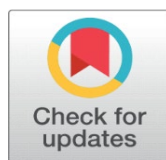


VISUALIZATION OF CONCEPTUAL AND PERCEPTUAL EXPERIENCES OF CASTE: A LITERARY REFLECTION ON THE *ANNIHILATION OF CASTE* OF DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR

M. Ramakrishnan ¹  , Shalini Pallavi ²  

¹ Assistant Professor of Folklore, Department of Anthropology & Tribal Studies, Central University of Jharkhand, Cheri-Manatu, Ranchi (Jharkhand), India

² Research Scholar, Department of Anthropology & Tribal Studies, Central University of Jharkhand, Cheri-Manatu, Ranchi (Jharkhand), India



ABSTRACT

A good number of writings in different forms are available on Ambedkar and his writings. Particularly, his *Annihilation of Caste (AoC)* is being overwhelmingly explored with varied objectives and purposes. Despite having aims and objectives for fulfill their agenda, with their own methodologies and theoretical frameworks, they had explored and highlighted the different dimensions and importance of the AoC, which, indeed, was considered controversial in its speech form for the Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal (JPTM), organizer of the conference that was supposed to be held in 1936. Some of the text were “unbearable” for the organizers for having content objectionable, but “would not change a comma” was the response from Ambedkar, and this speech became a book on May 15, 1936, at his own expense. Though there are narratives and anecdotes around the text and its production, the aim of this paper is neither about the making of the book nor what happened to the book. With the self-explanatory title, which has both the name of the text and the social agenda of the author, this paper employs the descriptive tool in deciphering the interplay between the text and the society mediated and manipulated through signifiers that are not only social and cultural but also historical. If, for example, “unbearable” becomes a signifier to connote the mindset of the dominants, then “would not change a comma” seems to transform into a signifier within the same system to connote equally a larger thing in contrast to the former. Interestingly, the text that is filled with and the result of mental agony that is due to the socio-cultural and symbolic “happenings”, has evolved as a sign to become a social agenda not only for the author of the text but also for humanity. Therefore, this reading is not a way to consolidate what is said or written; rather it problematizes the “signs” through their inherent properties of interconnectedness and intertextuality to explore the unexplored on the basis of the frozen text in the fluid social situations. As this study explains, the metaphorical nature of the text is an interesting aspect because of how the overall text is the result of a simple process that is the basic principle of any metaphorical conceptualization of abstract entities in terms of concrete instances that are atrocities, inhuman practices on the voice-less people. By offering a complete summary of the text, which the readers of the present generation may find useful to know the historical perspective on the presence of democratic voices against the caste system, this study presents a simple discussion that conveniently argues in favour of the social agenda, and in the process, many of the points are reproduced with the intension of not hurting anyone, rather, to present what has happened to the speech text. Further, the readers are expected to have an open-minded reading of this article as well as the text of Ambedkar, and the summary will be useful for the young scholars who do not so far have any access to the text.

Keywords: Caste, Religion, Reform, Society, Intertextuality, Harmony, Coexistence, Progress

Received 18 June 2023
Accepted 19 July 2023
Published 03 August 2023

Corresponding Author

M. Ramakrishnan,
ilakkiyameen@gmail.com

DOI
[10.29121/granthaalayah.v11.i7.2023.5203](https://doi.org/10.29121/granthaalayah.v11.i7.2023.5203)

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Copyright: © 2023 The Author(s). This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

With the license CC-BY, authors retain the copyright, allowing anyone to download, reuse, re-print, modify, distribute, and/or copy their contribution. The work must be properly attributed to its author.



“Know truth as truth and untruth as untruth”

(by Buddha’s remark, cf. [Ambedkar \(1936\)](#), cf. S. [Anand \(2014\)](#):145)

“He that will not reason is a bigot. He that cannot reason is a fool.

He that dare not reason is a slave”

(by Sir William Drummond. cf. [Ambedkar \(1936\)](#); S. [Anand \(2014\)](#):145)

“The best of men cannot be moral if the basis of relationship between them and their fellows is fundamentally a wrong relationship. To a slave, his master may be better or worse. But there cannot be a good master. A good man cannot be a master, and a master cannot be a good man.”

(by [Ambedkar \(1936\)](#): 89); cf. S. [Anand \(2014\)](#):302)

Courtesy: The authors sincerely express their gratitude to Dr. Kalsang Wangmo, Assistant Professor of Tibetan Studies, Department of Far East Languages, Central University of Jharkhand, Ranchi, for being instrumental for this paper which was originally prepared for the International Conference on Dr. B. R. Ambedkar by the Vietnam Buddhist University that was supposed to be held in July 2023 in Ho Chi Minh City, but was cancelled “due to unexpected objective conditions.”

1. INTRODUCTION

Since its publication, the *AoC* (1936) drafted by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (1891-1956) has never been an unpopular text as well never failed to make either conceptual or perceptual impact on its stakeholders – who have always belonged to the non-dualistic categories of “pro”, “liberal” and “against” in terms of caste and its manipulative tentacles. Composed as a speech to be presented as the nominated President’s “address” to the participants of the Annual Conference of the JPTM, a reformist group consisting of the members of the caste Hindus who worked for the caste system to be broken-down, that was supposed to be held in 1936 at Lahore, and in the context of postponements of the event, and subsequent cancellation due to the reason of the pre-submitted copy of the “text” and his refusal to comply to the demand for the modification – that eventually made the “text” as well as well historical in the light of its significance for the eradication of the disease that has infected the majority of the population. The “unbearable” text for the organizers, for having objectionable content and his stubborn response of not willing to “change a comma” [and another instance that his desire to print the text in Bombay, but the Mandal wished to print it in Lahore] could not be seen in isolation, rather it must be understood in the social context which functions as a signifying entity for the people who are occupying contrary and contradictory poles. While there are narratives and anecdotes that are interwoven around the text and its context of production, this paper focuses neither on the making of the “text” nor on what happened to the “text”. Rather, with the self-explanatory title, that carries the name of the “text” as well as the necessitated social agenda that gained its pace along with the production/publication of text [book], this paper employs semiotics as an interdisciplinary tool in deciphering the interplay between the “text” and the “society” that is mediated and manipulated through the presence of different socio-cultural and historical signifiers. If, for example, “unbearable” becomes a signifier to connote the mindset of the dominants, some of them seemed to be under the “liberal” blanket, then the “would not change [even] a comma” transforms into a signifier within the same system to connote equally a larger thing in contrast to the

former. Interestingly, the text that is filled with, and the result of, mental agony that is due to the socio-cultural and symbolic and metaphorical instances of “happenings”, has evolved as a sign to become a social agenda not only for Ambedkar but also for the millions of people around the world. Therefore, this reading is not to be seen as a way to consolidate what is said or written; but to problematize the “signs” from their inherent properties of interconnectedness to explore the unexplored on the basis of the frozen text in fluid social situations. This article is presented in two parts: while the first part deals with text, the second part describes the social reality in terms of the notion of untouchability.

2. THE NOTION OF CASTE AND UNTOUCHABILITY

If we consider categorization/classification activities are inherently associated with human beings, and engulfing us as basic elements that facilitate distinctions, then no one can escape from the clutches of social struggles [Bourdieu \(1984\)](#). Classification or categorization of objects or things, indeed, seems to offer ways for handling them for better comprehension in daily life. However, either of the processes cannot be ended without hierarchizing things and objects on the vertical line of preferences and absorbing factors that can lead to the relationship at the level of centre-peripheral, dominance-subordination, or inclusion-exclusion, etc., among the things or objects within a signifying system, and human beings are no exception if this hierarchical relationship on the ground of the classification or categorization by criteria is implemented, and in that case, as a result of it, there is an emergence of the dominant group that monopolizes the available resources, legitimizes its dominant culture, and creates polarized and dichotomic (value) system which popularizes the culture and aesthetics of the dominant group by devaluing or demeaning the culture and value of other groups. In most cases, a social collective will be created with the help of a kind of classification based on the quasi-categorical symbolizations of affinity and incompatibility, known as “categoriemes” by [Bourdieu \(1984\):475](#) and it is a symbolic reflective having “a separative power, a distinction, diacrisis, discretio, drawing discrete units out of indivisible continuities, difference out of the undifferentiated” [Bourdieu \(1984\) \(1979, 1996\): 479](#), cf. [Weininger \(2005\): 99](#), [Noordegraaf and Schinkel \(2011\):76](#)). By referring to the categorization of tribal communities, M. Ramakrishnan and Subhashree Sahoo mention that “[t]hus, the “tribes”, particularly, “primitive tribes,” as a social collectivity that is the result of or the combination of classificatory acts (by self as well as by others) and the inherent properties of each group may not be found in other groups within this collectivity. Therefore, within the category of ‘tribes’, not all groups contribute equally for the purpose of mutual classification and categorization, that is, each group within the collective share the responsibility of maintaining their affinity as well as differentiation. Here, the mutual classification is achieved by identifying the commonalities based on the visible socio-culture practices, whereas, in the differentiation, the invisible but substantial elements have been essential in the construction of group identity” ([Ramakrishnan and Sahoo \(2023\): 140](#)). Caste, taken up here as one of the social evils that holds back the progress of the country as well as a threat to humanity, emerged as a system of hierarchical order that segments Indian society that is engulfed with or by a projected single identity in the name of religion. It has become unique as its origin and sustainability are linked with the particular religion known as Hinduism which, unlike other religious establishments which are having regulations and conditions, appears as an amalgamation of folk deities of various ethnic groups as well as an appropriation of elements from other religious systems like Buddhism. A lot of literature has already been produced in

support of the caste system as well as opposing it by claiming it is an unwanted divisive factor that is used to legitimize the dehumanization of a large section of people who are believed to be part of the system through the hereditary acquisition of membership of a group within the system. However, the so-called Hindu society that seems to be governed by the “principles” of Hinduism, functions as a whole with different but independent parts but with interlinks that are hierarchical and hard to be broken down or demolished with the principles of equality and egalitarianism. In fact, the beliefs, sentiments, and superstitions associated with the caste system are quite ancient to Indian society, and the consolidation of these elements to form a single identity to be used in Western society happened during the mid-sixteenth century A.D. This consolidation and construction of a new identity from the already existing beliefs and sentiments resulted in a new outlook for the entire geo-political region, but within this country as a single political entity, this classification based on the vertical arrangement has significantly created both vertical and horizontal distance between communities on the one hand and individual members within a social group on the other hand. The general understanding of caste is that it is a dominant factor that marks its influence on people’s daily life, and it has its impact on those who have familiarity with the caste system irrespective of their non-belongingness. The social reality of those who have accepted the caste system and also those who have been forced to accept it is decided, shaped, modified and conditioned by the caste system, and thus, it is meaningless to disclaim that one is beyond the clutches of caste and its impact. However, it does not mean to denigrate the voices of protests, reject the reformists’ movements, and make a mockery of the transgressive activities, but to remind that the impact can be evidenced even by doing something against the caste system. Conversely, the caste system has different facets and dimensions, and moreover, either it camouflages to get acceptance by projecting it as a neat classification based on the four *varnas* (the Sanskrit word has many connotations) with assigned occupational demarcation and allotment. But the four *varnas* are not merely the names of the categories, rather they are symbolic and prescriptive in nature as they are being accommodated and justified through the vertical perception of body and the hierarchical position of its parts; they are not the spots on the bodies but the position of power and hierarchy with a set of behaviours and attitudes – for example, Brahmins - born from the God of creation’s (i.e., Brahma’s) face; Kshatriyas – arms as the place of origin; person originated from the thigh was the Vaishyas; and Shudras – from the feet), and their prescribed occupations, or prescribed requirements and duties, or dharma Ingold (1994):1026) are: ‘Vedic scholars/priests/teachers’ for Brahmins; ‘Rulers/administrators/warriors’ for Kshatriyas; ‘Agriculturalists/farmers/merchants’ for Vaishyas; and ‘Artisans/labourers/servants’ for Shudras. While the etymological origin of the term varna from the root *vr* can refer to “to cover, to envelop, count, classify consider, describe or choose” (Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, 1886 cf. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varna_\(Hinduism\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varna_(Hinduism))), its usage in Rigveda is to mean “colour, outward appearance, exterior, form, figure or shape” Monier Monier-Williams 2005 (1899): 924, cf. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varna_\(Hinduism\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varna_(Hinduism))). The Dharma-Shastras (Olivelle 1998) discuss in detail the nature of the varna system and its division of society. Scholars like Olivelle could argue that purity-impurity is prescribed in people’s moral, ritual, and their biological pollution due to their eating some types of food, etc. The explicit nature of purity and impurity could be seen in the caste system, which is almost extended to a group of people than applied to individuals. Further, Olivelle could interpret the purity and impurity to people of all varnas, that is, it is applicable ‘to persons beyond their affiliation to varna’ and “all four varnas could attain purity or impurity by the content of their

