed as a result of the policy of protective discrimination in the post-independence period. We have also noted that the main avenues of social mobility seized on in this period were secular - education, political office, government jobs, etc. However, this is not to say that there was no attempt at group mobility, and that the ritual and cultural sphere suffered neglect. (Below we will see that Sanskritization continues to be a major avenue of cultural mobility for the Scheduled Castes. Perhaps its popularity in the post-independence period is related to the political behaviour, which we found characteristic of the Scheduled Castes in this period, namely vertical mobilization. For, as we saw, in the pre-independence period, the horizontal mobilization of some untouchable castes was accompanied by de-Sanskritization.

Sanskritization

Adoption of Sanskritic deities

Adoption of Sanskritic deities has been reported in a number of monographs on the Scheduled Castes published by the Census of India 1961. In addition to indigenous and local deities, the Scheduled Castes are found to worship the deities of the Hindu pantheon.

The Shenwas of Gujarat are all Hindus and they worship the gods Ram, Sita, Laxman, Krishna, Siva. They also worship

Ramdev Pir, the deified Rajput prince from Marwad. They have their own local gods as well - Khodiar Mata, Limbodri Mata, Nagdev, Khetrapal or Vir Dev, and the various aspects of Jogani Mata.¹⁷⁸

Many of the Malas joined the Saivite and Vaishnavite sects, and adopted Siva and Perumal as their guardian deities.¹⁷⁹

Adoption of new customs and rites

The Bawris of West Bengal have given up some of their old rites.

"Chaya Daka or the calling back of the shadow in connection with the obsequies and shradh ceremony, are consciously avoided by them on the one hand, while on the other, they imitate the practices of the higher castes for achieving a higher social status, and for this they have accepted many local traits, such as anointing of turmeric on the day of the marriage, offering food in the mouth of the dead before cremation or burial, taking kachha or the mourning cloth after the funeral rite, performing alop pindi (similar to Niyam Bhanga, ceremonial wiping off death pollution taboo of the higher castes) etc."¹⁸⁰

Change of name

The Tiyar of West Bengal refer to themselves as Rajbanshi or Suryabanshi. They sometimes claim to be Mahishya. These appellations are indicative of a higher social status, and Rajbanshi means literally "of the royal lineage or of royal descent."¹⁸¹

There has been a change in the first name of the Vettuwan of Kerala. One of the informants Koran reported that the common name for boys two generations ago was Koran, Kandan, Chathan, Pallan, Thevan etc., while girls were called

178. Census of India 1971, Shenwas of Gujarat, Ethnographic Study No. 2, Monograph Series, Part V.

179. Census of India 1971, Scheduled Castes of Tamilnadu, Series 19, Part VB, p 415.

180. K.C. Shasmal, The Bawris of West Bengal, (Calcutta, 1972).

181. Census of India 1971, Tiyar of West Bengal, Monograph Series, Part V, Ethnographic Study No.2 (No.21 of 1961 Series).

Kotha, Kurumba, Chakki, Pully, Kali and so on. These names were easily distinguishable from the name of the higher Hindu castes. Today, the names are not easily distinguishable, e.g. Koran's grandchildren are called Sankaran, Pushkaran, Kartikeyan, Subramaniam, Gopi, etc. (males) and Remani, Sumathy, Latika, Uma etc. (females). These are common upper caste names as well. ¹⁸²

Myths regarding Origin

The Scheduled Castes have a number of myths of their glorious origin and consequent downfall, to support their contention that they were once an exalted people.