character, ethical intent, actions, innocence or ignorance, stipulations, and ritualistic behaviours” (Olivelle (2008): 240–245, cf. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varna_\(Hinduism\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varna_(Hinduism))). Moreover, Olivelle writes that “Dumont is correct in his assessment that the ideology of varna is not based on purity. If it were we should expect to find at least some comment on the relative purity and impurity of the different varnas. What is even more important is that the ideology of purity and impurity that emerges from the Dharma literature is concerned with the individual and not with groups, with purification and not with purity, and lends little support to a theory which makes relative purity the foundation of social stratification” (Olivelle (2008): 210, cf. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varna_\(Hinduism\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varna_(Hinduism))). The other text *Manusmriti* with its schematic commentary “provides models rather descriptions” (Ingold (1994): 1026) and the text elevates the Brahmins in the social order which eventually create the caste dimension of the country. In the series, many texts like the Upanishads, and epics like *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* also contributed to the establishment of the supremacy of a single community over other communities or groups by defining and redefining the nature and meaning of a Brahmana, for example by Vajrasuchi Upanishad that “Who indeed then is a Brahmana? He who has directly realized his Atman is without a second, devoid of class and actions [...] that exists penetrating all things that pervade everything. [He who] is devoid of the faults of thirst after worldly objects and passions... Whose mind is untouched by [pride and egoism], he only is the Brahmana. Such is the opinion of the Vedas, the Smritis, the Itihasa and the Puranas. Otherwise, one cannot obtain the status of a Brahmana” (Narayanasvami Aiyar (1914), cf. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varna_\(Hinduism\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varna_(Hinduism))). While society is divided on the line of occupation, then caste cannot be seen as a single unifying factor, rather it refer to a large number of endogamous groups and also exogamous groups within their castes (gotra). There are postulates and assumptions by scholars on the origin of varna, and later caste system. The invaded Aryans had to fight with the native or indigenous people who were called enemies (“daha”) or servants (“dasyu”) – one such assumption. The conflict between the Aryans and the native and indigenous people is understood either at the level of physical features such as light-skin versus dark-skin, and this antagonism was also felt at the level of language and culture as well as on the level of ritual practices. However, this bipolar classification based on physical features and language and culture is considered too elementary and cannot be the foundation for the origin of varna or caste, because of the plurality of social order and the accommodation or inclusion of other native people. But strangely, a fifth category of *Panchama* came to be the reality and people among the Shudras who had involved in menial and degraded occupations, and this group emerged as an excluded category in the name of “untouchables” and encountered innumerable problems such as inhuman attitudes, ill-treatment and discrimination by the dominant communities/castes who enjoy the different positions in the social ladder. The objective of this paper begins here because these age-old problems have been addressed by various social reformers and radical thinkers, but still, it is an ongoing issue not only in India but it has become a global issue. This article is an outcome of an intensive reading from the literary point of view and this reflection that highlights the textualization of experiences that are being conditioned by the system of caste insists the point that the present generation must get access to the *AoC* for purpose of understanding the complex nature of our social reality.

3. FROM THE PROLOGUE CONFERENCE, TEXT, CANCELLATION

The significance of this book falls within and outside the context of caste and it can also be seen in the background of its impacts on the lives of millions and millions of people who are the victims and are still being victimized in the name of caste. Through the speech-text, he disseminates his infallible agenda and task of confronting the members of the Hindu community to realize that being the sick men of the country they cause “danger to the health and happiness of other Indians” (Ambedkar (1936):1-2, Anand (2014):146). Its “Prologue” titled as *How This Speech Came to be Composed - and Not Delivered* (Ambedkar (1936), https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Annihilation_of_Caste) is offering the nature of the text making [from ideas to the textual form for oral presentation] and giving a subtle indication of its confrontation with the social reality, or the “prevailing conditions” within the Hindu society. It begins with the letter received on December 12, 1935, from the Secretary, JPTM, Mr. Sant Ram, and it noticeably addresses “My dear Doctor Saheb” which precisely and undoubtedly denotes and connotes several things about him and some elements of the society including the acknowledgement and recognition of his scholarship and also the open-mindedness of the members of the JPTM. Expressing his gratitude for their letter dated 5th of December, he admits that as there is no harm in giving publicity, there is no wrong in releasing the text to the press without the permission of the conference committee and he sought pardon for that. The hope that the Mandal had on Ambedkar and his new formula is reasonable and also based on the trust it has had on his scholarship and thinking. On behalf of the Mandal, he acknowledges him as a great thinker as well as his deep study on the problem of caste, also how he and his Mandal have always benefitted from his ideas. Though he delineated it in several conferences and other platforms, even in Kranti, his anxiety is to dispose his new formula that the caste cannot be broken down unless the religious system that functions as substratum for caste cannot be annihilated. And as it is not fully clear to him, Mr. Sant Ram seeks Ambedkar to explain it at length for the Mandal to take it up for further publicity. The text of the Mandal outlines its clear goal and broad vision that “...We can change our dates to accommodate your convenience. Independent Harijans of Punjab are very much desirous to meet you and discuss with you, their plans. So, if you kindly accept our request and come to Lahore to preside over the Conference it will serve double purpose. We will invite Harijans leaders of all shades of opinion and you will get an opportunity of giving your ideas to them. The Mandal has deputed our Assistant Secretary, Mr. Indra Singh, to meet you at Bombay in Xmas and discuss with you the whole situation with a view to persuade you to please accept our request.” (Ambedkar (1936):4-5, Anand (2014):149. Ambedkar had clarity and conviction on the vision of the Mandal and his reason for accepting the invitation is well mentioned as “[t]he Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal I was given to understand to be an organization of Caste Hindu Social Reformers, with the one and only aim, namely, to eradicate the Caste System from amongst the Hindus. As a rule, I do not like to take any part in a movement which is carried on by the Caste Hindus. Their attitude towards social reform is so different from mine that I have found it difficult to pull on with them. Indeed, I find their company quite uncongenial to me on account of our differences of opinion. Therefore, when the Mandal first approached me, I declined their invitation to preside. The Mandal, however, would not take a refusal from me, and sent down one of its members to Bombay to press me to accept the invitation. In the end I agreed to preside. The Annual Conference was to be held at

Lahore, the headquarters of the Mandal. The Conference was to meet at Easter, but was subsequently postponed to the middle of May 1936” (Ambedkar (1936):5, Anand (2014):150, <https://www.ambedkaritetoday.com/2019/05/the-annihilation-of-caste-speech-by-ambedkar.html>). These lines are candid and inspirational as there is acknowledgement of democratic voices. The further developments are now part of the history such as the Conference was cancelled after the speech was printed; while he wanted the public to know the reason for the cancellation of the Conference by making the copies available in the market; while the Mandal wanted to print the address in Lahore on the ground of economy, but he printed it in Bombay; for his letter dated 24th to Mr. Sant Ram, he received a letter the Mandal dated 27th March 1936 from the Mandal mentioning that “[w]e were a little disappointed to read it. Perhaps you are not fully aware of the situation that has arisen here. Almost all the Hindus in the Punjab are against your being invited to this province. The Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal has been subjected to the bitterest criticism and has received censorious rebuke from all quarters. All the Hindu leaders [...] have dissociated themselves from this step of the Mandal. ... Despite all this the runners of the Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal [...] are determined to wade through thick and thin but would not give up the idea of your presidentship. The Mandal has earned a bad name” (Ambedkar (1936):6, Anand (2014): 151); the letter puzzled him greatly because he couldn’t “understand why the Mandal should displease” (Ambedkar (1936):6, Anand (2014): 151); him and Sir Gokal Chand Narang’s resignation from whom he received earlier a letter dated 07.02.1936 mentioning that “I am glad to learn from the workers of the Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal that you have agreed to preside at their next anniversary to be held at Lahore during the Easter holidays, it will give me much pleasure if you stay with me while you are at Lahore” (Ambedkar (1936):6, Anand (2014): 151); but he did not yield to this pressure; Mr. Har Bhagwan who was sent by the Mandal to Bombay to discuss the matter personally, had no concern on the matter relating to the address’s printing, but he was curious to learn about the content of the text; after reaching Lahore Mr. Bhagwan wrote that “[i]n any case, it would have wide publicity and we are sure it would wake the Hindus up from their slumber. The passage I pointed out to you at Bombay has been read by some of our friends with a little misgiving, and those of us who would like to see the Conference terminate without any untoward incident would prefer that at least the word “Veda” be left out for the time being. I leave this to your good sense. I hope, however, in your concluding paragraphs you will make it clear that the views expressed in the address are your own and that the responsibility does not lie on the Mandal” (Ambedkar (1936):8-9, Anand (2014): 152); Mr. Har Bhagwan sent another letter that mentioned that “Besides that you have more than once stated in your address that you had decided to walk out of the fold of the Hindus and that that was your last address as a Hindu. You have also unnecessarily attacked the morality and reasonableness of the Vedas and other religious books of the Hindus, and have at length dwelt upon the technical side of Hindu religion, which has absolutely no connection with the problem at issue, so much so that some of the passages have become irrelevant and off the point. We would have been very pleased if you had confined your address to that portion given to me, or if an addition was necessary, it would have been limited to what you had written on Brahminism etc. The last portion which deals with the complete annihilation of Hindu religion and doubts the morality of the sacred books of the Hindus as well as a hint about your intention to leave the Hindu fold does not seem to me to be relevant. I would therefore most humbly request you on behalf of the people responsible for the Conference to leave out the passages referred to above, and close the address with what was given to me or add a few paragraphs on Brahminism. We doubt the wisdom of making the

address unnecessarily provocative and pinching. There are several of us who subscribe to your feelings and would very much want to be under your banner for remodelling of the Hindu religion. If you had decided to get together persons of your cult I can assure you a large number would have joined your army of reformers from Punjab. In fact, we thought you would give us a lead in the destruction of the evil of caste system, especially when you have studied the subject so thoroughly, and strengthen our hands by bringing about a revolution and making yourself as a nucleus in the gigantic effort, but declaration of the nature made by you when repeated loses its power, and becomes a hackneyed term. Under the circumstances, I would request you to consider the whole matter and make your address more effective by saying that you would be glad to take a leading part in the destruction of the caste system if the Hindus are willing to work in right earnest toward that end, even if they had to forsake their kith and kin and the religious notions” (Ambedkar (1936): 9-10, Anand (2014): 154) – Mr. Har Bhagwan ends his letter by saying: “[...] you have carved a niche in our hearts by writing such a wonderful treatise on the caste system, which excels all other treatises so far written and will prove to be a valuable heritage, so to say.” (Ambedkar (1936): 10); Ambedkar’s insightful reply: “[...] I also would prefer to have the Conference cancelled. I do not like to use vague terms – if the Mandal insisted upon having my address pruned to suit its circumstances. [...] I wrote it because I thought that it was absolutely necessary to complete the argument. [...] originally, I had planned to write a short address, for my own convenience, as I had neither the time nor the energy to engage myself in the preparation of an elaborate thesis. It was the Mandal which asked me to deal with the subject exhaustively, and it was the Mandal which sent down to me a list of questions relating to the Caste System and asked me to answer them in the body of my address, as they were questions which were often raised in the controversy between the Mandal and its opponents, and which the Mandal found difficult to answer satisfactorily. [...] If any of you had even hinted to me that in exchange for the honour you were doing me by electing as President, I was to abjure my faith in my programme of conversion, I would have told you in quite plain terms that I cared more for my faith than for any honour from you” (Ambedkar (1936):11-12, Anand (2014): 157. Other important lines found in his letter that need to be remembered by the present generation scholars are “You ought to have known that there was no hope of any alteration being made in the address. I told you when you were in Bombay that I would not alter a comma, that I would not allow any censorship over my address, and that you would have to accept the address as it came from me. I also told you that the responsibility, for the views expressed in the address was entirely mine, and if they were not liked by the Conference, I would not mind at all if the Conference passed a resolution condemning them. [...] I thank you for your appreciation of the pains I have taken in the preparation of the address. I certainly have profited by the labour, [even] if no one else does. My only regret is that I was put to such hard labour at a time when my health was not equal to the strain it has caused.” (Ambedkar (1936): 14, Anand (2014): 154. He ends the “Prologue” by saying that “I am sorry that it has ended in a tragedy. But what can anyone expect from a relationship so tragic as the relationship between the reforming sect of Caste Hindus and the self-respecting sect of Untouchables, where the former have no desire to alienate their orthodox fellows, and the latter have no alternative but to insist upon reform being carried out?” (Ambedkar (1936):14, Anand (2014): 158.

4. JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROLOGUE

The intention of quoting and reproducing lines from the “Prologue” of the book has its importance because of the fact that the discussions and dialogues that had taken place between Ambedkar and the Mandal cannot be seen in isolation, rather it has social and historical significance by the symbolic unfolding of the voices of confronting parties at synchronic and diachronic levels. When the text of an undelivered speech becomes unbearable to the Conference for which the text was originally prepared and that leads to the cancellation of the Conference, then it gives us curiosity as to what is actually contained in the speech text having a title that is signifying nature in every respect. Further, the overall text and its direct reference to the existing problems of the society, not being understood or presented in creative or imaginative ways, necessitates the conditions for approaching it for whatever reasons, either for reading or at least for making oneself familiar with it as a token of displaying one’s social commitment. Thus, like many other so-called spiritual and religious texts which are often quoted by people in daily life without being read or even seen once, a similar attitude could be seen here, that is, the dichotomy is that it is both well-read and oft-quoted on the one hand and not read and not-accessed on the other hand. But it is an undeniable fact that the text or at least the title of the address is quite familiar to thousands and thousands of people for the simple reason that the title communicates everything. And, interestingly, the oversimplified, unambiguous and precise title debars, in some cases, people from reading the text because the message and purpose of the text are already received.

5. LITERARY READING OF AOC

The text begins with “Friends” – a formal way of addressing the ungathered gathering and proceeds to express his “sorry” to the members of the Mandal for inviting him. He expresses his awareness that the members must have faced many questions for selecting him as the President, and also for selecting him all the way from Bombay for presiding over the event in Lahore. He raised his eyebrows by expressing his belief that “the Mandal could have found someone better qualified than himself to preside on the occasion” (Ambedkar (1936), Anand (2014):168). This generosity of admission has been founded on the strong point of admission that he has already made his criticism about the Hindus and has also questioned the Mahatma and problematized his authority. And he is aware that they hate him and for them, he is a snake in the garden. The use of the snake in the(ir) garden metaphor is highly appropriate and it explains many things at different levels, and here hate is not an exception and particular to an instance, it is rather historical and unabatedly growing to the socially deprived communities to which he belongs. Thus, the metaphorical use of snake is having both ontological existence and epistemological backings as it reproduces the hate as not a momentary manifestation, but it is constructed and being carry forwarded inherently by the dominants against the socially weaker sections which can overshadow many of the concepts and notions such as compassion, kindness, co-existence, etc. He is aware that the Mandal has the responsibility to give reason to politically minded people why he has to be invited to “fill the place of honour” (Ambedkar (1936), Anand (2014):168), and simultaneously he appreciates the Mandal for their ‘great daring act’, but he acknowledges it may not “please the ordinary religiously-minded Hindus” (Ambedkar (1936), Anand (2014):168). He comments albeit sarcastically that this act of the Mandal is disobeying the Shastric rules by not inviting a Brahmin as the President. And since “[t]he Shastras do not permit a Hindu to accept anyone as his

Guru merely because he is well-versed” (Ambedkar (1936):16, Anand (2014):168), and as also it claims that ‘only Brahmin can be appointed as Guru for the three Varnas’, it is, for him, up to the Mandal to give an answer and to have a reason for selecting him as President of the Conference. He admits that he is aware of the fact that the Hindus are sick of him and for whom he is not the person of welcome (“*persona grata*”) because he expresses his views by using his own platform which has already created irritation and perturbation. About being invited, his comment that “I have no desire to ascend the platform of the Hindus to do within their sight what I have been doing within their hearing. If I am here, it is because of your choice and not because of my wish” (Ambedkar (1936):16, Anand (2014):168), reflect his daringness and steadfastness in his commitment and views on the crucial issues including the necessity of political reform through social reform. For him, the social reform in India, not only then but also now, has few friends but many critics (who consist of political reformers and socialists), and thus he realized that the path to achieving it is not smooth rather filled with difficulties.

He sees collective efficiency as a way for permanent progress which is wrought by evil customs that need ceaseless effort to eradicate them. He understands the foundation of Social Congress that leads to the formation of National Congress and he gives the way how the Social Conference handled some of issues relating to country’s political organization. Moreover, he never failed to observe the “political advancement that the majority of the educated Hindus” were in favour of and their “indifferent” attitude towards “social reforms” (Ambedkar (1936): 17, Anand (2014):170). Though it is not a metaphorical contemplation, even in social thinking the concrete events that happen around us cannot be ignored as they are contributing to the conceptualization of related abstract concepts, and there are a few examples cited here that helped him visualize the nature and dimension of caste. He discusses on the stand taken by these two movements (National Congress and Social Conference) by giving excerpts from the speech delivered at Allahabad in 1892 by Mr. W.C. Bonnerjee (the “President of the eighth session of the Congress”), which, for him, “sounds like a funeral oration on the death of the Social Conference” (Ambedkar (1936): 18, Anand (2014):171). To put forth his argument substantially, he draws our attention towards many concrete examples that are not accidental or sporadic, rather they are social and having religious justification, and these incidents relating to the untouchables are nothing but cruelties or atrocities or the inhuman treatments that are noteworthy here: 1) the pathetic conditions state of the untouchables “under the rule of the Peshwas in the Maratha country” – the lower caste untouchables were prohibited from the “use the public streets if a Hindu was coming along” fearing that he might be polluted by their shadows; 2) the caste-Hindus’ [he provides a list of castes] tyranny on one of the untouchable communities, the Balais of Central India, includes eight rules/conditions that they were forced to adhere/conform (must avoid: wearing *pugrees* with gold-lace-border, fancy or colour bordered *dhoti*, ornaments made up of gold or silver, and (women) fancy type gowns/jackets; and must do: conveying death of caste Hindus to their kith and kin, playing music during the marriages of the caste-Hindus, attend confinement cases of women of caste-Hindus, not demanding remuneration or receiving what was given for rendering services to the caste-Hindus; and excommunicated or sent out of village if not abiding to these. (But the resisted or violated Balais members faced the followings –barred from drawing drinking water from public wells, prevented from grazing cattle, banned from passing through the lands of caste Hindus, not permitted to access their own lands, their petitions to the Darbar (Court of Indore) couldn’t give timely relief, and hundreds of them left their ancestral homes to settle in the villages of neighbouring states); 3) the incident that

happened previous year at Kavitha in Gujarat (the caste Hindus stopped the untouchables to keep their children away common schools); 4) incident that happened in Gujarat in 1935 (Zanu village, Ahmedabad district) (the well-to-do untouchable women were attacked for using metal pots for fetching water which affronted the dignity of the Hindus); and 5) the incident that happened in April 1936 in Chakwara village in the state of Jaipur in which the untouchables who returned from pilgrimage were attacked by the Hindus for using ghee in their sumptuous meal offered to their guests as part of religious piety and food was spoiled by them, that is, ghee was luxurious and part of social status – meaning that “the Untouchable host was impudent enough to serve ghee, and his Untouchable guests were foolish enough to taste it” (Ambedkar (1936):19-21, Anand (2014):173-174).

By considering these incidents, in line with Mr. Bonnerji, he further asks the political-minded Hindus the following questions which cannot be considered as irrelevant in present context: “Are you fit for political power even though you do not allow a large class of your own countrymen like the Untouchables to use public schools? Are you fit for political power even though you do not allow them the use of public wells? Are you fit for political power even though you do not allow them the use of public streets? Are you fit for political power even though you do not allow them to wear what apparel or ornaments they like? Are you fit for political power even though you do not allow them to eat any food they like?” (Ambedkar (1936):21, Anand (2014):174). Despite claiming to have a lot of questions, he felt that these questions were enough to address the issue and convince the other. For him, the reason for the loss of the Social Reform Party is that instead of focusing on destroying the caste system, the social reformers focused on the reform of family, and though the party was defeated, for him, it was rightly insisted on the importance and need of reform at social level. He lists a number of examples from India (Chandragupta, Shivaji and Sikhs) and the Arab world (Muslim Empire) to show the political revolutions that were paved way by both religious and social revolutions. Further, by highlighting the necessity of social reform for achieving the economic reform, he draws our attention to Socialists, and also to the Indian socialists who were of the notion, following their Western counterparts, that understood man as the “economic creature” and it indicated the logic that the source of power rests solely on property, and which helped to the preach “that political and social reforms are but gigantic illusions, and that economic reform by equalisation of property must have precedence over every other kind of reform” (Ambedkar (1936):25, Anand (2014):179).

Disagreeing with the notion of “economic power is the only kind of power”, he goes on to elucidate that nature and function of social status “That the social status of an individual by itself often becomes a source of power and authority is made clear by the sway which the Mahatmas have held over the common man” (Ambedkar (1936):25, Anand (2014):179). Similarly, as witnessed in the Indian history, he explores the signifying performance of religion as source of power with few questions that are insightful: “Why do millionaires in India obey penniless Sadhus and Fakirs? Why do millions of paupers in India sell their trifling trinkets which constitute their only wealth, and go to Banaras and Mecca?” (Ambedkar (1936):25, Anand (2014):179). If the argument of Indian socialists’ that “equalization of property is the only real reform and that it must precede everything else” (Ambedkar (1936):27, Anand (2014):181), then his question, “Can you have economic reform without first bringing about a reform of the social order?” (Ambedkar (1936):27, Anand (2014):181-182) reflects his critical approach and broader vision, rather than on the imagination or speculation without having any foundation on the social reality. His skepticism over the Socialist discourse is not

without reason, and what they propose would result in injustice which he does not want it and he quotes from a letter received his from a prominent Socialist which reads that “I do not believe that we can build up a free society in India so long as there is a trace of this ill-treatment and suppression of one class by another. Believing as I do in a socialist ideal, inevitably I believe in perfect equality in the treatment of various classes and groups. I think that Socialism offers the only true remedy for this as well as other problems” (Ambedkar (1936):27, Anand (2014):182).

When equal treatment of all classes as perfect equality is seen as a belief of Indian socialists, he comments it as their “complete lack of understanding” (Ambedkar (1936):28, Anand (2014):182). Also he expresses his contention that if we assume it is a programme of practical feasibility, then the socialists must also have belief in equality. Similarly, they need to bother that “one class illtreating and suppressing another class as a matter of system, as a matter of principle and thus allowing tyranny and oppression to continue to divide one class from another” (Ambedkar (1936):28, Anand (2014):182). The Socialists cannot believe in the reform without the revolution for the seizure of power through the participation of men merely for the equalization of property. Rather, there must be the feeling of equality, fraternity and justice, and also there will be any sort of discrimination at any level – whether caste or creed. However, he reminds us that ‘if they hope socialism a definite reality, the problem of social reform must be treated as fundamental and there is no escape’ (Ambedkar (1936):29, Anand (2014):183). And he is with conviction that by killing this monster (caste), there cannot be any political reform and economic reform. ‘The caste is a monster’ – is highly metaphorical in nature, and this conceptualization brings to communicate the need of as well as the urgency of eliminating (lit. killing) the monster which never favours anyone and no one can be benefitted from it. It is unfortunate and piteous state that there are defenders for even caste who assume it another division of labour which is perceived by them as an inevitable feature of civil society, and in this context, he rightly indicates that “the caste system is not merely a division of labour [and] it is also a division of labourers” (Ambedkar (1936):29, Anand (2014):86, 184). It is not to mean or agree that the civilized society do not need labours, but there should not be an unnatural division of labours, that is, caste cannot be seen as a logical way of division of labour as it introduces hierarchy – a gradation of labours one over other. So far the caste is concerned, the division of labours reflects neither natural aptitude nor spontaneity, rather it is based on the caste based social status, that is, there is a denial of taking into account the social and individual capacity – which is therefore considered as dangerously destructive because the harmful effect it makes on its members is gradual and unnoticeable. Conversely, leading to unemployment due to this division of labour and also because an individual is not permitted to change his occupation according to change in time, that is, while the industry is not static, change is a reality. Further, this does not permit a readjustment of occupation, as he mentioned, leads to the country’s unemployment. Thus, he says that “as an economic organization Caste is therefore a harmful institution, inasmuch as it involves the subordination of man’s natural powers and inclinations to the exigencies of social rules” (Ambedkar (1936):31, Anand (2014):185).