The Madigas trace their parentage to Jambavant, who was believed to be the primeval creation of Narayan, the supreme god. Jambavant angered Siva who cursed him and degraded the Madigas to the level of the lowest caste. ¹⁸³

The Holeyas trace their origin to one Honayya. During a procession, when the chief was riding on an elephant, the motley crowd which accompanied him entered a temple which was on the way. But the elephant could not enter the low portals of the temple, and Honayya and his immediate followers were left outside. Honayya and his men thereafter lost the privilege of entering temples. ¹⁸⁴

182. Census of India 1961, Vettuvan of Kerala, Ethnographic Study No. 18, Part VB (IV).

183. Census of India 1971, Scheduled Castes of Tamil Nadu, Series 19, Part VB, p 281.

184. Ibid, p 129.

Change of Occupation

The attempt to Sanskritize is also evident in the giving up of occupations traditionally considered polluting. There has been a trend towards taking up of agriculture.

Table 16*

Change of occupation			
State/District	Name of Caste/Community	Traditional Occupation	Change in Occupation
1	2	3	4
Rajasthan (Kota)	Baira(SC)	Leather work	Left handling the carcass of cattle and making shoes.
Rajasthan (Sikar)	Balai	Cotton weaving and leather work.	Left leather work.
Rajasthan (Bhilwada)	Bhambi	Leather work.	Taken up agriculture along with leather work.
Rajasthan (Nagaur)	Bhangi	Sweeping and Scavenging	Taken up agriculture along with sweeping and scavenging.
Maharashtra (Jalgaon)	Chamar	Leather work.	Left the traditional occupation of leather work.
Rajasthan (Udaipur, Bharatpur)	Jatav	Leather work	Left handling carcass of cattle since last 4/5 years.
Maharashtra (Nasik)	Mahar	Village watchman, menials and cultivator	Left handling carcass of cattle.

That occupation and social status are closely related is evident in the fact that the Khatiks, who follow different occupations in different areas, enjoy a varying social status.

* Roy Burman, B.K., Social Mobility Movements among Scheduled Castes and Tribes of India, Office of the Registrar General, Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi, 1970, p 3. Section of table on Scheduled Tribes omitted. See also Census of India 1961, Dhikhatpura, Vol. VIII, Part VI, Village Survey Monographs, No. 4, Appendix A : "A note on the 'changeover' of occupation by the Chamars in Morena and nearby region", 1964.

Thus, the cultivator and vegetable and fruit seller sections of Khatik have a somewhat higher status than the tanners and butchers.¹⁸⁵

Some of the Pasi have given up pig-rearing in an attempt to raise their social status, although this is a lucrative occupation. They have taken to goat-rearing instead.¹⁸⁶ On an enquiry about this switch, they clarified that goat-rearing is not so degrading. However, some enterprising Pasis have begun piggeries in the cities of Lucknow and Allahabad.

Conclusion

The avenues of social mobility available to the untouchables during the last century of British rule and in the post-independence period have been the subject of this paper. Utilizing the Weberian framework of analysis, an attempt was made to examine the social mobility movements of the untouchables in the cultural, economic and political spheres, and to consider the relationship between these dimensions, as well as their relationship with the wider society. As such, this may be regarded as a macro-study of the trends of social change among the untouchables.

It was found that one of the unintended consequences of colonial rule was the economic emancipation and relative prosperity of a few untouchable castes and pauperization of others. The former were unwilling to accept a position of social inferiority in the changed circumstances. They avidly took to the new avenues of mobility such as education and Westernization, and even to Sanskritization which was traditionally denied to them. They were aided in their efforts by the missionaries, and by the liberal, egalitarian ethos introduced by the British.

The failure of Sanskritization as an avenue of mobility, and the realization of a changing political and legal environment, gave rise to the untouchables' strivings for power. Their "horizontal unity" was brought about by B.R. Ambedkar and other local leaders, who initiated a de-Sanskritization movement, which gave the untouchables a common identity. Above all, Ambedkar pointed out the importance of secular avenues of mobility, such as wealth and power. He exhorted them to take to education. At the same time, M.K. Gandhi helped to focus attention on the plight of the untouchables. During the pre-independence period, the politicization of the untouchables reached its

39
12 72
27 40
32

zenith. As a result, they were recognized as a politically important community by the national leaders, and were granted a number of benefits in the new democracy, to bring them on par with the general population.