Reflecting on this division of labour, he highlights another defect of the caste which criticizes and questions human dignity and integrity by imposing the dogma of predestination as the basic principle, which does not mind sentiment, preference and choice of any individual. Thus, he warns that “Considerations of social efficiency would compel us to recognise that the greatest evil in the industrial system is not so

much poverty and the suffering that it involves, as the fact that so many persons have callings which make no appeal to those who are engaged in them. Such callings constantly provoke one to aversion, ill will and the desire to evade" (Ambedkar (1936): 30, Anand (2014):185). He substantiates arguments by pointing out how the Hindus degrade some occupations and provoke those who are already engaged in them, and this provocation leads to the constant development of desire on them either for evading or for escaping these occupations. And he exposes the inherently defective one that "what efficiency can there be in a system under which neither men's hearts nor their minds are in their work? As an economic organisation caste is therefore a harmful institution, inasmuch as it involves the subordination of man's natural powers and inclinations to the exigencies of social rules" (Ambedkar (1936):30-31, Anand (2014):185). And for those who defend the caste thinking that they are actually involving in preserving the purity of blood and race, he answers them by quoting ethnologists that "men of pure race exist nowhere and that there a mixture of all races in all parts of the world" (Ambedkar (1936):31, Anand (2014):186) and also by quoting Mr. Devadatta Ramakrishna Bhandarkar's (1875-1950) paper titled as "Foreign Elements in the Hindu Population" (D.R. Bhandarkar 1911:37) that "there is hardly a class or caste in India which has not a foreign strain in it. There is an admixture of alien blood not only among the warrior classes—the Rajputs and the Marathas—but also among the Brahmins who are under the happy delusion that they are free from all foreign elements" (Ambedkar (1936):31, Anand (2014): 186). Therefore, he makes us to realize that the development caste in India is nothing to do either with the prevention of the admixture of races or with the maintenance of purity of blood. He continues to remark that "as a matter of fact the Caste system came into being long after the different races of India had commingled in blood and culture" (Ambedkar (1936):31, Anand (2014): 186). Having a long discussion on whether caste and sub-castes are eugenic in origin, by placing different claims that are illogical, he mentions that "caste has no scientific origin, and that those who are attempting to give it a eugenic basis are trying to support by science what is grossly unscientific" (Ambedkar (1936):32, Anand (2014): 188). Moreover, he rejects the practical possibility of eugenics by quoting Prof. William Bateson (1861-1926 who in *Mendel's Principles of Heredity* (1909:205) says that "There is nothing in the descent of the higher mental qualities to suggest that they follow any single system of transmission. It is likely that both they and the more marked developments of physical powers result rather from the coincidence of numerous factors than from the possession of any one genetic element" (Ambedkar (1936):33, Anand (2014): 188). And, in this connection, he comments that "To argue that the caste system was eugenic in its conception is to attribute to the forefathers of present-day Hindus a knowledge of heredity which even the modern scientists do not possess" (Ambedkar (1936):33, Anand (2014): 188). He further argues that "A tree should be judged by the fruits it yields. If caste is eugenic, what sort of a race of men should it have produced? Physically speaking the Hindus are a C3 people. They are a race of pygmies and dwarfs, stunted in stature and wanting in stamina. It is a nation nine-tenths of which is declared to be unfit for military service. This shows that the caste system does not embody the eugenics of modern scientists. It is a social system which embodies the arrogance and selfishness of a perverse section of the Hindus who were superior enough in social status to set it in fashion, and who had the authority to force it on their inferiors" (Ambedkar (1936):33, Anand (2014): 188). Being insightful, his comments are powerful lines, that is, they are like sharp arrows that have been released from the bow. Moreover, while these comments are very specific in connection to the hierarchy imposed in

terms of caste, they are having universal appeal since they are drawn from the scientific studies held around the world.

Some of his strong points are proven to be true in the modern age as a society, in its broadest term, is highly globalized. The defenders of caste must realize that caste has never produced either “economic efficiency” or “improved the race”, but on the contrary, as he firmly mentions that the Hindus are now “disorganised and demoralised” (Ambedkar (1936):33, Anand (2014): 189). He rightly exposes the nature of the Hindu society and for him it is rather a myth than having a real existence. Being a collection of castes, the name itself is having a foreign origin, and in fact, as he reveals, having been given by the Mahomedans for the purpose of differentiating themselves from the natives. (Ambedkar (1936):33, Anand (2014): 189) The contemporary caste politics and its association with communal riots have been clearly understood by him and he does not show any hesitation in expressing it: “Each caste is conscious of its existence. Its survival is the be-all and end-all of its existence. Castes do not even form a federation. A caste has no feeling that it is affiliated to other castes, except when there is a Hindu–Moslem riot. On all other occasions each caste endeavours to segregate itself and to distinguish itself from other castes” (Ambedkar (1936): 33-34, Anand (2014): 189). Since there is no Hindu consciousness, or what exists as Hindu consciousness is the caste consciousness, the Hindus cannot form either a society or a nation. An absolutely true statement, even in the present situation, when the media is actively engaged in the construction of Hindu identity with reference to and also to oppose the other religious groups, for political power.

Another striking feature of his understanding of the formation of society is that having similar customs, habits, beliefs and thoughts cannot guarantee for forming a society, because culture spreads through diffusion. That is, similarity in certain things, or parallel activities, to assume they are similar, still that are not sufficient enough to make a society, that is, not feasible to binding men to form a society, or in other terms, it is not enough to constitute a society (Ambedkar (1936):35, Anand (2014): 190). He clarifies the nature of the constitution of a society by saying that possessing common things constitutes a society, but not by having similar things. Moreover, for him, “the caste system prevents common activity; and by preventing common activity, it has prevented the Hindus from becoming a society with a unified life and a consciousness of its own being” (Ambedkar (1936):35, Anand (2014): 191). If his critics think that he is dividing the society and disturbing peace and harmony of the Hindus by making it open the discussion on the nuances of caste, he proved them for being wrong in their assumption by saying that “This anti-social spirit is not confined to caste alone. It has gone deeper and has poisoned the mutual relations of the sub-castes as well” (Ambedkar (1936):35, Anand (2014): 191) And by citing examples for the presence of anti-social spirit prevailing within the Brahmins (sub-divisions) of his province, and also pointing out that it is no different from the one that is already available between different castes within the Hindus with the dichotomy of Brahmins and non-Brahmins, for example, he warns that “An antisocial spirit is found wherever one group has ‘interests of its own’ which shut it out from full interaction with other groups, so that its prevailing purpose is protection of what it has got” (Ambedkar (1936):36, Anand (2014): 191-192). Therefore, the Hindu identity constructed and projected for meeting different political agenda in the current political scenario must be seen in the background of his emphasis on the configuration of the Hindus which guides us to treat not as an identity of cherishment, but “merely an assortment of castes, but are so many warring groups, each living for itself and for its selfish ideal” (Ambedkar (1936):36, Anand (2014): 192).

One more notorious feature of caste is convincingly highlighted here and for that, he cites a few historical incidents that are not being forgotten by the concerned parties, that is, what has to be forgiven and forgotten is not being kept alive in the memory. His point is important "The existence of caste and caste consciousness has served to keep the memory of past feuds between castes green, and has prevented solidarity" (Ambedkar (1936):36, Anand (2014): 192). He does not forget to bring the plight of the aboriginal tribes of India, and he draws attention to the people who are excluded and partially excluded "in a land which boasts of a civilization thousands of years old" (Ambedkar (1936):36, Anand (2014): 193). He indicates how the Hindus are not felt ashamed of the condition of the tribes who are in a savage state and some of them are classified as criminals. In civilizing the aborigines, the Hindus cannot do whatever the Christian missionary is doing. Because a Hindu's "whole life is one anxious effort to preserve his caste. Caste is his precious possession which he must save at any cost. He cannot consent to lose it by establishing contact with the aborigines, the remnants of the hateful Anaryas of the Vedic days" (Ambedkar (1936):37, Anand (2014): 193). On the continuance of the plights of the aborigines, he looks at the caste as the barrier for the Hindus for not coming forward to show their duties to troublesome humanity. It can be said his own words: "Caste is, therefore, the real explanation as to why the Hindu has let the savage remain a savage in the midst of his civilization without blushing, or without feeling any sense of remorse or repentance. The Hindu has not realized that these aborigines are a source of potential danger. If these savages remain savages, they may not do any harm to the Hindus. But if they are reclaimed by non-Hindus and converted to their faiths, they will swell the ranks of the enemies of the Hindus." (Ambedkar (1936):37-38, Anand (2014): 193-194). In fact, he draws examples from two communities from Maharashtra such as the Sonars and the Pathare Prabhus, to argue that how Hindus have ignored to make humanitarian effort to civilize them on the one hand and preventing these people of lower castes within Hinduism to elevate their cultural level on par with the Hindu communities of higher social status. Similarly, the strong view he expresses on the Hindus' criticism of Mahomedans and ridiculing of Christianity in the context of the spreading of their religions, and also on the Hindus' endeavour in keeping other communities in darkness and also they bother to share with others their intellectual and social heritage, but if asked who can be seen as better and more worthy of our respect between Mahomedan as cruel and the is mean, then he does not have any hesitation to say that meanness worse than cruelty. (Ambedkar (1936):38-39, Anand (2014): 195). For the argument that Christianity is a missionary religion, by indicating the fact that once the Hindu religion had the missionary status, he posts an important question "why did the Hindu religion cease to be a missionary religion?" (Ambedkar (1936):39, Anand (2014): 196). He gives a flexible answer which is highly relevant in the present context that when caste showed its development through growth among members of the Hindus, with inconsistency in accommodating the converted people, it becomes difficult for the Hindus to convert aliens to their religion, that is, the "caste is not open to all and sundry" (Ambedkar (1936):39, Anand (2014): 196). That is, there is a law of caste that confines oneself from getting into its membership, which indicates that birth is an important factor that qualifies one to be a member of a particular caste. Since it is an autonomous entity, there is no authority to decide the membership of a newcomer. When the Hindu society is merely the "collection of castes" and where each autonomously functions as an entity of corporation, then conversion does not have a place here. Therefore, it prohibits the Hindu religion from its expansion and thus making *Shuddhi* and *Sangathan* impossible for the Hindus (Ambedkar (1936):39-40, Anand (2014): 196).

The caste that prevents the *Sangathan* and cooperation makes the Hindus so indifferent, and he quotes Morris who says that “The great treading down the little, the strong beating down the weak, cruel men fearing not, kind men daring not and wise men caring not.” (Ambedkar (1936):41, Anand (2014): 196). It is also enjoying its unquestioned right over any members when he or she is found of breaking its rules, and ex-communication is an example which prohibits any social discourse within the caste. But it always takes advantage of the helplessness of others in the same it insists upon them the conformity to its code. The caste is notorious for its reformers and also for reforms. The reformers are excommunicated as the orthodox people use the caste as a powerful weapon with which the reformers are prosecuted and reforms are killed. (Ambedkar (1936):42, Anand (2014): 196). His understanding of caste is much deeper than we think and they are futuristic as well as concerned for all. Even after about eighty-five years, his words are relevant and portray the present society that can be seen in the deplorable condition, undoubtedly as what he predicted. He says: “The effect of caste on the ethics of the Hindus is simply deplorable. Caste has killed public spirit. Caste has destroyed the sense of public charity. Caste has made public opinion impossible. A Hindu’s public is his caste. His responsibility is only to his caste. His loyalty is restricted only to his caste. Virtue has become caste-ridden, and morality has become caste-bound. There is no sympathy for the deserving. There is no appreciation of the meritorious. There is no charity to the needy. Suffering as such calls for no response. There is charity, but it begins with caste and ends with caste. There is sympathy, but not for men of other castes.” (Ambedkar (1936):42, Anand (2014): 199). Too much affinity and affiliation with the caste by the Hindus has affected the society at each level and it is also seen as being influential in their daily life. Caste binds us from acknowledging and appreciating the talents or criticizing the faults without paying attention to caste or without bothering the person’s caste. Right or wrong, one tends to support or follow a fellow provided he belongs to the same caste. The appreciation of virtue is possible but only the man belongs to the same caste.

On the constructive side of his approach, he gives other dimensions of the Caste by proposing that a society ought to be founded with three principles such as “liberty, equality, and fraternity.” The ideal society he has proposed is not a static and resisting transformation rather it is mobile and filled with “channels for conveying a change taking place in one part to other parts” (Ambedkar (1936):43, Anand (2014): 200). The social endosmosis he envisages is materialized through creating an ideal society where “many interests consciously communicated and shared” [and also there are] varied and free points of contact with other modes of association” (Ambedkar (1936):43, Anand (2014): 200). Further, what he proposes as fraternity for an ideal society is nothing but “only another name for democracy [which, as he defines that,] is not merely a form of government. It is primarily a mode associated living, conjoint communicated experience [and thus,] democracy is essentially an attitude of respect and reverence towards fellow men” (Ambedkar (1936):43, Anand (2014): 200-201). Whereas liberty is not absolute as caste influences its people to have unequal relationships among fellow men, and he rightly points out that “the supporters of caste who would allow liberty in the sense of a right to life, limb, and property, would not readily consent to liberty in this sense, inasmuch as it involves liberty to choose one’s profession.” (Ambedkar (1936):43, Anand (2014): 201). He terms this objection as a way to “perpetuate slavery”, that is, it cannot be taken as the subjugation in a legalized form, but, as he points out, “a state of society in which some men are forced to accept from others the purposes which control their conduct” (Ambedkar (1936):44, Anand (2014): 201). And, thus caste is no exception as it compels some persons to do certain prescribed callings

without their choice or willingness. In the case of equality, there are objections to the contentious slogan drawn from the French Revolution. Since equality seems to the notion of fiction, and thus, to treat all men as unequal, he asks that it must be a governing principle. In this context, he mentions three types of power that depend on the followings: “(1) physical heredity; (2) social inheritance or endowment in the form of parental care, education, accumulation of scientific knowledge, everything which enables him to be more efficient than the savage; and finally, (3) on his own efforts.” (Ambedkar (1936):44, Anand (2014): 201). Though all are unequal as per these conditions, we do not “treat them as unequal” simply “because they are unequal” (Ambedkar (1936):44, Anand (2014): 201). However, it is important to accept equality in the sense of need and capacity. In fact, there is a need to all men alike and it is the responsibility of the statesman who can have “some rough and ready rule” (Ambedkar (1936):45, Anand (2014): 202) for this purpose, because humanity has proved that it is incapable of “assortment and classification (Ambedkar (1936):45, Anand (2014): 202).”

He criticizes the reformist attempt of the Arya Samajists’ Chaturvarnya, which claimed not on birth but on guna (“worth”), by exposing its labelling men into the popular four categories (Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra) and also to display their behavioural pattern they have to perform their duties accordingly (Ambedkar (1936):44-46, Anand (2014): 203). In this context, he draws our attention to the practices of European society that “If European society honours its soldiers and its servants without giving them permanent labels, why should Hindu society find it difficult to do so, is a question which Arya Samajists have not cared to consider” (Ambedkar (1936):45, Anand (2014): 203). The same criticism he is applying to Plato’s *Republic* which presents the “idea of lumping individuals into a few sharply marked-off classes” and he is sure that people cannot be accurately classified into four categories or groups. And he gives reason that “Plato had no perception of the uniqueness of every individual, of his incommensurability with others, of each individual as forming a class of his own.” (Ambedkar (1936):47, Anand (2014): 205). Another difficulty in the establishing Chaturvarnya is the problem of maintenance through a penal system. By giving the reason for the act of Rama killing Shambuka in *Ramayana* for the latter transgressing from his class of Shudra to become a Brahmin, he says that Rama cannot be blamed because Rama Raj based on Chaturvarnya must be maintained through a strong punishment, i.e., necessity of death penalty is inevitable. And this must be understood in the background of *Manusmriti* that “prescribes such heavy sentences as cutting off the tongue, or pouring of molten lead in the ears, of the Shudra who recites or hears the Veda” (Ambedkar (1936):48, Anand (2014): 206). Another interesting point discussed that may be highly relevant in the present situation where feminist movements are not escaping from caste question and the role of women in it is that he points out that the protagonists of Chaturvarnya have not considered the place of women in the system. In this connection, he raises a few pertinent issues associated with the system of Chaturvarnya that whether women will also be divided into four classes? If the status women is going to be new, or status of their husbands, in the post-marriage phase, assumed as a result of their marriage, then the worth of a person, claims to the Chaturvarnya’s underlying principle, becomes insignificant which cannot be ignored. Even worth is the parameter to classify women, the question that arises on the nature of this classification as whether it is a “nominal or real”? Then he goes on to mention that “Hindu society has grown accustomed to women teachers and women barristers. It may grow accustomed to women brewers and women butchers. But he would be a bold person who would say that it will allow women priests and women soldiers” (Ambedkar (1936): 49,

Anand (2014): 207). Though it appears as a simple, elevating and alluring theory, for him, it is neither foolproof nor knaveproof, and in the context of inevitable interdependency, this theory appears as absurd, and in practice, it will be a master and servants' relationship. Moreover, he explains how other three agree to beat down the Shudra and how the latter will be prohibited from owning wealth and acquiring knowledge. Fearing that the Shudras may be rebellious towards their authority, the Shudras are not allowed to possess arms. He further says that that "this is how the Shudras were treated by the tryavarnikas is evidenced by the laws of Manu. There is no code of laws more infamous regarding social rights than the laws of Manu. Any instance from anywhere of social injustice must pale before it." (Ambedkar (1936): 50-51, Anand (2014): 209) But considering all the historical instances, that have tried and proved to be a failure as a system, he terms the Chaturvarnya as not a new system but as old as the Veda. (Ambedkar (1936):52, Anand (2014): 211).

He is troubled by the fact that the people have so much tolerated the social evil that they were subjected, and therefore unlike other countries in the world, there is no such revolution that has happened in India. The most striking answer he gives so confidently is that "it is that the lower classes of Hindus have been completely disabled for direct action on account of this wretched caste system. They could not bear arms, and without arms, they could not rebel. They were all ploughmen—or rather, condemned to be ploughmen—and they never were allowed to convert their ploughshares into swords." (Ambedkar (1936): 51, Anand (2014): 209). His thrust is on education and education as the source of liberation. Without education, there is no way for their salvation, and without knowing and having way or possessing no means for escaping, people do accept their external servitude and their inescapable fate. He cites an example from the situation of the weak in Europe: "Social war has been raging between the strong and the weak far more violently in Europe than it has ever been in India. Yet the weak in Europe has had in his freedom of military service, his physical weapon; in suffering, his political weapon; and in education, his moral weapon. These three weapons for emancipation were never withheld by the strong from the weak in Europe. All these weapons were, however, denied to the masses in India by the caste system." (Ambedkar (1936):51, Anand (2014): 209). The plurality of human society is historical and it never been a single entity, and thus the plurality is the reality. Even the same parameter does not have the same value within different groups. For instance, the social significance of the caste is not the same for both the non-Hindus and the Hindus. While it is a sacred institution for the Hindus, but for the non-Hindus it does not have any religious dogma. Therefore, it is merely a matter of practice for the non-Hindus. Those who deny that caste is not at all a problem for the Hindus and feeling comfort thinking as the Hindus society has survived, they subscribe to the point said by Professor S. Radhakrishnan (1888-1975) in the *Hindu View of Life* (1927) as proof of its fitness for this survival. By referring to the text [The civilisation itself has not been a short-lived one. Its historic records date back to over four thousand years and even then it had reached a stage of civilisation which has continued its unbroken, though at times slow and static, course until the present day. It has stood the stress and strain of more than four or five millenniums of spiritual thought and experience. Though peoples of different races and cultures have been pouring into India from the dawn of history, Hinduism has been able to maintain its supremacy and even the proselytising creeds backed by political power have not been able to coerce the large majority of Hindus to their views. The Hindu culture possesses some vitality which seems to be denied to some other more forceful currents. It is no more necessary to dissect Hinduism than to open a tree to see whether the sap still runs (1927: 12-13, quoted in Ambedkar

(1936):55, Anand (2014):214). “In dealing with the problem of the conflict of the different racial groups, Hinduism adopted the only safe course of democracy, viz., that each racial group should be allowed to develop the best in it without impeding the progress of others. Every historical group is unique and specific and has an ultimate value, and the highest morality requires that we should respect its individuality. Caste, on its racial side, is the affirmation of the infinite diversity of human groups” (S. Radhakrishnan 1927: 94, quoted in Anand (2014): 270). “Caste was the answer of Hinduism to the forces pressing on it from outside. It was the instrument by which Hinduism civilised the different tribes it took in. Any group of people appearing exclusive in any sense is a caste. Whenever a group represents a type a caste arises (S. Radhakrishnan 1927: 104, quoted in Anand (2014): 270)], Ambedkar writes that “For I fear that his statement may become the basis of a vicious argument that the fact of survival is proof of fitness to survive.” (Ambedkar (1936):55, Anand (2014): 215). Then he gives different modes of survival for an individual as well as for society - not all of them are equally honourable because it is necessary to differentiate between what is ‘merely living’ and what is ‘living worthily’. He gives battle as a metaphorical example for both merely living and worth living, i.e., fighting a battle or surrendering, and while the former is used for live in glory and the latter is meant the life of a captive. (Ambedkar (1936):55-56, Anand (2014): 215). For him, as he warns that, the social order must be changed for any progress to happen in the Hindu society, and even people cannot be mobilized for defence as well as for offence. Building up morality, or building anything cannot be done and possible on the foundation of caste.

He is not merely posing questions - (like “How to bring about the reform of the Hindu social order? How to abolish caste?” (Ambedkar (1936): 56, Anand (2014):216)) - as the first step in his proposal to abolish castes that lies on the abolishment of sub-castes, because, as he mentions that “there is a greater similarity in manners and status between sub-castes than there is between castes” (Ambedkar (1936): 56, Anand (2014):216). For him, food is the factor that integrates and disintegrates different caste groups, for example, “the Brahmins of the Deccan and southern India, who are vegetarians, and the Brahmins of Kashmere and Bengal, who are non-vegetarians” (Ambedkar (1936): 57, Anand (2014):216). Therefore, he comes with the proposal for a transition from one caste to another and finds that this transition is easy. However, it is pertinent to ask whether merger sub-castes will guarantee the caste abolition or not? Conversely, this process that the abolition of sub-castes may not be conducive because it will strengthen the caste to be “more powerful and more mischievous” (Ambedkar (1936): 57, Anand (2014): 216). While discussing about the inter-dinning, to know its possibility as a remedy, he is convinced that it may be an inadequate tool for abolishing task because few castes that do allow inter-dinning, however, they failed to kill the caste spirit and caste consciousness. However, he reveals that he is of the conviction that “the real remedy is intermarriage. Fusion of blood can alone create the feeling of being kith and kin, and unless this feeling of kinship, of being kindred, becomes paramount, the separatist feeling—the feeling of being aliens—created by caste will not vanish” (Ambedkar (1936): 57, Anand (2014): 217).

He appreciates and congratulates the effort of the JPTM for initiating the task of diagnostic process by saying that “[you have] shown the courage to tell the Hindus what is really wrong with them. Political tyranny is nothing compared to social tyranny, and a reformer who defies society is a much more courageous man than a politician who defies the government. You are right in holding that caste will cease to be an operative force only when inter-dining and intermarriage have become matters of common course. You have located the source of the disease” (Ambedkar

(1936): 57-58, Anand (2014): 217). He is careful in handling issues and his thoughts are foresighted and progressive. For him, since caste is religiously rooted, the Hindus cannot escape from observing it, so they don't practice as a matter of as they are inhuman and wrong-headed. Being religiously founded, the shastras play a vital role in teaching them the nuances of caste or the entire system of caste, and therefore, the real remedy lies in the agenda of "destroy[ing] the belief in the sanctity of the shastras" (Ambedkar (1936): 58, Anand (2014): 218). Here the shastras are permitting them to have belief in the "sanctity and their sanctions" (Ambedkar (1936): 58 Anand (2014): 218), and the also allow them to behave irrationally cum inhumanly. Therefore, one must have an understanding that it is the result of their beliefs that their acts are founded, and also the shastras inculcate these beliefs in the mind of people. The reformers include Mahatma who are making efforts for the abolition of untouchability must realize that unless there is a change in their beliefs in sanctity, there will be no result in their efforts (Ambedkar (1936): 58-59, Anand (2014): 218-219). And he suggests that "Make every man and woman free from the thralldom of the shastras, cleanse their minds of the pernicious notions founded on the shastras, and he or she will inter-dine and intermarry, without your telling him or her to do so" (Ambedkar (1936): 59, Anand (2014): 219). In order to reform the society, first of all, the Hindus must be told about the wrong that their religion is having, and they must look at the path taken by Buddha and Guru Nanak in discarding the shastras. In this context, he lists the following three types of social reforms: 1. that "does not relate to the religious notions of a people, but is purely secular in character"; 2. that "not only touches the religious principles but is diametrically opposed to those principles, and invites people to depart from and to discard their authority, and to act contrary to those principles"; and 3. "to give up caste is to ask them to go contrary to their fundamental religious notions" (Ambedkar (1936): 59-60, Anand (2014): 219-220). Precisely, when the Hindus are proud in upholding the social order and the divine basis of the caste, as the Hindus uphold the sacredness of the social order and caste has a divine basis, that is, the attempt at destroying the caste must be understood as means of dismantling "the authority of the shastras and the Vedas" (Ambedkar (1936):59-60, Anand (2014): 220). The highlight of his proposal is that he has emphasized a practical "ways and means of destroying caste" which are convincing because they are merely reflecting "knowing the ideal" one (Ambedkar (1936): 60, Anand (2014): 220). For him, the real ways and means must be chosen because the task is Herculean and thus, there must an endorsement from everyone about our capability in achieving it, and this task appears impossible because the Brahmins have vehemently extended their hostile attitude on this question. He is expressing his logical and practical understanding in the matter pertaining to the role of the Brahmins in the task. Everyone assumes that though the Brahmins are also of the view that caste is the bane of the Hindu society, the secular Brahmins can help in the task of breaking caste, but the same thing cannot be expected from the priestly Brahmins. Since both the Brahmins are "kith and kin" then they function as "two arms of the same body" which means that "one is bound to fight for the existence of the other" (Ambedkar (1936):60-61, Anand (2014): 221). It can be best understood in the Indian context from the last line of the quote Prof. Dicey in his English Constitution that "The true answer is that a revolutionist is not the kind of man who becomes a Pope, and that the man who becomes a Pope has no wish to be a revolutionist" (Ambedkar (1936): 61, Anand (2014): 222).

He expresses his high expectations on the intellectual class which, according to him, bears the responsibility for entire destiny of the country, and he mentions that "If the intellectual class is honest, independent and disinterested, it can be trusted

to take the initiative and give a proper lead when a crisis arises” (Ambedkar (1936): 62, Anand (2014): 223). However, he exposes the duality this class by say that “An intellectual man can be a good man, but he can easily be a rogue. Similarly, an intellectual class may be a band of high souled persons, ready to help, ready to emancipate erring humanity—or it may easily be a gang of crooks or a body of advocates for a narrow clique from which it draws its support” (Ambedkar (1936): 62, Anand (2014): 223). Conversely, he reveals that the intellectual class in India emerges a problematic group because of its composition and noninclusive nature, and it has been a monopolized one that makes us to call it is as the Brahmin caste, or to term them as reciprocally single one since both are same. In fact, the Brahmins caste does not simply form the intellectual class because it is highly revered by other communities of the Hindus (Ambedkar (1936): 62, Anand (2014): 223). Sadly, the rest of the Hindus are made to believe or accept as true that “the Brahmins are *Bhudevas* (gods on earth)”, i.e., they can do the teaching profession, that is, as Manu. Finding that this intellectual class is having grip over the rest of the communities, he expresses his disbelief because it opposes the attempts to reform the caste (Ambedkar (1936): 63, Anand (2014): 224).