The post-independence period has seen a decline in the politicization of the untouchables, manifested in the limited effectiveness of the R.P.I., the Dalit Panthers and the power blocs in the legislatures.

Rather the period has been characterized by vertical mobilization as scheduled caste leaders have been co-opted by upper caste factions. This leads to the mobility of the 'politician' and little is done for the group. Similarly, a few educated scheduled caste persons now occupy the higher ranks of the administrative hierarchy, but the vast majority have filled the lower ranks of the bureaucracy. Allotment of land has created a category of scheduled caste landowners, but the small acreage they possess and the harassment they undergo points to the vulnerability of their situation.

2 *1/20* There are many reasons for the failure of the reservation system to deal effectively with the problem of the untouchables. Firstly, they have not taken full advantage of the benefits, partly due to sabotage by upper caste officials, and partly due to their own feelings of inferiority and inadequacy. Secondly, it has created a category of scheduled caste elite who are most often alienated from their caste fellows, and who resort to "passing" in an attempt to join the mainstream of Indian society. Thirdly, the "upwardly mobile castes" of the pre-independence period have cornered the protective discrimination benefits, so that it does not percolate down to the needy sections of the scheduled caste population. By encouraging individual mobility, the

reservation system has broken the unity and politicization of the untouchable movement. At the same time, it creates the impression that a great deal is being done for the Harijans. To be successful, the reservation system has to be supplemented by the collective efforts of the scheduled castes to see that it is implemented in its entirety.

While the policy of protective discrimination, referred to above as the reservation system, has been disappointing in its effects on social mobility, the progress of education is encouraging. Education is slowly but steadily spreading to the scheduled castes, and significant strides have been made at the primary level. But much remains to be done regarding the higher levels of education of the scheduled castes. Not only should they be encouraged to go in for education, but the educational system should be geared to their needs and to the needs of the rural environment.

Urbanward migration cannot be expected to solve the problems of the scheduled castes, as India is primarily an agricultural country with 80 per cent of her people living in villages, and any lasting solution has to be found in the rural areas. The emphasis on rural development and the encouragement given to cottage industries by the Janta government may be expected to have a salutary effect on the economic conditions of the scheduled castes. However, we may consider here the relationship between urban ^{migration} and social mobility of the scheduled castes.

Generally, it was found that although some scheduled caste persons have entered the higher levels of the urban occupational structure, mainly due to the reservation of posts for them, by and large, urban migration

has led to horizontal mobility of the scheduled castes. It was also found that they are underrepresented in the urban areas. Thus, urban ^{migration} per se has not led to upward mobility. But, given the urban ethos, less imbued, as it is, with notions of purity and pollution, and offering, as it does, greater scope for achieved status, it is not unlikely that urban ^{migration} combined with other factors like educational attainment and influential kin and friendship networks, may have a positive bearing on the social mobility of the scheduled castes.

Sanskritization continues to be an avenue of cultural mobility in the post-independence period.

This study was undertaken to provide me with a general working knowledge regarding the Scheduled Castes, prior to my investigation for the Ph.D., for which my intention is to study the social mobility movements, or lack of them, of the Scheduled Castes of a particular area. This, I hope, will throw light on the differential mobility of the Scheduled Castes of the area, as well as contribute generally to a study of changes in the Indian social stratification system.

On the basis of this study I have arrived at the following derivations:

1) The cultural, economic and political dimensions are closely interrelated.

A close relationship exists between the political and economic dimensions. The politicization of the untouchables in the pre-independence period resulted in important economic concessions being granted to them, as in the policy of protective discrimination and other programs of economic re-distribution. The

continuing poverty of the scheduled castes in the post-independence period may be partly ascribed to their lack of political unity, so important in a democratic polity in which interest articulation takes place through lobbies and interest groups.

The cultural avenue of mobility is related to the political. It was seen that politicization of untouchables was accompanied by de-Sanskritization movements. It may be hypothesized that the Sanskritization movements of the post-independence period are related to the vertical mobilization and co-option of Scheduled Castes in politics.

The economic and cultural dimensions are also inter-related. In the pre-independence period, economic betterment was usually followed by Sanskritization, i.e. an attempt was made to convert economic advancement into mobility in the ritual sphere. In the post-independence period, economic mobility is sought for its own sake. In fact, a low ritual status is now claimed in order to secure the benefits of the "protective discrimination" policy. Thus, mobility in the secular sphere has gained importance, and individual mobility through the channels of wealth and power is on the increase. However, as we have seen, group mobility through Sanskritization has not been given up.

2) A close relationship exists between the social mobility of the untouchables and the wider society. The various planned and unplanned changes in the wider society have opened up new avenues of social mobility. In the colonial period, it was the changing values in the direction of a liberal, egalitarian ethos, the

beginning of industrialization and secondary urbanization, the changing political and legal climate, etc. In the post-independence period, the planned effort to improve the position of the untouchables in Indian society has opened up many and varied avenues of social mobility for them.

3) We have given instances in this paper of individual and group mobility. We found that colonial rule initiated a process of group mobility among the untouchable castes which culminated in their opting out of the Scheduled Caste list at the time of independence. They have joined the mainstream of Indian society, and are no longer identified with the untouchables. But, these groups were few in number, hence the extent of social mobility in the colonial period was limited.

In the post-independence period, there has been individual mobility which is spread out among all the untouchable castes. But, here again, the extent of mobility is limited, confined as it is to a few individuals, who have most often failed to provide leadership to their caste fellows. Thus, the changes regarding the social mobility of the Scheduled Castes in the post-independence period have been of a qualitative nature, insofar as some persons now hold high positions in the political and administrative hierarchies. At the same time, the magnitude of change has been limited, inasmuch as the number of such persons is small, so that the change is largely of a symbolic nature.

4) The benefits of "protective discrimination" have been cornered by those upwardly mobile untouchable castes who are still in the Scheduled Caste list. They have not percolated down to the needy sections for whom presumably

they were devised. This increases the gap between the prosperous and poor untouchables and defeats the purpose for which the policy was initiated.

An analogous situation appears to exist in the U.K. It was found that the welfare schemes go to the relatively well-off and organized non-manual workers than to the manual workers for whom they were intended.¹⁸⁵ At the same time, the existence of such schemes creates the impression that a great deal is being done for the deprived groups, and it removes the problems and issues of social justice from the public mind.

To my mind, a periodic assessment of the economic and social position of the Scheduled Castes should be made, and those who have reached a level of educational and economic advancement should be de-scheduled.

5) Conversion to Islam and Christianity brought the converts into theoretically more egalitarian stratification systems. But, as we have seen, conversion per se did not result in social mobility. However, in the case of conversion to Christianity, secular avenues of mobility were opened up through education and employment in the mission schools. This resulted in the phenomenon of individual mobility among the converts, as the resources of the missionaries were too limited to make an impact on the economic condition of the group. The mobile individuals were integrated into the upper levels of the hierarchy.

185. W.G. Runciman, Relative Deprivation and Social Justice ; A Study of Attitudes to Social Inequality in Twentieth Century England (London 1966).

6) If we carefully examine the social mobility movements of the Scheduled Castes, we find that on the whole, they have chosen the method of integration with Indian society rather than confrontation. Sanskritization was an attempt at social mobility within the cultural framework of Hinduism; conversion, though a rejection of the Hindu religion was nonetheless an acceptance of the spirit of tolerance characteristic of Indian society, later enunciated as secularism in the Indian Constitution. Ambedkar specifically chose Buddhism because it was indigenous to the Indian soil. Conversion to Islam and Christianity enabled the converts to identify with the political rulers of the time. It may be regarded as a vicarious attempt to get near the seat of power.