He gives another reason for the task to be impossible due to the two aspects of the caste: while one aspect exposes the divisive nature the caste the other one introduces grades among the communities – in the ladder of hierarchy where one caste is placed on the another caste as per their respective social status. The arrangement of castes is strategic and cleverly in the sense that it makes each caste to take pride of its position just above of other castes and it introduce a type of gradation in connection with social rights and religious rights - *ashtadhikaras* and *sanskaras*, that is those who occupy the higher order are supposed to have more rights than the lower order castes. Seeing these problematic configurations and distribution of both castes and arrangements, and also due to this gradation and the arrangement of social and religious rights, he fears that it becomes a difficult task to organize these communities against the caste. Moreover, if any caste is willing to have or claim the right for inter-dinning and intermarriage, it is quite obvious that, then the other castes may concede the inter-dinning and intermarriage, which may result in the understanding that the castes beings slaves to the caste system will not be having equal status among them. And, similarly, due to the fear that some of the castes who are enjoying some amount of prestige and social power than others may lose them, it is difficult to mobilize all the Hindus against the caste system (Ambedkar (1936): 63, Anand (2014): 224).

Keeping reason as a parametre, he proceeds to ask pertinent questions that reflect his boldness that whether the Hindus are ready to give up the caste system since they are holding it in contrary to their reason or are they free to practice their reason? However, the prevailing condition is that, as he mentions that, the Hindus cannot follow anything other than Veda, smriti or *sadachar*. That is, as Manu puts the condition that, if there is a confrontation between Vedas and Smrits, both of them will be holding equal authority. Again, Manu prefers to uphold shruti if it is needed to be decided between the shruti and smriti in terms of conflict. Similarly, according to Brihaspati, the *Manusmriti* must prevail when there is a conflict between two smritis. As laid down in *Mahabharata*, the Hindus are not entitled to use their reasoning faculty when there is a positive direction of shrutis and smritis. Since the Vedas and the Smritis deal with the caste and varna, there is no space for a reason to make an effect on a Hindu, and this is an interesting point that deals with the religious foundations. However, he points out some of the situations when a Hindu does not maintain the caste. Moreover, as he points out, as per the rule of shastras, caste has be maintained by the Hindus as far as possible and must do the

prayaschitta, a purification ritual for breaking caste taboos, if there is a violation (Ambedkar (1936): 66, Anand (2014): 228). Even if any doubt arise while reading and interpreting the Vedas and Smritis, Manu has a definite answer, and he mentions that “according to this rule, rationalism as a canon of interpreting the Vedas and smritis is absolutely condemned. It is regarded to be as wicked as atheism, and the punishment provided for it is excommunication. Thus, where a matter is covered by the Veda or the smriti, a Hindu cannot resort to rational thinking” (Ambedkar (1936): 64, Anand (2014): 225-226).

A reformer must possess as his armoury both reason and morality as their powerful weapons. The antagonistic role being played by the Brahmins is that they perform as an army in protecting the caste. It is the irony that the intellectual class in India is formed by the Brahmins who have been considered as natural leaders for other communities. He cautions the reformers that the Brahmins play a major role in protecting the system of caste and he further mentions that “Brahmins who are there not as mere mercenary soldiers but as an army fighting for its homeland, and you will get an idea why I think that the breaking up of caste among the Hindus is well-nigh impossible. At any rate, it would take ages before a breach is made” (Ambedkar (1936):68, Anand (2014): 229). while he is expressing his pessimism about the breach, he presents his consideration that “If you wish to bring about a breach in the system, then you have got to apply the dynamite to the Vedas and the shastras, which deny any part to reason; to the Vedas and shastras, which deny any part to morality. You must destroy the religion of the shrutis and the smritis. Nothing else will avail” (Ambedkar (1936): 68, Anand (2014): 229). He goes on to clarify what he meant by the destruction of religion and his explanation has a focus on showing the difference or distinction between what do we mean by principles and what by rules. If rules are considered practical, then the principles are intellectual, and while the former is associated with carrying out activities in regular ways and the latter can be seen as methods that help us making judgement about things. In fact, while rules do prescribe what needs to be pursued the principles do not. This distinction between rules and principle he employs in relation to religion, in the sense that even if principles are wrong, one can act consciously, and in other cases, though having right rules, one can act mechanically. Therefore, religion must mainly rest within the sphere of principles only, it must not occupy the domain of rules. And he warns that “the moment it degenerates into rules it ceases to be religion, as it kills the responsibility which is the essence of a truly religious act” (Ambedkar (1936): 69, Anand (2014): 230). On this ground he further sharpens his criticism on the Hindu religion by asking “Is it a set of principles, or is it a code of rules?” (Ambedkar (1936): 69, Anand (2014): 230) and his answer reflects his ontological revelation of it that “the Hindus is nothing but a multitude of commands and prohibitions. Religion, in the sense of spiritual principles, truly universal, applicable to all races, to all countries, to all times, is not to be found in them; and if it is, it does not form the governing part of a Hindu’s life. [...] To put it in plain language, what the Hindus call religion is really law, or at best legalized class-ethics. Frankly, I refuse to call this code of ordinances as religion. The first evil of such a code of ordinances, misrepresented to the people as religion, is that it tends to deprive moral life of freedom and spontaneity, and to reduce it (for the conscientious, at any rate) to a more or less anxious and servile conformity to externally imposed rules. Under it, there is no loyalty to ideals; there is only conformity to commands” (Ambedkar (1936):69-70, Anand (2014): 231). While critically discussing the underlying elements that constitute the overall outlook of the Hindu religion, he does not have hesitation “in saying that such a religion must

be destroyed, and there is nothing irreligious in working for the destruction” (Ambedkar (1936):70, Anand (2014): 232).

It does not mean that he is totally against religion or religious system, rather, his expectation on religion is high and for a universal religion or a religion with universally acceptable principle. This is clearly seen from his agreement with the statement of Irish origin British Statesman and political thinker, Burke (2001) (1729–1797), who says that “True religion is the foundation of society, the basis on which all true Civil Government rests, and from which power derives its authority, laws their efficacy, and both their sanction. If it is once shaken by contempt, the whole fabric cannot be stable or lasting” (Ambedkar (1936): 70, Anand (2014): 232, Das (2010)). He suggests a list of cardinal items for reform purpose that are:

- “a standard book of Hindu religion, acceptable to all Hindus and recognized by all Hindus” (i.e., “all other books of Hindu religion such as Vedas, shastras, and puranas, which are treated as sacred and authoritative, must by law cease to be so, and the preaching of any doctrine, religious or social, contained in these books should be penalised.”);
- ‘abolition of priesthood among Hindus, or if impossible, the hereditary priesthood must be abolished; examination must be conducted and a certificate (*sanad*) must be issued by the state as a permission for practice’;
- ‘no ceremony performed by priests who do not possess a *sanad*’;
- ‘priests must be employed by the state and who, as servants of the state, must be entitled for disciplinary proceedings if there is a violation on the ground of moral, belief and worship’; and
- ‘the total number of priests depends on the state’s requirement and it can be limited by law as practiced in the case of Indian civil service (ICS)’

(Ambedkar (1936): 70-71, Anand (2014): 232-233).

He admits that it may sound radical, but nothing revolutionary that as every profession is regulated in the country, there is a need to regulate so far unregulated profession of priest who are not so far “subjected to any code” (Ambedkar (1936): 71,). He gives reason for why the priestly class must be controlled by regulations for preventing them from misguiding others and doing mischief (Ambedkar (1936): 71-72, Anand (2014): 234). This point needs to be discussed in modern times considering the rights and privileges they enjoy. For him, Hinduism must be saved from Brahmanism which is poison and kills it, and he expects that the Arya Samajists must welcome this reform (Ambedkar (1936): 72, Anand (2014): 234). His proposal for a reform of the Hindu religion is insightful and highly progressive, and it reflects not only his vision for the country and also of his bravura commitment. What he is proposing is not simply a task of addition and deletion, rather a total change in the values that facilitate the everyday life. That is, his proposal seeks to promise a total change in the underlying and original notion of life which is possible through “remoulding”, “scraping” and “chipping off from the ore” to give a complete new “outlook” with new “attitude” towards “men and things”, and this “new life” is possible through conversion to a new system, that is, discarding the shastras’ authority and obliterating the religion that is founded on the shastras. This conversion to new system of belief will make it sure that the old body becomes inoperative and the new one will begin to ‘enliven and pulsate’ (Ambedkar (1936): 72, Anand (2014): 235).

He proceeds to close his address and seeks the Hindu audience to allow him to ask a few questions that he thinks that they are vital, and he invites them to ‘seriously consider the same’ (Ambedkar (1936): 73, Anand (2014): 235): first of all,

the Hindus must consider the anthropological view: “there is nothing to be said about the beliefs, habits, morals and outlooks on life which obtain among the different peoples of the world, except that they often differ; or whether it is not necessary to make an attempt to find out what kind of morality, beliefs, habits, and outlook have worked best and have enabled those who possessed them to flourish, to grow strong, to people the earth and to have dominion over it” (Ambedkar (1936): 73, Anand (2014): 235). In support of this point he draws attention to Professor Thomas Nixon Carver (1865–1961) who says that “morality and religion, as the organised expression of moral approval and disapproval, must be regarded as factors in the struggle for existence as truly as are weapons for offence and defence, teeth and claws, horns and hoofs, fur and feathers, plumage, beards, and antlers. The social group community, tribe or nation which develops an unworkable scheme of morality, or within which those social acts which weaken it and unfit it for survival habitually create the sentiment of approval, while those which would strengthen it and enable it to expand habitually create the sentiment of disapproval, will eventually be eliminated. Its habits of approval and disapproval handicap it as really as the possession of two wings on one side with none on the other would handicap a colony of flies. It would be as futile in one case as in the other to argue that one system was just as good as another” (Carver (1915): 20, quoted in Ambedkar (1936): 73, Anand (2014): 235-236). While pointing out that “morality and religion are not merely matters of likes and dislikes” (Ambedkar (1936):73, Anand (2014): 236) and also by giving reason why ‘religion and morality must seen in terms of their survival value’, he goes on to present the second by quoting Professor Dewey (1916) who says that “Every society gets encumbered with what is trivial, with dead wood from the past, and with what is positively perverse ... As a society becomes more enlightened, it realises that it is responsible not to conserve and transmit the whole of its existing achievements, but only such as make for a better future society” (Ambedkar (1936):74, Anand (2014): 236). Here it is the responsibility of the society to decide what they want to conserve – whether the social heritage in toto or to choose something that can be transmitted to the future for the better society” (Ambedkar (1936):74, Anand (2014): 236). Third, he cautions that “the Hindus must consider whether they must not cease to worship the past as supplying their ideals” (Ambedkar (1936):74, Anand (2014): 237) and in support of his view he draws insights from Professor John Dewey who says that “An individual can live only in the present. The present is not just something which comes after the past; much less something produced by it. It is what life is in leaving the past behind it. The study of past products will not help us to understand the present. A knowledge of the past and its heritage is of great significance when it enters into the present, but not otherwise. And the mistake of making the records and remains of the past the main material of education is that it tends to make the past a rival of the present and the present a more or less futile imitation of the past” (Ambedkar (1936):74, Anand (2014): 237). Here, interestingly, he warns about the principle that “looks upon the present as empty and upon the future as remote” (Ambedkar (1936):74, Anand (2014): 237) since it “is inimical to progress and is a hindrance to a strong and a steady current of life” (Ambedkar (1936):74, Anand (2014): 237). And, fourth, he emphasizes the inevitable aspect of change of time, and he mentions that “the Hindus must consider whether the time has not come for them to recognize that there is nothing fixed, nothing eternal, nothing *sanatan*; that everything is changing, that change is the law of life for individuals as well as for society. In a changing society, there must be a constant revolution of old values; and the Hindus must realise that if there must be standards to measure the acts of men, there must

also be a readiness to revise those standards” (Ambedkar (1936):75, Anand (2014): 237)

6. WHY THIS EXTENSIVE READING AND SUMMARIZING OF THE ADDRESS?

This portion clarifies the necessity of this reading and summarizing of the text of the address in the contemporary scenario which has seen a sea-change in the social development on the one hand and the strengthening of the some of the concepts and notions such as caste as more vigour, dominant and decisive factor that plays an indispensable role in the daily life hundred and forty crore Indians. With the help of this lengthy address he elucidated his position and made it clear on his views that were the reflection of a person who had “no tool of power, no flatterer of greatness” (Ambedkar (1936):75). His comment on caste that cannot be either ignored or found to be irrelevant in the modern context that “Caste is no doubt primarily the breath of the Hindus. But the Hindus have fouled the air all over, and everybody is infected...You, therefore, deserve the support of all those who are suffering from this infection...” (Ambedkar (1936):75; Anand (2014):238). The importance of this address is that each and every reform must not ignore this address, on the other hand, even the orthodox may gain from reading this text. Since the text is “open to objection, it has to be read” (Ambedkar (1936):75). Though for a general reading or for a glance at the title, the readers may quickly establish that he is a challenge to Hinduism, the intensive reading of his text disillusion their notion and make them realize that he is very much concerned as well as wants to reform it by making its philosophy and principles universally acceptable. However, the dichotomy of the text itself can be understood that irrespective of being composed in addressing the problems of fellow men who are socially neglected with the religious sanction, the text presents points that are highly academic and dialogic making it clear to its readers or target groups. That is, the text is readable and decipherable, argumentatively, by the readers who are on the other side of the fence, and it is almost handled comfortably by elite scholars who have already established positions in the field of social criticism. Therefore, presenting the summarized text becomes a pertinent point for us because it may facilitate the caste debate to be live and vibrant in the present socio-political conditions. With the help of this article, if published without expurgation, we may underscore the point that the younger generations must not be kept themselves away from the text which has everything to fulfill their ambitious task of becoming social thinkers and critics. This intensive reading has not been so enjoyable for two reasons: first, the well-organized content that is more comprehensive and highly polished seeking the role of advanced readers, and second, not only the language but the style of presentation is highly sophisticated and uncompromising which promise to touch our inner consciousness and disturb our peace. Finally, despite the assumptions that the annihilation of caste, understood as a text (when it is indicated with italics) as well referring to the task of social agenda, is relevant only to understand the problem of the caste of the Hindu society, the readers may find that, like the authors of this article, may find it is relevant to comprehend the contemporary problems that involve human relations, some of them are with modern outlook.