✓ In politics also, the untouchables have, by and large, tried to be integrated into the political system. Founded by a staunch constitutionalist, B.R. Ambedkar, the Republican Party's aim is to champion the cause of the untouchables through democratic means. The ex-Prime Minister Indira Gandhi depended on the reserved seat holders to see her through many a political crises and, most often, she got their support.

Radical movements like that of the Dalit Panthers have as yet received limited support. The Naxalites to all evidences, have not developed a support base among the Harijans but among the tribals of the area. Lloyd and Susan Rudolph point out that the Communist movement has not attracted the Harijans.¹⁸⁶ Thus, far from trying to overthrow the social and political system, the Harijans

186. Lloyd and Susan Rudolph, "Untouchability : The Test of Fellow Feeling", The Modernity of Tradition (Chicago, 1967).

seen to have sought mobility within it. They have considered it expedient to back the winning horse, in this case the ruling party, in order to get immediate benefits. This, of course, does not rule out confrontation by them in the future.

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Appendix 1

Constitutional Safeguards

The Constitution provides for a number of safeguards for the Scheduled Castes contained in articles 15, 16, 17, 23, 25, 29, 38, 164, 320, 330, 332, 334, 335 and 338.*

Article 15(2) provides that:

1. No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them, be subject to any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard to:

- a) access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of public entertainment.
- b) the use of wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads and places of public resort maintained wholly or partly out of State funds or dedicated to the use of the general public.

Article 17 provides that Untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of "untouchability" shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.

Article 23 prohibits begar and forced labour.

Article 25, which guarantees freedom to profess, practice and propagate religion is specifically made subject to the other fundamental rights provisions, and is explicitly qualified by the proviso that:

(1) Nothing in this article shall affect the operation of any existing law or prevent the State from making any law ... (b) by providing for social welfare or reform or the throwing open of Hindu religious institutions of a public character to all and sections of Hindus.

* Vimal Chandra, "Constitutional Safeguards", Seminar, May 1974. See also Development of Scheduled Castes: an appraisal, Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi.

Article 29(2) forbids persons in charge of "any educational institution ... receiving aid out of State funds to deny admission to an applicant "on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them".

Special Provisions

The Directive Principles contained in Article 46 of the Constitution state that "the State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation." In accordance with this, Article 16(4) empowers the State to make any provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens which, in the opinion of the State, is not adequately represented in the services under the State. This enabling provision was considered necessary as the main article 16 of the Constitution bestows equality of opportunity on all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State.

Political Reservations

Article 330 states that seats shall be reserved in the House for the Scheduled Castes, and Clause (2) of Article 330 states the number of seats to be reserved in the Lok Sabha. According to Article 332(1), seats shall be reserved for the Scheduled Castes in the Legislative Assemblies of every State and Clause (3) specifies the number of seats to be reserved. No non-Scheduled Caste person can contest an election from any Scheduled Caste constituency. But a Scheduled Caste person can contest from the general constituency too.

These reservations were for a period of ten years from commencement of the Constitution, by Article 334. It

has been extended twice. The Constitution 8th Amendment Act 1959 extended it for another ten years and on 9 December 1969 the Lok Sabha passed yet another Amendment (23rd) Bill extending the time limit to thirty years, i.e. 25 January 1980.

Reservation in Government Services

Article 335 ensures, "The claims of the members of the Scheduled Castes ... shall be taken into consideration, consistently with the maintenance of efficiency of administration, in the making of appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or a State."

In accordance with Article 16(4) and Article 335, the Government of India has made reservations for Scheduled Castes in the Services. Thus, 12½ per cent of vacancies filled by direct recruitment on an all-India basis by open competition, i.e. through the U.P.S.C. or by means of open competitive tests held by any other authority, is set aside for the Scheduled Castes. Where recruitment is made otherwise than by open competition, the reservation is 16²/₃ per cent. Relaxations are given regarding the age limit, i.e. the maximum age limit stipulated for appointment to a post may be relaxed by five years in the case of Scheduled Caste candidates.

Appendix 2

The tables on the following pages give an indication of the prevalence of 'untouchability' in Tamilnadu and Kerala.*

* Census of India 1961, Traditional Social Disabilities in Rural India (Part 1 - Southern Region), Office of the Registrar General, Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi.

Table 1*

Consolidated statement of disabilities found in different villages in Tamilnadu

Name of village	Number of Scheduled caste/tribes studied	Unseceability	Unapproachability	Untouchability	Inadmissibility to the temple	Inaccessibility to hotel tea stall etc.	Inability to use utensils of hotels tea stalls etc.	Disability in using the same source of water	Disability at ferry boat and other public conveyances	Discrimination in sitting arrangement in community festivals recreation etc.	Discrimination in participation in community festivals	Disability in obtaining services of barber	Disability in obtaining services of barber	Disability in obtaining services of washerman	Disability in services of other village servants.	Compulsion to render certain services	Disability in matter of entering in high caste houses	Discrimination in matter of sitting arrangement in the houses of high castes	Discrimination in use of dress, ornaments luxurious items of food and other luxuries	Segregation in residence in the village	Disability in using the cam crematorium or burial ground.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
1. Arkasanchalli	2 SC	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
2. Arkavadi	Not given	-	-	-	-	-	-	Number not available	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Athangrai	2 SC	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4. Ayyangarkulam	1 SC 1 ST	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5. Kadambangudi	3 SC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6. Kadathurchery	2 SC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7. Kadukkara	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8. Kanakagiri	3 SC	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9. Koottumangalam	4 SC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10. Kurmalur	2 SC	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
11. Pudukulam	3 SC	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12. Ravanasamidren	2 SC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
13. Thadagam	1 SC	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14. Thenbaranku	1 ST	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15. Thiruvellarai	3 SC	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
16. Valpatti	4 SC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
17. Visavanoor	6 SC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	6	-	-	-	2	-

*Ibid, p91.

Table 2

Consolidated statement of disabilities suffered by various castes in Tamilnadu

Name of Caste/ Tribe.	Number of villages where found	Unreachability	Unapproachability	Unreachability	Inadmissibility to the temple	Inaccessibility to hotel, tea stall etc.	Disabilities in the matter of using common utensils of hotels	Disability in using the same source of water	Disability at ferry boat and other public conveyances	Discrimination in sitting arrangement in community festivals, recreation etc.	Discrimination in participation in community festivals	Disability in obtaining services of Brahmin priest.	Disability in obtaining services of barbers	Disability in obtaining services of washermen	Disability in obtaining services of village servants	Compulsion to render certain services	Disability in the matter of entering in high caste houses	Discrimination in the matter of sitting arrangement in the houses of high castes	Discrimination in matter of dress ornaments luxurious items of food and other luxuries	Segregation in residence in the village	Disability in using the same crematorium or burial ground.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
1. Adi-Dravida	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Arunthathiyar	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Chakkiliyan	5	-	1	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	1
4. Irular (ST)	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
5. Kuravan	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
6. Malayali (ST)	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7. Pagadai	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8. Pallan	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	1
9. Panicker	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
10. Parayan	9	-	3	-	-	1	-	5	-	-	-	-	3	4	-	1	2	1	-	2	1
11. Semban	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
12. Sennan	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
13. Pulluvan (Pancharam)	3	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	2	-	1	1	1	-	1	1
14. Vaikaran	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
15. Varnan	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
16. Veduvar	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
17. Harijan	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
18. Sambavan	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 3*