7. DISCUSSION

Apart from the summarization, some of the important points of the text are discussed here:

- 1) The *AoC* / Annihilation of Caste and the semiotic undercurrent: The text demonstrates that human relation in Hindu society is complex, and it needs theoretical inputs from relevant disciplines for comprehending the whole system that has influence the interpersonal relationship in socio-cultural, political and spiritual spheres. However, human relation involves different levels of communication that involves many components such as encoder, decoder, message, code, medium, channel, signs, symbols, etc. The caste and varna systems cannot be understood outside the purview of the communication process as they provide not only a context but also a set of rules or conditions that influence the process of communication between individuals within the Hindu society. That is, the communication between the Hindus is not spontaneous and there is no free flow of information, and thus the knowledge sharing is strictly conditioned by the systems that have become the objects of contention for social reformers. In fact, communication becomes a tool with which the whole dimension of the caste system can be understood, and the exchange of messages, in face-to-face communication, or indirect communication, are highly regulated that many times lead to the failure of communication, that is, the breaking up of human relations. Even in any social interaction between individuals belonging to different castes who are sharing a common system of the Hindu society can be understood in terms of [Ruesch \(1972\)](#) actual events and symbolic events. In which the former refers to the behaviour of the people and the field or environmental or situational structure which is the substratum on which behaviour of organism manifests, and the latter is consisting of communication i.e., the organization's or organism's symbolic functioning, and the social order or social context which provides ground for the symbolic functioning [Ruesch \(1972/1966\):21](#)). As far as the caste is concerned, both the actual events and symbolic events are not exempted from the communication process, because of the hierarchical social order based on birth. Even the language used for communication is structured and influenced by the caste relationships among the Hindus. Further, the caste decides the finalization of structure, language usage and language content [Ruesch \(1972\)](#), and even vocabulary of language used is having a decisive function, for example. Within the hierarchical social order, being graded using criteria or any classificatory system, that emerge different patterns of social behaviour that are guided and influenced by language, and in fact, it is the language that provides the foundation for the establishment as well as the dissemination of the caste-based system. Further, each social position with a set of behavioural patterns within the order is constantly promoted, justified and contested in and by language which provides a medium. In this process, a lot of literature is being produced for and against the caste system on the one hand and a vast amount of literature is being produced for reforming it on the other hand. However, all the literature, whatever the purpose and format, are contributing directly or indirectly to the shaping of the caste system in a positive or negative way. Each term used in the classificatory system describes the status, roles and social attributions, and the social positions in the network of human relations. Each caste name is defined with reference to other names, that is, a relatedness is expressed by each caste name – one terms its position in relation to other terms within the system. There are social and cultural behaviours and practices that also play significant roles in establishing the meaning of caste names by differentiation and integration. For example, by wearing a thread over the body, Brahmin differentiates himself from others,

that is, when the term Brahmin is defined, naturally all other caste terms are defined. In fact, within the caste as a signifying system, there are elements actively and independently but in coordination with other elements to make the system functional. The system does not provide any provision for its elements to redefine or rearrange their roles and relationships, and thus making either the reformist attempt or revolution within the system is either impossible or requires a long period of time. However, the viable option, as he points out in *AoC*, is to get out of the system to adopt a new system with different sets of values. When caste becomes a semiotic system, all the participating elements must enjoy their meaningfulness and address their meaninglessness by adapting the provisions provided by the system itself. As far as the Caste is concerned, even language in social communication does not favour a neutral and unified system, because, the whole establishment is founded on the hierarchical status and roles with a set of codes and patterns that are required to be followed by the members of the society. A caste system is a unified system of different castes where each caste or caste group defines its rules and regulations as well as its relationship with other caste groups as per the ascribed social positions in the ladder. Moreover, each caste functions independently and it disseminates rules and regulations for its members and the membership can also be terminated or temporarily withdrawn through the process of excommunication. Human reasoning is completely withdrawn in the case of caste, and the elementary logic that is needed for perceiving the world is now discarded and the textual instructions are blindly and forcefully followed by each caste group within the system. This hierarchical arrangement is not always sacrosanct, that is, there are violations and revolts. The symbols and signs of one caste are contested and appropriated by other groups in a way that is progressive when it is towards an upward move. Further, caste finds its manifestation not by suppressing by freely expressing and addressing on the one hand and by allowing its members to reflect through different media. The caste system through the production, combination, and appropriation of codes, signs and symbols, produces different emotions and feelings, and also it produces antagonistic relationships due to the exploitative nature of the overall arrangements of the system. Further, it is irony that caste that is founded on the birth of a person with ascribed value based on purity which segments human beings as touchable and untouchable, produces values that can be either preferred or non-preferred or that can be rejected such as equality, change, etc., as preferred value, for example, and inequality by birth, stability as non-preferred or rejected values, for example. The author of the text, as a result of his in-depth reading and understanding the systems of caste and varna, decided to leave Hinduism as a remedy for the inhuman relationships justified by a few ancient texts. His minute readings, which cannot be rejected by the authority of Hinduism, have interpreted the caste and its supportive documents with the perspective that modern semiotics will prove logical and valid. For example, caste 'X' naturally produces caste "Y" through its contrary relationship and on the other axis by introducing ascribed values "X" implies the "Touchable" and it naturally produces through its contradictory relationship "Untouchable" which is implied by the "Y". While the combination of "X" and "Touchable" can produce the "Priesthood" / "Respectable Caste" whereas "Y" and "Untouchable" form the category of Lower Caste / Inhuman / Menials. The first one is known for enjoying rights and privileges and the second one indicates the masses who are deprived of

their basic and fundamental rights. "X" is associated with knowledge, therefore considered an intellectual class, but the other groups are meant to be controlled by and are kept away from knowledge sources. A learnt society versus ignorant society, or touchable versus untouchable communities, or Society that enjoys rights and privileges versus the one that is deprived of all the rights and privileges including their fundamental rights – is the outcome of the caste system that has been overwhelmingly exposed by one of its participating elements. The "danger" with the caste system, as indicated by the text, it gives undue advantage and privilege to the undeserving persons (such as unlearned, criminals, deviants, etc.) belonging to the top order castes than the deserving people (learned, intellectuals, etc.) from the lower castes, and it means that as per the caste attributions, a deviant or criminal from the top order castes and the intellectuals from the lower castes are nothing but exceptions. His task of annihilating caste can be well understood with the help of the Greimacian actantial model in which he is occupying the place of "subject" and his move for achievement can be called an "object" – a desire as the connecting relationship he had towards the object. Naturally "Sender" could be seen as the millions of deprived people and those who helped him to get higher education are the "Helpers". The "Opponents" are those who have not only opposed him but are those who supported the caste system. Here even Mahatma comes under the category of the "opponent" by default. And finally, the "Receivers" are those who are benefitted from his struggle. His relationship with the opponent is established through power relations, whereas it is at the knowledge level he established his relationship with both the "Sender" and the "Helper." Therefore, his struggle cannot be reduced to the caste system alone but any other oppressive system that is practised anywhere in the world. However, to ask whether his task is fulfilled or not, it can be admitted that it is an unfinished one and the object, that is what he wanted to achieve is still an object of desire, and the task of the subject is yet to be finished. Considering the facts that the opponents are gaining strength day by day, in metaphorical speculations, it is necessary to point out that there is a space which needs to be filled with the stronger subject, as it had like the author of the text. In fact, caste, from the framework of Semiotics, is like a traffic signal system or a language system, has emerged as a semiotic system that has been imposed upon the people by the so-called "authority" ostensibly with the agreement and acceptance, and at the same time, there are disagreements and disapprovals of the system by the affected people who have been included as part of the system. Like a language, it has a deep structure grammar that guides, decides, and manipulates the performance of the people. The rules and regulations of the system are taught and maintained with the help of elaborately arranged mechanisms that have percolated and infiltrated into the minds of the people whose everyday language usage, folklore materials, customary practices, material culture, rituals, rites, celebrations, festivals, ceremonies, verbal and non-verbal communications, gestures, etiquettes, etc., are doing the role of either reproducing the knowledge of the caste systems or negotiation with it. When attempting at revamping or reforming of the system for making it conducive, assuming like other reformers who had the assumption that it can be reformed, the system resists to a maximum any reform, and the system provides two options, either the reforms must be from the authority as a matter of realization or pressure group influence on the authority group, or

- the second is to leave the system and to adapt to a new way of life leaving behind the old system.
- 2) The contemporary abominations and incidents, not sporadic and intermittent affairs across the country, and even extended to countries where Indian Diaspora has presence, the recent ones being mixing of faces in the drinking water overhead tank of Dalit community in Tamil Nadu (2023); death of a Dalit boy (aged 9) in 2022 in Rajasthan by his teacher for the simple reason that he touched the drinking water pot kept for upper castes (Indian Express, Jaipur edition, dt. August 14, 2022 11:03 IST. <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/jaipur/dalit-boy-dies-kin-say-assaulted-for-touching-upper-caste-water-8088753/>); the Chhapra mob lynching in the Saran district of Bihar occurred (2021) on the caste line and followed by a violence between Yadavs and Rajputs; a girl from a Dalit community in the Hathras district of Uttar Pradesh was gang raped and killed in 2020 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2020_Hathras_gang_rape_and_murder); Darshan Solanki's (student of IIT Bombay) suicide on 12th February 2023; California bans caste based discrimination after a Dalit Indian engineer faced caste discrimination at Cisco System in Silicon Valley headquarters in 2020; etc., have iterated that the *Annihilation of Caste* is relevant as millions of people are living in a "chamber of horrors", and thus, the progressive younger generations must be deprived of accessing the text for intellectually challenging the system..
 - 3) The understanding that he had on caste as 'endogamous unit' and as 'enclosed class', or "an ascending scale of reverence and a descending scale of contempt" (Ambedkar, 1945: 25–44, cf. Das (2010): 25 & Hiwrale (2020): 84, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2394481120944772>) is still unchanged and the incidents relating to honour killings are the testimonies to it.
 - 4) He has exposed the paradox of the caste system which introduces both purity and pollution simultaneously by the privileged castes on the bodies of the lower castes, and it is visible in the case of women of the untouchable communities while love is polluted, rape is pure – the inter-caste relationship can be best related here.
 - 5) Mahatma's defence of the caste system and his perception of village management through the caste system help us to understand his confidence in it which, though facilitated his survival in politics, is orthodoxy and problematic in nature. However, see it as a tool that can protect the villagers from "any oppression from the ruling power or powers" (Arundhati Roy in Anand (2014):18), and his fear of losing it in the hands of the social system of the Western Europe (Arundhati Roy in Anand (2014):18), or his worry, i.e., change in the caste system could create disorder must be seen in the larger political context than merely as personal.
 - 6) Conversely, the trust in democracy for eradicating the caste system miserably failed, and rather, it provided equal opportunities for both reformists as well as the orthodox elements which eventually help the orthodox forces to claim the upper hand over the reformists.
 - 7) For Mahatma, who is a radical critic of Western modernity, modern cities are an excrescence and they do "the evil purpose of draining the life-blood of the villages" (Young India, 17 March 1927; CWMG 38, 210, cf. Arundhati Roy in Anand (2014):35). Whereas, for Ambedkar, who believed in progress and happiness promised by pragmatic Western liberalism, "the villages are a sink