Consolidated statement of disabilities found in different villages in Kerala

Sl.No.	Name of Village	Number of scheduled castes/tribes studied	Unsecurability	Unapproachability	Untouchability	Inadmissibility to the temple	Inaccessibility to hotel tea stalls etc.	Inability to use utensils of hotels tea stalls etc.	Disability in using the same source of water	Disability at ferry boat and other public conveyances	Discrimination in sitting arrangement in community festivals recreation etc.	Discrimination in participation in community festivals	Disability in obtaining services of Brahmin priest	Disability in obtaining services of barber	Disability in obtaining services of washermen	Disability in obtaining services of other village servant	Compulsion to render certain services	Disability in matter of entering in high caste houses	Discrimination in matter of sitting arrangement in the houses of high castes.	Discrimination in use of dress, ornaments, luxurious items of food and other luxuries	Segregation in residence in the village	Disability in using the same crematorium or burial ground.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
1.	Eravipuram	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2.	Tangasser 1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3.	Amaravila	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-
4.	Bharanikavu	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-
5.	Edamon	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6.	Kadapra	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7.	Kurichy	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-
8.	Cheruvannur	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9.	Mittar	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-
10.	Parassala	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
11.	Kadakkavvor	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12.	Prakkad	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
13.	Kottukal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14.	Thashava	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15.	Ankamali	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
16.	Lokamaleswaram	3	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
17.	Attappady	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
18.	Champakad	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

*Ibid. p 182.

Table A*

Consolidated statement of disabilities suffered by different castes in Kerala

Name of Caste	No. of villages where found	Unseability	Unapproachability	Untouchability	Inaccessibility to the temples	Inaccessibility to hotel, tea stall etc.	Disability in using the same source of water.	Disability at ferry boat and other public conveyances	Discrimination in sitting arrangement in community festivals, recreations etc.	Discrimination in participation in community festivals	Disability in obtaining services of main priest	Disability in obtaining services of barber	Disability in obtaining services of washerman	Disability in obtaining services of village servants	Compulsion to render certain services	Disability in matter of entering in high caste houses.	Discrimination in matter of sitting arrangement in the houses of high castes	Discriminations in matter of dress, ornaments, luxurious items of food and other luxuries	Segregation in residence in the village	Disability in using the same crematorium or burial ground.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Chakkiliyan	1																			
Kanakkia (Padanna)	1				1															
Kuravan	2															1				
Koyadi	1															1				
Pallan	1															1				
Panan	1																			
Parayan	6				1										2	3				
Pulayan	8				2										1	2				
Shandan	4															1				
Velan	3															1				
Vettuvan	1				1															
Hill Pulaya	1																			
Irula	1																			
Maduga	1																			

*Ibid, p 184.

Appendix 3

The two poems given here express the strong emotions of the Dalit Panther youth against the prevailing social order.*

I

Minds Ablaze

by J.V. Pavar

These clenched fists won't
loosen now
The coming revolution won't
wait for you
We've endured enough : no
more endurance now
Won't do letting down your
blood's call to arms
It won't do :
The seeds of revolution
have been sown since long
No use awaiting, the
explosion's now.
The fire - pit is ablaze : it's
for tomorrow
Even if you take to your heels
now
No use : Life's certainty is
no more
How will they snuff the fire within?
How will they stop minds
gone ablaze?
No more reasoning now :
Unreason helps a lot
Once the horizon is red
What's wrong in keeping
the door open?

* Dalit Panther : Revolt of Harijan Youth, Patriot,
10 Jan. 1974.

II

by Arun Kamble

If you were to live
the life we live
(then out of you would poems
arise)

We: Kicked and spat at for our
piece of bread.

You: Fetch fulfilment and name
of the Lord.

We: Down - gutter degraders of our heritage

You: Its sole repository,
descendants of the sage.

We: Never have a paise
to scratch our backs

You: The golden cup of
offerings in your bank

Your bodies flame in
sandalwood

Ours you shovel under half-
turned sand.

Wouldn't the world change,
and fast

this life's that's all we've
always had?