- of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow-mindedness and communalism” (Das 2010: 176).
- 8) The *AoC* as a radical text is carefully crafted not directed at the Hindu fundamentalists and extremists, but at the liberal and progressive Hindus who are open for dialogue and reform. Thus, the text cannot be seen as his “utopia his impracticable, unfeasible dream”, rather it presents his dream and the possibilities – essential for the liberal society, or enlightened India, if it wants to be progressed.
 - 9) Mahatma has rightly acknowledged that the address cannot be ignored by any reformer, and even the orthodox could gain from the reading, and he also admitted that “one can only judge a system or an institution by the conduct of its representatives” (Ambedkar (1936):78, Anand (2014):284). This point founds ground for Ambedkar to ignite the fire, and it is what the semiotics clarified through its *la langue* and *la parole* relationship, i.e., abstract systematic principles and conventions or institutions of norms (independent of the individual user) versus the usage of the system or performances of individuals.
 - 10) The vindication of caste by Mahatma reflects his contradictory position, i.e., despite his criticism of the practice of untouchability, he defended his interpretation of Hinduism by justifying how his half a century life lived and how he has “endeavoured to the best of [his] ability to regulate [his] life.” (Ambedkar (1936):80, Anand (2014):287)
 - 11) Shri Sant Ramji’s clarification on varna versus caste is noteworthy and it clarifies that the JPTM agrees with Ambedkar on the matter that caste is “the root cause of the disruption and downfall of the Hindus” (Ambedkar (1936):81, Anand (2014):289); the Mandal had objective of in persuading the Hindus to annihilate caste; “the function of both of them [caste and varna] is one and the same, i.e. to restrict inter-caste marriage and inter-dining” (Ambedkar (1936):82, Anand (2014):290); the “Hindus are slaves of caste, and do not want to destroy it” (Ambedkar (1936):82, Anand (2014):290); those who reject caste and varna cannot call himself Hindu; etc.
 - 12) Ambedkar, in response to Mahatma, emphasizes that the caste has ruined the Hindus; reorganizing caste on the ground of Chaturvarnya becomes impossible on the one hand and turns into harmful since it denies masses of opportunity to acquire knowledge; to make the Hindu society as a progressive and harmonious, there is a need of reorganization of it on a foundation of religion that upholds the principles of “liberty, equality and fraternity” and it is possible to achieve through the task of abolition caste and varna or destroying by discarding the so-called divine authority of the Hindus (Ambedkar (1936):85, Anand (2014):297).
 - 13) For textual authenticity, and to argue the point that since the people are illiterate and not having knowledge about the shastras which makes them to believe what have been told to them, he has made use of the writing of Mr. Tilak who is the recognized scholar of Sanskrit and Hindu shastras (Ambedkar (1936):85, Anand (2014):298).
 - 14) His contention is that the saints’ teachings are lamentably ineffective as they never found attacked the caste system, but they were the staunch believer in it – “most of them lived and died as members of [their respective] castes” (Ambedkar (1936):85, Anand (2014):298-299). However, the saints enjoyed the privilege of breaking caste which a common man couldn’t.

- 15) Ambedkar agrees with the point Mahatma had raised that religion should not “be judged by its worst specimens but by the best, it might have produced” (Ambedkar (1936):87, Anand (2014): 300). But he opposed the ideology proposed by Mahatma that the “Hindu society can be made tolerable and even happy without any fundamental change in its structure, if all the high-caste Hindus can be persuaded to follow a high standard of morality in their dealings with the low-caste Hindus” (Ambedkar (1936):88, Anand (2014): 301).
- 16) He admits that he does not have any problem in respective “caste Hindus who realize a high social ideal in their life” [and] “without such men, India would be an uglier and a less happy place to live in than it is” (Ambedkar (1936):89, Anand (2014): 301-302).
- 17) He finds inconsistency in Mahatma’s understanding of caste and varna, and for Gandhi who later acknowledged the demerits of caste as since “caste is harmful both to spiritual and national growth” (Ambedkar (1936):93, Anand (2014):307), “the essence of the Mahatma’s conception of varna is the pursuit of one’s ancestral calling, irrespective of natural aptitude” (Ambedkar (1936):93, Anand (2014): 307). Moreover, despite his better understanding of the problem of untouchability, Mahatma’s support of the caste system is regrettable and it is evident from his following lines that “Caste is another name for control. Caste puts a limit on enjoyment. Caste does not allow a person to transgress caste limits in pursuit of his enjoyment. That is the meaning of such caste restrictions as inter-dining and intermarriage... These being my views I am opposed to all those who are out to destroy the Caste System” (BAWS 9:276, Parel (1997): 188-189, Anand (2014):29).
- 18) He clarifies and gives reason why he is “disgusted with Hindus and Hinduism because they cherish wrong ideals and live a wrong social life” (Ambedkar (1936):95, Anand (2014):310). And he spells out his reason for him having issues with the Hindus and the Hinduism that according to him, his issue is not about their imperfection of the social conduct of the Hindus and the Hinduism, but “over their ideals” (Ambedkar (1936):95, Anand (2014):310).
- 19) He raises a logical question with reference to the Brahmins who transgress the caste rules but do not speak against either caste or shastras. And it is applicable to others too. That is, those who transgress caste are not the people who are opposing it. The duplicity that he exposes is that those who oppose something due to some reasons may not be expected to give up their conviction on them. By upholding “the theory of caste and the purity of shastras”, but preaching against them is not going to make any changes in the society (Ambedkar (1936):97, Anand (2014):312). His comments must be seen as the reflection of his vision for the society. In relation to the denial of the mass, the fruits of their thinking fearing that it could emancipate them from the yoke of caste and dismantle the power structure of the privileged class, he categorically points out that the dishonesty of the intellectuals or intellectual class, is a most disgraceful phenomenon (Ambedkar (1936):97, Anand (2014):312).
- 20) Finally, he quotes lines from Matthew Arnold’s (1822–1888) poem “Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse” (that reveals ‘the Victorian era inner conflict between scientific progress and religion, identity and values’ (Anand (2014):319)) to say the Hindus “are wandering between two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born” (Ambedkar (1936):97, Anand

(2014):313). The masses do not have choices – they may appeal to Mahatma for guidance but he does not believe in thinking, and they seek guidance for intellectual classes who are too either “dishonest or too indifferent to educate them in the right direction” (Ambedkar (1936):97, Anand (2014):313). It is like a situation of tragedy – what one can do is lament.

8. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The *AoC* in no way escapes from presenting the system, or grammar, of the caste and its evil practices by which millions and millions of people are being affected as it (caste) promotes the wrong relationships. The text makes its arguments and dialogues not on the basis of any assumptions and imaginary projections, and they are not devoid of any logical and pragmatic undercurrents. As he admits, the text has “discussed the ways and means of breaking up the caste system” (Ambedkar (1936):11, Anand (2014):156), that is, it has emphasized the task of destroying the caste system, and here the text also makes us to realize that the task is Herculean. Considering “the social and religious rights distributed among the different castes” (Ambedkar (1936):63, Anand (2014):224-225), Karl Marx's slogan for economic revolution “You have nothing to lose except your chains” (Ambedkar (1936):63, Anand (2014):224) turns out to be quite useless for Ambedkar. Even after eighty-five years of the publication of the text /address, or seventy-five years of independence, there is no sign of dilution of caste structure, and the number atrocities on the lower communities or the incidents of conflicts among the different castes provide the testimony to the fact that we are so much obsessed with caste and hierarchical order that ensures wrong relationship among the fellow citizens. His remarks about the caste system that “[since] there cannot be a more degrading system of social organization than the caste system, [it] deadens, paralyses and cripples the people from helpful activit[ies]” (Ambedkar (1936):63, Anand (2014):210), cannot termed as obsolete in the present society as they are highly relevant and need of hour. Can anyone find it wrong to question the system of belief and dogmas that are considered sacred that finds repugnant while people inter-dining, comingling and intermarry? When caste is not a physical entity or object no one can pull it down instantly like a brick wall, as he points out, “[c]aste is a notion [and] it is a state of mind” (Ambedkar (1936):58, SAnand (2014):218) that necessitate a notional change for its destruction (Ambedkar (1936)). In the Indian history, while there were times the country had encountered defeats due to war and engulfed with darkness because of the flourishing caste system, the period of Maurya empire must be celebrated, as Ambedkar rightly highlights it, “as the period of freedom, greatness and glory” and it was the period that the complete annihilation of the caste system was the reality because “the Shudras, who constituted the mass of the people, came into their own and became the rulers of the country” (Ambedkar (1936):51-52, Anand (2014): 210). By and large, like Dalit aspirations, the *AoC* is a breach of peace, as rightly indicated by Arundhati Roy (Anand (2014): 16).

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

REFERENCES

- Adams, J. (2011). *Gandhi : Naked Ambition*. Quercus.
- Aloysius, G. (1997). *Nationalism without a Nation in India*. Oxford University Press.
- Ambedkar, B. R. (1936). *Annihilation of Caste*. Honest Books.
- Ambedkar, B. R. (2003). *Ambedkar : Autobiographical Notes* Ravikumar (Ed.). Navayana.
- Anand, S. (2002). *Meenakshipuram Redux*. Outlook, October 21.
- Anand, S. (2008). *Understanding the Khairlanji verdict*. Hindu, October 5.
- Anand, S. (Ed.). (2014). *Annihilation of Caste : The Annotated Critical Edition*. B.R. Ambedkar. Verso.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977/1972). *Outline of a Theory of Practice* R. Nice (Trans.). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511812507>
- Bourdieu, P. (1984/1979). *Distinction : A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* R. Nice (Trans.). Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). *The Forms of Capital*. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, Greenwood Press, 241–258.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990a/1980). *The Logic of Practice* R. Nice (Trans.). Stanford University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990b). *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology* M. Adamson (Trans.). Stanford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781503621558>
- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and Symbolic Power*. Ed. & Intro John B. Thompson G. Raymond & M. Adamson (Trans.). Polity Press.
- Burke, E. (2001). *Reflections on the Revolution in France : A Critical Edition* J. C. D. Clark (Ed.). Stanford University Press. (Orig. Publ. 1790.).
- Béteille, A. (2001). *Race and Caste*. Hindu, March 10.
- Carver, T. N. (1915). *What is Justice? Essays in Social Justice*. Harvard University Press. <https://doi.org/10.4159/harvard.9780674287907>
- Das, B. (Ed.). (2010). *Thus Spoke Ambedkar, 1 : A Stake in the Nation*. Navayana.
- Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and Education : An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* [Reprint]. Macmillan, 1958. Indian A. Books (Ed.). New Delhi : 2004.
- Forbes Quote (2023). <http://www.forbes.com/quotes/8694/>
- Hiltebeitel, A. (2011). *Dharma: Its Early History in Law, Religion, and Narrative*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/obo/9780195399318-0001>
- Hiwrale, A. (2020). *Caste: Understanding the nuances from Ambedkar’s expositions*. *Journal of Social Inclusion Studies*, 6(1), 78–96. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2394481120944772>
- Ingold, T. (1994). *Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology*. Routledge.
- Kandasamy, M. (2013). *How Real-Life Tamil love Stories End*. Outlook, July 22.
- Moon, V. (Ed.). (2014). *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches*. New Delhi : Dr. Ambedkar foundation. (First published in 26 January 1991 by Education Department, Govt. Of Maharashtra.), 9.
- Narayanasvami Aiyar, K. (1914). *Thirty Minor Upanishads*. Robarts. University of Toronto : Printed by Annie Besant at the Vasanta Press.
- Noordegraaf, M., & Schinkel, W. (2011). *Professionalism as Symbolic Capital : Materials for a Bourdieusian Theory of Professionalism*. *Comparative Sociology*, 10(1), 67–96. <https://doi.org/10.1163/156913310X514083>

- Olivelle, P. (1998). Caste and Purity: A Study in the Language of the Dharma Literature. *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 32(2), 189–216. <https://doi.org/10.1177/006996679803200203>
- Olivelle, P. (2008). *Caste and Purity. Collected Essays*. Firenze University Press. <https://doi.org/10.36253/978-88-8453-732-4>
- Parel, A. (Ed.). (1997). *'Hind Swaraj' and Other Writings*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ramakrishnan, M., & Sahoo, S. (2023). Necessitating a Dialogue on the Idiosyncrasy of Imposed Identity on Tribal Communities with Reference to the Lodhas of Eastern India. In S. K. Kolay & Nilanjan Khatua (Eds.), *Vulnerable tribal groups in India*, Concept Publication Pvt Ltd, 125–180.
- Round Table India (2023).
- Ruesch, J. (1972/1966). Social Process. In T. A. Sebeok (Ed.), *Semiotic Approaches to Human Relations* Mouton, 21–46. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110816228.21>
- Sebeok, T. A. (Ed.). (1972). *Semiotic Approaches to Human Relations*. Mouton.
- The Ambedkar Today (n.d.).
- Viswanathan, S. (2005). *Dalits in Dravidian Land : Frontline Reports on Anti-Dalit Violence in Tamil Nadu (1995–2004)*. Navayana.
- Weininger, E. (2005). *Foundations of Bourdieu's Class Analysis* Ed. Erik Olin Wright *Approaches to Class Analysis* (pp. 82–118). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511488900.005>
- Zelliot, E. (2013). *Ambedkar's World : The Making of Babasaheb and the Dalit Movement*. Navayana.